

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION
Minutes
June 19, 2017

ATTENDEES

Present: Commissioners Gardiner, Heller, Lewis, Miller; Director Black; Recreation Superintendent Dials; Interim Parks Superintendent McFarland; Executive Assistant Dyssegard; Assistant Manuel

Absent: Commissioner Landt; City Council Liaison Mayor Stromberg

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gardiner called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. at The Grove 1195 E. Main.

PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

WILDLIFE-PROOF TRASH CAN DISCUSSION (INFORMATION)

McFarland displayed a photo of a park trash receptacle recently demolished by a bear. He said bears tended to hunt for food in Lithia Park on Sunday and Monday mornings after weekends when many people had visited the park. McFarland stated that bears were known to travel the entire length of Lithia Park – moving from trash can to trash can. He detailed efforts by the custodial crew to discourage bears, with mixed results. McFarland highlighted other areas where bears raided trash cans in the Parks system, including Siskiyou Mountain Park.

Dyssegard reported that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife responded to APRC's query regarding bear-proof trash containers and recommended models ranging in price from \$161 per can to \$1,800.

McFarland reviewed the findings and said a steel reinforced plastic can by Bear Saver at approximately \$300 would be ineffective. Higher end steel receptacles with a bear-proof upper and lower door manufactured by Bear Saver would cost approximately \$1,200. A steel receptacle with double doors from the Bear Saver CE Series would cost approximately \$893. McFarland explained that both doors were lined. The preferred receptacle had four reinforced plates that could be drilled and bolted into concrete anchors. A tie-down kit would include two large eye-bolts and a pole, raising the price to \$968 apiece plus freight. McFarland stated that the receptacle was ADA certified. Once authorized by the Commissioners, and with the number of units determined, an accurate quote could be obtained.

Black noted that there were currently 80 trash cans as well as a dumpster in Lithia Park: essentially a can every fifty feet. He stated that the close proximity of cans to one another helped to ensure that trash was picked up and discarded properly. Ultimately it would become a budget decision in terms of the number of cans to purchase.

Miller asked about the Lithia Park Master Plan and whether it would address the issue. Black stated that the Master Plan would look at traffic patterns and pedestrian counts – data that would be helpful in consolidating trash cans.

Heller noted that Bear Saver cans were designed to protect against Grizzly bears – a very different animal from Ashland's black bears. He suggested alternative solutions such as later trash collections by APRC personnel. There followed a brief discussion about the impact on the Parks Operations budget if staff hours were extended. Black contrasted expanded hours for increased custodial work versus a one-time capital outlay to purchase bear-proof containers.

Gardiner agreed, noting his experience with a bear raid in Lithia Park one Sunday morning in which several cans were damaged. He highlighted the finite number of custodial hours, stating that rebuilding the damaged cans would also take time. Gardiner suggested focusing on the number of bear-proof trash cans needed. He also advocated for speedy resolution given the negative impression made by unsightly trash strewn about in Ashland's premier park. McFarland supported bear-proof containers as well, noting the impact on the custodial crew should trash cleanup take time away from other duties.

Lewis commented that State parks along the western US coastline used bear-proof containers. He said the replacement process should begin soon, without waiting for a finalized Master Plan. He noted that once the Master Plan data was collected and reviewed, locations for bear-proof containers could be adjusted. Lewis highlighted the Belson design as the most familiar of the bear-proof units. He asked about the addition of recycling containers, given that current collection baskets seemed to be working well. Lewis indicated that 80 cans seemed like too many, particularly for bear-proof receptacles.

Black indicated that if so directed by the Commissioners, he could begin work on the logistics: timelines, funding and number of units. He stated that there was a concern for public safety given the number of recent bear sightings.

Lewis asked about trash cans in an undeveloped park. McFarland replied that cans are placed at trailheads and other areas where Woof Waste stations are appropriate.

McFarland said he researched local construction of bear-proof trash cans and discovered that manufacturing costs were roughly the same or slightly higher than the national brands. There followed a discussion focused on the number of cans needed, whether partnering with the City would be helpful and an acknowledgment of the impact on neighboring residential properties if access to food was eliminated in the park. Also discussed was a potential source of funding. Heller suggested signage for educational purposes if trash cans were replaced in an effort to discourage bears from entering the park.

BUDGET UPDATE (INFORMATION)

Black reported that the Budget Committee had forwarded a recommendation to City Council for approval of the 2017-2019 APRC budget as presented. He stated that blanket cuts had been proposed for various City departments but they were not approved. Black explained that the budget process had been somewhat different from past years; however, the outcome was comparable.

In response to a question by Heller, Black noted that there had been very little concern about the proposed APRC budget – with just one question about the rebuilding of the Daniel Meyer Pool. He stated that the APRC budget was lean and would require diligence to stay within established boundaries.

There followed a discussion about the continued impact of the PERS shortfall. Black indicated that options to backfill some of the accrued losses were under review. He noted that APRC could not sustain another \$600,000 impact as experienced in 2017. Black stated that earnings projections by the PERS Board of Directors had been overstated.

