

City of Ashland  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
2019 Goal Setting -Special Meeting

**MINUTES**

February 22.2019

**ATTENDANCE**

Present: Commissioners Bell, Gardiner, Heller, Landt, Lewis; Director Black; Recreation Superintendent Dials; Parks Superintendent Oxendine; Analyst Cottle; Senior Services Superintendent Glatt; Analyst Kiewel; Assistant Manuel

Also present: Managers Oropallo, Flora, VanWhye, Minica, Miller

Absent: City Council Liaison Mayor Stromberg

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Gardiner called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. at the Ashland Community Center 59 Winburn Way

**PUBLIC INPUT**

Larry Cooper of 259 B. St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Cooper talked about the challenges of good communications with the public – particularly in the area of policy setting. He suggested consideration of the issues from the viewpoint of the complainant. Proactively reflecting on potential concerns would assist APRC when communicating hot button issues. He stated that complainants should thereafter be kept informed about their particular area of interest, including meeting dates and times.

**INTRODUCTION**

Black noted that Cottle, Kiewel, and Minica were present representing specific areas of expertise. He proposed that the meeting be conducted as if it were a work session – working together to craft goals that would become part of the strategic planning for the next biennium. The biennium budget would then reflect the goals as prioritized.

Black explained that twenty goals had been set for the previous two years. Of those, six were fully completed and eight had been partially completed. He reported results as follows:

- ***Trails Master Plan Update***

The Trails Master Plan was updated via a two-year process that was accomplished by volunteers. It is currently under planning review and once approved by the Planning Department, the Master Plan would go before the Ashland City Council for adoption into Ashland's Comprehensive Plan.

- ***Open Space Master Plan***

Black highlighted three property acquisitions that were purchased with guidance from the Open Space Master Plan. The properties included the Mace property, East Main property, and the Brisco property.

- **Senior Program Reorganization**

Black stated that the Senior Program had been reorganized and new Superintendent Isleen Glatt was currently working on expanding senior programs and services.

- **Performance Audit**

Black noted that the Performance Audit emphasized the potential for community outreach for the Oak Knoll Golf Course. In keeping with that direction, new manager Patrick Oropallo is focusing on the opportunities for growth that are currently available.

- **Budget**

Black reported that APRC was currently underbudget per the 2017/2019 biennium budget. He stated that the budget would be stringent for approximately the next decade, given the increasing costs for PERS. Once Tier 1 employees retire during the upcoming ten years, then it is anticipated that the budget would plateau.

## **OAK KNOLL GOLF COURSE**

Black stated that Oropallo would be giving a presentation on opportunities at the Golf Course for the next two years and beyond.

Oropallo highlighted the opportunities to expand, noting that increased community events and golf tournaments along with expanded programming are part of a comprehensive plan to more intimately interact with visitors and residents. Engaging the business community would be a critical aspect of the expansion. He indicated that in addition to golf tournaments – a traditional aspect of corporate involvement - businesses can bring their employees to the Golf Course for other activities such as team building events. In-house tournaments will also be added including an Ashland City Championship. Oropallo stated that scheduling these events during the slow times is one way to keep top-of-mind involvement throughout the year.

Oropallo talk about developing co-branding opportunities – particularly with hotels and in the APRC Play guide. Programming would be designed to attract beginning golfers with event markers as they increase their skill levels. New classes such as the Chip, Sip, and Giggle event would pair golf with wine tasting. A Jr. League program would begin with one or two teams of approximately 12 children per team. Working with SOU, Oak Knoll would offer a football and soccer class as well. Oropallo indicated that he would be offering free lessons on Fridays for boys and girls. A new class for Veterans will be instituted with approximately 220 hours of free golf lessons provided by Oak Knoll. He stated that the White City VA has agreed to bus interested veterans to the golf course.

Oropallo relayed that he planned to increase food service – by utilizing the existing kitchen and or by allowing caterers to prepare food onsite. He estimated that the existing kitchen could provide light meals for approximately 30-40 people. People who use the golf course for activities other than golf such as dog walking or for personal fitness would be tracked. Oropallo stated that it was anticipated that approximately 70% of those users would be captured.

Oropallo talked about ways to make tees more interesting and inclusive for junior golfers. Point of sale equipment and communications would be improved. Community events such as community concerts, a putting course and others would provide entertainment as well as recreation at the course.

Environmental programs such as activities for birders and the creation of an Audubon conservation sanctuary would be introduced. Oropallo stated that water monitoring and conservation would be economically feasible and would create a more naturalized course. He commented that historic renovations would also enhance the course – so that aficionados could play on an historic course with historic equipment for an extra element of fun.

Ideas for future enhancements include:

- Pickleball courts on site
- Catering food services and program packages that include exploring local restaurants and or a separate banquet hall.
- A playground

#### Commissioner Discussion

In response to a question by Landt, Oropallo noted that there was room for a playground adjacent to the #10 tee with room also at the upper parking lot for 5 or 6 pickleball courts.

