

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Minutes
January 22, 2018

Present: Commissioners Gardiner, Heller, Landt, Lewis, Miller; APRC Director Black; Recreation Superintendent Dials; Forestry Supervisor Minica; Executive Assistant Dyssegard; Assistant Manuel

Absent: Interim Superintendent Jeffrey McFarland; City Council Liaison Mayor Stromberg

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gardiner called the meeting to order at 7:00pm in Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street.

APPROVAL OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MINUTES

- o Ad-Hoc Senior Program Advisory Committee, December 11, 2017—acknowledged
- o Trail Master Plan Committee, December 15, 2017—acknowledged

- o Regular Meeting—December 18, 2017

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes of December 18, 2017, with an amendment as follows:

Page 4, Paragraph 6: Heller moved to *increase* the fee to \$.45 per square foot for Clay Street Park plots”
Should be: Heller moved to *decrease* the fee to \$.45 per square foot for Clay Street Park plots.”

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes of December 18, 2017, as amended. Miller seconded.
The vote was all yes.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- *Open Forum*

Luther Lyman of 321 Clay Street in Ashland, Oregon, was called forward.

Lyman stated that he had been playing tennis in Ashland for over 30 years. During that time, courts available at Southern Oregon University had deteriorated to the point that players preferred to use the courts at Hunter Park. Lyman noted that the courts at Hunter Park were also deteriorating and tennis players had attempted to fill cracks in four of the courts. He thanked Jason Minica for his help in obtaining needed materials and for his commitment to re-painting the boundary lines.

Lyman relayed that court five had more significant issues – cracks wide enough to cause injury. He also reported that the courts on the railroad side were dangerous under certain conditions. Lyman talked about the \$55,000 that had been set aside for tennis in the CIP, noting that he had suggested resurfacing court five as a more permanent solution. He stated that he had learned that those funds were to be used for capital improvements rather than maintenance.

Dale Swire of 233 Clay Street in Ashland, Oregon, was called forward.

Swire stated that Ashland’s tennis courts were not up to best standards. He relayed that with other disciplines such as pickleball and bike polo using the same courts, tennis players were finding it more difficult to find suitable places to play.

Swire asked for assistance from APRC, suggesting that dedicated pickleball courts be added to relieve the overcrowded conditions on the tennis courts.

Dave Ferguson of 995 B. Street in Ashland, Oregon, was called forward.

Ferguson highlighted similar concerns, advocating for a long-term plan. He suggested that dedicating \$55,000 for something new did not take into account the value of the existing assets: the courts currently in need of refurbishment.

Ferguson talked about the repairs made by players to date, noting that people from 60 to 90 years of age worked an entire day to fill the cracks in courts one through four.

Ferguson referred to the Lithia Park Master Plan, stating that planning for the future should include the repair and maintenance of existing APRC assets.

Jane Ferguson of 995 B. Street in Ashland, Oregon, was called forward.

Ferguson spoke to the couple's experience as newcomers in town, highlighting the welcome extended by tennis players. She commented that they were great ambassadors for the community. She reiterated concerns about the condition of the courts, stating that the cracks would continue to need work and that temporary repairs had obscured the boundaries. She said nets and fencing were also in need of repair.

Ferguson expressed a fear that a player at play could be injured. She stated that it would be in APRC's best interests to take care of these courts.

David Chuse of 392 Taylor Street in Ashland, Oregon, was called forward.

Chuse presented a broader context for local tennis. He noted that Ashland's Big Al's Tournament was a USTA-certified regional tournament. He talked about tennis as a lifelong sport, ranking #4 in the world with a global reach of over one billion people according to Totalsportek.com. [Tennis: A Top World Sport](#)

Chuse reported that last year's Big Al's Tournament winner was a local high school student with great promise. With AHS tennis teams for both boys and girls using the Hunter courts, they were in high demand.

- ***Senior Center Public Comment***

Sandra Sawyer of 585 Thornton Way in Ashland, Oregon, was called forward.

