

**MINUTES FOR RESCHEDULED BUSINESS MEETING**  
**ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**  
January 17, 2024  
Council Chambers – 6 p.m.  
1175 E Main St

Present: Commissioners Landt (Chair), Bachman, (Vice Chair) Adams, Lewis, Seffinger; Interim Director Eldridge, Deputy Director Dials, Interim Senior Services Superintendent Mettler, Parks Superintendent Caldwell, Executive Assistant Mero

Absent: None

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

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Landt called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. APRC Business Session – November 8, 2023
- b. APRC Business Session – December 6, 2023

**Motion:** Bachman moved to approve the minutes for the APRC regular business sessions November 8, 2023 and December 6, 2023. Landt seconded.

**Vote:** All in favor

**III. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

- a. Added to the agenda under Business items: Draft resolution - information only – after the Rogue World Music item - relating to the Open Space Map.
- b. Moving the Chair/Vice Chair elections to the top of the list of Business items because Stef Seffinger may need to leave meeting early and would like to vote.

**IV. PUBLIC FORUM**

None

**V. CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Approval of Recreation Division Advisory Committee Meeting minutes from October 19, 2023

**Motion:** Adams moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Lewis seconded.

**Vote:** All in favor

**VI. DIRECTORS REPORT**

Eldridge provided the APRC Interim Director's Report.

- Administration News:
  1. Staff Changes
    - a. Senior Services Superintendent Isleen Glatt has retired. Natalie Mettler is now serving as Interim Senior Services Superintendent and Shannon Holt as Interim Senior Services Coordinator.
    - b. Administrative Analyst Tara Kiewel has moved to Eugene to work for Lane County Parks. We will be posting an Administrative Analyst position hopefully before the end of the week.
  2. Legislative Initiatives
    - a. Alcohol in the Parks Ordinance is now in the Ashland Municipal Code.
    - b. Last night the Parks Hours Ordinance was unanimously approved by the City Council and will be amended into Ashland Municipal Code.
    - c. Parks, Trails, and Open Space Map will be presented tonight for Commissioners' final approval.

- Senior Services Division:  
The Holiday Party was widely attended by about 100 patrons and volunteers. Ashland Rotary Club and Shop N' Kart provided free gifts and cards for attendees, and OLLI's French Caroling class performed familiar Christmas carols. Event sponsor was Village at Valley View, which provided refreshments.
- Recreation Division:
  1. Thrilled to announce that after months and months of preparation, we are moving away from Activenet registration software to SmartRec software, also known as Amilia. Deputy Director Dials will be presenting this at the February meeting. There are directions for using SmartRec in the current Playguide. There is an app as well. Rolled out as planned on January 3. Staff is trained and continuing to learn more functions.
  2. Oak Knoll Golf Course is closed on Tuesdays through January. Regular hours will commence in February. The management contract has been drafted and reviewed by Legal and Finance, soon to be reviewed by management company Golf Automation.
- Parks Division:
  1. We continue to be plagued by Vandalism and Theft. An incident in November and two in January resulted in high damage/high losses.
    - a. Saturday November 11 North Mountain Park was hit. Chain link fence was cut and a chainsaw stolen. Approximately \$1,000.00 in damage and loss. Of course, repairs now need to be done.
    - b. January 1 Bluebird Park was hit for the second time. Plants valued at approximately \$2,500.00 were damaged, pruned, cut, and ripped out. All incidents reported to the police.
    - c. Over the weekend of January 6 and 7, Lithia Park Shop was hit. Assume they jumped the fence. Truck gas tank caps have locks on them so two tanks were drilled, and the gas siphoned, and a third truck had the fuel line cut. This leaves us down three trucks, which is a big challenge for us. Working with the City and Public Works to come up with a plan for fleet replacement. Approximately \$5,000.00 in damage and losses.