Lewis noted that transitioning from gas carts to electric carts had been discussed at the Golf Subcommittee as a conservation effort.

Landt stated that the goals presented did not include infrastructure needs. He asked whether there were any items that would impact the budget such as infrastructure repairs. Landt applauded Oropallo for creating a program that would work on the existing grounds, indicating that he was appreciative of the innovative thinking and emphasis on the positive.

Black stated that he too was appreciative of Oropallo's focus – but given the age of the golf course, there would be some course improvements needed. He noted that the cart paths had not yet been completed, and the Clubhouse was in need of repairs etc. Black indicated that the important point was that in spite of those needs, Patrick was moving forward without major improvements.

In response to a question by Bell, Dials stated that Oropallo was confident that he could increase revenue by 80%. She recommended 70% as a more conservative starting place. In addition, she noted that at some future date, she would present plans to the Commissioners to adjust golf course fees.

In response to a question from Bell about minimal infrastructure changes, Gardiner noted that last year's infrastructure improvements included new sprinkler heads. Because of that work, the course grounds are currently in reasonable shape.

Lewis cautioned that revenue was highly dependent upon factors beyond control – such as the weather and wildfires etc. He supported the plans for enhanced programs and services, stating that engaging more people was an important component of a healthy golf course.

Landt agreed with establishing an aggressive goal provided incentives for achievement.

Bell asked about a plan to divest APRC of the golf course if it could not become more efficient. Lewis replied that alternatives such as converting the course to a park would not make financial sense because the use would not be revenue producing. He stated that selling the property for development like affordable

housing would entail a transfer to the City who would then decide the property's fate. He stated that continuing as a municipal golf course was the best alternative for APRC at this time. He expressed excitement over the innovations planned.

Bell talked about the tight budgetary environment with the golf course being the most costly program to run. He stated that it seemed reasonable to have a contingency plan that might include divestiture. Black replied that the best process for testing that idea would be continued discussions and the establishment of a benchmark that would signal the appropriate time to consider an alternative plan. In the meantime, APRC would work towards the most cost-effective program possible.

Gardiner noted that APRC promotes recreational activities that serve a portion of the populace. If public opinion were to change and there was to be outside pressure to decommission the golf course, then the options would be considered at that time.

Landt suggested that failure to improve the return on investment would, in his opinion, trigger consideration of other options. He stated that initially every effort should be made to increase the efficiencies. He indicated that Oropallo should first be given an opportunity to increase cost recovery and expand the services.

## **STAFF LEVELS OF SERVICE**

Black commented that the goal is to continue to provide programs and services at the current level of service.

- ***Recreation Division Level of Service***

Dials stated that it was her responsibility to advocate for APRC's recreational programs and the staff that brings them to fruition. She stated that the unsung heroes are the staff that welcome the public on a daily basis. Dials noted that staff works to solve problems at the point of contact. They are welcoming, friendly and kind in spite of the many hats they wear.

### **Nature Center**

Dials reported that the Center welcomes approximately 4000 visitors in the last few months. She highlighted Nature Center staff, highlighting their dedication to the programs offered at the Center. Dials noted that the Nature Center offers a wide range of activities for people of all ages and abilities. Dials detailed the behind-the-scenes work that must be completed for a seamless experience – noting that community programs included school based educational opportunities, demonstration gardens, special events and more.

### **Recreational Programming**

Dials talked about the diverse programs offered in APRC facilities - stating that there is an average of 95 programs presented each season. Recreation manager Flora works to facilitate partnerships with the business community and other organizations with a goal of enhancing revenue and increasing community outreach.

### **Ashland Rotary Centennial Ice Rink**

Dials noted that family-oriented programming at the Rink attracts approximately 20,000 people per season. Parks staff plan and manage operations, including training and scheduling 19 seasonal staff.

### **Daniel Meyer Pool**

Dials reported that over 13,000 users utilize the pool annually. She stated that the summer season runs from mid-June through mid-September, employing approximately 20 lifeguards, swim instructors, and aquatic fitness instructors.

### **Recreation and Visitor Services**

The Grove functions as the main office for customer services – including registration for programs and services as well as the management of facility leases. Staff disseminates materials such as brochures and maps and answers basic questions regarding parks and open spaces. APRC also facilitates the annual tax program sponsored by AARP.

### **Calle Guanajuato**

Dials noted that she is responsible for oversight and management of the lease agreements and contracts for restaurants and coordination with the APRC Parks Division for maintenance during the season which runs from mid-March through mid-November.

### **Special Events**

APRC special events sponsored by the Recreation Division include the annual Bike Swap, 4<sup>th</sup> of July run, Ashland World Music Festival, First Frost, and Island Night.

### **Volunteer in Parks Program (VIP)**

Dials described Volunteer Coordinator Lori Ainsworth's duties in recruiting, screening, training and assigning volunteers who assist APRC in various capacities. She noted that in 2018 there were over 1500 volunteers who donated 13,574.20 hours.

