

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

Present: Commissioners Gardiner, Heller, Landt, Lewis, Miller; Director Black; Parks Superintendent Oxendine; Recreation Superintendent Dials; Senior Services Superintendent Glatt; Assistant Manuel

Absent: Executive Assistant Dyssegard; City Council Liaison Mayor Stromberg

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gardiner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street, Ashland.

APPROVAL OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MINUTES

- Golf Subcommittee, September 18, 2018—acknowledged
- Trails Master Plan Update Committee, October 5, 2018—acknowledged

Study Session September 17, 2018

Motion: Landt moved to approve the minutes of September 17, 2018, as presented. Lewis seconded.
The vote was all yes.

Regular Meeting September 24, 2018

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes of September 24, 2018, as amended. Lewis seconded.
The vote was all yes.

Regular Meeting September 24, 2018

Was

Landt proposed that the permanent route and short-term route be combined from the proposed upstream bridge to North Mountain Avenue. He stated that Bear Creek could be crossed at the Riverwalk with the trail proceeding on the side opposite from the one proposed. He commented that the only outstanding issue would be an improvement to the North Mountain Avenue bridge. In that way, over half of the distance outlined in the permanent route and in the short-term route would be shared.

Should be

Landt proposed that the permanent route and short-term route be combined from the proposed upstream bridge to North Mountain Avenue. He stated that Bear Creek could be crossed at Riverwalk with the trail proceeding on the side opposite from the one proposed. In that way, over half of the distance outlined in the permanent route and in the short-term route would be shared.

Motion: Landt moved to approve the minutes of September 24, 2018, as amended. Heller seconded.
The vote was all yes.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- **Open Forum**

Kristina LeFever, formerly of 1140 Siskiyou Blvd. in Ashland, OR, was called forward.

Lefever thanked APRC for its efforts to manage parks and open space with little or no pesticides. She highlighted the value of continuing those practices, indicating a concern that Section 9109 of the proposed Farm Bill could impact local ability to set policies that are stricter than those at the Federal level. Lefever talked about Ashland’s IPM (Integrated Pest Management) program as an example.

Lefever asked the Commissioners to take action against the proposal by either writing letters, passing a Resolution or signing a petition. She submitted additional information about the bill along with suggested letters and links and quoted from a joint statement from the mayors of Portland, Oregon, and South Portland, Maine, as follows:

“Through our deliberations with community stakeholders and experts, we learned from the independent scientific literature that pesticides can harm people and are linked to a range of diseases from cancer to neurological disorders immune and reproductive effects to respiratory impacts and learning disabilities...Most importantly, our research found that we could successfully maintain our parks, playing fields, and private lawns without the use of high-risk pesticides”.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Gardiner announced changes to the Agenda - changing the order *of Agenda Items b and c.*

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Potential Use of the Grove as Overnight Shelter (Information)

Black introduced City Administrator Kelly Madding who was present to initiate a discussion regarding the potential use of The Grove as a temporary winter shelter during the 2018-2019 winter season. He explained that in the past, the City of Ashland used Pioneer Hall in that capacity but would no longer be able to do so. The City was in the process of finding an alternative location.

Black relayed that APRC historically leased Pioneer Hall for recreational purposes – relinquishing the space when winter shelter was needed. The Grove – currently under consideration as an alternative location -- serves as the Recreation Center for Ashland and is under APRC jurisdiction. He stated that Madding was present tonight for informational purposes – to explain what the winter shelter was intended to look like and how it would work. The Commissioners would not be asked to approve or disapprove a proposal for using The Grove as a temporary winter shelter until the Business meeting of November 26, 2018.

Madding stated that she had been tasked with the effort to find an alternative to Pioneer Hall for the upcoming winter. She noted that a faith-based group called Options for Homeless Residents of Ashland (OHRA) had been operating the shelter at Pioneer Hall previously and would continue to do so at the new location.

OHRA had been operating the shelter using a model created by the Rogue Retreat for the Kelly Shelter. Madding introduced Chad McComas as Director of the Rogue Retreat and Phil Johncock, in charge of operations for OHRA, and said they would be happy to answer any questions from the Commissioners.

Madding reviewed the history of the shelter – stating that the goal was to operate a winter shelter seven days per week. In the past, during four of the seven days, the shelter was located at Pioneer Hall. Pioneer Hall would no longer be available for overnight shelter because of a variety of issues, including structural and safety concerns.

