

VASHON PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MEETING MINUTES

Ober Park, Performance Room, 7:00 pm

DATE: Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Commissioners attending: Bob McMahon, Doug Ostrom, Hans Van Dusen, Karen Gardner, Abby Antonelis.

Staff attending: Elaine

ISSUE	DISCUSSION AND OUTCOME	FOLLOW UP
Call To Order & Agenda Review	The meeting was called to order and the agenda was reviewed at 7:00 PM by Bob McMahon	
Public Comment	<p>CJ: We had a great Kite Day on Saturday. We lost the wind at about 1:00. People were parked all the way up the hill. I like to see a lot of kids get outside and get dirty! It was the kind of thing we want for that park.</p> <p>Ruth Anderson: I was involved on the Board early on for about the first 12 years. I thank you for your service. I planned words for how to deal with the failed levy, and that is to keep accentuating the positive. Which is what you are doing! The activity guide coming out right before the election was great, because it shows the benefits of the park district. I think April can be a cruel month between getting property taxes done and income taxes. I hope got feedback from the Op-ed. I hope your gracious partners were the basis for your support. I would suggest going to speak to each group. As far as negative comments, you were so close getting over 50% - I think emphasizing the positive will pull it over the top. There was irony in the opposition, because it was based on fiscal beliefs – now you have to pay for more election costs. I recall when we wanted to buy Lisabeula, and one Board member was opposed to paying \$200,000 for 5-1/2 acres on the waterfront.</p> <p>CJ: It should be noted that this young lady is one of the reasons we have a park district.</p> <p>Hans: Thank you so much for all you have done!</p> <p>Bob: I hope you are pleased with what we are doing.</p> <p>Ruth: I feel very good about what you are doing. I was worried for awhile. What are other comments people have?</p> <p>Elaine: A concern about increased property taxes, no matter how miniscule. People felt there was a lot of confusing misinformation. The opposition came with some credibility having been a former commissioner. One said there is nothing in it for her – she doesn't use the parks.</p> <p>Doug: I know her – it's not true. She is part of Drama Dock, which rehearses at our facilities.</p> <p>Karen: Talk of the Hospital District was confusing.</p> <p>Ruth: Well, carry on!</p>	
4.23.19, 4.30.19 Minutes; 4.19.19 – 5.9.19 Preliminary Vouchers	<p>Abby: I move to accept.</p> <p>Doug: Second</p> <p>Pass 5-0</p>	Motion to approve 4.23.19, 4.30.19 Minutes; 4.19.19 – 5.9.19 Preliminary Vouchers Pass 5-0

<p>BARC Lease Amendment</p>	<p>Elaine: You may recall at the last meeting I announced that RJ’s Kids met their match requirement of \$75,000 for the RCO grant of \$75,000. The grant award has been certified, so we will be moving forward with the Cement Pump Track project. You also may recall that last Fall, I came to you with an amendment to the BARC Lease with VISD to extend the term of the lease 21 years due to the requirement that the project have a life of 20 years. The project completion date has been extended to February, 2020, so we are short one year. To be safe, RCO is suggesting through 2041. Need a motion to approve the amendment and new signatures and to suspend the rules, because this needs to go to VISD and is due to RCO by 6/27.</p> <p>Bob: There is currently a lease in effect, and we are just amending the lease?</p> <p>Elaine: Correct</p> <p>Hans: I move to support the amendment to the BARC lease.</p> <p>Doug: Second</p> <p>Abby: Motion to suspend the rules.</p> <p>Karen: Second.</p> <p>Pass 5-0</p> <p>BARC motion: pass 5-0</p>	<p>Motion to support the amendment to the BARC lease to December, 2041.</p> <p>Pass 5-0</p> <p>Motion to suspend the rules.</p> <p>Pass 5-0</p>
<p>Levy – Next Steps</p>	<p><u>Letter From Scott Harvey</u></p> <p>Elaine: Scott asked me to read this publicly:</p> <p>Dear Commissioners, It is time for a reasonable Park District levy (If cost controls are maintained, \$0.45 should fund all the projects in Prop. 1 over the next 7-8 years, with no borrowing and no TAN). Of course, the Strategic Plan will need to be amended. It only should include the high priority items from the community survey (no Capra or staff wages). Don’t get me wrong, the Park District should honor its commitment to its employees. However, after June 2020, staff wages are a business decision that should be based solely on available resources and prevailing wages on Vashon, and nowhere else. I wish you well and look forward to supporting your amended request in November. Best regards, Scott Harvey</p> <p>Hans: .45 is encouraging. Funding all the projects in Prop 1 is a manner of speaking, I guess. I get the 7 – 8 years thing suggests delaying and stretching over 8 years. Amending the Strategic Plan conflicts with funding the projects, because that is what the Plan was all about. I appreciate him reaching out, but I’m trying to understand what he is saying. I don’t fully know the wage thing and what he is suggesting.</p> <p>Elaine: To Scott’s credit, I take it to mean for you to not go back on your word and honor all three buckets. Unfortunately, at .45, we can’t do it.</p> <p>Hans: You and staff have agreed to make that sacrifice.</p> <p>Elaine: I appreciate that he is saying you should honor your commitment to staff.</p> <p>Hans: What does the stuff in parentheses mean?</p> <p>Elaine: I think he is saying no additional staff wage increases after that 3rd bucket in June, 2020. The Capra statement is interesting, as it is a time commitment, and not a financial commitment. Well, to be fully transparent, it would cost us @ \$10k when we actually apply. There is a fee, and we have to house the committee.</p> <p>Hans: So this is a parenthetical suggestion about priorities.</p> <p>Doug: My take on this is that the Community Survey did not address Capra or staff wages.</p>	

