



City of Tigard

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Minutes

MEETING DATE: November 16, 2009 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

MEETING LOCATION: Public Works Building, 8777 SW Burnham, Tigard, OR 97223

The purpose of the Park and Recreation Advisory Board is to advise and advocate for park and recreation opportunities for a growing Tigard.

Joint meeting with the Tigard City Council to discuss the Tigard Parks Bond election results and future direction for the PRAB.

Park and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) Chair Rogers called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Roll Call:

Park and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) Members Present: Chair Rogers, Board Members Davies, Mears, and Swanson. Also present: Alternate Board Member Polivka. PRAB Board Members Absent: Bernhard, Freudenthal, Leinberger.

City Council Present: Mayor Dirksen; Councilors Buehner, Henderson (also City Council Liaison to the PRAB) and Webb. Absent: Council President Wilson.

Staff Present: City Manager Prosser, Parks and Facilities Manager Martin, Parks Supervisor McKnight, City Recorder Wheatley.

Park Bond Results – Next Steps: Prioritize action items

Bob Betcone of the Trust for Public Lands reviewed an assessment of the outcome of the bond measure election that failed.

- Voter turnout was low.
- Survey results indicated the bond measure would pass by 63 percent; however the pollsters assumed that there would be at least a 40-45 percent voter turnout. Actual voter turnout was 34.5 percent. The bond measure failed by 53.8 percent.
- Another factor in the failed measure is that in many jurisdictions there is a demographic that consists of people who tend to vote against government-sponsored measures to increase taxes. Generally speaking, this demographic is expected to comprise about 25 percent of the overall electorate. Accompanied with the low turnout numbers was the aspect that the “no voters” tend to be regular voters and are more influential when the turnout is lower.

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA – November 16, 2009

- Another factor in the disparity between the election results and survey results was that the polling was done in May and since that time there has been a consistent series of negative news reports regarding the economy and unemployment.
- In other parts of the country, measures of a similar sort did pass (i.e., \$400 million measure passed in the State of New Jersey).
- Post-election analysis suggests that this type of experience can be viewed as a learning experience telling us what the voters might do next time.
- TPL helped with the successful Metro Open Spaces Campaign three years ago and the successful Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation Campaign (\$100 million). Both of those campaigns had an earlier failed measure.
- Discussed opportunities coming up for a potential bond measure election in 2010. Discussion included the gubernatorial race in November and the likelihood of a number of money measures on upcoming ballots. The May ballot might not have as many money measures. 2010 money measures will include a countywide library levy as well as a public safety measure.
- TPL would like to work on the Tigard bond measure campaign again and would also perform another poll.
- TPL "...is enthusiastic... and willing to support any new effort..."
- The decision of a "go" or "no go" to the ballot for May is needed right away.
- Greater voter turnout would be expected in a May or November 2010 election.
- Mr. Betcone suggested the wording of the ballot measure be evaluated relative to the polling results to convey an accurate message about how the funds would be used.
- Jurisdictions have choices with regard to the message; i.e., highlight particular projects such as the Fowler project or other real estate projects.
- Last results suggest more grass roots efforts are needed; i.e., get-out-the-vote type of activities, and door-knocking activities.
- Reassessment of the dollar amount should be done.
- Board Member Swanson suggested the lead-time before the election was tight. She suggested that next time there be more public forums and more publicity.
- Mr. Betcone agreed with Board Member Swanson that a more robust communication effort be made so voters can draw a closer association to the question on the ballot.
- Mayor Dirksen said he would be interested in what the members of the PRAB think.
- Board Member Davies said he feels strongly that we should try again. He referred to other jurisdictions sending this type of question out to the voters multiple times before realizing success. He questioned the messaging that went out on this most recent effort and referred to the short time period for communicating to the voters about the park bond measure. He felt that the Fowler and similar projects should have been featured more prominently in the information shared with the voters. The voters, he said, would have attached more to specific projects than to the message that went out such as a "good, warm feeling of clean water."
- Chair Rogers agreed that the voters should be able to attach their idea of what the money will be used for and create a vision how the money will be used. Having more lead-time will help the next effort. He supported another attempt.
- Board Member Mears suggested using the Master Plan as the basis for information sharing with the voters so the goal is worded clearly.

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA – November 16, 2009

- Board Member Swanson said the PRAB had been preparing for a 2010 bond measure and going to the voters in November 2009 took her by surprise as she had anticipated having a whole year to get the word out. She said she definitely agreed with the bond measure.
- Councilor Webb commented the Council had also been thinking about the bond measure for a later date.
- Chair Rogers also commented on the sooner-than-planned election effort. He, too, was expecting to go to the voters in 2010 or 2011, but the polling results indicated that the timing appeared to be supportive for passage in 2009.
- Board Member Davies said that May 2010 election might be too soon. He noted that property tax statements came out a week before Election Day and that could be a consideration for avoiding a November ballot measure.
- Board Member Mears commented that another reason to support going out for a May election is that May is the time when people begin to think about summer.
- Councilor Buehner commented she would like to include a video on cable access accompanied by a volunteer effort to get a door tag “on every door in the city about two weeks before the election.”
- Councilor Webb advised a November election often has a number of money issues and people will select one or two to support.
- Mayor Dirksen offered that we might want to consider a campaign for May 2011. Councilor Buehner commented that this would be an off-year election.
- Mayor Dirksen reported for Council President Wilson, who could not attend tonight’s meeting, his suggestion that a ballot measure might be more attractive if we could identify some properties and get options on them. Chair Rogers said this could be a “double-edged sword” limiting opportunities. However, by identifying properties, voters can connect with the property. Mayor Dirksen agreed that the point is to have a vision that represents the vision of the residents of Tigard. Chair Rogers said the Fowler property is a fantastic piece of property and said he would like for everyone to be able to walk through this property so that, hopefully, “they would agree with us.”
- Councilor Buehner noted her only concern with the Fowler property is that she received some “push back” from residents as their perspective was that the taxpayers have already paid for this property when purchased by the School District. This is an issue that we need to be prepared to address. Chair Rogers agreed that care should be taken to put together the appropriate message.
- Councilor Henderson reported the objections he heard were based on *The Times* editorial. Mr. Betcone commented that this was not the worst type of editorial the issue could have received. The editorial seemed to endorse many of the favorable qualities for the bond measure, but then concluded “almost provocatively” that the timing was not right due to the economy. The measure was favorably endorsed by the *Oregonian*.
- Mr. Betcone commented that there was no organized “no” campaign. Some individuals expressed concern. Concerns expressed, in general, related to some of the more technical aspects (i.e., ballot measure wording or the degree to which the proposed ballot meshed with the Master Plan). He did not recall any concerns regarding the concept for more open spaces, playgrounds, and wildlife habitat in the City of Tigard. He advised the technical concerns could be addressed in public education forums.
- City Manager Prosser noted in the May 2010 ballot it is highly likely there will be a measure to create a Tigard Aquatics District. He asked Mr. Betcone if that would tend to work in favor or against a parks bond measure. Mr. Betcone responded that he did not know. Often times, in other jurisdictions polling results indicate disfavor with facility construction. TPL often recommends that those types of efforts be taken up separately from measures to purchase land or open spaces. He

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA – November 16, 2009

said he would be happy to do some research and report to the City Council and Park and Recreation Advisory Board.

