

Council Study Session

January 31, 2022

Agenda Item	City Council Election for Parks Commission Vacancy	
From	Joseph Lessard	City Manager
Contact	Joe.lessard@ashland.or.us ; 541-552-2103	
Item Type	Requested by Council <input type="checkbox"/> Update <input type="checkbox"/> Request for Direction <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input type="checkbox"/>	

SUMMARY

This item is to seek City Council direction on the process it wishes to follow to solicit candidates and select a final appointed individual to fill a Parks Commission vacancy.

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Michael A. Gardiner has submitted his resignation from the Parks Commissioner to its Chair, Rick Landt, and to APRC Director Michael Black effective January 31, 2022 (see attached letter). Staff is seeking direction from the City Council on the process it wishes to use to fill Mr. Gardiner's vacancy on the Parks Commission. The following is provided as back-up for the discussion on this topic.

Article III of the City Charter addresses elected official vacancies and states the following:

“A vacant elective office in the City shall be filled within sixty (60) days by the Council electing some qualified person to fill such vacancy. The appointee's term of office shall begin immediately upon appointment and shall continue until a successor, elected at the next biennial election, takes office for the unexpired term.” (Biennial elections take place every two years; the next biennial election will be November __, 2022)

The City Council has discretion on how it solicits candidates and selects an individual to fill such Parks Commission vacancies. I understand that in the past it has directed the Parks Commission to conduct an advertising and interview process and submit a recommended candidate or list of candidates to the City Council for consideration and final election to the vacant position. Alternatively, the City Council may wish to conduct its own process to find and select a candidate to fill a vacancy. Please note that under the City Charter, election to the Parks Commission automatically appoints an elected individual to the Recreation Commission.

In the past, questions like the following have been used by the Parks Commission in the application process for its vacancies:

1. What do you think are the biggest issues facing the Parks Commission and Recreation Commission currently?

2. Do you have experience working with local governments, paid or volunteer?
 - a.If yes, please describe.

3. Do you have past non-government volunteer experience?
 - a.If yes, please describe.

4. Why are you interested in the joint positions of Parks Commissioner and Recreation Commissioner?

The City Council may wish other questions to be included in the current application process such as for work history or educational background.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Does the City Council wish to follow the historic Parks Commission advertising and recommendation process?
2. Alternatively, does the City Council wish to develop a direct application/nomination and selection process?

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

Attached: Parks Commission resignation letter from Mr. Michael A. Gardiner

To: Ashland Parks & Recreation Chair Rick Landt and APRC Director Michael Black

(cc: City Manager Joe Lessard, City Recorder Melissa Huhtala)

From: Mike Gardiner - APRC Commissioner

Re: Resignation

Dear Rick and Michael:

It is with regret that I tender my resignation from the APRC Board of Commissioners, Position #3, effective January 31, 2022. I have truly valued my time spent on the Parks Commission and apologize to both the APRC staff and my fellow commissioners for any inconvenience that this change bears on the organization.

For the record I was first elected to APRC Position #5 in 2002. I was re-elected in 2006 and lost an election in 2010. I was appointed to the vacant Position #3 in 2012 and was re-elected to this position in 2014 and again in 2018. In all, eighteen years of service as an elected public servant. I am proud of the many projects that APRC has completed in the past two decades. This list includes coming close to reaching our city's comprehensive plan goal for neighborhood parks and open space with the addition of Scenic Park, Ashland Creek Park, Briscoe Park, East Main Park and hopefully Lincoln School Park sometime in the future. We also made a home within APRC for our city's senior services when the city was about to shutter the program in 2007. APRC's contributions to the citizens of Ashland are represented by projects both small and large . . . such as the Nature Play area at North Mountain Park, riparian restorations projects along both Ashland and Bear Creeks and larger projects like the extensive remodeling of the Japanese Garden in Lithia Park and the rebuild of the splash pad and other facilities at Garfield Park. This list could go on and on.

I look forward to working with you on current and future projects as our paths cross in the promotion of parks, outdoor recreation and open spaces.

Sincerely,


Michael A. Gardiner