A diverse group of people from the faith-based community, from the City Council, from OHRA and the Rogue Retreat – called the Winter Shelter Group – had been assessing options for an alternative location. The Presbyterian Church would continue to house those in need of shelter for three of the seven days weekly. An alternative site would provide lodging for the other four days.

Madding stated that entities with space large enough for the shelter were consulted – including SOU, the Ashland School District and various public and private businesses - all without success. She noted that most City facilities lacked large open spaces but those that did – such as The Grove – were under consideration.

Madding indicated that the Presbyterian Church could house approximately 36 people and that it was assumed that the number of users at another location for the remainder of the week would be the same. She stated that according to the Fire Marshal, the occupancy rate for The Grove would be about the same - 36 people each night. She stated that according to new procedures, the number of homeless seeking shelter for the night should be known and no one would be displaced. Cots in the form of bunkbeds would be provided.

Heller asked about other options for housing the shelter within the faith-based community. Madding stated that the Presbyterian Church was the only entity that agreed to provide shelter. She commented that other churches provided volunteers and donated meals.

Madding introduced Chad McComas from Rogue Retreat, noting that he would talk about the new model for operations of a shelter.

McComas explained that he would share the mistakes of the first year – what was learned and the development of a new model that was working well. He explained that the Kelly Shelter had begun without much preparation – that people were dedicated to getting people off the streets but the lack of planning resulted in a chaotic first year. McComas noted that a first come-first served opportunity for overnight shelter had resulted in issues such as long lines of people waiting for shelter and behavioral issues with a population that was unknown and at times ungovernable. He stated that the first year the shelter was considered a detriment to the neighborhood.

An application and reservation process was subsequently created to properly vet applicants (determining who were serious about getting off the streets and who were not). A reservation system ensured that most of the applicants were known and the number of beds, meals and other services could be planned. Case management was added to assist with assessments and work with people to resolve issues preventing them from moving forward. The system worked so well that the second year there was no impact on the neighborhood. In three months, forty (40) people were no longer homeless. McComas stated that the Medford Police Chief recognized the shelter for their achievements.

Phil Johncock, consultant for OHRA, agreed, stating that the issues with regard to Pioneer Hall were challenging. He stated that the new system would ensure a great 11th year for the shelter in Ashland. Johncock stated that there were eleven (11) community participants acting as partners including a number of strong faith-based organizations and other entities who provided over 100 volunteers and 4000 hours of service.

Madding clarified that once the temporary shelter was identified, the shelter would operate for 90 days only. OHRA was pursuing a permit to operate a winter shelter in the old Baptist Church building and that site might become a more permanent shelter.

PUBLIC INPUT

Millie Carlton of 2934 Farmington Ave. Medford, OR. was called forward.

Ms. Carlton stated that while she lives in Medford, she comes to The Grove on Wednesdays to attend Italian classes. Carlton acknowledged that the homeless situation should be addressed but also expressed concern about the students, instructors and business people who provide recreational services at The Grove. She noted that those who provide the services and the people who participate – including Ashland’s youth - would be displaced and financial arrangements would be negated if The Grove were to be used as a winter shelter.

Carlton indicated that The Grove had an important purpose as a community center for Ashland’s residents and that operating a winter shelter could be detrimental to other residents of Ashland. She stated that while she did not have answers to the dilemma, she wanted to raise awareness of the impact that a winter shelter would have on existing programs and services.

Peri Owen of 500 Grandview Dr. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Owen stated that she recognized that some residents of Ashland had no address and finding them a safe, warm place to overnight was a priority. That said, she indicated that providing shelter for some should not be at the expense of others – the people who support The Grove and its recreational programs. She suggested that there were other options – emphasizing the commonality of homeless issues throughout the Rogue Valley. Owen proposed solutions that included utilizing the Jackson County Fairgrounds as well as vacant or available buildings in neighboring cities. She recommended working with other municipalities and landlords to offer tax incentives to house a winter shelter.

Owen asked about Briscoe School and the possibilities there, noting that the building was underutilized with plenty of space for an overnight shelter.

Owen stressed the moral imperative of caring for the homeless during winter but concluded that an alternative to The Grove should be found.

Lloyd Canty of 853 Pompadour Dr. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Canty noted that he conducted archery lessons at The Grove and had done so for approximately four years. He described his classes as specially designed for focus, concentration and relaxation – the “Zen”

of archery. Participants ranged in age from eight years old to 88. He told stories related to his participants – stating for example that his 88-year old participant had been told that she couldn't compete in archery because it was not ladylike. He described the moment of triumph when she hit her first bullseye after waiting over 80 years for such an achievement.