We have plans for increased security. Cameras, improved fencing and improved lighting, especially at Lithia shop, and with new staff occasional nighttime presence in some areas.
  2. Original Alice in Wonderland Ridge trail has been closed. Two reroutes have been built, one for bikes, one for pedestrians on easements that were secured many years ago. Fences have been built by Parks staff to block off original trail and signage posted. News has been spread through Social Media.
- Landt: Asked if the pedestrian and reroute Mimsy trails are multi directional.
- Eldridge answered that the pedestrian trail is, the Mimsy trail is one way downhill. Currently no legal way to go uphill by bike. Looking for options, working with partners, homeowners, and Forest Service.
- Landt: Time for celebration! Two new trails, Wasabi and the Mimsy trails. Accomplished with lots of work by private groups, Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association, and Ashland Woodland Trails group along with APRC staff. Eldridge agreed and mentioned the work on the Liberty Street property.
- Seffinger asked if they could do a little better job maintaining Caterpillar Trail. Make it so that it better accommodates walkers and bikers. Bikers erode the trail, making it unsafe for walkers, especially seniors.
- Eldridge: That land is Forest Service land. We and private groups do maintenance in conjunction with the Forest Service. We will take up the issue with our partners.
- 3. Central Stone Staircase at Ashland Japanese Garden (AJG) has been given a face lift and will be reopened sometime soon after a railing is installed. The work was a low-cost solution that can be altered in the future for design elements/ADA access.
- 4. New Lithia Playground fountain was installed. It has two levels of drinking spots and a bottle filler. APRC insulated it themselves. Much less expensive than buying an anti-freeze fountain.

#### Questions/Discussion

Landt commented that the lower fountain is still too high for little children. For future fountain installation, are there fountains manufactured with lower faucets for small children?

Eldridge: For current fountains, we might place a step for the littles.

5. Staff renovated the Shelter at Gardenway Park. It was an intensive project. Saved a lot of money by doing the repairs in-house instead of replacing the shelter.

Landt: Interjected to welcome Jeff Dahle as one of two City Council liaisons to the APRC. The other liaison is Eric Hansen. Jeff commented that he was happy to be the liaison to the APRC.

## VII. **BUSINESS**

### a) **Chair/Vice Chair Elections (Action)**

**Motion:** Landt made a motion to nominate Jim Bachman as Chair. Lewis seconded.

**Vote:** Bachman abstained; the rest was all yes.

**Motion:** Seffinger made a motion to nominate Landt as Vice Chair. Lewis seconded.

**Vote:** The vote was all yes.

### b) **Rogue World Music Rebranding and Expansion (Information) [presentation](#)**

Deputy Director Dials introduced Ana Beyers, Executive Director of RWMF and APRC Recreation Manager Lonny Flora.

Festival began in 2016 in Ashland. Expansion goals include being an event that serves local communities by generating circular local exchange and connection and by acting as an anchor attraction to tourists from throughout the West Coast. Also, to take advantage of the overlap between Rogue Valley cities' community engagement, revitalization, and economic goals. In 2023 Festival drew approximately 5,000 people. A conservative estimate for 2024 is that this number will grow to 8,000 attendees. Many publications, such as AAA and the Oregonian, have asked for information about the Festival. Working with APRC staff, the RWMF will be piloting the new policy allowing alcohol in some Ashland parks.

RWMF seeks support for producing the festival. Their cost will be approximately \$80,000 to produce the festival in 2024. Asking for support by the Commissioners in the form of a signed template letter of support to include with Grant requests.

Flora noted the marketing being done by RVMF is benefiting APRC's branding without requiring our staff time or additional money. Mentioned how much we will benefit from the new Alcohol policy. Piloting the policy with RVMF will give staff valuable experience that may help attract additional events and serve to bring more people into our parks.

#### Questions/Discussion

Lewis: Asked if Lonny is recommending the Commission write a letter of support.

Flora: Yes.

Dials: Recommended staff draft a letter of support for Commissioner review.

Lewis: Noted that having events in the park brings us back to the beginning of Lithia Park and the Chautauqua series.

Seffinger agreed. It demonstrates how Parks is working with the rest of the City, looking at economic base, and bringing people into the City.

Adams: In support too.

Landt: Will the staff's draft letter of support need to be approved by Commissioners?

Adams: Suggested that the Chair could approve the draft letter of support as the Commission's trusted representative.

Bachman: Agrees that the letter of support does not require full Commissioner's involvement. A remarkable collaboration by all, looks forward to attending.

