

**MINUTES FOR STUDY SESSION  
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
July 1, 2020  
Electronic Meeting – 6:30 p.m.**

Present: Commissioners Gardiner (Chair), Landt (Vice-Chair), Bell, Heller, Lewis; Director Black; Recreation Superintendent Dials; Assistant Sullivan

Absent: City Council Liaison Mayor Stromberg

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

**II. PUBLIC INPUT**

None

**III. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) REPRIORITIZATION DISCUSSION**

Black reviewed the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#). The following items were discussed:

- Black recapped the situation which lead to reprioritization
  - APRC is facing a budget shortfall due to COVID19 which requires reprioritizing Capital Improvement
- Gardiner and Black put the recommendation together based on public input and discussions held at previous public meetings. The public impact was also taken into consideration when crafting the recommendation. The recommendation is for discussion purposes. A decision on the issue will occur at a Regular Business Meeting
  - Landt added that the recommended projects also align with the informational rakings provided by Commissioners for a previous meeting
- Black worked with Gardiner to provide the following recommendation for reprioritizing the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP):

Staff Recommendation:

1. The current projected budget for discretionary projects is \$450,000. I recommend that the Commissioners add another \$100,000 to the available funds for a total of \$550,000 to be used for discretionary projects. The source for the additional \$100,000 is the Mace Property Trail – the current budget for that project is \$150,000. I propose to reduce the Mace Property Trail budget by \$100,000 to add to the discretionary projects.
2. With \$550,000 now available, I recommend the following projects, with the associated budgets, be adopted as the priority for the CIP discretionary projects:
  - a. Daniel Meyer Pool Replacement - \$325,000 – these funds would be set aside while a financing mechanism can be identified and implemented to fund the full cost of the pool replacement.
  - b. East Main Park Design and Construction - \$125,000 – these funds would be added to dedicated funds of \$600,000 already in this project budget. The intent for the project would be to move forward with design and planning approval at this point and possibly develop the park in phases.
  - c. Hunter Park Tennis Courts - \$100,000 – the intent of this project would be to resurface and restripe the courts at Hunter Park to accommodate multiple uses, such as tennis and pickle ball. Since the funds are not available to construct the dedicated pickle ball courts at Oak Knoll Golf Course, this project will at least provide a higher standard of pickle ball and tennis courts than currently exists without the expense of constructing a new facility.

## Mace Project Discussion

- Black stated the decrease in funding for the Mace Property project is justifiable because the property is currently functional now for public access
  - Landt stated that some of the funds that stay with Mace project should be used to construct a foot bridge needed to provide year-round access to property. Landt added that the funds proposed for removal from this project would have funded a paved trail as identified in the transportation plan
    - Black stated that the paved trail will be constructed later, when funds are available
    - Lewis advocated for the construction of the foot bridge Landt referenced
    - Black stated staff is in the planning process of constructing the foot bridge

## Pool Discussion

- Black stated that placing the \$325,000 in reserve for the pool would help to secure a revenue bond. Black emphasized that the project cannot move forward until additional funding is secured. Securing a revenue bond is reliant on receiving F&B Tax revenue. The revenue from F&B will not be known until later in the year
  - Black clarified that revenue bond is not only way to fund the pool. \$325,000 could be used as seed money for grants and or donations to directly pay for the construction of the pool
- Additional discussion occurred later in the meeting (noted below)