### **Clubhouse Operations at Oak Knoll Golf Course**

Dials commented that the year-round golf course features a covered driving range, putting green, short game practice green, a clubhouse and outdoor patio. APRC provides rental clubs and golf carts as well as merchandise for purchase. The clubhouse is available for special events.

Dials spoke briefly about internal customer service, staff committee attendance, budget oversight and other activities that contribute to APRC as a whole, as well as the municipal golf course.

- ***Parks Division Level of Service***

Oxendine stated that Parks primary responsibility was to maintain existing parkland. He stated that he was supportive of the goals and ideas that have been expressed with the focus of improving what is already there.

In response to a question by Bell, Oxendine stated that he recommended a review of the parkland to determine the current level of service. Once established as a baseline, a goal could be set to monitor improvements.

Landt asked about the current level of service of lower Lithia Park. Oxendine stated that in his opinion, the level of maintenance was approximately a 3 or 4. Scenic Park, on the other hand is a little higher because it is a newer facility and the hardscape is in acceptable shape. He noted that the entrance to Lithia Park should be maintained at the highest level possible given the amount of resources available.

Oxendine noted that the Performance Audit recommendations were to improve operations in general by establishing formal maintenance standards, a comprehensive asset inventory and other actions to determine performance indicators. He suggested that a consultant assist with establishing comparative benchmarks to measure the level of service in the parks.

Black clarified that Parks maintains APRC parkland at the levels that can be physically viewed. He stated that when a compliment is received about a park – they are really commending the parks staff that ensure that the park is maintained.

Glatt highlighted staff's maintenance of the public restrooms, stating that keeping them cleaned was a critically important part of the parks experience.

Gardiner asked about hiring a third party to recommend benchmarks. Black replied that one of his goals was to complete a Master Plan for each of the Parks. In essence that would provide an evaluation that could become the foundation for improvements.

There followed a brief discussion about self-rating such a large area – and the amount of time and effort it would take. Heller suggested empowering volunteers to review the levels of service and evaluate each of the parks with that criteria. He stated that the outside assessment could provide helpful information at minimal cost.

- ***Forestry Division Level of Service***

Minica stated that the Forestry Division oversees 563 acres of Parks forestland with a focus on managing for biological diversity of native plants and controlling non-native invasive species. Minica provided an overview of the environmental impacts that Parks works to incorporate, while maintaining Parks trails and open space. He stated that hikers are generally very appreciative of the almost 50 miles of trails that Parks provides.

Minica told a story about a property owner who allows Parks to access forestland from his driveway – noting that wildfire mitigation is an important part of Parks maintenance. He stated that the property owner was so pleased with the work that Parks does, that he donated funds to support their work.

Minica talked about dog servicing stations and the number of bags of waste that are removed from the trails by Parks workers. At almost 400,000 bags per year, the service to the citizens of Ashland is a substantial one.

Minica outlined the number of partnerships that provide volunteer workers to keep the forests environmentally sound and urban forest safe. He noted that they partner with the Fire Department on requests for grants for fuel mitigation.

Other services provided include working with landowners on property disputes – helping other departments with construction needs and more.

### Commissioner Discussion

Bell noted the large amounts of Ivy that is present in Lithia Park, asking about mitigation efforts there. Minica replied that Parks crews come together periodically to remove the ivy.

Heller suggested an article in Park Views regarding doggie waste. He asked about building a mountain bike trail along the Eastside of Lithia Park.

### ***Senior Services Division Level of Service***

Glatt stated that historically the senior program referred to programs provided at the Senior Center. She indicated that as part of the redesign, the senior program is expanding to include referral services to other organizations as part of a more comprehensive look at what seniors need. The scope of the program has also been expanded to serve seniors community wide. She highlighted the importance of building a network for seniors based upon their specific needs.

Glatt talked about the fitness, recreation, and education services provided, noting that Food and Friends meals often attract seniors who need the social contacts – not just a meal. Support services for seniors and their families provide assistance in accessing benefits and navigating the social services available.

Glatt told stories that illustrated how valuable building connections for seniors becomes as they age and their circumstances change – noting that the goal was to build a more age friendly community and greater awareness of the needs of older adults.

Heller commented on the importance of social media in building awareness. He encouraged Glatt to continue to reach out to the community via the Ashland Tidings and digital communications. Glatt agreed, noting that the Senior Advisory Committee was looking at the Gatekeeper program that would assist with increased social marketing.

Bell noted that organizations like Rogue Community Health could offer more intensive case management. Glatt agreed noting connections to the organization and others who specialize in specific areas that were part of the concept of directing people towards the services that are needed.

Gardiner asked about capacity at the Senior Center. Glatt replied, stating that the busy times are between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. She stated that she wanted to expand the program's offered during the 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. timeframe. In addition, caregiver classes would be offered at night. She stated that many classes were full and scheduling additional classes required prioritization. With a portable structure, more classes could be offered at optimal times.

