



Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District Minutes of a Retreat of the Board of Directors

A Retreat of the Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District Board of Directors was held electronically at 6 pm on Wednesday, October 26, 2022.

Present:

Felicita Monteblanco	President/Director
Barbie Minor	Secretary/Director
Alfredo Moreno	Secretary Pro-Tempore/Director
Heidi Edwards	Director
Tya Ping	Director
Doug Menke	General Manager

Agenda Item #1 – Board Retreat

A Retreat of the Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District Board of Directors was called to order by President Felicita Monteblanco on Wednesday, October 26, 2022 at 6 pm.

General Manager Doug Menke introduced facilitator Thomas Bruner with Bruner Strategies and the district staff in attendance. Thomas provided a brief overview of this evening's retreat agenda.

Agenda Item #2 – District Updates

Aisha Panas, Park Services director, and Holly Thompson, Communications director, provided a detailed overview of the current state of the district via a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was entered into the record, and which included the following topic areas:

- Fall Registration Update
 - 43% increase in registrations over last fall
 - 18% below 2019 fall registration numbers
- DEIA Update
 - Welcoming Week took place in September
 - THPRD map in Spanish
 - Welcome packet in English and Spanish
- Fall 2022 Events & Activities Overview
- Staffing Report
 - 25% of full-time positions have turned over since the pandemic
 - Classification and compensation structure update underway
 - Part-time wages increase
- Facility Updates
 - Harman Swim Center has reopened
 - Aloha Swim Center will reopen November 14
 - Garden Home Recreation Center roof and ceiling repairs
- Maintenance Operations Updates
 - Fanno Creek Service Center roof repairs
 - Heating, HVAC and plumbing preparations for winter
 - Edging fields and replenishing playground surfaces
 - Chipping woody debris and spreading onsite
- Nature & Trails Updates
 - Fall native plantings
 - Addressing beaver activity as necessary
 - Cleanup of trails and downed trees

- Planning, Design & Development Updates
 - Parivar Park opening
 - Abbey Creek concept planning
 - Downtown Parks & Open Space Framework Plan
 - Comprehensive and Strategic Plan Updates
 - \$1.9 million grant awarded from Metro for Westside Trail crossing of Highway 26
 - \$2.05 million grant awarded from Metro for Beaverton Creek Trail
- Finance Updates
 - Revised Operating Plan update will be presented at the November board meeting
 - Annual district audit currently in process
 - Tyler Munis conversion will relaunch in January

Aisha and Holly offered to answer any questions the board may have.

Tya Ping inquired about the reasons for registration being down 18% from 2019.

- ✓ Aisha replied that while staffing availability is a concern, the comfort level of the public hasn't necessarily returned to pre-pandemic levels, either.

Heidi Edwards asked whether any of the planned facility maintenance projects will impact users.

- ✓ Aisha replied that some difficult calls have been made in order to retain patron comfort, such as delaying the reopening of Harman Swim Center due to the paving project being behind schedule, as well as closing affected areas of Garden Home Recreation Center.

Agenda Item #3 – Board Priorities Discussion

Reconfirming Our Values

Thomas referenced the three core values and value statements confirmed by the board last year:

- Leading with Equity with special attention to Racial Equity
 - THPRD values all dimensions of equity including ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, sexual orientation, and other identities. We see it as an essential core value that we prioritize all aspects of equity. A commitment to equity means looking at individuals' needs and understanding that people need different things to achieve equitable outcomes. THPRD recognizes that to achieve meaningful equity we must prioritize investments in activities to reach those most marginalized therefore we support a comprehensive investment in equitable outcomes for the most impacted people and at this time, due to disparate impacts, a special focus on activities to advance racial equity is an important component of our overall equity strategies.
- Environmental Stewardship
 - We value our natural environment and demonstrate this value through how we acquire, plan for, and maintain these areas. Environmental stewardship extends to the way we build and maintain our facilities, and the practices we use to procure goods and services.
- Commitment to Community Vision
 - We are committed to honoring and realizing the community feedback captured through the district's visioning process. We will integrate the public's feedback into our planning and operational efforts to honor the four visioning goals to be Welcoming and Inclusive, provide Play for Everyone, to be Accessible and Safe, and to Preserve Natural Spaces.
 - As per the document included within the board of directors' information packet, district staff is proposing an update to this explanatory statement as follows: change "and to Preserve Natural Spaces" to "and to practice Environmental Stewardship" in order to broaden this focus area.