## E Main Park Discussion

- Black stated the \$600,000 allocated to the construction of E Main Park came from the sale of properties that were planned to be parks (YMCA Park sold for \$480,000; An adjacent property to the YMCA park which was the planned location for the second dog park sold for \$120,000). These funds are now dedicated to construction. The \$125,000 of discretionary funds being discussed at the meeting would be allocated to design. The park would need to be constructed in phases. A new RFQ would need to be issued to design a park that requires less maintenance than previously planned.
- The design of this project will include the Bike Skills Park, ranked as #3 in the informal Commissioner ranking
- Black clarified the following:
  - Staff is working with an outside group on the design and funding the construction of the bike skills park
  - The construction of Ashland Creek Park (ACP) cost \$900,000. E Main is roughly the same size and has many of the same amenities currently planned for inclusion of E Main Park
  - The \$600,000 allocated for construction will provide enough funds to move forward with an initial phase of construction, with other phases to follow as additional funds are secured
- Heller stated a recollection of consensus in not moving forward with building new parks due to a concern of increasing maintenance with the current level of staffing
  - Black stated Heller may be recalling Blacks comments about maintenance concerns during the goal setting process for the current Biennium. Commissioners decided to include the construction of E Main Park as a high priority during at the end of that process
- Landt stated the following:
  - ACP was built several years ago so it is likely that costs will be higher today
  - E Main Park needs to be designed differently to create a low maintenance park
  - He supports keeping the promise the dog park advocates, neighbors and bike community
    - If it were not possible to build the park with low maintenance design, he would not support the project
- Black clarified that that ability to provide a significant first phase of construction depends of the final park design as well as the required improvements on E Main
- E Main is already an APRC property and being maintained. Additional amenities will increase maintenance, but they can be designed to greatly limit the amount of maintenance required when compared to parks such as Lithia, Hunter and North Mountain Park
- Lewis stated the following:

- Improvements on E Main will be considerable
- It will likely be necessary to provide on-site parking
- Phase II, which would include the bike skills park will come later when funds are available
- It is important to fulfill commitments made to the dog park community
- This will likely be the last significant addition to the park system, and this will pretty much fulfill the goal of establishing a park within ¼ mile of all residents in Ashland
- Upon the completion of E Main Park, the emphasis will be working on maintenance issues
- Heller stated support for E Main Park, including the dog park and bike skills park, but also stated concern that in this time of limited finances and unpredictable future finances that moving \$125,000 may not be necessary at this time
  - Black stated that the \$125,000 allows the design to move forward so the \$600,000 already allocated for construction can be utilized.

### Hunter Park Tennis Courts Discussion

- Black reiterated that since the dedicated pickleball courts at Oak Knoll could not be completed at this time, restriping the tennis courts at Hunter Park would provide increased playing opportunities for pickleball players until funds for constructing dedicated pickleball courts are secured
- Black clarified that both Hunter and Lithia Park have lights over the sports courts
- Heller stated surprise that Lithia Park courts were not included in the recommendation
  - Black stated the following:
    - Resurfacing the courts at Lithia Park were included in the discussion before APRC was faced with a revenue shortfall
    - Resurfacing the courts at Hunter would provide more opportunities for mixed use play
    - Hunter Park provides revenue through rental agreements with the Ashland School District
- Heller proposed the following for the courts at Lithia Park, in addition to resurfacing the courts at Hunter Park:
  - Resurfacing and restriping the upper court for four dedicated pickleball courts
  - Resurfacing and restriping the lower court for mixed use pickleball (four courts) and tennis (one court)
- Landt stated the following:
  - Unsure about dedicating any court to one single use and referenced an [email from Jim Bachman](#)
  - When faced with a reduced budget mixed use makes more sense and that individual use courts results in the need to construct more courts
  - It makes sense to have multi-functional courts and institute dedicated times for different user groups
- Black estimated the cost to resurface the Lithia courts would be \$25,000 - \$30,000. Referenced replacing courts at Helman at \$60,000. This is an estimate. Staff will work on getting a bid
- Lewis stated the following:
  - Would like to see public comment from users on the resurfacing proposal
  - Utilization of courts should be taken into consideration. Twelve or more pickleball players can use the same court that two people are utilizing for tennis
- Gardiner asked the reasoning for making the upper court dedicated for pickleball since four courts are currently striped there now
  - Heller responded with the following:
    - Dedicated courts play better, feel permanent and are preferred by players
    - Many pickleball players are elderly and some have issues putting up and taking down nets to play
    - People are unable to show up and play. They must know the combination of the equipment locker and know how to set up the nets
    - Nets get damaged more easily, permanent nets last longer
- Heller clarified that Central Point has recently built new pickleball courts