In response to a question by Landt, Glatt noted that the model for Ashland senior services was Oregon's Aging and Disability Resource Connection – a program that emphasizes fewer intensive services for a larger number of people rather than intensive services for fewer people. Training of the public sector and interested citizens would create a network of people who have learned how to recognize vulnerable seniors – particularly those who might be isolated and therefore unable to communicate their needs. Glatt talked about goals for outreach and increasing community awareness so that people have the tools to respond as loved ones age.

- ***Administration Division – Level of Service***

Kiewel described a day in the life of administrative staff – handling meeting preparations, preparing the budget, reviewing projects and more.

Cottle stated that she was looking forward to organizing and maintaining APRC policies and developing access to policies online that are easy to navigate. She stated that familiarizing APRC staff with tools for website management, and the City's communications system called Nixle was being actively pursued. Cottle talked about the capabilities of Nixle in communicating mass alerts or advisories. As an example, she noted uses for sending text or emails when there is a closure due to wildfire smoke at the pool.

Cottle highlighted in-house marketing and promotions such as the Recreation Programs Guide – produced for three seasons each year. She stated that advertising revenue from the guides is projected to be \$6800 for the 2018/2019 budgetary year. Cottle told a story related to forging a partnership with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival that resulted in a half-page ad in the Shakespeare Festival guide. She stated that because of that and other partnerships, advertising effectiveness increased 26.5% over the annual marketing budget.

Cottle noted that articles in the Ashland Tiding Park Views was a popular and effective way to reach the community – recently contributing to the success of a previous solicitation for public input on goals.

Cottle shared examples of ways to leverage marketing while promoting special events – noting creative ways that resulted in benefits for APRC and APRC's community partners as well.

- **2019/2019 Budget / CIP Status Update**

Black quoted from the report given by Mark Welch, Admin Director from the City of Ashland, regarding the 6th Quarter Financial Review – noting the following: “The Parks General fund continues to show a positive trend with their Fund Balance increasing. Parks has collected 46.6% of the budgeted revenue and only spent 41.9%”.

Black expressed kudos to Division Superintendents and Department managers – stating that it was a concerted effort to save money, given the current biennium's budget restrictions. Because of their vigilance, the next biennium would be better able to meet personnel, materials and service expenses more expeditiously.

In response to a question by Landt, Black stated that he had asked the City Finance Director if APRC would be allowed to roll over a fund surplus and the reply was affirmative. There followed a brief review of times when the City laid claim to APRC's ending fund balance. Landt remarked that a change of strategy should be determined if that were to happen again. Black stated that he assumed that surplus funds of approximately \$400,000 would go to contingencies and capital outlays. If that were to be the case, the General Fund would become more robust.

Heller suggested getting confirmation that the fund balance would remain with APRC.

Bell asked about segregating the funds into a line item for PERS unfunded liabilities. Black noted that he would take that under advisement.

## **CIP Budget**

Black reviewed the projects completed that were budgeted in the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) including the Calle Guanajuato improvements, Garfield Water Play replacement, the North Mountain Culvert repairs, the Riverwalk improvements and the Shade Shelter at Ashland Creek Park.

Other line items include projects that are ongoing such as the second Dog Park construction, development of a neighborhood park to replace the YMCA park. Black suggested that the two projects should be combined. The \$265,000 set aside for construction of the Dog Park is a conglomeration of funds from various sources. Approximately \$5600 has been spent to date on survey work for that project. Also ongoing is the Lithia Parks Master Plan which is about 75% complete,

Black stated that the sale of the YMCA Park yielded \$480,000 and the purchase of the Clay Street property in its stead resulted in \$91,000 surplus funds. Those surplus funds have not yet been added to the budget but would be included in the draft budget for the upcoming biennium. He stated that \$120,000 from the sale of a portion of the Clay St. property was also not yet recorded in the budget and would also be reflected in the upcoming budget.

Black indicated that the \$3,250,000 budgeted for the pool has not yet been secured. The source of funding would be a bond if the project comes to fruition.

Trails and Open Space Master Plan Update was budgeted for \$30,000 with an actual cost of approximately \$5000.

Black talked about land acquisitions budgeted at \$1.48 million which was spent on property acquisitions of the East Main property, the Mace property and Brisco park.

There followed a brief discussion about the status of remaining funds minus the budgeted items where the funding source has either not yet been identified or sought. Black stated that there would be approximately \$1.0 million remaining in actual dollars for CIP projects. The majority of the remaining funds comes from Food & Beverage Tax revenue.

Oxendine talked about Oak Knoll irrigation improvements, stating that the project was close to completion with approximately \$11,000 remaining in the budget. He stated that any remaining funds would be spent on a new filter for the system.

In response to a question by Landt, Black noted that the amount budgeted for the North Mountain Park Nature Play area was \$15,000 in seed money. The project as a whole was approved for up to \$150,000. Black explained that funding was dependent upon alternative sources of funding that once obtained would be spent. Work done to date resulted in expenditures of \$23,000 for design of the play area and \$35.00 for a permit. Expenditures of \$41, 895.53 were reported in error. Black clarified that \$15,000 was actual CIP funding from the Food and Beverage tax revenue.