Thomas opened the discussion for the board's consideration of reaffirming these values and referenced the value of Leading with Equity with special attention to Racial Equity, inquiring whether the board wishes to reaffirm this value. The board members agreed to retain the value and value statement as-is. Heidi Edwards referenced her comments during the board's discussion of this value last year, noting that she would like to see the board move beyond only racial equity, but agrees that the first portion of the value statement addresses that concern.

Thomas referenced the value of Environmental Stewardship and inquired whether the board wishes to reaffirm this value. Discussion followed:

- Tya Ping supports the value of Environmental Stewardship but would like to see a more robust value statement incorporating areas such as climate change, climate resiliency, and climate action. She referred to the portion of the value statement to "acquire, plan for, and maintain" natural areas, and would like to see a reference to protecting and improving, too.
- Heidi expressed agreement with Tya's comments, noting that community education is another component that's missing from the value statement.
- Barbie Minor expressed agreement as well and suggested that the district's responsibility as stewards of the natural environment should also be included.
- Alfredo Moreno added that it would be helpful to rephrase the value statement in a more proactive voice.
- President Monteblanco expressed support for the previous suggestions.

Thomas referenced the value of Commitment to Community Vision and inquired whether the board wishes to reaffirm this value. Discussion followed:

- Holly Thompson, Communications director, provided additional information regarding the proposed value statement edit, noting that it is being proposed in the interest of being in alignment with what will be coming forward for the board's review via the Comprehensive Plan Update. As the public feedback contained within the Vision Action Plan (VAP) is actualized, some areas will morph slightly as they are contextualized.
- Alfredo explained that the value statement seems to focus on community feedback that has already been sought. He wonders if a reference could be added to an ongoing dialogue with the community, as well.
- Barbie expressed support for Alfredo's suggestion, especially in consideration of the intentionality the district has shown in continuing to broaden its community outreach practices.
- Heidi noted that the VAP was a huge undertaking and wonders how to incorporate language recognizing that while there will continue to be community outreach, it likely will not be to the depth and extent that occurred with the VAP. She would like to see the value statement have a more active voice in terms of putting the community vision to work.
- President Monteblanco commented that she is open to the previous suggestions of recognizing a continual commitment to public outreach while highlighting the VAP, noting that the amount of information collected in that effort was truly profound.
- Alfredo noted that the value itself is high-level enough that it can speak to a robust process that happened, as well as speak to an ongoing effort to listening to and understanding what the community wants. Perhaps it is as simple as adding a sentence regarding continuing community outreach.
- Holly expressed appreciation for the board's discussion and their absolute commitment to community involvement. She described the difference between a commitment to the community vision versus a commitment to the community vision process. The VAP provides the foundation for an amazing amount of information and the district has a responsibility to be committed to that gift of information from the public and use it as the focus point from which to move forward, which is being done via the Comprehensive Plan

Update. She agrees that adding a sentence to contextualize this would be beneficial in following a robust and culturally respectful public engagement process as the district moves forward in implementing the ideas and feedback gained from the VAP.

- The board expressed agreement with the suggested addition as outlined by Holly.

Thomas congratulated the board on this evening's thoughtful discussion and reaffirmation of its values, noting that their discussion was a great display of continuity and fidelity to their core values, as well as how to strengthen and enhance the value statements.

- ✓ General Manager Doug Menke noted that the updated value statements will be brought to the board for consideration of approval at their November meeting.