### c) **A Resolution in Support of Expanding Multi-Modal Transportation Routes in Ashland. (Information)**

Chairman Bachman chose not to read the resolution noting it is a Draft and will be presented at the February 7 meeting for Action. Asked for feedback from Commissioners.

#### Questions/Discussion

Seffinger: Has read the resolution, visited some of the areas, and feels it lines up with Commissions' goals. She is in support.

Eldridge: Noted that the intent is to respond to public concern and to show APRC's support for the extension of the Central Bike Path (CBP) and its connectivity with the Greenway. The CBP is not specifically called out on the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Map (the Map). The CBP is identified in the Transportation System Plan and the Trails Master Plan, both of which go through the Transportation and Planning Commissions. The CBP is also in the Ashland Comprehensive Plan. Still need to acquire easements on Railroad right of way which will be done by Public Works. APRC will support and work in collaboration with Public Works and the City to realize goals of extending and connecting the CBP.

Landt: The question to beg is why don't we just make the changes on the Map? Suggested possibly adding a 'whereas' to the Resolution.

Lewis: All for the connections but doesn't think it will be done easily. Issued a request to citizens to please email him with suggestions!  
Extending the trail will involve the path sharing roads with motorized traffic.

Adams: Decision making purview is not APRC's. Our role will be mostly supportive as stated in the Resolution. We support human-powered transportation and connectivity in our community for those who can't or choose not to use motorized vehicles. We look forward to working with friends on the City Council who also strongly support human-powered transportation.

Landt: Two goals for putting the resolution on the agenda. One to get it approved and two to line it up with the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Map. That's what community members have been requesting. Recommended adopting several modifications suggested by Eldridge. Leave off the last phrase in the first 'whereas'. Combine points three and four in the first long 'be resolved.' Adjust wording in the second 'whereas'.

#### **d) Technical Support Document for Parks, Trails, and Open Space Map (Action)**

Eldridge presented the "Final" Parks, Trails, and Open Space Map (the Map) and "Comparison" maps. Mentioned the intention was to get the Map and the accompanying technical support document approved so that they could be presented to the Planning Commission at its January 26 meeting. The Map is to replace the one approved in 2002 which is currently in Ashland's Comprehensive Plan.

The Comparison map was created at Planning's request so that one could easily see what parcels had been removed from the Map since 2002. It was created for informational purposes only and will disappear with approval of the Map.

Eldridge noted both maps have a purplish-blue overlay that represents the Trails Master Plan Corridors (including the Central Bike Path) and is already part of the Ashland Comprehensive Plan. Any land within the overlay is high priority to acquire for connectivity.

The Technical Support Document is the story behind the Map. The text was initially on the Map but left it somewhat cluttered. It is intended to be used in conjunction with the Map. The new Map represents a pivot on the part of Parks to prioritize connectivity, access, riparian connection, and forestry and fuels management over acquisition of parcels to create parks. Other changes may be made during the rest of the approval process. (Planning Commission, City Council)

#### Questions/Discussion

Landt: Could changes still be made to the Map at the City Planning Commission or Council level?

Eldridge: Yes.

**Motion:** Landt moved to approve the Technical Support Document to the Map. Adams seconded.

Bachman asked for people to speak to the motion. Landt and Adams declined.

Seffinger said we also looked at budget and what we really needed with this Map.

Lewis suggested people interested in connectivity to look at the Map and read the Technical Document because it answers questions and so much work went into its creation.

**Vote:** All Yes

Eldridge took a moment to express her gratitude to GIS staff member Lea Richards for all her work on creating the Map.

**Motion:** Landt moved to approve the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Map. Adams seconded.

No one elected to speak to the motion.

**Vote:** All Yes

Eldridge: asked that there be a vote on the Comparison Map.

**Motion:** Landt made the motion to approve the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Comparison Map. Adams seconded.

No speaking to the motion.

**Vote:** All Yes.

#### **e) The Freshwater Trust Herbicide Waiver (Action) [presentation](#)**

Eldridge introduced Eugene Weir from The Freshwater Trust who will discuss blackberry control at Bear Creek and Ashland Creek for riparian restoration and the Water Quality Trading Program.

