

**MINUTES FOR SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
July 7, 2021
Electronic Meeting – 6:00 p.m.**

Present: Commissioners Gardiner (Chair), Landt (Vice-Chair), Bell, Eldridge, Lewis; Director Black; Recreation Superintendent Dials; Senior Services Superintendent Glatt, Analyst Kiewel; Manager Sullivan.

Absent: None

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

APRC Regular Business Meeting – June 9, 2021

Motion: Landt moved to approve the minutes from June 9, 2021. Seconded by Bell.

Vote: The vote was all yes

III. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

None

V. CONSENT AGENDA

a) Subcommittee Minutes Acknowledgment

- Current Parks, Conservation, and Maintenance Subcommittee – January 12, 2021
- Bee City USA – April 28, 2021
- Recreation Division Advisory Committee – May 13, 2021

Motion: Landt moved to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Lewis.

Vote: The vote was all yes

VI. DIRECTORS REPORT

City of Ashland Emergency Declaration

- The City of Ashland Emergency Declaration has been extended to August 17, 2021. As a result, car camping will continue to be allowed at North Mountain Park while alternatives are being explored by the City

Fire Restrictions

- City of Ashland is in high fire danger. APCR closed fire rings and BBQ pits in parks earlier in the season. Additional signage will be posted in Lithia Park

Lithia Pickleball Courts

- A large tree recently fell onto the pickleball courts and caused damage to the fence requiring some of the courts to be closed
- Staff is working with contractors to provide multiple quotes that include fixing the damaged area only and lowering the fence that surrounds the pickleball courts to 6'

Ashland Creek Water Quality

- The swim reservoir and wading area have tested for unsafe amounts of E Coli. Both areas have been signed that swimming or wading is not recommended. Testing is done on a weekly basis at the swimming reservoir and the wading area near the Lithia Park playground

Facility Reopening

- APRC facilities will begin reopening on a limited basis and will follow OSHA (Oregon Occupational Safety and Health) guidelines. Programs will be allowed indoors on a staggered and ongoing basis

Bike Donation Drive

- 140 bicycles were recently donated to APRC. A group of volunteers and RVTB (Rogue Valley Transportation District) recently worked on tuning up bikes so they can be donated to individuals in the community

July 28, 2021 Special Meeting

- There are various actions that need to be taken on budget matters before the next fiscal year begins. The administrative team at the City of Ashland who were going to assist moving the necessary items forward have resigned or have submitted their resignations. This meeting will focus on how to move budget matters forward
- There will also be an item on the agenda to purchase electric mowers

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

a) John and Jean Sully, Non-Standard Memorial Request (Action)

Sullivan reviewed the [staff report included in the meeting packet](#). A non-standard memorial request was submitted by Louise Mintun in honor of John and Jean Sully. Mintun is requesting the dedication of a new wooden bench on the property recently donated by the Lord family that is adjacent to Bear Creek and North Mountain Park. The bench would be maintained as a permanent amenity of the property. A donation of \$5,000 would be made to dedicate this memorial.

Public Input: Louise Mintun and Bob Palzer spoke in favor of the memorial

Discussion: Landt stated support of the idea of a memorial for the Sully family but has concerns about dedicating a memorial in perpetuity because future expenses will ultimately be higher than the amount donated. Landt added that a standard memorial is dedicated for a 10-year period and would support dedicating the memorial for a 50-year period based on the proposed donation of \$50,000.

Lewis stated the Current Parks, Conservation, and Maintenance Subcommittee recommended approval of the request as an exception outside of the standard memorial regulations.

Motion: Lewis moved to approve the non-standard memorial for John and Jean Sully on the Cynthia Lord Property. Seconded by Bell.

Additional Discussion: Lewis stated that non-standard memorial requests are reviewed on an individual basis and that that he supports this dedication based on the merits of the proposal. Bell stated this particular memorial is a part of the history of the property and has a timelessness about it and that the historically based connection deserves a longer dedication period.