Reconfirming Our Budget Priorities

Thomas referenced the three budget priorities for FY 2022/23 that the board identified last year:

- Investing in our Employees and Technology.
 - We are committed to attracting and retaining exceptional employees and prioritizing employee professional development, support, and well-being. We must also ensure we are investing in technology to operate more efficiently, stay current, provide staff the tools they need to be effective, and to provide improved customer service to THPRD patrons.
- Rebuilding Programming with an Emphasis on our Access for All Work.
 - This will continue to be a rebuilding year for the district, as we focus on trying to return programming to pre-pandemic participation levels and offerings. As we prioritize expanding program offerings, we will continue to leverage and integrate our Access for All work. We will continue to provide FREE community programming and expand our efforts through grant-supported partnerships, community events, and broaden our financial aid services to people from various racial and ethnic backgrounds and underrepresented groups.
- Planning for Future Natural Areas, Facility and Trail needs, and Funding Resources.
 - We are committed to planning for our future through investments that will expedite the development and financial sustainability of parks, trails, and other facilities, to create community spaces where we can all gather.
 - As per the document included within the board of directors' information packet, district staff is proposing an update to this priority as follows:
 - Developing Sustainable Operating and Financial Models for the Future.
 - We are committed to ensuring that we can continue to offer programs, facilities, parks, and trails that meet the needs of our community while ensuring that we can sustainably care for and maintain our offerings and spaces in the long term.

Thomas opened the discussion for the board's consideration of reaffirming these budget priorities and referenced the priority of Investing in our Employees and Technology, inquiring whether the board wishes to reaffirm this priority. The board members agreed to retain the budget priority as-is. Heidi noted for the record that it is important to acknowledge how critical of a budget priority this is to the board.

Thomas referenced the budget priority of Rebuilding Programming with an Emphasis on our Access for All Work and inquired whether the board wishes to reaffirm this priority. Discussion followed:

- Heidi offered that the first portion of the priority statement "This will continue to be a rebuilding year for the district" be replaced with "As we continue to rebuild and return programming to pre-pandemic participation levels...." in order to reflect the progress that has been made.

- President Montebianco commented that she does not like the word Access as it does not align with Equity, but that she currently does not have an alternate suggestion as the word Justice may be too strong. However, the intention behind this budget priority is 100% in alignment with the board's aspirations. Regarding Heidi's comments, perhaps the entire first sentence of the priority statement should be deleted.
- Barbie observed that if the entire first sentence is removed, the budget priority itself also includes reference to rebuilding.
- Alfredo noted that he, too, prefers moving away from the rebuilding verbiage and instead prefers expressing a commitment to providing robust and creative programming as much as is possible. He would like to see language reflecting that the district is moving on as best as possible from the impacts of the pandemic.
- Tya would like to see an expansion in terms of what Access for All means and tying in the board's value statement in serving all dimensions of equity including ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, sexual orientation, and other identities. In general, she does not like the term Access for All.
- General Manager Doug Menke noted that the district is working on different terminology for Access to All, such as Play for All.
- Holly noted that updating the budget priority to take into consideration the progress that has been made makes a lot of sense; however, district staff is still in the midst of a tremendous amount of transition. This priority has been helpful for staff and a rallying cry to prioritize the work to build back programming and expand access to the people who need it most. Updated language will be provided for the board's consideration at their November meeting.
- Tya added that perhaps Play for Everyone is better terminology than Play for All as it's more personable.

Thomas referenced the budget priority of Planning for Future Natural Areas, Facility and Trail needs, and Funding Resources and inquired whether the board wishes to reaffirm this priority.

Discussion followed:

- Aisha Panas, Park Services director, described the intent behind the staff-proposed update of this budget priority to Developing Sustainable Operating and Financial Models for the Future. She noted that as staff considered the big-picture perspective of the district in relation to its budget priorities, the financial impacts of remaining an employer of choice came into focus and with that, the need to develop a financial model that makes the most sense and is sustainable in the long term. This will involve many different areas, such as a robust grant strategy, evaluating the district's resource allocation model and how we charge for classes, and how those offerings fall within the cost pyramid. This is foundational work that needs to be taken on now in order to best prepare for the district's future. The work of Planning for Future Natural Areas, Facility and Trail needs, and Funding Resources would remain a divisional priority for the Park Services division, but does not necessarily need to remain as a districtwide priority at this point in time.
- The board members expressed support for the proposed updated budget priority as presented.

Thomas congratulated the board on their work in revisiting, reaffirming, clarifying, strengthening and updating their budget priorities for FY 2023/24.

Reconfirming the Parking Lot

Thomas opened the floor to discussion regarding the board's parking lot and decision-making tool intended to be used as a mechanism by which to thoughtfully evaluate ideas, suggestions, requests and opportunities identified by the board in an equitable and transparent manner.