Sawyer read a [prepared statement](#) that referenced her past testimony regarding the Senior Program process and the recommendations regarding the Program that had been made at the time by Director Black. In that testimony, she advocated for postponement of the approved recommendations.

Sawyer asked that recommendations made by the Ad-Hoc Senior Advisory Committee also be postponed until the public could assess the Committee's recommendations and present alternatives.

Avram Chetron of Ashland, Oregon, was called forward.

Chetron relayed that he had lived in Ashland for eleven years. He talked about the proposed adoption of recommendations from the Ad-Hoc Committee and advocated for postponing approval until the Ad-Hoc Committee completed its work.

Reading from a [prepared statement](#), Chetron highlighted the quality of the survey, raising concerns about the questions asked, the survey sampling, and the projected outcome.

Ed Green of Ashland, Oregon, was called forward.

Green talked about discussions he held with citizens while trying to obtain signatures for recall petitions for three elected Parks Commissioners. He noted that people tended to ask why Senior Center staff were let go in August 2017 and he called for a reply from the Commissioners.

Gardiner noted that Open Forum was the Commissioners' time to listen to the public, not the time for dialogue. As an alternative, he encouraged one-on-one contact with the APRC Director or a Commissioner.

- **Pickleball**

Jack Methot of 885 Jaquelyn Street in Ashland, Oregon, was called forward.

Methot noted that there was a Southern Oregon Pickleball Association (SOPA) in the Rogue Valley with approximately 360 email recipients, most of whom were seniors. He said local pickleball players were able to play on two courts in Lithia Park on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings.

Methot spoke of a program initiated by pickleballers to support growth of the sport; specifically, local players had offered to teach pickleball to middle school students in Ashland, Phoenix and Talent, with equipment and expertise provided. The challenge was in finding available pickleball courts.

Methot proposed, as a short-term solution, adding dedicated pickleball times in Ashland on evenings and weekends. The group's goal was to grow the sport in Ashland by promoting it as family entertainment involving persons of all ages. He expressed confidence that young people would respond enthusiastically to the sport.

Methot said finding dedicated pickleball courts would be a long-term solution that would allow pickleball players to play without time constraints. An added benefit would be returning tennis courts back to tennis players.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS (ACTION)

Motion: Landt nominated Gardiner to serve as 2018 chair. Heller seconded. Gardiner accepted the nomination.
The vote was all yes.

Motion: Miller nominated Landt to serve as 2018 vice chair. Lewis seconded. Landt accepted the nomination.
The vote was all yes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- ***Ashland American Legion Baseball Banner Status Report (Information-Action)***

Dials noted that Ashland American Legion Baseball was requesting placements of sponsorship banners on outfield fences between the foul line and temporary fencing at North Mountain Park for the 2018 season. She explained that the organization made a similar request in 2017 but were not able to implement the program that year. She introduced representative Ken Buccino and invited him to speak about the request.

Buccino said there were a number of reasons why the program was not implemented in 2017. He expressed optimism that prior APRC approval would provide an opportunity for installation of the banners and reiterated that the banners were an important fundraising tool for the high school-aged baseball program.

There followed a brief discussion about potential concerns.

Motion: Landt moved to extend the 2017 Commissioner approval of banner placements on North Mountain Park outfield fences to the 2018 season. Miller seconded.

The vote was all yes.

- ***APRC Adopted Goals (Updated-Amended / Action).***

Black highlighted the January business meeting discussion regarding proposed modifications to the goals and said he presented an update on all BN17-19 goals at that time. As discussed, two goals were presented that seemed to be redundant and it had been determined that a key component was missing. After several iterations of the two goals, the Commissioners agreed that the intent had been to rebuild the community pool with the addition of competition-style elements. Descriptions of the goals were combined and modified to add clarity to the intent and to reduce redundancies.

Landt proposed modifications as follows: "Rebuild the Daniel Meyer community pool and increase its functions to include a cover and a competitive component. Existing pool functions to be retained. Partner with users such as the Ashland School District and Rogue Valley Masters Swimmers to ensure that APRC's portion of the operational costs fit within the APRC budget."