Pending projects include funds for a storm drain project, funds for a sidewalk along Winburn Way and others. No funding from the \$55,000 set aside for pickleball courts has been expended. Total expenditures including property acquisitions are at \$2.2 million of the CIP. Heller noted that there was an additional \$1. 6 million that had not yet been expended on the East Main Park and other smaller projects.

Minica noted that the Beach Street project ongoing even though listed as complete. He stated that there was some additional planning for the project that was outstanding. Landt questioned the notation that the project was completed - noting that there were some repairs that were stopgap measures until more extensive fixes could be initiated.

- ***Update regarding current goals***

1. Facilitate a partnership between Parks and Recreation and a community partner, such as the YMCA, SOU and Ashland School District, to build new competition-style and recreation year-round indoor swimming pool for the community.

Black noted that an Ad-hoc Committee was working on a preferred solution and the project was not yet developed.

2. Update Trails and Open Space Comp Plans and continue to purchase land according to the plans. Black stated that the Trails Master Plan update project would be completed once it has been adopted into the Comp Plan – something that would happen whether or not it is included in future goals. He stated that the Open Space Plan could be moved forward.

3. Move forward with the process of selection for a consultant for the Lithia Park Master Plan and begin planning process.

This portion of the project has been completed.

4. Evaluate all APRC facilities and structures for seismic and flood safety.

Black suggested that the evaluation could be completed as a Master Plan, recommending that the goal be replaced.

5. Expand Bear Creek Greenway to its originally planned beginning/ending point at Emigrant Lake.

Black stated that this goal was proposed as a new goal as well and could be discussed when the new goals are reviewed.

6. Evaluate expanded and alternative use of the Senior Center to meet community needs.

Black noted that the evaluation was close to completion.

7. Evaluate and present a cost recovery implementation strategy for Commissioner Approval.

Black reported that the goal was partially complete – with APRC operating under a new MOU with the Ashland School District.

8. Develop parks development standards and guidelines.

Black suggested that this goal be moved forward, noting that revised standards might result in some cost reductions – particularly in the area of water conservation and use.

9. Follow all of the adopted recommendations of the 2016 Performance Audit.

Black indicated that the recommendations were guidelines that should become followed whenever possible without being listed as a goal.

Landt commented that if there were related issues with regard to the Audit – specific goals could be set to address those issues. Black replied that there were some issues – for example with the golf course - that were important enough to be considered a guideline, and listed as a goal.

10. Pursue the evaluation of, and funding for, a rebuild of Daniel Meyer Pool into a year-round eight lane competitive/recreation aquatics facility.  
It was agreed that the goal should be combined with goal number one – with the understanding that the Subcommittee would be accountable for any solutions proposed.
11. Negotiate with the Ashland YMCA to rid APRC of the restrictive deed that currently governs the use of APRC's "YMCA Park."  
This goal has been completed.
12. Continue to consider options for APRC's use of the Imperatrice Property.  
Black noted that the City was reviewing options for the property with APRC contributing to the discussion.
13. Work to identify at least six "dedicated" pickleball courts through various means including partnerships with Ashland School District and Southern Oregon University and/or private partnerships.  
Black stated that there were additional goals with regard to the courts that would be discussed when new goals were discussed.
14. Plan and build a second dog park on APRC property somewhere toward the south end of Ashland.  
Black stated that there were several related goals and that the goal should be discussed in tandem with new goals.
15. Master plan for park shop/yard areas, dog parks and skateboard park  
Black recommended expanding this goal as a Master Plan after additional discussion.
16. Restore the area of Beach Creek below pedestrian bridge.  
This goal has been completed.
17. Continue the process of evaluation currently underway at the Senior Center, with the goals that have been established, and work to incorporate and evaluate the program and determine whether the program should be located in the APRC or City budget.  
Black noted that there were other related goals to be discussed or combined.
18. Implement/attain easement and purchase agreements on Ashland Pond property and through the few remaining private properties, with dogs excluded from the property via a wildlife preserve designation.  
Black suggested that a better goal might be to continue to obtain easements on properties for trail access continuity. He noted that it could include the Ditch Trail and others.

Landt stated that obtaining access to APRC owned properties should be the first priority. It was agreed that the goal would be re-worded for a broader focus.

19. Evaluate, create plan and improve irrigation at Oak Knoll.

Black recommended removing this goal in favor of one of the new goals proposed.

20. Evaluate grant and other funding opportunities for a Nature Play area at North Mountain Park.

Black relayed that funding has been obtained, suggesting that a goal to build the Nature Play might not be needed.

There followed a lengthy discussion about combining and/or eliminating goals. Landt commented on the relevancy of Goal #5. Heller suggested that new goals be reviewed prior to a decision to move former goals forward. It was agreed that Goal #13 should be addressed during discussion of the proposals for new pickleball goals and other goals modified based on discussion of the new proposals.

### **2019/2021 BUDGET PROCESS DISCUSSION**

Black talked about the likelihood of a flat budget, noting that while the City would not fund any increased budget requests, expenses would continue to go up. He projected a budget shortfall of approximately \$750,000 for the biennium - given increases in PERS liabilities, increased fees for utilities and insurance and other expenses.

