

SPOKANE PARK BOARD

Budget Workshop

5:30 p.m., September 27, 2011 – City Council Chambers

Notes

1. Park Board Members Present: Ross Kelley, Jim Santorsola, Randy Cameron, Susan Traver, Chris Wright, Ken VanVoorhis, Andy Dunau, Dr. Samuel Selinger, Councilman Bob Apple

Park Board Members Absent Excused: Martha Lou Wheatley Billeter, Jim Quigley

Staff Present: Leroy Eadie, Jacki Faught, Craig Butz, Debby Dodson, Nancy Goodspeed, Tony Madunich, Rebecca Madany, Mike Aho, Angel Spell, Taylor Bressler, Pamela McKinzie, Carl Strong, Scott Niemeier, Garrett Jones, Steve Nittolo, Alice Busch, Al Vorderbrueggen

Others Present: Louise Chadez; Ray Tomlinson, SSSAC Board President; Helen Dennis, SSSAC; Kathleen Govett; Curtis Connolley, SSSAC Volunteer; Linn Edmonson, SSSAC; Sonia Dayley, SSSAC; Donna Fagan, NEYC Board Member; Bonnie McDade, SSSAC Director; Mollie Dalpae, Mid City Senior Center Director; Marjorie Tomes, Corbin Senior Center; Ozzy Kenezovich, Spokane County Sheriff; Kris Miller, SSSAC; Marian Herzer, SSSAC, Project Joy; Louella Cantalini, PVCC; Anna Marie Robbins, Hillyard Senior Center; Hal McGlathery, SSSAC; Erica Roscoe, WCCC; Kelly Cruz, Chair WCNC; Linda Cuneo; Jen Hussey, WCNC; Patt Earley, Aging and Longterm Care of Eastern Washington; Katie Roley, NEYC; Joy Jones, West Central Neighborhood; Kathleen Kennedy Wickham; Marcia Florek, NEYC; Starsha Thorp; Timothy Migola; Taylor Simpson, West Central Neighborhood

2. **Discussion:**

- A. Leroy Eadie reviewed the budget guidelines adopted by the Board earlier this year.
- B. Rebecca Madany outlined the Revised 2012 Budget Proposal #2 being presented.
- C. An explanation of how the Public Works contribution to Urban Forestry for the tree inventory will work was given.
- D. Discussion was had on where the one time funds of \$389,000 Parks will receive from the General Fund in 2012 and the funds found in the accounting error are being allocated in this proposal and what other allocation options might be.
- E. In this proposal \$50,000 of the center funding is being allocated to the transition planning for the centers. Should these funds not be needed for the transition process it will be reallocated to the centers. Parks will ask as a requirement of centers receiving any funding in 2012 a signed document committing them to participate in the transition process with the Mayor's office and Parks and Recreation. City Administration has put Dorothy Webster in charge of the process, Parks is participating, and a stakeholders meeting has been scheduled for October 19th.
- F. The funding the centers receive from Parks and Recreation only provide a portion of each centers funding and these funds are required to be used for senior and youth recreational services.
- G. A brief discussion was had regarding cost recovery, how it is calculated, benefits of partnerships and accountability of partners to affirm that funding is going towards recreation services and not towards mortgages.
- H. Further discussion was had on how Parks allocates to different centers.

- I. Conversation was had regarding the new Division Manager for Recreation that is included in the original budget. This is not a fully funded position. Conversations with the union will occur before any decisions will be made. The manager in charge of Recreation is also in charge of Riverfront Park. This is too much to ask of one manager.
- J. Parks is the co-signer on the mortgage of the SSSAC and if the center defaults will receive financial responsibility for that mortgage; Parks owns the PVCC; Parks has vehicles at 4-5 of the centers; and Parks has a lease at the NECC for the Senior Programs. The Board asked for a list of the value of these items and expressed concerns that they do not know what money is being spent where.

3. **Public Comments:** Duplicate comments are only noted once.

