

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Signs, Plaques & Memorials Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2017

ATTENDEES

Present: Commissioners Heller and Lewis; Interim Parks Superintendent McFarland; Executive Assistant Dyssegard; Park Tech II Hyde

Absent: None

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Lewis called to order at 2:40pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was noted that the March 2017 meeting minutes were approved by the Parks Commission in April.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Peggy and Burke Brynes, 1551 Woodland Drive in Ashland, said they were interested in learning more about the work of the Parks Commission and its subcommittees.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Hear Update on Recent SPM Requests

a. Bandshell Benches—Strauss and Bettinger

Dyssegard said a bench was recently installed near the bandshell for longtime Ashland City Band member Yair Strauss and another bench had been proposed for that area for the Bettinger family. She said the Bettingers previously talked about funding a pollinator garden at The Grove but the family could not agree on the project. In the meantime, they hoped to fund a bench at the bandshell.

Discussion

Lewis asked if there would be two bandshell benches with plaques and Dyssegard replied yes. Lewis asked if they would be existing benches and Dyssegard said they would be new. Lewis asked if they would be movable benches and Dyssegard said they would be fixed in place. Heller asked if plaques were placed on the backs of the benches and Dyssegard said they were usually mounted on the front.

b. Lithia Park Picnic Table—Kletter

Dyssegard said a memorial picnic table with plaque was underway for the Kletter family—an upgrade of an existing picnic table. Hyde asked about the designated location and Dyssegard said it was along the chipped path trail up from the APRC Admin office.

c. Ashland Creek Park Memorial Bench for Vogel Family—Materials and Location

McFarland said the Vogel family patriarch had passed away and the family hoped to install a bench on their former property, now known as Ashland Creek Park. He said this new metal bench with plaque would be purchased by the Vogel Family and the proposed location was yet to be determined.

Discussion

McFarland said the original requested location was an area that was experiencing problems with homeless campers. He said the Trail Master Plan also recommended not building trails that led people into dead-ends, such as the Meadow Loop Trail, which was an area under consideration for the bench. Lewis said staff could decide where a bench might be most appropriate. Hyde asked if staff could invite the family to visit the area so everyone could discuss and decide on a suitable location. In terms of the homeless campers, McFarland said staff checked the park regularly for campers and packed out trash as needed. Additionally, APD officers were stepping up patrols.

Heller mentioned the dynamics between the benches and the homeless. He said sometimes benches with dividers were purposely placed so visitors couldn't lie down. He also suggested shorter benches. McFarland said homeowners downstream from the park were having problems with the homeless coming onto their property and going to the bathroom in their yards. Lewis mentioned that APRC wanted to work with the Vogels and a metal bench would require less maintenance. Dyssegard said the bigger concern was the location of the bench. Hyde said there was a plan for lavender beds at Ashland Creek Park, in the area of the existing bench at the end of the loop trail. Hyde said he hoped to plant wildflowers that would make the area more meadow-like. In terms of the timeframe for the Vogel bench, Dyssegard said the Vogels wanted to have the project completed by October 27, 2017. Lewis suggested that the subcommittee allow staff to make the decision about the bench and its location in order to expedite the process. He suggested calling the Vogels and scheduling a meeting on the property with staff. Lewis said he didn't know how long it would take to get the plaque; Dyssegard responded that it had already been ordered. Heller asked if the October 27 deadline was a reasonable timeframe to complete the project. Staff said they would do their best to accommodate the family's needs. Heller said a non-standard bench was fine; Lewis concurred.

d. New Garfield Park Signs

Dyssegard said new Garfield Park signs were underway: four welcome signs that also provided park rules, designated for installation at the four entrance points to the park. The group discussed purchasing six signs (instead of four) and placing them at each entrance, with two placed between the volleyball courts and the waterplay area for greater visibility about park rules.