- Chair Rogers noted how crucial timing is for this type of ballot measure.
- Mayor Dirksen asked Mr. Betcone his recommendation for the next step. He commented that it appears there is consensus among the PRAB and City Council members to make another bond measure attempt. The questions are -- How do we do it? and -- When is the appropriate time. Chair Rogers agreed with Mayor Dirksen that the PRAB would like to see the City continue to pursue a park bond measure accompanied by new planning and different approaches to the campaign.
- Mayor Dirksen said the bond issuance dollar amount should be reconsidered. He pointed out there were other money measures on the November 2009 ballot that passed in other jurisdictions.
- Board Member Mears said he would like to see the ballot measure back on the May 2010 ballot. A November election should be avoided because of the timing of the mailing of property tax statements.
- Board Alternate Polivka said she was concerned that May might be too soon.
- Chair Rogers suggested the details of the process could be sorted out later now that it appears there is agreement to “push this thing along.”
- Mayor Dirksen said he feels a sense of urgency. “This land is going to be lost if we do not tie it up, and soon.” He added that this would be the only reason he would want to go ahead with a bond measure with the economy the way that it is. If we wait until things get better, it might be too late.
- Councilor Webb commented that the deadline would be tight for a May election. The filing deadline is in March 2010.
- Board Member Davies summarized what needs to be accomplished; i.e., rewrite the polling questions and determine if the numbers need to be changed. He asked Mr. Betcone how long the polling process would take. Mr. Betcone said this could be put together quickly – within six weeks. He agreed the poll needed to be redesigned. Mr. Betcone commented that at the front-end, we would want to put together a more concerted game plan with regard to a grass roots effort including an educational effort. These efforts should be integrated so they are more complimentary and we are “firing on all cylinders.”
- In response to a question from Chair Rogers, Mayor Dirksen said he would not want to go forward if the polling indicated the timing was not right. Councilor Buehner indicated she supported another attempt. Councilor Webb said she would not want to put this matter on the November ballot, which is now scheduled to have the library levy and the public safety levy. Councilor Henderson said he agreed with Board Member Swanson’s earlier comment regarding the importance of lead-time; however, he said he also believed that people did not have good information and if this could be delivered effectively that this would be an important factor towards success. Councilor Henderson said May was acceptable and agreed there were competing issues in the November election.
- Mayor Dirksen said the matter should be explored to determine if there is a fatal flaw.
- Board Member Davies added that it would be important to determine what is going to happen with the aquatic measure. Timing of this will also be a factor.
- Mayor Dirksen noted there would be a meeting on November 17, 2009, to discuss an alternative proposal to the formation of an aquatic district. City Manager Prosser explained the concerns regarding the formation of an aquatic district and that the four cities, the County, and the School District have been meeting. There is a chance the aquatic district formation might be withdrawn;

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA – November 16, 2009

however, the timeline is tight and the alternatives under consideration are complicated. There was discussion on the aquatic district proposal and the players involved.

Mr. Betcone left the meeting.

Chair Rogers asked the City Council members what they would like to see from the PRAB in 2010.

- Mayor Dirksen said the inventory of available properties suitable for purchase was completed. It could probably use an update; however, he did not know if this would be a major task for the Board.
- There was discussion about prioritization of the inventory. The list, as a whole, needs to be reviewed and PRAB members were going to consider doing this as their next project. Mayor Dirksen said that if the City goes back to the voters again, this would be very important. Regardless, this priority listing of inventory needs to be kept up to date.
- Parks and Facilities Manager Martin commented properties will come up for purchase and the Board has determined where these should be placed on the priority list. He said recently he has been getting more calls from people regarding pieces of property being offered for sale for parks.
- Councilor Buehner noted the Water Division has several reservoirs, some of which have small parcels that would be appropriate for pocket parks. She suggested the Board might want to consider looking at these properties

Chair Rogers asked about the status of Burnham Street, Downtown Revitalization, and Parks.