- A. The Park Board lost credibility with some citizens after passing the pools bond and then charged for swimming and increased the fees for swimming.
- B. The City is supposed to be protecting the vulnerable, Seniors and Youth.
- C. Full cost recovery cannot be met with youth programs.
- D. There is a lot of inequity between the current method of funding senior and youth centers.
- E. The SSAC will cease operations and close its doors if all P&R funding is cut.
- F. The history of how the SSSAC came to be on P&R property and the costs of building was outlined.
- G. Funding for the centers should not be eliminated.
- H. Centers provide recreation to many thousands of Spokane residents.
- I. 50,000 go through the doors of the SSSAC each year.
The budget process for Parks and Recreation has caused massive disruption of the operation of SSSAC and requests for information have burdened staff time.
- J. Contributions to fundraisers at the SSSAC have diminished.
- K. Consequences for 2012 and/or 2013 would cause the SSSAC to close as they cannot raise an additional \$9,600 per month.
- L. Approximately 10 years ago when the SSSAC was built part of the agreement for building on P&R land was the understandings that SSSAC would be a partner with P&R and P&R would continue financial support.
- M. SSSAC members have contributed nearly \$2M to the building of the facility which may be lost if P&R discontinues funding.
- N. If discontinued P&R funding causes the loss of the facility Parks will own the building and owe the balance of the loan.
- O. The SSSAC will be looking into the legal ramifications for P&R if they cause the center to lose the building.
- P. Many proposed budgets have been provided to centers since July 1st with everything from 100% cuts to 20% cuts.
- Q. Funding should be kept at the 2011 level until a strategic plan can be put forth by P&R that would not affect so many citizens with such great impact.
- R. P&R has the money to fully fund the centers.
- S. What are the details of the agreement that will be required before any funds for 2012 are released.
- T. Based on the proposed budget it appears there is no long-term reasoned plan for use of the fund or reorganization of P&R; there is a commitment on the part of staff to eliminate funding of the centers; there is a commitment to preserve the positions of all P&R staff; there is no consideration for the 25 or 50 paid staff of the centers who stand to lose their livelihood if the budget as currently proposed is passed; and there is no

consideration for the loss that will be suffered by the thousands of members of the centers.

- U. The Board is urged to require accountability from its staff; to fund the centers so they can continue to operate; to keep funding the 2011 level until a strategic plan can be put forth by P&R that would not affect so many citizens with such great immediate impact; and if the Board is committed to divorcing P&R from the centers come forward with a plan that will give the centers time to develop alternate funding.
- V. The SSSAC is very important to the community with about 1,400 members. Many are on limited incomes. In order to continue operating memberships would have to be increased to the rate of Manito Country Club or Spokane Club dues. The center is for people of all ages and all income levels.
- W. The SSSAC has been doing a "Burn the Mortgage" fundraiser that has taken in a lot of money, that money has dried up with the feeling that the center will be taken away from them.
- X. The \$400K accounting money was available for the centers all along.
- Y. Why is Urban Forestry in Recreation Department's budget? This should be moved to Operations and prison work crews or those sentenced to community service should be used for this work.
- Z. (Staff) The Urban Forestry Program is not part of the Recreation Budget but is a part of the overall Parks and Recreation budget.
- AA. Predominately across the country Senior Centers are part of the Parks and Recreation program.
- BB. In Vancouver, WA the senior centers are a part of Parks and Recreation and Urban Forestry is in the service water category.
- CC. The paper this morning said that a \$250,000 tree inventory will be taken with funding coming from Wastewater so there is money for Urban Forestry coming from another department.
- DD. Bellevue, Tacoma and Vancouver all considered cuts for 2012 for senior programs but funding has remained essentially the same while Bellevue and Vancouver reduced funding for Urban Forestry.
- EE. The NEYC provides the care that disabled children need, they have a great staff, are very supportive to parents and caregivers. The loss of that facility would be tragic. Please reconsider funding cuts to NEYC.
- FF. The NEYC has worked with the Parks and Recreation through relocation and reorganization. They have developed partnerships with the schools. The neighborhood is no longer considered one of the 100 lowest income neighborhoods in the United States and needs their partnership with Parks and Recreation to keep this trend going.
- GG. The SSSAC provides recreation services for 56% of the population, seniors and youth in Spokane. The center augments these recreational services with 60+ employees, thousands of volunteer hours, fundraisers and fees. Funds for services other than recreational services come from areas other than Parks and Recreation. The SSSAC signs a scope of services with Parks and Recreation each year.
- HH. Parity funding in centers is not reasonable or necessary under the current organization of the youth and senior centers.
- II. (Staff) There is no assumed revenue increase for 2012 from the centers and the 2013 budget is not on the table yet. The original budget that was presented to the Board was also provided to the centers, Mike Aho's recommendation to the Director was also shared with the centers, today's proposal is the second proposal submitted to the Board.