Black stated that because the budget shortfall was projected to be significant, he asked the Commissioners be aware that increases in levels of service per the adoption of new goals, would most likely result in a decrease in levels of service elsewhere.

Black listed many budget positives such as increased revenue from the School District, and the new Golf Course manager who had a very real opportunity to increase in revenue. He noted that there was an opportunity to increase SDCs (System Development Charges). Ashland's SDCs were very low in comparison to other cities. Black suggested a goal to work on a Master Plan to increase SDC fees during the next biennium. He stated that an increase would create some flexibility in how the Food and Beverage tax would be utilized. Black noted that Parks received approximately \$50,000 per year in SDCs and increase to the mid-range of SDC's would increase revenue significantly.

In response to a question by Heller, Black noted that a case needed to be made to justify an increase in system development charges. He indicated that a Parks Master Plan that details deferred maintenance would become part of the analysis by the City Council – who would ultimately approve the request. Bell suggested that the unfunded PERS liability could be presented as justification as well.

Black explained that SDC's typically pay for infrastructure improvements (increases in the system or major maintenance projects). The PERS liabilities are in the Materials and Services Budget and therefore not funded by SDCs. That said, Black noted that extra revenue from SDCs could take the place of Food and Beverage (F & B) revenue, freeing F & B funds for Materials and Services.

In response to a comment by Heller, Black noted that the F & B funds were down due to the excessive smoke in the Valley during the summer. In response to a question by Gardiner, he stated that it would most likely take a year to prepare the Master Plan prior to presenting the request for an increase in SDCs. He indicated the increase would need to be justified by many years of projects and a demonstrated need to maintain the system.

Lewis observed that the rules for SDCs were complex and included a capital outlay in the general area of collection.

Black stated that the high levels of service demonstrate that APRC staff's accomplishments were substantial. He highlighted the creative and innovative ways that staff had responded to opportunities. He noted that new manager Oropallo was a case in point – proposing increased programming that would translate to increased revenue without a major influx of capital.

Black noted that the community was asking for services that called for significant investments – such as the rebuild of the Daniel Meyer pool. He stated that such reaching goals should be carefully considered given budgetary constraints. The pool would be funded by a general obligation bond that must be repaid over a long period of time. An upgraded pool would also cost significantly more to maintain. A careful assessment should be reviewed to determine the potential for cost recovery. Gardiner suggested that an expedited process was necessary and a decision regarding the pool should be addressed in the near future, given the demand for aquatic services and the deteriorating condition of the existing pool.

Black stated that APRC should pursue opportunities compatible with the ability to maintain the current level of service. Projects should be discussed in conjunction with the opportunities for volunteer assistance, alternative sources of funding, cost recovery ratios and more. New sources of revenue such as endowment funds or new ways of earning money should be considered and actively pursued.

Gardiner noted that new projects must also be justified to the satisfaction of the Budget Committee and City Council.

## **REVIEW PUBLIC INPUT**

Black noted that substantial public input had been received and evaluated. One requests that should be discussed in depth would be the proposal by Cathy Shaw.

## **DRAFT GOALS/GOALS BRAINSTORM**

- ***Bear Creek Greenway***

Black reviewed current Trails and Open Space goals regarding the Bear Creek Greenway. Black suggested that the Bear Creek Greenway goals were already supported through the Trails and Open Space Master Plan. In addition, he proposed setting aside \$250,000 to build a trail from Sleepy Hollow on the Mace property to North Mountain Park.

Heller asked whether budgeting \$250,000 for a new trail that would add to the cost of maintenance was appropriate given budget constraints. Black replied that much of the trail would be asphalt needing very little maintenance. Funding would come from CIP funds.

Gardiner noted that the Greenway's goals did not need to be reflected in APRC's goals. He suggested either leaving it as a placeholder or amending the goal to the reflect creation of a trail on APRC property. After some back and forth, it was agreed that the goal would be restricted to trail construction from the Dog Park to North Mountain Park.

- ***Lithia Park Single Track Bike Trail***

Black proposed that the feasibility of a low angle bike trail be explored on the East Side of Lithia Park.

There followed discussion that included an assessment by Forestry Supervisor Minica – who indicated that a new trail, would add congestion in Lithia Park, conflict with various user groups, and add stress to an unstable hillside. He stated that signage would have to be erected to establish the restricted use – when APRC’s policy limits signage in Lithia Park.

Black suggested amending the goal to state “Explore feasibility and community support of a low-angle bike trail on the east side of Lithia Park”.

In answer to question by Heller, Gardiner noted that if the bike track becomes a goal, then additional public input would be obtained and the decision to move forward would be prioritized. Landt noted that a feasibility study would also explore alternatives, such as Winburn Way.

- **Wildfire Prevention Strategies**

Black noted the AFR (Ashland Fire Resiliency) actively works on wildfire prevention. APRC participates through the Forestlands Commission.