Canty went on to note that his participants were from all walks of life -- from doctors and lawyers to the indigent. Other stories were of shared experiences between a father and troubled daughter and between a counselor and his client for whom archery was an alternative to drugs.

He thanked Recreation Superintendent Dials and Recreation Manager Flora for providing an amazing space for people to grow and experience positive life impacts.

Lousie Shawkat of 870 Cambridge Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Shawkat cautioned against profiling the homeless. She stated that a common misperception of the homeless were that they were dangerous or perceived to be “not fully human.” Shawkat related her own experiences to the contrary.

Shawkat noted that she too took classes at The Grove and in her opinion, classes would not have to be cancelled to accommodate a shelter. She noted that this would be a temporary situation while a permanent shelter could be found.

Shawkat stated that Ashland could do better than to exclude the homeless from shelter on cold winter nights.

John Ourant of 1252 Old Willow Lane Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Ourant spoke on behalf of his wife, a dance instructor at The Grove. He said that using The Grove as a shelter would end his wife's dance classes. Because people had already registered and paid for winter classes, refunds would have to be given. Ourant highlighted the special requirements of a wooden floor for dance lessons, stating that a new location would have to be identified elsewhere in the Rogue Valley and new students recruited. He reiterated that the shelter would impact recreation services for residents of Ashland and it would impact the service providers as well.

Ourant noted that as a Scout Troop Master who holds scout meetings at Pioneer Hall, he could speak first hand about the wear and tear a shelter causes. He expressed a concern about The Grove and damages to the wooden floor and mirrored walls, stating that in his opinion, the damage would be costly and the impact on the facility would be substantial. Ourant talked about his experiences with the homeless through church, stating that the behaviors exhibited could be a fearful experience for children. He noted that even with careful vetting, some behavioral issues could be disturbing for children who must pass by on their way to school.

Gordon Enns of 312 Quail Circle, Talent, OR. was called forward.

Enns reiterated concerns about the possible cancellation of dance classes and the impact of overnighters on the wooden dance floor. He expressed dismay with regard to displacing instructors who paid for space at The Grove and those who have paid for those services. Enns noted that almost 50 people attend dance classes regularly. He talked about the healthful benefits of participating in dance and had questions about practical matters associated with storage facilities.

PUBLIC INPUT CLOSED

Gardiner reported that several written commentaries had been received by APRC that would be included in the record. All comments would be available to the public and accessible online.

Lewis highlighted the conflict between accommodating a winter shelter and accommodating the recreational services that fulfilled the recreational mission of APRC. He stated that he would like to hear proposals that would address those concerns in a fair and equitable way.

Lewis noted that APRC had been willing to do their part for those less fortunate – as illustrated by APRC’s willingness to accommodate a public shower facility on Parks property. He stated that APRC worked hard to be part of a solution whenever necessary and would continue to do so if a solution could be found that would mitigate the impact on Ashland’s citizenry. Madding replied that the impact had been considered and the Presbyterian Church had offered use of their facilities on evenings when they were not operating the shelter.

Black noted that staff was looking at alternatives – including those that the City had suggested. He stated that The Grove was functioning well as a Recreation Center and its popularity was growing, creating a number of hurdles to surmount.

Superintendent Dials stated that staff had begun the process of finding suitable locations for classes offsite. For example, Fire Station Two could be used for language classes if certain hurdles could be overcome such as access. She indicated that the greatest obstacle would be placement of the dance class because of the necessity for a wooden floor.

Lewis questioned security of the offices at The Grove after hours. He noted that the office spaces not only house sensitive information, but also store supplies, provide a lunch room and additional restrooms that would most likely be needed if the shelter was full. Black agreed, stating that extra measures would be needed to secure the offices. According to the Fire Marshal, egress would need to be provided through the offices in case of emergencies. The Fire Marshal suggested installation of a door that would access the offices equipped with a crash bar to alert security personnel if breached. Black indicated that there were other areas where barriers would be needed as well. Although able to accommodate an occupancy of about 50 people, the facility was not a turn-key shelter.

Landt asked about utilization of the Briscoe School gymnasium. Madding replied that part of the school was leased to service providers who deliver child care at the site. She suggested that the winter shelter was not conducive to the mix of uses.