2. Review SPM Policy and Discuss Potential Updates

Dyssegard said the Signs, Plaques and Memorials policy was last reviewed in 2013. At that time, the price of memorial benches was raised from \$300 to \$600 and the Parks Commission also discussed implementing a ten-year time limit on memorial items in the park due to a shortage of memorial opportunities in Lithia Park. Heller asked for clarification on the time limit; Dyssegard said that after ten years, memorial items would no longer necessarily be under the ownership of the original donors. Hyde said he felt the bench price was right and he was supportive of the ten-year time limit. Lewis asked if Hyde was saying that the bench could not be guaranteed after ten years as opposed to stripping the plaque off. Hyde said in ten years it would not be automatically sold to anyone else but there was no guarantee about continued ownership. Heller asked if there was a system for tracking original donation dates and Dyssegard said she kept a spreadsheet of installation dates. Lewis said that it sounded fine as long as donors understood that their items were only guaranteed for ten years. Noting a section in the policy about larger plaques for larger donations, Lewis asked for clarification about the recommendation of 3x4 plaques. Dyssegard said it would allow for larger plaques (3x4 instead of 1x4) for donations at or above \$5,000 in value.

Lewis recommended including the ten-year time limit in the SPM policy and calling for a vote by the Parks Commission at a future meeting. Heller said there was limited space for benches in Lithia Park so this made sense. Heller mentioned the wall of giving (plaques) near the downtown Chamber of Commerce and asked if something similar could be installed in Lithia Park. Lewis said the commission had discussed a wall of giving in the past but decided to include that as recommendation in the upcoming Lithia Park Master Plan.

In conclusion, Lewis asked staff to forward any recommended updates for the SPM policy to the Parks Commission for review and potential approval.

Open Forum

Peggy Brynes said she and her husband frequented the Ashland Senior Center and were interested in how the Parks Commission conducted its business.

Lewis said staff could notify the Brynes' about upcoming Parks Commission meetings if they provided their email address. Mrs. Brynes asked if the makeup of the Ad-hoc Committee had been decided as she wanted to apply for a seat. Lewis said that he hoped people with an interest in the future of the Senior Center would show up at the meetings. He said the Parks Commission was open to input as they were trying to expand programs and services at the center. Lewis said a minimal number of Ashland seniors regularly visited the center, beyond the daily lunch program. Mrs. Brynes said she attended the discussion group and it was small. Lewis said it was never the intention of the Parks Commission to close the Senior Center but somehow that was the impression heard around the community, including in the press. Mr. Brynes said the biggest upset was the removal of the former Senior Center Manager. Lewis said a new manager would be hired in the future and the center would be enhanced. Lewis said Parks Commission meetings, including subcommittee meetings, were open to anyone wishing to attend. Dyssegard said all meeting agendas and minutes were posted on the City of Ashland website for public viewing. Mrs. Brynes said the agendas might not have been posted in noticeable ways. She said the fear factor was that the proposed upgraded swimming pool in Hunter Park would take over the land on which the Senior Center was located. She said one of the early recommendations was that the Senior Center be moved to The Grove, so it had appeared as if the Parks Commission wanted to eliminate the building. Lewis said that was one of the misinformation pieces circulating in the community. Mrs. Brynes said people were aware of how government worked and how government sometimes didn't listen. Lewis said anytime the public had questions, they could call APRC Director Black and set up a meeting. He said APRC handled both social services and recreational opportunities and there had been a great deal of criticism about what APRC knew about social services. He said APRC had been in charge of the Senior Center for over ten years but had never established control over its management. Dyssegard said many people didn't know that the Senior Center was a division of APRC. Lewis said that this was a new beginning and he was hopeful that the Brynes' would be involved in whatever parts they found interesting. Mrs. Brynes asked if the commissioners were volunteers and Hyde said they were volunteers, elected officials, many of whom had been doing their volunteer work for a long time and knew the city well. He said many cities didn't have a separate elected Parks Commission, just a Director, and the elected Parks Commissioners were on par with City Councilors because APRC was so important to Ashland. Lewis urged Mr. and Mrs. Brynes to stay involved with the work of the Parks Commission.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE

No meeting date was set.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:42 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Dyssegard, Executive Assistant
Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission