

**MINUTES FOR SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**

August 4, 2021

Electronic Meeting – 6:00 p.m.

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

Absent: Director Black

This meeting was recorded by Rogue Valley Television (RVTV). Links to recorded meetings can be found on the [City of Ashland website](#).

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

APRC Regular Business Meeting – July 7, 2021

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes from July 7, 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

- **Ashland Senior Advisory Committee – May 3, 2021**

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

Vote: The vote was all yes.

VI. DIRECTORS REPORT

Glatt reported on the following items:

COVID Restrictions

- The City of Ashland (COA) and APCR have enacted COVID restrictions including masking and distancing in buildings and limiting in person meetings
- Commissioners directed staff to hold the September meetings electronically. A determination will be made on meeting locations on a month-to-month basis.

OSHA Wildfire Smoke Rules

- OSHA has released draft rules for employee safety regarding wildfire smoke. Staff trainings are underway

Downed Tree in Lithia Park

- A large oak tree was downed by high winds in the lawn near the Butler Perozzi Fountain. At least one other tree was brought down by the oak tree
- Clean-up and refurbishment of the lawn area is underway

Electric Mowers

- Per Commissioner direction at the July 28 Special Meeting, staff reached out to various jurisdictions to get feedback on the use of Mean Green electric mowers. All responses were positive, and staff has moved forward with purchasing three electric mowers.

Water Quality in Ashland Creek

- E. Coli levels have dropped to a safe level in Ashland Creek at the wading area and the swimming reservoir

Closures Due to Smoke

- Daniel Meyer Pool; City Band Concert; First Park Walk in Lithia Park

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

a) **Lithia Park Court Discussion – Consideration of converting the mixed-use (lower court) to dedicated pickleball courts and addressing safety issues associated with the rock stairs separating the courts. (Possible Action)**

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

Court Striping

- Several members of the public have requested that APRC consider converting the lower court in Lithia Park from mixed-use (tennis/pickleball) to dedicated pickleball. The item was also requested to be discussed in a Commission meeting by the Chair of the Parks Commissioners
- Commissioners approved changing the upper court in Lithia Park from mixed use (tennis/pickleball) to four dedicated pickleball courts on August 12, 2020. The motion also included a reevaluation of usage after one year
- When the court was resurfaced in 2020 it did not properly dry, resulting in some of the paint wearing through. The company has been scheduled to re-paint the courts under warranty on August 16, 2021 (originally scheduled for August 5)
- Several pickleball users and Southern Oregon Pickleball Association (SOPA) have requested that the kitchens (a pickleball term) on the courts be painted another color, which is standard practice
 - The president of SOPA, Jack Methot, has stated a willingness to try to secure funds to assist with the cost of painting the kitchen areas, which has been quoted at \$3,300. They next meet on August 17.
- Sullivan reported that the courts will need to be closed for at least three weeks to dry

Public Input:

Written comments were received and [posted to the APRC website](#).

Cory Franc of Ashland spoke in favor of converting the lower courts to dedicated pickleball. Franc stated the sport is very popular and wait times are very long. Providing dedicated courts will alleviate this issue and will be a benefit to the community.

Jack Methot spoke on behalf of SOPA and spoke in favor of converting the lower courts to dedicated pickleball courts. Methot also stated that as a board member of SOPA and the Southern Oregon Pickleball Foundation (SOFA), he will advocate for both organization to contribute money to assist with the cost (\$3,300) of painting the kitchens a different color. Methot stated he will try to determine if funds can be made available prior to August 16, when the courts will be painted.

Discussion:

- It was confirmed that if the lower courts were to be dedicated to pickleball, there would be no tennis courts in Lithia Park. There are eight tennis courts at Hunter Park, with one of the courts (court #5) being mixed use with bike polo and futsal
 - Dials reported that court #5 had been reserved by bike polo in the evenings (starting at 6pm), so staff removed the tennis net. Users contacted staff with concerns and the tennis net is now being replaced at night when bike polo is done using the court so it will be available for tennis players the following morning
- Landt stated an understanding that dedicating the lower court for pickleball would result in an overall reduction of tennis facilities and these users are generally concerned with losing more courts. To address these concerns, Landt proposed instituting a moratorium on making changes to court usage at Hunter Parks and that additional changes will not be made to any courts in the park system until usage data (including tennis, pickleball and other uses) has been gathered and analyzed
- Landt stated that painting the courts should be contingent upon receiving \$3,300 from SOPA and/or SOFA. This would be consistent with other user groups, such soccer users, making financial contributions for improved facilities
- Bell stated support for dedicating the courts to pickleball because APRC needs to be responsive to changing recreational trends in the community. Bell added that it would be a show of good faith for the pickleball community to contribute funds, but that if what is being asked is standard for pickleball courts, APRC should be aiming for this anyway

Motion: Landt moved to convert the multi-use lower court at Lithia Park to dedicated pickleball use with the appropriate stripping and painting of the court. And APRC place a moratorium on any change to the usage at the tennis courts at Hunter Park for at least two years and until robust data has been collected and evaluated on pickleball and tennis usage at Hunter and Lithia parks. Future changes would be consistent with the results of the gathered and evaluated use information. Painting of court kitchens will be contingent on Southern Oregon Pickleball Association and Southern Oregon Pickleball Foundation providing the \$3,300 for the extra cost of painting the eight pickleball court so-called kitchens. Seconded by Lewis

Discussion: Lewis stated that SOPA has made an excellent case for dedicated courts and it was disappointing for many people that the funding for the dedicated courts at Oak Knoll was lost. Lewis added that this is a recognition of new sports and attempting to get the most value out of APRC facilities. Eldridge supported the need to gather data on court usage so informed decisions on court usage can be made.

Vote: The vote was all yes

The SOU tennis courts were discussed regarding a possible shared-use agreement. It was clarified that these courts are not usable because they have not been maintained.

Lithia Court Steps

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

- A safety issues has been raised by Lithia Park court users that staff would like direction on addressing. There are historic rock steps separating the upper and lower courts that presents a trip and fall hazard
- After receiving comments from multiple users about the tripping hazard presented by the steps separating the two courts, staff investigated alterations necessary to install a fence and a gate that would separate the upper and lower courts and provide a safety barrier between the two elevations of the courts
- After staff review, it was determined that it would be necessary to remove rocks to install two poles to extend the fence across the upper and lower courts while also providing a gate for movement between the courts. This could be done only in areas where the poles need to be installed, which would maintain the surrounding rocks that serve as stairs. However, the rocks are uneven and may still be a tripping hazard themselves. All of the rocks could be removed, and stairs could be formed in with concrete to provide an even transition between the courts and reduce hazards associated with the uneven rock stairs
- Staff is planning to add the fence and gates between the upper and lower courts and believe that the rock stairs should be replaced in total. The stairs are original to the courts, so staff is seeking the approval of the Parks Commissioners before making this change
- After discussion on this item, it was determined that staff will provide more detailed options to address the issue including maintaining the rock steps as a cost saving measure. Staff will report back to Commissioners at a future meeting

IX. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

X. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- a) Recreation Division Advisory Committee—August 12, 2021
 - Electronic Meeting—4:00 p.m.
- b) E Main Park Public Listening Session—August 18, 2021
 - Electronic Meeting—6:00 p.m.
- c) Joint Parks Commission/City Council Study Session—August 23, 2021
 - Electronic Meeting & 5:30 p.m.
- d) Ashland Senior Advisory Committee—September 13, 2021
 - Electronic Meeting—3:30 p.m.
- e) APRC Study Session — September 1, 2021
 - Electronic Meeting—6:00 p.m.
- f) APRC Regular Business Meeting—September 8, 2021
 - Electronic Meeting—6:00 p.m.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm

Respectfully Submitted
Sean Sullivan Business Operations Manager.