FUTURE “PARK VIEWS” DISCUSSION (INFORMATION)

Gardiner said the APRC articles featured in the Ashland Daily Tidings were a great way to get information out to the public. He stated that he would like to schedule future columns by soliciting additional ideas from the Commissioners and staff.

Scheduled Columns:	Month	Topic
Commissioner Miller	June	Ashland Parks Foundation Grants
Commissioner Gardiner	July	Senior Center
Superintendent Dials	August (tentative until confirmed)	Alternative Sports in Ashland

Suggestions for additional topics included discussion of a second Dog Park, the new pool, pickleball, APRC's Integrated Pesticide Management policy, proposed uses for the Imperatrice Property, APRC volunteers, bear-proof trash cans and information about educational offerings at North Mountain Park Nature Center. Miller noted a myriad of topics about the Forest Lands Commission and their work. Gardiner proposed a discussion of collaborative partnerships such as those forged with the Ashland School District.

ACP / APPLGATE TRAIL MARKER RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY (ANNOUNCEMENT)

Dyssegard extended an invitation for participation in an historic trail marker installation ceremony on Friday, June 23, at 11:30 a.m. at Ashland Creek Park located at 27 E. Hersey Street. The marker would pinpoint the area where Applegate Trail pioneers camped in 1846. Dyssegard stated that the Ashland Chamber of Commerce would attend, as would representatives from Trails West, the originators and manufacturers of the markers.

McFarland explained that the marker would be cemented in place at 11:00 a.m., with the ribbon-cutting ceremony beginning at 11:30.

STAFF UPDATES

- ***YMCA Park***

Black highlighted the article in the Ashland Daily Tidings about the YMCA Park land disposition / transfer. He said he appreciated the quotes from the Y and was pleased with the coverage so far. He said he was scheduled to make a presentation at an upcoming City Council meeting about the property and the Y's disproportional use of the park land without compensation. Black reported that for the year 2016/2017, the Y exclusively used the property 281 days out of 365. This meant that the neighborhood park was closed for public use 77% of the year. It was anticipated that City Council would approve the sale of the property given those parameters.

- ***Daniel Meyer Pool***

Black relayed meeting with the pool manufacturer that would likely be selected to build the expanded facility. He stated that he also met with Anderson Pool Works, a Portland-based pool installation company. He said a survey of the areas had yet to be completed but there appeared to be few site-specific constraints.

Black noted that illustrations would be prepared and new bids readied based on re-routing of the underground power and storm drain. He emphasized that the project would continue to move forward once a maintenance and operations compensation commitment was made by Ashland School District. He noted that he would be outlining the plans and presenting a proposed contract at the School District's Facilities Management Subcommittee meeting on July 5 and to the Ashland School Board on July 15.

- ***Lithia Park Master Plan***

Black stated that APRC received three substantial responses to the Lithia Park Master Plan RFP. He described the applicants as offering a "broad brush" of talents combined with an emphasis on team orientation. Black noted that the applications would be reviewed by the Master Plan Subcommittee, with a subsequent recommendation prepared for Commissioners' approval.

- **Save Our Schools and Playgrounds**

In response to a question by Lewis, Black stated that at the June 26 APRC Regular meeting, Commissioners would be asked for a statement of support for the efforts that Save Our Schools and Playgrounds was making to preserve the Briscoe and Lincoln School playgrounds and ballfields. He affirmed that the grounds were labeled in the City's Comprehensive Plan as open space; however, the Ashland School District, as property owners, had final say as to use of the properties.

Black said he was working with the School District to find a solution that would preserve the lands as neighborhood parks. He explained that although APRC did not list the acquisition of the properties as a current goal, retaining the properties as neighborhood parks was considered a high priority for APRC.

- **Daniel Meyer Pool Renovation**

Miller asked about the size of the pool and other pertinent details. Black noted that two tanks were under consideration to mitigate filtration issues inherent in one large pool. The overall measurement would be 25 meters by 25 ft. with one small and one large tank. He stated that based on the manufacturer's review of the space, all equipment, including filtration apparatus and pumps, would fit in the space currently used for that purpose at the existing pool.

Black stressed the importance of securing a commitment from the Ashland School District prior to seeking a bond and beginning construction. He noted that the timing of the APRC bond for the pool, as compared with the Ashland School District's bond for schools, had yet to be worked out. He stated that the School District had asked that Black become a member of the School District's Bond Committee and he agreed to serve.

- **Ashland Creek Park Shade Area**

Gardiner asked for a timeline for construction of the shade area at Ashland Creek Park. McFarland replied that there was still some finishing work to be completed at Garfield Park. Once completed, the project manager would begin working on the shade structure.

- **Ashland Senior Center Survey**

Black noted that funds were available through the Ashland Parks Foundation [earmarked for the Senior Program] that could be used to fund a Citywide survey about Senior Program services in Ashland. He said there was a group in Ashland, Source Research Center at SOU, that could serve as a useful resource for survey building.

- **Daniel Meyer Pool Swim Class Registration**

Dials noted that the Daniel Meyer Pool opened to the public on June 15 and swim class registrations were currently underway.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:46 pm

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.