Motion: Landt moved to adopt the modified statement as listed above in replacement for the former two goals. Miller seconded.

Discussion of Motion

Landt commented that it would be easy to decide to rebuild the Daniel Mayer pool with more functionality than to seek funding via a bond. He stated that the more difficult task with regard to the pool would be to ensure that the operating costs remained within budget once the rebuild was accomplished. Landt noted that expenses for a year-round pool would be considerably higher than current operational costs, and he was appreciative of the work that Director Black was focusing on to ensure that the operational costs would remain within budget. He applauded the focus on long-term costs and the fiscal responsibilities of building a budget that would work. Landt stressed the importance of finding the sponsors needed to accomplish that goal.

Motion: Landt moved to adopt the modified goal as follows: "Rebuild the Daniel Meyer community pool and increase its functions to include a cover and a competitive component. Existing pool functions to be retained. Partner with users such as the Ashland School District and Rogue Valley Masters Swimmers to ensure that APRC's portion of the operational costs fit within the APRC budget." Miller seconded.

Discussion of Motion

Heller asked about the best way to proceed with stakeholders, noting that community partners could choose to cancel future agreements for pool services if a preferable alternative became available. If that were to happen, the pool budget could be significantly impacted.

Lewis noted that partnering was an integral part of the rebuild and Commissioners must be comfortable with the arrangements once agreements were established.

Gardiner noted that the project would be placed on hold pending further developments with potential community partners. Black addressed ways to reach agreements with partners, stating that negotiating partnerships would remain a dynamic process until it became sustainable and the Commissioners were satisfied.

Motion: Landt moved to adopt the modified goal as follows: "Rebuild the Daniel Meyer community pool and increase its functions to include a cover and a competitive component. Existing pool functions to be retained.

Partner with users such as the Ashland School District and Rogue Valley Masters Swimmers to ensure that APRC's portion of the operational costs fit within the APRC budget". Miller seconded.

The vote was all yes.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Recommendations of Ad-Hoc Senior Program Advisory Committee (ASPAC) (Possible Action)*

Black reviewed the background that resulted in the creation of the Ad-Hoc Senior Program Advisory Committee in September 2017. He stated that the Committee had worked diligently toward solutions to develop a Senior Program that would be more robust and inclusive, as envisioned by APRC. The Committee noted that a program description and a well-defined job description for a high-level Manager were key components in moving the program forward. The Committee identified the basic tenets and characteristics that would provide the framework and overarching principles for the program and its leader.

Jackie Bachman, Chair of ASPAC, was called forward.

Reading from a [prepared statement](#), Bachman noted that the main goal of ASPAC was to create recommendations that would provide a framework for moving the Senior Program forward. She said three objectives were developed to reach that goal:

1. Listen to the public
2. Draw upon the knowledge and experience of local experts
3. Research Best Practices and the National Standards of Excellence as related to Senior programs.

Bachman detailed the experience and skills contributed by each ASPAC Committee member, and outlined ways the Committee facilitated communication and public input. She reported on the results of the Committee's research into the Best Practices and Standards of Excellence, highlighting key services that needed to be strengthened – particularly in the areas of referral and outreach – and provisions for transporting seniors. Bachman referenced the National Standards for Excellence and the areas for improvement based upon the Standards. The Committee determined program needs as follows:

- Develop a current Action Plan with Goals and Objectives
- Provide an updated Mission Statement
- Establish a series of annual reports and other reporting processes
- Develop a Policies and Procedures Manual
- Convene an Advisory Committee and a Fundraising Committee
- Provide a Senior Program Evaluation Plan
- Improve Referral and Outreach partnerships and procedures

Bachman called for approval of the proposed Senior Program Description, the Senior Program Manager Job Description Essentials and establishment of the Senior Program as a Separate Division. She explained that a higher level of leadership was needed to ensure that the program would be successful.