Landt suggested that the case might be similar at The Grove. He suggested that there were other correlations as well. He stated that the City would need to break the contract with the daycare providers at Briscoe in the same way that Parks and Recreation would have to do with their service providers. He indicated that in his opinion, finding a suitable winter shelter was a City issue. He commented that the solution should not create another problem and until there is sufficient mitigation in a way that is satisfying to APRC's clients and service providers, he would have difficulty supporting the proposal.

Madding disagreed, stating that in her opinion, the winter shelter is a community issue. She suggested that a small group of stakeholders – including one or two Commissioners -- work together to facilitate successful resolution of the issues either by resolving the conflicts at The Grove or by finding a suitable alternative site.

Landt stated that in his opinion, The Grove seemed to be presented as the only option. He noted that the focus seemed to be that APRC should take on the responsibility of providing for the homeless by facilitating a winter shelter in its facility. He stated that in his opinion, any decision pro or con would be harmful and APRC would be placed in a no-win position. Landt explained his philosophy that if a problem arises without an obvious solution, it could often be resolved by trying harder and looking more creatively at the alternatives. He stated that he could be more supportive if a less disruptive solution could be identified.

Madding noted that this was informational only and no decision was necessary at this time. She stated that she was exploring The Grove as an option. Landt commented that considering The Gove as an option implied that there were other options under consideration as well.

Black reiterated that Madding's presentation was for information only and that APRC staff would also prepare information for the Commissioners based upon any questions they might have. He highlighted Madding's quick response to staff concerns and willingness to work to resolve issues. Black indicated that staff would work to develop specifics as added information so that the Commissioners could make a decision once they are fully informed.

Lewis stated that many of the logistics had been discussed – in Council Chambers and in emails. He said that developing potential solutions that would satisfy recreational users of The Grove and addressing the security of the Grove's offices were important to him. Lewis asked about supervision after the lights go out, and addressing issues such as loitering, damages to the landscaping, cleanliness of the building, dogs and other hurdles.

Lewis highlighted the contract between portable shower users and the entity providing showers, stating that it was an excellent prototype for engaging shelter users and ensuring that standards were upheld. He pointed out that the City Council had asked APRC to increase revenues but had added constraints such as reducing the availability of APRC facilities such as Pioneer Hall for paying guests - thereby significantly limiting revenue opportunities. He stated that the five Commissioners had been elected to oversee Parks and Recreation programs and services, trails, parks and open spaces, making

those things a top priority. If APRC were to agree to facilitate a winter shelter, in his opinion, then it would require solutions that satisfied Parks and Recreation users.

Lewis also asked about School District facilities – stating that they too have the ability to accommodate large numbers of people. Madding replied that the Ashland School District and SOU both indicated that their facilities were not compatible with the proposed use as a winter shelter. She thanked the Commissioners for their comments, stating that the specifics were important and the work would continue to sort these things out.

Gardiner stated that there would be more questions. He agreed that working together was important, suggesting that Madding’s suggestion of a study group was welcome. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that Superintendent Dials, Commissioners Lewis and Gardiner would volunteer to represent APRC. Landt summarized the study group’s mission to work toward resolution of the impediments to using The Grove as well as continue to identify an alternative site.

Heller stated that he had enjoyed the stories that highlighted the importance of recreation classes and the positive impact on people’s lives. Black agreed, noting the stories were difficult to quantify but no less important.

a. Proposed Park Hours Ordinance Amendment (Information/Possible Action)

Black noted that Ordinance 68.380 of Ashland’s municipal code, established a “curfew” for Lithia Park. He stated that a possible amendment to the code would be to extend parks closing hours to all APRC parks – and to allow for closure of the parks between the hours of 11:30 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. Black explained that closing the parks would allow for a “reset,” thereby protecting the parks against overuse and discouraging illegal camping.

Black addressed the camping issue, noting that according to Ashland’s municipal code 10.68.330 camping was prohibited in any City park or any property or any street adjacent to a park. He stated that establishing a closing time for parks would further address the camping issue by eliminating ambiguities. He reiterated that this suggestion was at the request of Ashland’s police. Closing the parks would assist the police in enforcing camping violations and eliminating conflicts related to people in the park at night.

Black reported that he canvassed other parks in Oregon for closing times, stating that of the ten queried, all had posted closing hours and that Ashland was the only one without such a policy – Lithia Park being the exception. Black reviewed the postings, noting that generally the parks closed between 10:00 or 11:00 p.m. and opened at 5:00 or 6:00 a.m. He expressed support for closing the parks at night with the caveat that people traveling through on trails or commuting from one place to another should be the exception. He stated that people should not be prohibited from walking or biking for transportation and that any motion should include language that exempted active transportation.