General Manager Doug Menke provided an overview of the status of the board's parking lot, which currently contains one item: expansion of afterschool programming. He noted that with the district's investment in employees resulting in constrained resources, it will be important that new ideas have a cost neutral impact or are traded out with an existing expense or activity. Discussion followed:

- President Monteblanco commented that the goal of expanding afterschool programming requires a willing partner, which is currently not available. Once a partnership is available, it will require a difficult discussion regarding what can be given up in order to facilitate the expansion.
- Robust discussion occurred regarding whether the afterschool programming expansion item should be removed from the parking lot since it is not viable at this time without a willing partner. Some felt that this topic in particular warrants remaining on the parking lot due to the amount of work that has been done and as a vehicle to show other elected officials its importance; others felt that it should be removed for now and brought back to the parking lot once a willing partner is available. Additional concerns about removing it from the parking lot included the potential for it being forgotten, and changes in board leadership. Interest was also expressed in revisiting the parking lot on a more regular basis and clarifying the parking lot process.
- Thomas inquired whether there is a place where ideas that are in a holding pattern can exist other than the parking lot. General Manager Doug Menke described the value in having a document such as the parking lot available to reference in discussions with partner agency leads. There are not any similar processes currently available where such ideas would be documented, besides perhaps the board's budget priorities. He proposed that the parking lot be expanded with a new category for topics that, while of interest by a majority of the board, can't move forward immediately.
- President Monteblanco requested that the parking lot be revisited at the board's January meeting and encouraged the board members to submit their ideas for consideration.
- Heidi requested that a synopsis of where the district stands in its conversations with the Beaverton School District on this topic be put together as a recap. She noted that it might be time for another joint meeting with the Beaverton School District board, as well. Tya referenced the staff time that would be required to create a recap document but supports the idea of a joint meeting. General Manager Doug Menke suggested recapping the status of the afterschool programming expansion concept in December and from there determining whether to move forward with a joint meeting. Thomas recognized the additional work this would create for staff and encouraged staff to return to the board with a realistic timeframe and possible tradeoffs or what may be delayed as a result. Felicita, Barbie and Alfredo expressed agreement with this approach, as well.

Conclusion

In conclusion of this evening's retreat, Thomas invited each board member to share two things: something they are particularly enthusiastic about in terms of the district over the past year, and something they feel good about regarding themselves as THPRD board members.

- Alfredo is proud of the work the district has done to connect with the Spanish-speaking communities who were not previously engaged in the district's registration process. As for himself, he is proud that he has brought his most authentic, imperfect self to everything he has done as a THPRD board member.
- Tya is proud of the resiliency, hard work, and creativity of THPRD staff, noting that their efforts are the reason that THPRD exists for the community. As for herself, she is proud of doing a good job in developing relationships with both staff and board members in order to create a welcoming environment for good work to be done.
- Heidi recognized the staff changes and transitions that have taken place, noting that it has appeared seamless to the public even though challenges have surely been experienced.

As for herself, she is proud of being resilient through such difficult times over the past few years and coming through to the other side to a place where we can all be proud.

- Felicita is proud of the intentionality behind so much of what the district does, such as the new THPRD map in Spanish, which wasn't just a translation but a reinterpretation of what the district's Spanish-speakers might need in a map. As for herself, she is proud of being a connector of others to the benefit of THPRD and her peers.
- Barbie is proud of THPRD staff and how they have handled the past few challenging years with positivity and empathy despite the hard conversations and choices that have had to be made. As for herself, she is proud of her service on the board as her first foray into public service, showing up with intentionality even when scared, and living her values.
- General Manager Doug Menke is most proud of THPRD staff and their remarkable ability to move forward regardless of the weight pressing upon them, as well as our patient and resilient community. As for himself, he takes great pride in playing a leadership role for the district but wouldn't be able to do it without the amazing support received from the board.

Thomas thanked the district staff in attendance this evening for helping make the retreat happen, and everyone in attendance for the amazing work they continue to do collectively as a district and also individually as leaders.

Agenda Item #4 – Adjourn

There being no further business, the retreat was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Felicita Monteblanco, President

Barbie Minor, Secretary

Recording Secretary,
Jessica Collins