Backman announced that ASPAC would complete their work in March 2018, noting that the Committee recommended that the new Senior Program Manager begin employment on July 1, 2018.

Discussion

Black expressed appreciation for all those who worked on the ASPAC project to date, recommending approval of the three components listed above. He explained that the Job Description called for a higher level of qualifications to provide the leadership needed to strengthen the Senior Program.

Black noted that ASPAC was also recommending that the Senior Program become its own Division - one that would report directly to the APRC Director.

There followed an extensive discussion regarding the proposed organizational changes and budgetary impacts. Landt suggested that the new Division function as other divisions within APRC, with the leadership identified at the highest levels as Superintendents. Black noted that regardless of title, the intent was to empower a senior-level manager who would become a part of the APRC Administration team.

Black reviewed the Senior Program Description and a summary of program elements. Black noted that the Referral and Outreach components should be added to the summary – as envisioned by ASPAC.

Heller asked about the members of the public who were disgruntled and whether their concerns had been addressed and reflected in the recommendations.

Bachman replied that most concerns would be assuaged with inclusion and transparency – quoting the AARP slogan “Nothing about us without us”. She acknowledged that it would take time to dissipate the anger within the community, stating that it would take at least a year to come to terms with the changes.

Bachman shared a recent story related to the Center, and highlighted the increased number of people who were contributing to the program as volunteers – two examples that were indicative of the positive changes that were beginning to happen at the Center.

Bachman noted that ASPAC had spoken to hundreds of people and the majority were looking for a leader at the Center. She advocated for moving forward quickly with approval of the recommendations so that the unmet needs of vulnerable seniors could be addressed as soon as possible. She explained that the process of finding a qualified, high-level Senior Manager was time-consuming and that ASPAC was recommending a hire date of July 1, 2018 - the beginning of the APRC fiscal year.

Gardiner commented that Commissioners Lewis and Gardiner had been participating in the process for the past year and the original vision of the Senior Program as an expanded program with broader and more inclusive services would come to fruition based on ASPAC recommendations.

Heller asked about the number of respondents to the survey. Discussion about the survey focused around the compilation of 675+ surveys received. Heller asked whether there would be value in waiting for completion of the compilation prior to making a hiring decision.

Black advocated for immediate adoption of the Senior Manager Job Description because of the length of time that an interview process would require. He stated that the Job Description had been crafted by experts in the field who were familiar with the essential elements needed and that a new manager would want to participate in the development of a refreshed mission and vision as well as in the formulation of goals toward expanding the program.

Bachman noted that the survey was a Community Needs Assessment. She stated that without the framework of a program description, the manager would not be able to meet those needs effectively. Bachman explained that ASPAC had documented a comprehensive amount of information in addition to the Needs Assessment that would become a valuable resource for the manager.

Landt stated that the Senior Program Description and the proposal to create a separate Division for the Senior Program were straightforward and clear. He expressed concerns about the proposed Job Description, noting that additional vetting was necessary. Landt indicated that he would vote in favor of the description if it was understood

that it was *conceptual* rather than *actual* so that changes could be made. Black agreed, noting that approval would facilitate the emphasis on a higher level of leadership. He stated that some steps were remaining, such as vetting by the City's HR and Legal departments, edits for consistency in formatting with other City job descriptions, and any content changes based on input received from the Commissioners and ASPAC members.

Black highlighted a key component – namely the National Standards for Senior Programs. The Standards would become the benchmark for improvements to Ashland's Senior Program as well as providing a methodology that could be measured. He noted that the Standards provided an opportunity to explore cutting-edge programs and services that had been implemented nationally. Black noted that the manager's Job Description was also based upon nine Standards of Excellence.

Bachman stated that each of the Standards were detailed in workbooks, providing guidance on the processes needed to accomplish each improvement. She indicated that the Standards had been a missing element in the prior program and that each benchmark would provide needed perspective and documentation demonstrating progress. Black agreed, stating that the Standards provided the Senior Program Manager with the tools to accomplish Best Practices and move the program forward to the next level.