Black stated that it was assumed by many that the curfew assigned to Lithia Park applied to all of Ashland’s parks. He suggested that the Ordinance be changed to apply closing times to all parks and open spaces.

Gardiner highlighted public comments received by email for and against – stating that they would be included in the record.

Discussion Among Commissioners

Lewis proposed that the discussion include how to best address exceptions such as trails and open space. Landt agreed stating that if closing times were decided upon, exceptions for passing through the parks should be agreed upon as well. He talked about Scenic Park as an example, noting options to either travel through the park or walk around the park – an additional three blocks. He stated that doing so would not be consistent with Ashland’s Comprehensive Plan.

Landt argued against enacting another rule – stating that enforcement of such a rule would be complaint driven – which in his opinion was problematic because of the potential for profiling people in the park after dark. He indicated a preference for policing unacceptable behaviors like vandalism or littering or destruction of property etc. rather than enforcement of a curfew. Landt talked about acceptable uses after dark such as stargazing, noting that he had not heard a compelling reason for closing the parks at night. He advocated instead for the existing Ordinance that prohibited camping because of the emphasis on unacceptable behaviors.

Heller expressed concerns about prohibiting legitimate uses at night such as the study of astronomy. He questioned closure of the restrooms during times when people are present.

Miller expressed surprise that closing times only applied to Lithia Park stating that he was ready to approve a motion to apply Lithia Park’s closing times to all parks and open spaces.

Gardiner commented that in his opinion, it was important to offer guidelines regarding the openness of our parks.

He talked about the diverse list of cities - from Eugene and Bend and Grants Pass, to Portland that have found value in closing their parks for a period of time each day. He stated that in Ashland, there were some rules for people to follow when they visit Ashland’s parks, but the expectation was that people would self-monitor.

Gardiner stated that Ashland’s rule that disallows dogs off leash in the parks ensures that if a disturbance occurs in violation of the rule, then Ashland Police have a mandate to enforce it. He noted that the rule prohibiting camping is not as clear and the police have asked for guidance. Gardiner suggested additional discussion exploring how trails and open spaces would fit into the new rule. He stated that closing all parks between 11:30 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. would be one option to consider. He suggested that a range of options be considered prior to deciding to amend the Ordinance.

Landt suggested that APD’s request was more about greater consistency between the parks. He suggested that either all of Ashland’s parks be subject to a curfew or Lithia Park’s curfew be eliminated and Ashland’s parks remain open throughout the night.

Lewis stated that in his opinion, Ashland’s police officers were asking for direction to avoid a battle with people in the park at night who deny they are camping. Illegal camping continues to be

destructive in a number of ways. Giving APD an additional tool to enforce the no camping rule would be helpful. Those who use the park in a friendly way – who gather with friends at a fire ring with a potluck could continue past 11:30 could be exempted by permit. For those who don't want to go through a permit process – then 11:30 p.m. would be the time to head home.

Black recommended that there be an allowance for incidental use of the park as well. He highlighted a common practice throughout Oregon to allow entrance to the park at night to retrieve a forgotten article or to pass through when traveling. Black suggested that closing hours were somewhat different from curfew because it implied social control when the Ordinance would simply establish park hours.

Landt stated that he would most likely vote against a change in park hours that would make the parks off limits at night. For those who would support such a rule, he suggested extending closing time to 12:00 a.m. midnight. He stated that doing so would minimize the intrusiveness while setting aside a time for parks to reset.

Gardiner proposed that more time be given so that staff could work out language that would include park hours and exceptions that could then be evaluated by the Commissioners.

There followed a brief discussion about listing exceptions and the need for additional public feedback. Staff was directed to include parks hours on the Agenda for the next regularly scheduled business meeting.

a. Japanese Garden Presentation (Information/Possible Action)

Black noted that Lithia Park's Japanese-style garden was originally envisioned by John MacLaren in the early 1800's and fully implemented in the park by 1916. Development continued for some years, but eventually the garden fell into disrepair. The garden was renovated in the 1980's and '90's by Parks personnel and has continued to remain in good repair.

Black explained that four years ago, donor Jeff Mangin stepped forward with a proposal to add authenticity to the garden so that the garden was more indicative of Japanese culture and social heritage. Black stated that the design and attributes of the current garden had been borrowed from the Japanese, whereas Mangin's idea was to create a more authentic Japanese garden.