Vote: Bell, Lewis, Eldridge, and Gardiner voted yes. Landt voted no. Motion Passes 4-1.

b) Trail Review Committee Formation (Action)

Black reviewed the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#) which included the following items:

- Commissioners adopted the following goal for the current biennium, ranked number 5 out of the 15 adopted goals

Explore the feasibility of and make decision on all trails and proposals by the Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association

Objective a. Review and decide on requested mountain bike trail in lithia park

Objective b. Review proposed trails sustainability plan for mountain biking in Ashland

- The [plan proposed by Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association \(RVMBA\)](#) has clear and distinct recommendations for specific trails
- Black is proposing reconvening the committee, which recently reviewed the Trails Master Plan update in 2016 with the addition of two (2) members representing mountain biking interests as listed below, to review the individual proposals:

Composition / Proposed Members

1. APRC Commissioner
2. APRC Commissioner
3. Ashland Forest Lands Commissioner
4. Ashland Forest Lands Commissioner
5. Conservation Commissioner
6. Member of Public Torsten Heycke
7. Member of Public David Chapman

Staff Liaisons

1. APRC Director Michael Black
2. APRC Open Space Supervisor Jason Minica
3. Ashland GIS Specialist Lea Richards
4. Ashland Fire Department Forestry Div. Chief Chris Chambers

Mountain Bike Representatives

1. RVMBA Member Casey Botts (author of the RVMBA proposal)
2. Member of Public (mountain bike trails user)

- Black recommends authorizing the APRC Chair to create the committee and appoint members as desired to review the RVMBA trail proposals to provide recommendations to Commissioners. The approval of any aspects of the proposal would be included as an addendum to the Trails Master Plan
- Gardiner stated that he, Eldridge, and Black recently held a meeting on this topic to develop the recommended process being proposed

Motion: Landt moved to that the Trails Master Plan Review Committee be reconvened to assist the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission in reviewing the proposal for trail modification by the RVMBA and that the Chair be given permission to appoint the members of the committee as outlined in the attached document. Seconded by Lewis.

Discussion: Landt stated this is an appropriate approach to working on the adopted goal.

Lewis stated he participated in the committee process to adopt and then update the Trails Master Plan and stated that it was incredible community effort and added his hope that Heycke, Chapman and Botts will all be able to participate in the process. Lewis later added a preference for Jeff MacFarland, former APRC staff, to participate as well.

Eldridge stated agreement with comments made and also stated a preference to bring more women and diversity to the group when appointing the position slotted for a member of the public representing mountain bike trail users.

The following items were clarified:

- “Chair” referenced in the motion refers to the Chair of APRC
- Reconvening the committee does not mean that the participants who represented the various groups need to be the same people. For instance, new Commissioners could be selected to serve on the committee and other personnel changes may have been made in other groups that will need to be considered when appointing members
- The proposal for the low angle trail through Lithia Park would be reviewed by the reconvened committee
- The Chair would appoint the committee members and report back to Commissioners without a need for a vote

Vote: The vote was all yes.

c) APRC Employee COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) Increase (Action)

Black reviewed the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#). Black requested a COLA increase of 2% for all APRC regular employees. This approval would require the suspension of a policy regarding COLA that states:

Rather than adjusting all salaries by a specific percentage, parties recommend a range of 1-5% based upon the Consumer Price Index (CPI-W) 12-month average from March of the prior year to March of the current year.

The policy would require a 2.5% increase, which is not possible under current budget. The City of Ashland non-represented employees have received a 2% COLA increase.

Motion: Landt moved to approve the proposed suspension of the Benefit Adjustment Policy and approve a COLA increase at 2% for all APRC employees for the 2021/22 fiscal year. Seconded by Lewis.

Discussion: Landt stated a preference to follow the policy, but that this is a reasonable approach based on available funds. Lewis stated agreement with Landt.

Vote: The vote was all yes.

d) Kestrel Park Bridge Funding – CIP Budget Amendment (Action)

Black reviewed the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#) and noted the recommendation in the staff report is different than what he is proposing.