There followed discussion regarding the Shaw request to accelerate wildfire mitigation efforts. Minica noted that there were approximately 50 acres of Lithia Park land that were in need of wildfire mitigation treatment. Black stated that Shaw’s request had a myriad of implications – he suggested that the place to begin would be to determine what the Forestlands Commission and other partners were working on and how APRC could support that effort.

Landt noted that the legislative process for the Shaw proposal would continue to gather support with voters given the opportunity to approve a bond for mitigation. APRC’s goal should be to explore parks and open space fire vulnerability to determine if a significant amount of work needs to be done.

Bell noted that fire suppression work was underway by APRC and its partners. Shaw had proposed buying land to secure a perimeter around – which in Bell’s view, was a different project. After a substantial discussion about ways to accelerate wildfire management, the Commissioners agreed to support a goal proposed by Landt as follows: “Explore wildfire vulnerability of APRC land and if there is a significant backlog of fire mitigation that needs to be done, consider a bond.”

It was agreed that goals 6, 7, and 8 would be incorporated into one goal as stated above.

Black noted that goals 9,10, an 11 and 12 were specific projects, with goal #10 referencing the Mace property. It was agreed to leave those goals a stated. Goal #13 was a goal to purchase a specific easement to access Ashland Pond. It was agreed that the goal would be changed to refer to Ashland Pond and *other landlocked properties*. Goal # 14 was removed in favor of goal # 7.

Mike Oxendine noted that goal 15 should include a replacement schedule for trees that have a limited lifetime. Goal 19 was removed in favor of goal 25. Goals 16 and 17 were combined, as were goals 20 and 21. Black commented that utilizing the maintenance budget as well as capital funds to renew or replace aging infrastructure and update equipment for the purpose of using TID water instead of domestic water, would actually result in a cost-savings.

Black explained that a strategy to improve the infrastructure in this way, would impact capital spending but it would also result in longer term savings in the maintenance budget. Oxendine shared examples such as the upgrade of trash compactors or a new pump and filter that would allow for TID water. He stated that TID water would be much less expensive. The savings will reside in the maintenance budget to be used for other projects.

Black reviewed goals 22 and 24 – noting that the two referred to a collaborative effort to create an indoor activity center to provide a healthy environment for children when the air quality outdoors puts them at risk. Goal 23 would be to build such a facility. It was agreed that 24 would be removed as redundant. Goals 24,25, and 26 were to be combined. Goals 27, 28, 29 and 30 would be combined as well.

- ***Pesticide Management Improvements***

Black introduced goal 31 on pesticide management. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Commissioners would support the goal but not move the goal forward. Landt noted that additional data from staff was needed to address specific biological practices. Lewis commented that the Pesticide Management program had a history of continuous improvements and that the policy was reviewed by the Commissioners on an annual basis. Oxendine highlighted the high cost of some organic pesticides and the limited budget, noting that staff was as efficient as possible given the constraints. VanWhye suggested that developing plans for each specific species could be helpful in terms of managing shade and other controls that work. She stated that weed-whacking could be problematic at times by facilitating the spread of seeds. Landt agreed noted that sometimes spraying an annual would not prevent the plant from going to seed.

- ***Passenger Van***

Black proposed removal of goal 32, noting that the purchase of a van could be prioritized internally. Goals 34, and 35 were combined. There was some discussion about the difference between developing indoor alternatives because of air quality and/or because of programming needs.

- ***Historic Structures and Art in the Parks***

Heller noted that 36 might refer to the historical markers proposed by the Arts and Historic Commissions. Oxendine clarified that the intent was to include all of the historic structures and art that was in need of repair or rejuvenation. Black suggested that the goal could be addressed with a master plan. The Perrozi fountain and Lincoln School fields could be addressed via a Parks Master Plan.

- ***Managerial Software, Marketing Plan and CAPRA***

After some discussion, it was agreed that Goal 37 could be addressed inhouse without listing as an official goal. Oxendine explained that Goal 38 - the purchase of operations software – would increase efficiencies with enhanced tracking. He noted that there would be a budget impact of approximately \$50,000.

Black explained that the MOU with the City of Ashland covers the development of a Marketing Plan and/or a communications guide. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that goal 39 could be removed.

In response to a question by Landt, regarding goal 40, Black explained that CAPRA is an acronym for Certified Accredited Parks and Recreation Agency.

- ***Aquatics Facility***

Goals 41 through 47 were related to the pool replacement or upgrade. It was agreed that goal 44 would replace goals 41 – 47. Goal 48 would stand alone.