Black stated that the conceptual design had been extensively reviewed and vetted with opportunities for public input. A subcommittee was tasked with choosing a conceptual design that would compliment the Lithia Park Master Plan. The design was vetted during Design Week for the Lithia Park Master Plan and gave the subcommittee an opportunity to publicly explain the parameters of the project and obtain feedback about proposed conversion to traditional Japanese garden. People were in agreement that the concept was appropriate and welcome – as long as the other elements in the park remained undisturbed. Two additional public meetings were held to determine what Ashlanders felt were the redeeming characteristics of the garden and what they would like to see happen in the garden. A number of objectives were developed based upon public comment and data gathered during the Lithia Park Master Plan process.

One clear directive was to create a garden that would be more accessible to people – particularly for those who need ADA access and facilities. In addition, people would like additional benches and quiet places. Japanese elements such as a tea house and moss garden were deemed desirable, as were water features and a stream. It was noted that stepping off the existing pathway moved people away from the garden and commenters were agreeable to expanding the garden to mitigate that abrupt transition away from the garden. Black stated that the current pie-shaped garden was difficult to work with and the plantings were vulnerable to damage from local wildlife – fencing would be needed that could be incorporated into the landscaping.

Black noted that the proposed design created by Mr. Tanaka was prepared based upon the comments and ideas gathered. He explained that the Commissioners comments would also be taken into consideration. Black noted that APRC would be working closely with Mr. Mangin and Mr. Tanaka to bring the project to fruition.

Mangin introduced Toru Tanaka – describing the process of finding a qualified Japanese landscape architect. He stated that Tanaka was known for his creation and management of the Portland Japanese garden – which is considered the most authentic Japanese garden in the country.

Mangin talked about his love for the existing garden, stating that he had shared his enjoyment of the garden with his beloved wife – and that it was in her honor that he was undertaking the project. He also expressed a desire to contribute something of value to Ashland – stating that his goal was to provide a venue that would engage and energize the community, as well as attract visitors.

Tanaka presented a future garden tour, noting that the garden would reflect much of the current configuration. The entrance would be moved to the side of the garden and visitors would travel around the garden on a pathway that would be ADA (American with Disabilities) accessible. A formal entryway would lead visitors into a bamboo forest then to a wisteria garden that in turn would lead to a tea garden. The tea house would border a stream beginning with an 8 ft. waterfall leading into a natural garden. Other elements would include an area of costal pines, a Zen garden bordered with a Japanese tile roof and wall. A koi pond would be accessible over a bridge to a patio and deck. There were plans for a gatehouse that would be bordered by a Japanese vine that would remain green throughout the year. With the bamboo beside it, the vine represents strength. A bamboo fence would support a fast-blooming white flower. On the other side, the fencing becomes a temple fence – one designed to guide the eye forward.

Tanaka described the bamboo garden that would be planted with a type of bamboo that remains small in diameter. In the center there would be a Japanese style red lantern with a simple moss cover. When entering the grove, one can go through the gate that leads out of the garden.

Tanaka talked about the tea garden, indicating that the courtyard before the tea house was an important area – providing space for preparations before entering the tea house. There would be a full washing stone with a basin. Tanaka chose a four-sided style basin with Japanese carvings – but noted that there were many kinds of basins to choose from.

The natural garden bordering the creek would have a stone lantern that would anchor the stream. The space behind the waterfall would be used for storage of the pump and other mechanical items. Large stepping stones provide enough width for travel in a wheelchair. (not quite sure this is accurate) On the other side of the natural garden would be the sculptured shoreline bordered by a Japanese forest. In the spring beautiful pink and white flowers could be enjoyed.

The Zen garden would be very simple - constructed of sand and rock. Each rock would have a special meaning. Tanaka pointed out a rock that looks like a ship, noting that the up-thrust points towards the islands where people traditionally look for treasure. For those who carry a heavy load -- it is symbolic of leaving the burden behind.

Mangin highlighted Tanaka's effort to preserve as many trees as possible in the garden. Tanaka had talked about providing space for the existing maple to thrive by protecting its roots and Mangin emphasized that this level of care would be extended to all of the trees that would be incorporated into the new design. He detailed time spent with APRC's arborist – assessing each tree to determine which would survive and those that would not. Tanaka added that there was a large Douglas Fir that had a weak root system – suggesting that the tree be taken down and repurposed by using its wood to build the garden's infrastructure – the benches and fencing and other structures that would become an integral part of the garden's make-up.