- APRC has spent funds on planning activities to eventually install two (2) bike/pedestrian bridges over Bear Creek connecting Kestrel Park to Nevada St and to the Riverwalk Property. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) granted APRC \$555,000 for a Federal Grant from the Oregon Community Paths Program for the Kestrel Park Bridge
- The match for this grant was originally thought to be 10%; however, it is now necessary for this project to be carried out utilizing state funds, which requires an additional matching funds from APRC. Black displayed a [table identifying the cost estimates](#) for the project for both state and federal grant programs
- The Commissioners approved a line item in the CIP (Capital Improvement Projects) for a second bridge over Bear Creek that would be ancillary to the Kestrel Park Bridge. That line item has \$75,000 budgeted to it that was intended to act as match money for a future grant from the Community Paths Grant Fund. That grant will not be available for another three years. Black displayed the [CIP Budget](#)
- Black requested that the Commissioners consider reallocating \$40,000 from the CIP Fund dedicated to the Second Bear Creek bike/pedestrian Bridge to the Kestrel Park Bridge to ensure that the grant funds from Oregon Community Paths is not lost and we can move forward with the construction of the Kestrel Park Bridge. The Bear Creek Greenway Foundation will be providing an additional \$40,000 to meet the matching requirement
- Black noted that this project will provide a significant active transportation option both to and from the neighborhood located near Kestrel Park

Discussion:

- Gardiner stated that he is on the Bear Creek Greenway Board and that this project has been in the works for more than three (3) years and that construction of both bridges will provide a connection to North Mountain Park from Nevada Street
- Landt stated support for this proposal, but noted that APRC will be providing two-thirds of the necessary matching funds at the end of the day and that a 50/50 split would be more desirable for future projects

Motion: Landt moved to reallocate \$40,000 from CIP funds currently dedicated to the 2nd Bear Creek Bridge to the Kestrel Park Bridge, along with Bear Creek Greenway Foundation and or other entities, to meet the required funding match. Seconded by Bell.

Discussion: Bell stated it is appropriate to move the funds to complete the first of the two (2) planned bridges and that increased access to this area is a worthy goal. Lewis stated that APRC has stepped up in the community to increase bicycle infrastructure in Ashland. Gardiner stated he will work with the Bear Creek Greenway Foundation to continue providing funds for projects that extend the greenway.

Vote: The vote was all yes.

IX. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

Gardiner acknowledged Furlough days were completed in June and thanked staff for the sacrifices made as APRC responds to budgetary challenges. Gardiner added that the Lithia Park Nature Walks are looking like they will start up again August and run through September.

Black clarified that quotes are being sought to replace the HVAC systems at the Oak Knoll Golf Pro Shop and the Ashland Senior Center utilizing the \$150,000 allocated for infrastructure that to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and he will report back as more information is known.

Eldridge stated she has received concerns from community members regarding limited hours and opportunities at Daniel Meyer Pool and requested staff to provide information on pool operations. Dials stated the amount of people allowed in the pool is no longer restricted and added the following:

- The pool is open 10 hours a day, seven (7) hours a week
- There are numerous user activities to occur daily, such as Master Swimmers in the morning, lap swim, swim lessons, and community swim
- A mix of programs are offered throughout the day fitting as many as possible in with the number of hours the pool is open
 - Once swim lessons are finished, the number of recreational swim sessions offered may be able to be increased
- Dials confirmed that utilizing volunteers to staff the pool is not an option for safety reasons

X. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- a) Ashland Senior Advisory Committee — July 12, 2021
 - Electronic Meeting—3:00 p.m.
- b) APRC Special Business Meeting Session — July 28, 2021
 - Electronic Meeting—6:00 p.m.
- c) Current Parks, Conservation, and Maintenance Subcommittee – July 29, 2021
 - Electronic Meeting—2:00 p.m.
- d) APRC Special Business Meeting — August 4, 2021
 - Electronic Meeting—6:00 p.m.
- e) Recreation Division Advisory Committee — August 12, 2021
 - Electronic Meeting—3:30 p.m.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted
Sean Sullivan, Business Operations Manager