- **Pickleball**

Goals 51 – 57 and 58 were related to pickleball. Heller proposed the resurfacing of the courts at Lithia Park as an interim step prior to building dedicated courts. He stated that APRC set aside \$100,000 for 6 pickleball courts. Heller requested \$50,000 in additional funding so that \$150,000 could be used to build 8 dedicated courts. He stated that more work needed to be done to determine the ideal location for the courts but once built – there would be minimal upkeep. Landt noted that goal 56 was a proposal for a multi-use court at Ashland Creek Park. There followed a detailed discussion about shared uses, scheduling conflicts and compatibilities between pickleball and tennis. Heller stated that the first-come, first served rule seemed to be working well. In response to a question about revenue by Bell, Heller noted that asking for a small donation for play would be appropriate. He stated that he would ask APRC to build the courts with assistance from SOVA on lights, and other amenities. There followed a debate regarding the need to resurface all APRC courts, and/or build dedicated courts. Heller requested that the priority be dedicated pickleball courts (goal # 53). It was agreed that follow-up would be needed to determine the budgetary impact. In conjunction with pickleball, it was also agreed that goals 58 and 59 be removed in favor of goal 62 – which was to resurface the Hunter Park tennis courts with the addition of one multi-use court. Goal 61 would be removed.

- **Conservation and Sustainability- Parks Development**

Black suggested that goal 63 should emphasize that potential sites for electric charging stations be considered in the Master Plan processes for Parks.

Goals 64,66 and 67 were removed. It was agreed that goal 69 would need further discussion. Goals 70 and 71 represent opportunities for solar and hydropower where feasible.

Goal 80 - wetlands creation and/or restoration could become potential sources of revenue.

Black stated that there was a potential for resolution regarding goals 81, 82 and 83. The acquisition would impact the maintenance budget. Landt noted that Lincoln Park was in the Comp Plan. He suggested that Goal 84 be revised to read “Ensure that the Lincoln School playground and fields remain open to the public *in perpetuity*”.

Goals 85 and 86 would stand as written. Goals 87,88,89 also stand as written. Bell noted that Goal 90 was to build a park similar to the Park in the Westmoreland Neighborhood in Portland. VanWhye noted that the North Mountain Nature Park was modeled on Westmoreland. It was agreed that goal 90 would be removed.

- **Senior Services**

Landt suggested that goal 91 be incorporated into like goals. There were no comments for goals 93 through 99. Landt indicated that the Paradise project (goal 100) was intended as a visionary goal that once evaluated, could be paid for with grants.

Glatt noted that the 7 goals (101 through 108) contained objectives that she would seek support from the Commissioners on. Black added that he would like to see goals prioritized as well as receive support. Landt

stated that budget impacts should be estimated by staff. It was agreed that the senior services goals would be voted upon outside the goal setting meeting.

- **Oak Knoll Golf Course**

Black recommended removal of goals 110 and 112 in favor of 111. Goal 113 was covered elsewhere. There followed a brief discussion about the cost of completing the cart path paving (approximately \$250,000) and the playground (approximately \$100,000). Goals 114 and 115 could be included in goal 111.

Black talked about the wetland area dredging, noting that the Army Corp of Engineers must approve of the project. Goal 117 would stand as written. Goal 118 presented different options for plantings.

- **Recreation Expansion**

Dials noted that goals 119 and 120 were taken from the Performance Audit. She stated that with the advent of the Recreation Subcommittee, the Performance Audit recommendations would likely become Recreation goals. Goal 123 will be removed.

Goals related to pickleball would be identified in goal 56.

Goal 122 The Lithia Park goal and the Oak Knoll bridges projects would be covered under Parks Master Plan.

Oxendine stated that the North Mountain Park Facilities (goal #122) was needed because there was no longer room to store APRC equipment – similar to the maintenance yard at the Oak Knoll Golf Course. He stated that the expansion could be accommodated by utilizing seldom used parking spaces.

- **Facilities**

Dials referred to plans to turn an underutilized ball field into a soccer field. She introduced goal number 124 – talking about upgrades to the Grove that would include ADA door and keycard access and others.

Dials stated that APRC facilities are put to use during smoke events but air quality levels might put users at risk. She suggested that air scrubbers and door and window seals be addressed for all facilities. Landt suggested that the costs involved should be obtained and analyzed at a future goal setting session.

Dials spoke briefly about goal 129 – noting that an Interpretive Plan for APRC as a whole should be developed with a focus on history, flora and fauna.

Black noted that goal 129 notes that additional funding is needed for the Nature Play area but that funding would come from grants. Construction of the playground is anticipated to start in summer of 2019.

VanWhye noted that she was currently approximately \$10,000 short but that a funding source had been identified to cover that. She noted that the unknown would be increased construction costs. Black suggested that the budget cover a shortfall of \$25,000 or less if a shortfall were to develop.

VanWhye noted three ponds at North Mountain Park need to be dredged to remove silt and create an open water habitat. She stated that the ponds have been filling for so many years that the natural characteristics have changes from open water habitat to more of a wetland habitat. She stated that there is a sediment trap that needs to be maintained.

Landt suggested that goals 11, 130 and 131 should be funded from grants.

Black stated that the goals would be clarified and newly formatted based upon discussion and a vote will be scheduled.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Manuel, Assistant

*These Minutes are not a verbatim record. The narrative has been summarized to reflect the discussions made. Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission Study Sessions, Special Meetings and Regular Meetings are digitally recorded and available upon request.*