Bob: There is nothing that keeps us from going as far as we can with Capra, whether or not we get certified.
Elaine: That is true. I have said before that actual certification is a huge undertaking. It is a worthwhile goal, but if we don't get there, it is a great model to frame plans and policies.
CJ: What Scott is telling you here is that each one of these elements need to be complied with, or he will not support your next levy. People I have talked to say that Scott's commentaries did not figure in to voting no. It is a given that Scott made an enormous contribution to our financial health. I would not worry about his lack of support going forward.
Doug: In a way, we are victims of our own virtue. As opposed to how things were in 2015, we are going into 2020 with some money! That may have fed the opposition in that this time, we can afford for them to send a message to the Park District. In 2015, they couldn't – it would have shut us down.
Karen: A number of people were swayed by Scott's statement about taxes increasing 38%. With that, Scott lost all credibility with me. If he had not made that statement, I might consider his thoughts here.
Abby: I feel the same way. It is important for us to draw the line with him.

Review of Potential November Levy Strategies

Elaine: Review of options we discussed at the last meeting and email from Hans:

2019 Budget Revision

Cut Recreation Programming from \$100,000 to \$50,000 (savings: \$50,000)

Eliminate purchase of 2 trucks and 1 trailer (savings: \$84,000)

Eliminate second top-dressing at VES Fields (savings: \$15,000)

No temporary summer maintenance help (savings: \$20,000)

Increase Admin \$10k for 2nd levy run (cost: \$10,000)

The changes lead to an increase in the reserve from \$265k to \$425k. That would keep the lights on in 2020 if need be. We can't assume we are going to pass in November. If you agree, I need a motion to amend the 2019 budget as presented.

Abby: If we fail in November, who decides how we budget the \$425k?

Elaine: In my opinion, you might keep 2 people, insurance, utilities for Ober Admin being functional.

Remember, this must carry us all the way through 2020 and potentially pay for 2 elections in the process.

Doug: Actually, it would have to be into 2021, since the first bulk of the funding hits in April.

Abby: And all else would be shut down? Even keeping gates locked?

Elaine: We can decide the variables, but it effectively means we close for a year and start over in 2021. It will be brutal. A horrible thing to have happen.

Doug: Not to mention, no maintenance would hasten asset deterioration.

Abby: What does the staff prefer about the levy level to run?

Elaine: I haven't had a full-on staff meeting to get their opinion, but the general chatter seems to support 41, because it's the safest for operations.

Bob: I understand the psychology behind 41, but from the comments we're getting, I don't know if it makes much difference how much we ask for. People are saying no to property taxes, period.

Karen: What we have going for us at 41 is it's not raising taxes particularly. We would publicize it as the same levy you have been paying for 4 years.

Bob: Remember, if it fails, it reduces property taxes.

Elaine:

Presented Options:

- 1) Stay at current levy of \$0.40891 (41)
 - a. Levy = \$1,455,907
 - b. Minimal capital projects (\$250,000) – highest priority and emergencies only. Wait for the next levy to address more.
 - c. \$50,000 Recreation Programming
 - d. No 3rd wage increase bucket
- 2) Stay at current levy of \$0.40891 (41)
 - a. Levy = \$1,455,907
 - b. Minimal capital projects (\$250,000) – highest priority and emergencies only
 - c. Float a bond for capital projects in 2021
 - d. \$50,000 Recreation Programming
 - e. No 3rd wage increase bucket
- 3) \$0.45
 - a. Levy = \$1,597,947
 - b. Capital Projects = \$870,000
 - c. \$50,000 Recreation Programming
 - d. No 3rd wage increase bucket
- 4) \$.048
 - a. Levy = \$1,704,477
 - b. Capital Projects = \$1.3 million
 - c. \$50,000 Recreation Programming
 - d. No 3rd wage increase bucket

Karen: I think there is an advantage to waiting on the bond until after we gauge what happens with the hospital district.