Tanaka continued to describe other elements of the proposed garden such as the bonsai stand that would be placed on the patio next to the pond to divide the areas. He stated that the deck would provide a place for the koi to hide in the winter. A focus beside the pond would be a willow tree – referencing the light and dark sides of mankind. Tanaka explained that pond water was considered female, while the waterfall was considered to be female on one side and male on the other side. Tanaka stated that he was well versed in Japanese culture and would be happy to explain the meaning of each element but he emphasized that people who just want to enjoy the beauty of the garden without cultural significance were welcome too.

Tanaka talked about the current entrance to the garden, stating that the steps would be repurposed to utilize as part of the waterfall. The entrance gate would be moved to another part of the garden. Cherry trees would be planted in such a way that when mature, would block the street and parking areas from view.

Finally, Tanaka spoke of his anticipation in building the garden and delight in presenting his garden drawings to the Commissioners and the public.

Black noted that moving forward would entail more detailed design information in order to obtain price estimates.

He explained the rationale for moving the entrance gate, stating that Tanaka would protect the donation of another Ashland resident by placing the gate within a garden. APRC had unknowingly placed the gate at the entrance – not understanding that it represented a Shinto religious symbol - something that could be construed as offensive to some people.

Commissioner Discussion

Landt asked about a work around for the large Douglas firs on the property. He asked about the breast height measurement of the trees in the vicinity, indicating that such ancient trees should remain in place. Tanaka noted that he would be willing to accommodate the trees.

There followed a discussion about leaving the trees in place and moving the garden to the south to accommodate the trees. Mangin stated that due to the large number of needles that fall from the trees each year, the garden would need to be moved by approximately ten ft. Black added that such a move would not disturb the incense cedar located to the south.

Mangin stated that at first thought, he agreed with Commissioner Landt. He noted that after additional consideration, that utilizing the wood would provide a certain respect for the tree and because wood would be needed to complete the garden, it seemed to be appropriate and special.

Lewis advocated for a thoughtful review of the plan prior to determining the fate of the Douglas fir. He suggested that a site visit would be helpful so that he could evaluate the site. Lewis expressed his enthusiasm for the project – stating that it would be the fruition of work done by Don Tode – an APRC employee who spent many hours renovating the existing garden.

Black suggested that the site visit include anyone who would like to attend. Lewis agreed, emphasizing the broad scope of the project and the need to consider how best to assimilate the plan.

Landt questioned the height of the wall bordering the garden, access to Winburn Way, and details regarding the ADA access route. He noted that he would be amenable to a site visit.

Black stated that he would arrange a site visit prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

b. Smith-Myer-Roper Diversion Proposal on Ashland Creek (Information/Possible Action)

Alexis Larson, project manager for the Rogue Watershed Council introduced her mission – stating that the Watershed Council focused on fish passage and stream habitat projects.

Larson noted that although the Rogue Watershed Council was a not-for-profit, and not affiliated with any regulatory body, the organization worked with all of the natural resource agencies locally, in Jackson County, and in the State of Oregon. The work of the Watershed Council was funded with grants – including grants from Federal sources as well as from private foundations. Much of the work completed to date had been funded by the Resources Legacy Fund. There have been three projects since inception in 2017 – removal of a diversion dam in Talent, OR. and assistance for a private property owner to remove fans and improve irrigation. She noted that removing barriers for fish passage typically includes improvements for irrigation systems – a win-win proposition.

Larson noted that the Smith-Myer-Roper Diversion Dam is on the ODFW priority list as well as on the Rogue Basin list. She stated that the Watershed Council draws from the ODFW priority list when selecting projects and the Smith-Myer-Roper Diversion Dam was brought to the forefront when the First Water Trust and Bureau of Reclamation completed their preparatory work. According to an assessment, the main priority was to make way for juvenile fish who were seeking a cool-water refuge when Bear Creek became too warm to support them. Larson referenced the design work that

described the removal of the dam and replacement of a reprofiled stream channel that directs flow to the new intake system.

Larson noted that there were some educational opportunities with this project, stating that the Watershed Council proposed signage that would provide information about fish passage and why it was important. Other topics might include watershed health and riparian plantings. Larson stated that a media campaign would compliment the project and create greater awareness of the impact that the improvements would bring.