- JJ. The Mid-City Senior Center keeps track of all services they provide and could provide to the Board. The Center does not get enough from Parks and Recreation to use funding for mortgage payments nor does it use funds for the Meals on Wheels program.
- KK. Why are you looking at cutting funding to youth and senior centers? The Roadmap to the Future would indicate that with 56% of the population of Spokane being over 50 and under 19 funding for these age groups should increase not decrease.
- LL. Without the mentorship the youth centers provide the kids will end up on the streets, if they end up on the streets then they will end up in jail. We used to sit on our front porches, knew our neighbors and knew the kids in the neighborhoods. Now we live in our backyards with 6' security fences. There is nowhere out there anymore providing the mentorship for the kids but the centers. There is concern about what will happen when we stop caring about our youth and seniors. Society is judged based on how they treat their seniors and their youth.
- MM. There appears to be five divisions within the Parks Dept and it seems the majority of the cuts are coming from only two of them, unfortunately the senior and youth centers are in that category. This does not seem appropriate when little cuts are being taken to Park Operation, Horticulture and Administration and they should share the pain.
- NN. The breadth, scope and complexity of the Parks budget are mind boggling.
- OO. Project Joy celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. They have 231 members all over the age of 55, have performed for 2,200,000 people, have 27 different performing groups, and they receive a minor amount of money from Parks and Recreation.
- PP. Collaboration and synergy is important to making this city the best that it can be. Some of the center's collaborations were outlined. Partnerships fit with the Roadmap to the Future.
- QQ. The SSSAC will not have to make any cutbacks at 20% this year. They will figure out a way to keep it the same and as they look to the future lets work together without thinking cut but looking at revenue generation very carefully.
- RR. (Board Member) Reminded the audience that several Board members are seniors as well.
- SS. Spokane is the second largest city in Washington and the largest city between Seattle and Minneapolis. The CVB states "As business, medical, education, entertainment hub of the Inland Northwest, Spokane is home to a myriad of culture and recreation opportunities." Parks and Recreation provides recreational services as a matter of civic pride and according to Roadmap to the Future Spokane needs to adequately fund youth and senior programs.
- TT. Recreation can be referred to as an "invisible division" as if you are not present at the time of the activities you cannot see the nature of these activities and the impact on each individual. Activities have been added over the years. This history has changed the mission of Parks and Recreation.
- UU. To cut Recreation 20% without cutting Park Operations is not acceptable.
- VV. The City has 4 Golf Courses. The Golf Fund is an enterprise fund, is self sufficient, and paid for by golfers.
- WW. The WCCC is a valuable asset to the community as a whole.
- XX. The WCNC support the current funding and program levels at the West Central Community Center and the Sinto Senior Center and hope you will identify other areas to cut.
- YY. Parks is underwater on the YMCA demolition and does not know where the budget stands on the restoration.
- ZZ. Riverfront Park IMAX stands to lose 30% this year. Parks needs to look at what is done

in the park and how it might be done better.

- AAA. The Urban Forestry Fund will be increased by 413%, take \$275 from that fund and give it to seniors.
- BBB. Spokane has a 1 in 3 dropout rate. Cutting recreation programs to youth will cause that to increase.
- CCC. WCCC has been cut at the Federal, State and Local level.
- DDD. Mentoring received by the children at the NEYC is priceless.

4. **Optional Further Discussion:** *Park Board Members*

- A. Some members are in favor of the idea of fully funding the senior centers but do not want to see that done with a band aid of one time money. We need to be looking for a budget that is sustainable next year and into the future. One member indicated they would be interested in seeing a budget with no cuts or very little cuts, like 5% across the board. Another indicate he would like to look at Administration and Ops, coming back with some tough reductions in staff. The Board asked how a reduction in funding at the SSSAC would cause the center to close if all funds were being used for recreational purposes and inquired if the funds were going to mortgages or to recreational programs. Ray Tomlinson indicated that the center would close long term. They cannot say that the dollars they get from Parks, from other agencies, or memberships, go to any one particular place, all funds received go into one pot. The center has been depleting its reserves. They can probably go for one year without the 20% but it would require bringing their reserves down close to zero. The Board expressed concern that recreation dollars may not be being used only for recreation if pulling our recreation funding would cause the centers to close down. The transitional year and the process was discussed. Concerns regarding if Project Joy provides recreational opportunities to more than the actual participants.
- B. Urban Forestry was discussed. The proposed revised budget for the centers is about 5% of the total expenditures proposed by staff. Urban Forestry is 2.8% of the proposed budget. Urban Forestry is not the villain in the budget. It is a smaller part of the budget than what is proposed for centers. While there may be some legitimate criticisms to the level of funding for centers it isn't appropriate to direct it at Urban Forestry. The City approved \$250K over a 5 year period for a tree inventory. Urban Forestry had budgeted \$50K for the tree inventory next year. The best case scenario is to subtract out the \$50K already in the UF budget. The City's \$50K cannot be used for anything except the tree inventory.
- C. The Board is very concerned about the current state of Riverfront Park and interested in rejuvenating the park. We are currently working on a master plan. We will be coming to the citizens with a proposal by 2013 or 2014. The Board has been concerned about the losses at the IMAX.
- D. Capital outlay was discussed. Money is put in capital outlay as a reserve in one pot in the budget and then it will go to the different various areas based on the capital plan. One of the goals of the budget is to get caught up on deferred maintenance.
- E. The impact on Recreation on restoring all funding to the centers then the Board needs to look at the areas were we have an opportunity for cost recover where large cuts were made, Recreation Programs and Riverfront Park.
- F. The Board asked staff to bring forward two proposals. One that fully restores funding to the centers and another that contains a 5% cut.

5. **Adjournment:** 8:46 p.m.

Next Park Board Study Session ~ Joint with City Council: October 13, 2011, 3:30 p.m. City Council Briefing Center.