- Bell stated that Hunter Park would be a better location for dedicated pickleball courts since it has better access and more courts
- Black stated the following:
  - APRC does not have very many single use areas aside from some areas such as bocce ball and most of the tennis courts at Hunter Park
  - Most facilities require set up or change from one user to another
  - Limited funds with limited property and trying to meet needs of diverse group of people requires mixed use facilities
- Heller stated he is a pickleball professional for the record
- Gardiner stated that moving forward with a recommendation at the next meeting on funding levels is possible and that the specifics of which courts are resurfaced and how they are striped can be determined later
- Black stated it will take more than a week to get public feedback on the resurfacing courts and recommended that the decision on the courts should be scheduled for the August meeting
  - Sullivan clarified that the public will be able to directly participate in the Zoom meeting to provide public testimony
- Heller stated that tennis players will be less impacted if multi-use courts have only two pickleball courts striped per tennis court with one pickleball court on each side of the net

### **Additional Pool Discussion**

- Bell inquired about the design and heating equipment, specifically non-methane-based options, for the pool. Black clarified the following:
  - The general design of the pool has not changed from the work achieved through the recent public process
  - The designers are currently in the site plan phase and have not begun on designing the equipment. The design will be as energy efficient as possible. Using natural gas will cost less than more sustainable heating mechanisms. Options will be provided to Commissioners, including price difference, for heating methods
- Bell stated that the \$325,000 which is seen as seed to support a revenue bond would not enough collateral to secure a bond and that revenue projections for next year are less than the \$325,000 expected annual payments.
  - Black stated the following:
    - The current available CIP funds for discretionary projects for this biennium is \$550,000 included in the recommendation
    - Revenue received from F&B for FY21/22 (starting in July 2021) would determine if enough funds are available to support a revenue bond
    - Theoretical funding sources could look like:
      - Setting aside \$325,000 now could be used as seed money. Outside groups could raise additional funds. If they were to raise \$300,000 that would increase cash on hand to \$625,000 and would reduce the amount funded through a revenue bond
      - If grants are made available for shovel ready projects, a proposal could be put forward with the \$325,000 identified as matching funds
    - It is imperative to set aside money for the pool now to increase the number of funding options available in the future
- Bell stated the possibility of the need to limp the pool along through another season if construction cannot start in the near term
  - Black stated that once the design is complete, it may be possible to start improving the equipment using some the \$325,000 to allow the pool to remain functional
- Bell stated that a general obligation bond should be considered as a funding source
  - Black stated his opinion that the timing is not right to go out for a general obligation bond now. This may not be the case a year or two from now and this could be revisited. Black recommends excluding all other options before going out for a general obligation bond

- Heller stated a concern with a long-term commitment to the pool for the next ten years when the financial situation is unknown
  - Black stated that setting aside \$325,000 now does not dedicate those funds for the next ten years. The funds would become dedicated once staff presents the Commissioners with a revenue bond and it is approved
- Landt stated another option for discussion would be to allocate all \$550,000 to the pool since it has been identified as the number one priority
  - Bell stated a general obligation bond and F&B money would still be required

**Closing Comments**

- Lewis stated that the recommendation that is scheduled to be voted on next week is flexible. Nothing will be set in stone at this moment but will start moving APRC in a direction to prioritize projects. This will also give the community a sense of what to expect
- Gardiner stated that moving forward will allow various user groups to provide comments on a general course of action without setting anything in stone as the financial situation continues to unfold over the coming months
- Black stated he will alter the recommendation to make court resurfacing more generic to allow for specifics to be determined later based in direction from Gardiner
- Heller inquired when alternatives to the funding recommendation should be made
  - It was stated that motions can be made at the next meeting and discussed and voted on if seconded

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

Gardiner announced that the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission will hold an Executive Session immediately following the Study Session to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions, pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(e).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
Sean Sullivan, Executive Assistant