Hans: Can we look at the capital projects sheet?

Capital Improvement Plan Revision

Elaine: Karen, Bob, and I met and discussed high priority items. I met afterward with Jason and Eric. The high priority column amounts to \$218k so is doable in the 41 rate.

Captain Joe: On the Pt Rob road, I think the patchwork Jason did to the asphalt is working fine. We may be able to hold off on the repaving. I'll monitor it this summer.

Elaine: Well, then, maybe we'll have another \$30k. Most of the grant column is getting done or applications are in that we are optimistic about. The potential bond column is \$1.3 million of projects that need to be done. We have tabled \$2 million in restrooms and the Tramp Harbor dock.

Hans: So the bond column is priority projects. And in that, the pool is \$900k. A key thing in looking at our revenue stream for the next 4 years is the pool. What flexibility do we have for the pool?

Elaine: I keep my ear to the ground on grants for pools. A state grant has a 50% match, and a new KC grant is coming around, but I don't know the conditions. With a match, you have to have it in place, so that could be problematic. With a pool grant, the bond need may be \$800k, not \$1.3 mil.

Bob: It depends, too, on what the final plan is for the pool.

Hans: The bond ask may be more like \$1.5 mil when we add the high priority column to it. \$1 – 1.5 mil. I have to say I am wary of #2. As a Commissioner, I feel I need to make a choice about putting a bond out there in 2 years and whether or not I think it would pass. I think it is dishonest to not address it. I don't want to do it. I don't think the landscape will change that much. And I'm not so comfortable with how #1 sells the projects down the road. I totally think .45 would pass. I realize we are playing with house money here, but even our biggest critic says he would support it.

Karen: I am inclined toward #1. We need this to pass. I don't want to fool around with the property tax concern. I don't know about #2. I think it depends upon the hospital district passing or not as a gauge of public sentiment.

Doug: I'm not sure I follow your argument about making a commitment or not to a bond at this time. Would people be terribly surprised if 2 years from now we raise the bond issue?

Hans: I am not willing to say maybe or maybe not there will be a bond. I am not willing to throw away the Strategic Plan. I feel if a bond failed, then I am throwing out the Strategic Plan. I respect your conservative evaluation.

Bob: 41 cents has troubled me for the same reasons you state. I feel right now that we don't know enough about why our levy failed. I think we need to know more before we decide.

Hans: 41 is way below inflation!

Elaine: I have looked at that. We are at \$1.3 million in 2010, and we are still there now. The cumulative Seattle CPI over the past 10 years has been 21%. We should be at \$1.6 mil based on inflation.

Hans: So just inflation suggests we be at .45. We are locked at 1%. We don't get inflation.

Karen: I still think we play it safe and stay at 41. Then we strategically prepare the community for a bond by showing value through focus groups, actively engaging with the community.

Hans: The bond would have to be a pool bond. Will that pass?

Bob: And the number the Hospital District is talking about isn't going to hurt us.

Elaine: If they stick with 40, Library takes 16.5, and we are at 41, we would be fine. If we are at 45, and they take 40, we will be knocked back to 41. We are stuck at 41 no matter how you slice it. We would have 1 year of enjoining extra, because they aren't funded until 2021.

Bob: Well, to be knocked back is an argument for a bond right there.

Doug: To be clear, if we go for 41, and the Hospital District takes more, are we better protected if we're at 41 rather than being knocked back from 45? We would be helping to solve the problem if we are 41?

Elaine: If they stick with 40 and all others what they say, and we're at 41, there is zero wiggle room. All they can take is 40 and not harm us.

Doug: Arguably, we are in better shape if we just plan at 41 rather than plan at 45 and get knocked back.

CJ: Bond issues are a tough sell on the island. There are 5 organizations vying for the available pool of money this year. The pressure will come down hard. The Hospital District will also form a Foundation; the taxes won't fund what the island wants. VCC – \$3 million for capital. VCA - \$1.2 mil for operations. School Foundation.

And the Heritage Museum.

Abby: I don't see any scenario where the Hospital District stays at 40 cents. They seem to need more money if they are looking for donations through a Foundation. Certainly, they want to do what is best for their District.