Weir: The Freshwater Trust (TFT) is asking for an additional three year waiver to facilitate the application of herbicide to noxious weeds on three Ashland Parks properties:

- Bear Creek river mile 23.5 Hardesty/Ponds
- Bear Creek river mile 24.8 Riverwalk
- Ashland Creek river mile 0.2 Ashland Ponds

Weir: One of the goals is to rid these areas of noxious, invasive, woody, non-native plants (like blackberry) and replace them with Native plants which are the basis of the food chain for native wildlife from pollinators to fish. Bear Creek is heating up and drying out. Studies have shown that riparian restoration is one of the best ways to build climate change/fire resilience.

APRC has a policy of Integrative Pest Management (IPM) which forbids the use of pesticides and herbicides in Ashland parks. The three-year waiver of this policy was originally requested and granted for the three properties noted above. TFT has made good progress; however, they need more time. They are requesting an additional three-year extension of the waiver. Weir noted that all other municipalities along the 35-acre project granted the TFT a 20 year waiver of their IPM policies.

#### Questions/Discussion

Seffinger: Worked on similar projects long ago. The native plants are necessary for native animals, insects, and fish. She is in support of extending the waiver.

Lewis: Reducing the thermal load of the streams is of huge economic value to the City.

Landt: Asked if there were any changes to the waiver.

Weir: Yes. One challenge is posting the notice of the treatment 48 hours in advance. This is due to weather conditions and contractor availability. Will honor that and would like some flexibility. Also requested removing the limit of treatment to fifty feet from the stream. Instead, asked that the waiver be applied to the land where TFT has the agreements.

Landt: Has concerns about blanket using the State's list. Prefers there be a site-specific list. Noted positive relationship with TFT and a good relationship with Weir. How judicious will TFT be in using this list?

Weir: Specifically using Oregon Department of Agriculture's A and B noxious weeds lists. These are the weeds that are toxic, poisonous to people, and/or a fuels risk. There are a lot of non-native plants that they aren't concerned with and won't treat. Will use mechanical/hand methods when recommended.

Landt: How many plants are on those lists? Over 100?

Weir: There are a lot. They are focused on approximately 15 top targets. If new noxious weeds are found, TFT would like to have the flexibility to use herbicide if it is the recommended treatment. They try to use best practices and do not just go straight to spraying.

Landt: What standard do you propose for posting advanced notice of spraying?

Weir: Proposes to follow the label of the treatment they are using. Post prior to treatment then take down the posting after the life of the chemical has passed. Can be weather dependent. Much easier for them to leave the posting up following the treatment than pre-posting.

Also asking for easing restrictions around the treatment time. Usually done in the fall especially woody weeds like blackberry, but some weeds are best treated in the spring. (poison hemlock for instance)

Landt: Minimizing herbicide use is the right thing to do. Voted for the waiver in 2019 and prepared to vote for it again. Changing the allowable spraying distance (from the creek) makes great sense. Topography is much more important than some standard number. TFT was able to work within the two day notification stipulation previously and doesn't want to change it. Working with a very sensitive population.

**Motion:** Landt moved to grant The Freshwater Trust another three years waiver and to extend the treatment area to the entire leased project area. Adams seconded.

#### Questions/Discussion:

Adams: Thanked Eugene extensively. He has a background in Ecology. Looks forward to a Bear Creek that's not choked by blackberries but instead surrounded by native species that are cooling the water and are making it a hospitable place for fish. Wholeheartedly in support.

Lewis: Trusts Eugene and TFT. Noted that Glyphosate (Crossbow for example) is fully legal and for sale in Ashland with no restrictions. Appreciates the Trust's judicious use of the herbicide.

Weir: In 2019 during initial discussion, it was decided that Glyphosate would be the only herbicide TFT would use under the waiver. It is the most studied herbicide in the world.

**Vote:** All yes.

VIII. **ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF**

None

IX. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- a. APRC Special Business Meeting February 7, 6:00pm in City Council Chambers
- b. Recreation Division Advisory Committee February 8, 4:00pm at the Lithia Park Cabin

X. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46pm

Respectfully Submitted

Nancy A. Mero, Executive Assistant