Larson talked about the diversion dam – noting the large amount of concrete along the site and the constraints that impeded juvenile fish from finding cool-water habitat. The concept design outlines the following:

- A roughened channel design that has a 6% slope over 95 ft. and is constrained between a pipe at one end and private infrastructure on the bank across from the park. Much of the channel is buried – with step-pools that will help to divert the flow into a new intake system. The existing fish screen would be reset for efficiency.
- Diversion improvements include a new head-gate and sediment trap; a pipe ditch and lower existing screens

Discussion Among Commissioners

In response to a question by Gardiner, Landt stated that the dam was located in the vicinity of Ashland Creek Park – just above the new sewer line.

Landt reported that he had a vested interest in the project because of water rights at the Smith-Myer-Roper diversion dam. He stated that the proposed removal was designed to create approximately 1.8 miles of spawning habitat. Landt asked about the barrier below Lithia Way and whether there were plans to improve fish passage there as well. Larson replied that it was not a priority at this time but because it did impede passage, it should be addressed at some point.

Landt expressed a concern about damage created by heavy equipment – referring to lessons learned when the sewer line was installed. He stated that there had been no restrictions on heavy equipment and a large area beside the project had been disturbed. He stated that with appropriate planning, the damage could have been minimized. Landt proposed a corridor with fencing to create a route for heavy equipment that would limit access to the work site. He asked that Parks staff line out the corridor with fencing on both sides.

Gardiner asked about walking trails and it was agreed that equipment would be able to detour around the trails. Black added that passageway might be needed over one of the trails but agreed that Parks staff could work towards minimal exposure.

Landt also asked that safeguards for leakage from equipment be undertaken for heavy equipment that is stored on parkland

In response to a question by Lewis, Black noted that the APRC's goal was to work with the Watershed Council to improve fish passage in addition to improving access to the creek. Landt agreed, stating that it would be an efficiency if both goals could be accomplished concurrently.

Landt noted that the Smith, Myer, Roper Diversion dam was the oldest structure in Ashland with water rights stemming from 1838. Larson agreed, stating that the project would go through historic review through the State Historic Preservation office.

Larson indicated that the first step after approval of the project would be to seek grants to fund the project.

Motion: Heller moved to approve the Ashland Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project.
The motion died for lack of a second.

Black noted that there were some amendments to add such as the installation of a heavy equipment corridor.

Motion: Heller moved to approve the Ashland Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project with the amendments previously discussed that would ensure care for the land and water. Lewis seconded.
The vote was all yes with Landt abstaining.

Black relayed that a letter would be sent to the Watershed Council stating APRC support for the project. He noted that APRC would also work on an agreement for in-kind assistance.

a. Change Guidelines for Park Design Subcommittee to Sustainability, Efficiency, & Conservation Subcommittee (Information/Action)

Black stated that the proposal was to change the current Subcommittee - called the Guidelines for Park Design Subcommittee - to the Sustainability, Efficiency, & Conservation Subcommittee. He indicated that there would be some changes to the way the subcommittee would function, with new goals as follows:

- *Reduce energy needs*
- *Develop best practices for design/maintenance*
- *Conserve natural resources*

There followed a brief discussion about listing the word *efficiency* in the title. Black explained that it stood for a broader role encompassing both Parks and Recreation. Lewis commented that an example proposed by Landt was how to design landscaping that would reduce maintenance – whether it be when mowing lawns or weeding.

Motion: Landt moved to approve as outlined by our Parks Director. Miller seconded.
The vote was all yes.

SUBCOMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

Black reported that the due diligence process was underway for the 5.52 acres of Main Street Property that had been approved by the Ashland City Council. He also announced that sale of the Clay street

property was moving forward with a tentative closing date of November 14, 2018. A Phase One Environmental Survey was underway and an Alta Survey was almost complete.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

There were none.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

Pool Ad-hoc Subcommittee Meeting—November 7, 2018, 3:30 p.m.
Ashland Senior Center 1699 Homes Ave.

S-SAC Goal Setting—November 13, 2018, 1:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.
SOU Hannon Library Room 352 1250 Siskiyou Blvd.

Study Session—November 19, 2018, 7:00 p.m.
The Grove, Otte-Peterson Room 1195 E. Main St.

Regular Meeting—November 26, 2018, 7:00 p.m.
Council Chambers 1175 E. Main

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Manuel, Assistant

These Minutes are not a verbatim record. The narrative has been condensed and paraphrased at times to reflect the discussions and decisions made. Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission Study Sessions and Regular meetings are digitally recorded and are available upon online.