Senior Program Description

Motion: Landt moved to adopt the proposed conceptual Senior Program description as edited by staff. Lewis seconded

The vote was all yes.

Discussion

Black reiterated that the motion to approve would be for the conceptual job description with the understanding that it would continue to be modified as appropriate. He indicated that the basis of the job description would remain substantially the same with minor edits.

Landt suggested changing the summary under Planning and Development from "Develops long-range strategic plan with operational goals in meeting the needs of Ashland seniors, in conjunction with the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commissioners and APRC Director, and in alignment with the advice and recommendations of the Senior Program Advisory Board" to "Develop a long-range strategic plan with operational goals in meeting the needs of Ashland seniors, with general direction from the APRC Director".

Landt also suggested that when the document referenced the Senior Program Advisory Board, that the Board be identified in parenthesis as an APRC Subcommittee. He stated that the clarification would ensure the organizational integrity that all APRC divisions follow and would ensure that all recommendations were forwarded to the Commissioners for approval.

Black agreed, noting that subcommittees do not have the authority to make policy decisions. He discussed a scenario that delineated the responsibilities of the Advisory Board as recommendations only and the APRC Commissioners as the decision makers. He agreed to review the proposed bylaws for clarity.

Bachman also agreed, stating that in her opinion, the role of an Advisory Board was to advise and assist. She highlighted the precedent set across the nation regarding Advisory Boards or Committees, indicating that they operated in the same manner as a subcommittee, with the same representation. Bachman described an Advisory Board that would include approximately five citizens who participated in senior programs, a community partner or two, an APRC Commissioner, a City Councilor, the Senior Program Manager and possibly the APRC Director.

Landt advocated for the removal of any language that inferred policy oversight for the Advisory Board or Senior Program Manager. Lewis asked about a friendly amendment to include the clarification, stating that he would accept that into the motion. Landt indicated that assurances from staff that the bylaws would be reviewed and modified was sufficient. Black proposed that a Commissioner be appointed to review the final version of any documents that were modified prior to distribution.

Gardner volunteered to conduct the final review.

Senior Program Manager Job Description Essentials

Motion: Lewis moved to approve the conceptual Senior Program Manager job description as described and edited by staff. Heller seconded.

The vote was all yes.

Discussion among Commissioners

Heller commented that the proposed organizational change designating the Senior Program as a separate division was significant and he asked whether the change would cause dissention among APRC staff. Black replied that he represented staff and he felt that the change was understood and accepted. He identified work in progress that defined the new division as an integral part of APRC. He said the the Senior Program Manager would be included within the administrative team and the organizational chart would reflect that association.

Landt inquired about the budgetary impact of a higher-level manager. Black acknowledged that the requirements for increased responsibilities would trigger an increase in the pay range. He stated that exact figures were as yet unknown but he estimated that the budgetary impact for the top range would be approximately 10% higher than the previous salary range.

There followed a brief discussion of the benefits package. Black stated that he would bring additional information to the Regular Meeting on February 26.

Senior Program as a Separate Division

Motion: Landt moved to approve the change in organizational structure so that the Senior Program Manager reported directly to the APRC Director and the Senior Program became a Division of APRC. Lewis seconded.

The vote was all yes.

SUBCOMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

- ***Annual Forestry Division Report (Information)***

Black introduced the Forestry, Trails and Open Space Supervisor, Jason Minica.

Minica highlighted the goals and objectives of the APRC Forestry Division, noting that daily work focused on reducing fire hazards, conducting weed abatement and doing fire-wise landscaping to promote wilderness conservation and protect the environment.

Minica reported that the division was responsible for managing 269.79 acres of developed land and 491.27 acres of undeveloped land. Fuels reduction work included tree removals and thinning. One project completed this year was the removal of beetle killed trees on the Lithia Park hillside and on Waterline Trail.

He explained that Ashland had lost a substantial number of trees to beetle infestations related to drought conditions. Trees that could be salvaged were converted to firewood, brush was burned and wood that remained infested was transported to Biomass to be burned.