- City Manager Prosser reported good news about the bids for the Burnham Street project. The Engineer's estimate for the project was \$8.4 million. The City was considering alternatives to phase the project because it did not have the full funding. The bid award came in at \$4.1 million, so the City is able to proceed with the entire project. The road will be kept open for the entire 18-month construction period.
- No parks were acquired. City Manager Prosser reported the entire lot at the northeast corner was purchased (Zuber property). Mayor Dirksen noted there might be an opportunity to consolidate properties in the area.
- The dog park will be closed during the Burnham Street construction.
- A piece of property near Main Street was purchased, cleaned up, and seeded. This property is technically not a park, but is needed for the alignment of the urban creek. A design is still needed for this area.
- The Fanno Park Master Plan calls for a downtown plaza and we would have used some of the bond money to move this forward. Nothing can be done until a source of financing is identified.
- Chair Rogers commented that it would be nice to establish some type of focal point (i.e., a fountain) to start bringing people to the area.
- Time was spent discussing the activities planned this year in the downtown area: re-meander of Fanno Creek, small projects designed to draw people to the downtown such as replacing trails, 12-foot sidewalks, landscape areas, and green street work on the south end of Main Street.

Chair Rogers opened up discussion on recreation topics:

- Board Member Davies said the PRAB members would want to revisit recreation options for the City of Tigard, although it is not the focus at this time.

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA – November 16, 2009

- Mayor Dirksen said there was no opposition to a recreation program on City Council; the only questions are: 1) How would it be funded?, and 2) In the face of limited funding, what is our priority?
- Board Member Swanson noted there are already pockets of recreation offered; however, it is not cohesive. Offerings include the Tigard 4th of July, Family Fest, and programming by the Library. Alternate Board Member Polivka acknowledged the current activities offered, but she envisions a more extended recreation program.
- Mayor Dirksen commented on other recreational opportunities offered in the City through long-standing private not-for-profit organizations; i.e., little league, soccer, etc.
- In response to a question by Councilor Henderson, City Manager Prosser advised the City has hired an events coordinator (32 hours/week) who will work on activities such as the Family Fest and a concert series.
- Chair Rogers commented about the purchase of parkland over the years and there is recreation programming occurring. Often... “we don’t market our successes to the public.”
- Board Member Swanson said a big problem with the recreation in Tigard is that it is sporadic. There is no centralized catalog. The recreation programming does not have to be run by the City exclusively. She suggested a program coordinated by the City and collaborating with other organizations.
- Chair Rogers advised that before there was the decision to go ahead with the parks bond, the PRAB was working on an inventory of recreation programming in the City. Mayor Dirksen said this would be an excellent “interim success”; that is, with the community create a recreation catalog for a central clearing point to find out information about all the activities offered in Tigard regardless of how it is funded.
- Additional discussion took place on whether to include some questions about recreation funding in the upcoming poll, noting the funding for purchasing parks would come from the bond measure (not for funding operations). Typically fees do not always cover the full cost of recreation programming, which would mean that we would need to reprogram some existing general fund money or go to the voters for a levy.

Chair Rogers called for public comment:

- John Frewing reported his concerns about the bond measure. He said he thinks that Tigard needs more open space and, in particular, natural areas. He said he was concerned that the last bond measure did not provide any substantive natural areas. The Master Plan specifically mentions that about natural areas are “somehow vague in the City of Tigard and there is no direction in the Comprehensive Plan as to what to acquire.” Mr. Frewing commented that at a City Council meeting last week, Council President Wilson said we need to get on with trying to identify what we need as natural areas.

Mr. Frewing said the polling done by the consultant apparently found a great deal of interest in natural areas. While natural areas were mentioned in the ballot title, there was inconsistency in the fact that the Master Plan does not have any natural areas identified. He said clarifying this matter would go a long ways towards helping win a ballot measure. If the bond measure is to include natural areas, there must be some basis for including these areas. The idea of being specific in naming some typical areas is a good one.

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA – November 16, 2009

- **Executive Session:** The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board went into Executive Session at 8:10 p.m. under the provisions of ORS 192.660 (1) (d), (e), (f) & (h) to discuss labor relations, real property transactions, current and pending litigation issues and to consider records that are exempt by law from public inspection.

The Executive Session concluded at 8:34 p.m. and the meeting was adjourned.

Catherine Wheatley, City Recorder

Attest:

Park and Recreation Advisory Board Chair, City of Tigard

Date: _____

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