Elaine: With Library pulling out this year, that leaves 16.5 available.

Hans: We need to be clear in November that the VPD levy does not impinge the Hospital District if the voter so chooses both no matter what we decide about 41 or 45. The message is that we are not limiting the taxpayer's ability to choose. Abby, Doug, and Elaine, where are you on this?

Abby: I support 41 and have a long term view. VES is still in people's brains. We need to pull back and rebuild the levy amount over time. I think a higher rate is a futile effort in the face of the Hospital District. I feel we have a responsibility to the taxpayers to provide a fully functioning District, and that starts and stops with our responsibility to maintain staff. I'm not comfortable gambling that.

Doug: I'm for 41. We need to be really clear that we are not asking for an increase. 41 is the only way to get through to the people who voted against it.

Elaine: I'm for 41. I think the message for the sale is clean and easy. And it salvages operations. If we don't have operations, we don't have a park district.

Hans: I just think it's too bad we are giving the community a park district that only a minority wants. The majority wants the Strategic Plan.

Revise 2019 Budget – Motion to Approve

Karen: I move that we revise the 2019 budget as presented.

Abby: Second

Communication Plan 2019

Elaine: Speaking of gathering information and deciding our talking points, Abby, Hans, and I met last night to discuss communication strategies both for the next levy campaign in addition to ongoing information to the community. Starts with identifying our objectives:

- Regularly and factually inform the voting community about VPD's strategic plan, levy, and budget objectives
- Increase awareness of VPD's facilities and services
- Increase use of facilities and services and increase attendance to events
- Generate interest and positive dispositions
- Correct perceptions that have been formed on misinformation

This is what we need to hit over the course of the next 5 months. Bob started with the op-ed. The paid advertising options should stay with the campaign committee. Direct marketing will be on-going. We need to focus on the PR pieces:

- Op-eds: Over 5 months, 4 commissioners + me take a month and write an op-ed.
- Social media – be reactive and proactive. Needs to be guided by the attached policy.
- Strawberry Festival booth
- I like the idea Ruth suggested that we go to user group meetings

**Motion to
approve the 2019
budget as
presented.**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletter to all emails in RecPro <p>Add a regular agenda item to Board meetings to decide on our talking points.</p> <p>Doug: One point needs to be that you are going to pay less money, but you are also going to get less stuff.</p> <p>Elaine: There is your op-ed Doug!</p> <p>Doug: Also, trying to identify how people are benefitting from the Park District when they don't realize.</p> <p>Karen: That would be my op-ed – values. The value VPD brings to the community.</p> <p>Elaine: I included these things in the Get the Facts sheet. I would like you to review and approve at next meeting, so I can put it on our website.</p> <p>Karen: I don't know that people use our website. We need other means of putting it out.</p> <p>Elaine: This can be my op-ed when we get closer to our levy.</p> <p>Abby: I think one thing to address is people saying the users need to pay for what they want. That begs the question of whether or not you really want a park district.</p> <p>Hans: Rewrite it as a Q&A in the context of the new levy.</p> <p><u>Social Media Policy</u> – reviewed.</p> <p>Elaine: Is it good form for it to be a public forum? I do think we need to be reactive. The misinformation needs to be addressed.</p> <p>Abby: Often, people just want to be heard. It's not that hard to sway them with facts.</p> <p>Hans: I would just delete that clause.</p> <p>Elaine: Designees are Eric and Marshall. Commissioner is Abby.</p> <p>Abby: Or you could say the Secretary.</p> <p>Hans: I don't think the policy needs to say that. It's whoever you designate.</p> <p>Elaine: The piece about the Open Public Meetings Act is awkward, because we do want one Commissioner.</p> <p>Hans: You could say "with the exception of a single designated Commissioner."</p> <p>Hans: I move to approve as amended.</p> <p>Abby: Second.</p> <p><u>Letter to User Groups</u></p> <p>Elaine: I wrote a letter as instructed. Review?</p> <p>Hans: Third paragraph says what we are considering – take that out. I'm not keen on that whole narrative. Are you feeling this is productive?</p> <p>Elaine: I have mixed feelings about it.</p> <p>Hans: I don't feel strongly that you need to do it. Let's wait until we get further down the road.</p> <p>Bob: Yeah, because we haven't decided on what we're cutting.</p>	<p>On-going agenda item: communication talking points and assignments</p> <p>Motion to approve the Social Media Policy as amended.</p>
<p>Adjourn 8:40 pm</p>	<p>Abby: Move to adjourn. Hans: Second Pass 5-0</p>	

Minutes by: Elaine Ott-Rocheford