Minica said year-round weed abatement includes the removal of blackberries on APRC-managed lands and the removal of Scotch broom and other invasive species in the forestlands and parks. The division is also responsible for mowing the Central Bike Path – which APRC staff completes multiple times during the spring and summer. Tree removal occurs on a nearly daily basis and approximately 48 miles of trails are maintained.

APRC staff work to protect infrastructure and promote trail safety while respecting the environment. Community partnerships facilitate trail management and maintenance while allowing for public participation in environmental projects.

Minica noted that approximately 65 Woof Waste stations are serviced throughout the year, resulting in the use of approximately 400,000 bags annually. The stations are monitored and serviced twice a week during the summer season.

Minica displayed pictures of tools of the trade specifically designed for trail work. Trails are chipped where needed, with students from the John Muir School taking on work projects four times each year.

Detailed logs are kept of the work done within the parks, trails and forested areas. The logs detail where the work was completed, the number of staff hours spent, the amount of debris collected and the costs incurred for hauling materials away. Forest treatments are logged, acreages are recorded and the number of burn piles are documented. Any collaboration with partners is also recorded. The number of trees removed that are twelve inches in diameter or larger are detailed.

Landt talked about the Acid Castle Rocks property acquisition, highlighting fuels reduction work completed in that area. He characterized the acquisition as a win-win situation providing additional trail connectivity as well as improvements in the health of the forest in that area.

There followed discussion focused on the expertise provided by an in-house arborist and the budget implications, given that an in-house specialist accomplishes much more than an outside consultant would. Landt inquired about a decrease in net costs for operations due to the shift from outside consultant to in-house specialist. Black answered that the arborist was a Park Technician III – a Supervisor who manages people as well as monitoring tree health. In that context, there was a cost savings. He stated that one day per week was dedicated to the care of trees in the parks and trail areas – something that would be unaffordable without in-house assistance. Landt agreed, stating that with 700+ acres, it was a wise use of the operational budget.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

There were none.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dials noted that the Senior Program Newsletter had been distributed to each Commissioner. She indicated that programming for seniors had recently increased, warranting an extra page in the newsletter. She highlighted free safety classes offered by Ron Kohl, a retired detective and Crime Prevention Specialist, a free repair class, an AARP Smart Driver class and more.

Dials noted that an Information and Referral Specialist was available at the Senior Center on Wednesdays from 8:30-3:30pm. The Ad-Hoc Senior Program Advisory Committee was scheduled to meet on Monday February 12th at 3:15pm in Council Chambers.

Dials thanked Natalie Mettler, Lori Ainsworth and Jane Evans-Davis, current Senior Program support staff, for their hard work ensuring that programs and services were ongoing Monday through Friday and that there were opportunities for new workshops and programs.

Discussion

There followed a discussion of distribution sites for the newsletter. Heller suggested that the Ashland Library be added to the list.

Black talked about the number of comments received from the Senior Survey, stating that there were many who responded positively in addition to those expressing concerns. He stressed that no personal information was solicited as survey respondents were anonymous. He encouraged those who had not yet responded to do so as the deadline for completing the survey was Friday, January 26, 2018.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- o Ad-Hoc Senior Program Advisory Committee, February 12, 2018, Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main, 3:15pm
- o Study Session, February 12, 2018, The Grove, 1195 E. Main, 5:30pm
- o Regular Meeting, February 26, 2018, Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main, 7:00pm

ADJOURNMENT INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

By consensus, Vice Chair Landt adjourned into executive session at 9:15pm

Executive Session: Real Estate Discussion and Disposition, ORS 192.660 (2)(h)

ADJOURNMENT OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

By consensus, Vice Chair Landt adjourned out of executive session at 9:45pm

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Manuel, Assistant

These Minutes are not a verbatim record. Narratives have been condensed and paraphrased at times to reflect discussions and decisions. All Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission Study Session and Regular Meeting are digitally recorded; digital recordings are available upon request.