

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Minutes
January 28, 2019

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

Absent: 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

Executive Session	December 4, 2018
Pool Ad-Hoc Subcommittee	December 5, 2018
Golf Course Subcommittee	December 12, 2018

Study Session November 19, 2018

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes of November 19, 2018 as presented. Heller seconded.
The vote was all yes.

Regular Meeting December 10, 2018

Motion: Lewis moved to approve the Minutes of December 10, 2018 as presented. Gardiner seconded.
The vote was all yes.

INTRODUCTION

Recreation Superintendent Rachel Dials introduced new Golf Course Manager Patrick Oropallo.

Oropallo talked briefly about his background, noting that he had learned to play golf as a child at the Oak Knoll Golf Course. He stated that he was pleased to return to the Ashland community as Manager for the Golf Course, stressing his desire to convey his passion for the game to the youth of Ashland.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- *Open Forum*

Terry Doyle of 462 Allison St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Doyle noted that his deceased wife, Chiyemi Katsuyoshi Doyle had been born in a Tule Lake Oregon Japanese Internment camp in June of 1945. He asked for permission to erect a memorial in her honor, suggesting that a Japanese Lantern (or Toro) would be appropriate. Doyle relayed that he would defray the costs for acquiring and placing the Lantern in a suitable place within the Japanese Garden. (see Attachment I)

Martin Stadmueller of 2248 Lupine Dr. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

As President of the Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association, Stadmueller advocated for additional mountain bike trails – noting a particular need for trails that would serve young riders. He suggested that APRC consider ground

for a pump track that would prepare riders for safe travels when skilled enough to ride in Ashland's watershed. Stadmueller also proposed a low-angle easy trail for novices along the east side of Lithia Park. He indicated that such a trail would provide safe access from town as well as reducing traffic along roads that lead to Ashland's watershed as well as removing riders from Winburn Way.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Action)

Motion: Landt moved to approve Michael Gardiner as Chair of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Board of Commissioners for 2019. Heller seconded.

The vote was all yes.

Gardiner accepted the nomination.

Motion: Lewis moved to approve Rick Landt as Vice-Chair of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Board of Commissioners for 2019. Bell seconded.

The vote was all yes.

Landt accepted the nomination.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Japanese Garden (Action)

Tanaka introduced a rendering of the proposed garden, noting that it would modestly enlarge the existing garden and provide easier access into the garden. The garden would offer an authentic view of Japanese culture and garden design.

Tanaka stated that people seemed to be in agreement that the proposed design met the project's criteria transforming the current Japanese-style garden into a beautiful traditional garden steeped in the elements of Japanese design. He acknowledged concerns about removal of two Douglas firs in order to facilitate the garden's design, stating that in his opinion, the health of the tree closest to that garden was problematic. Because of the lean, further growth (if any) would be limited and if toppled by the wind, there was a potential for catastrophic destruction of the garden.

Black provided a visual display of the existing garden with an overlay depicting the proposed expansion. He explained that the garden would expand from .5 acre to approximately .65 acre – an additional 6500 square feet. He stated that the original Japanese Garden had been very basic -and by 1924 there were only two mature trees in the area. He talked about the current interest in enhancing the garden that began with incorporation into the Lithia Park Master Plan. In August 2018, workshops were held to discover what people wanted in improvements to the garden. In October 2018, a conceptual drawing was presented to the Commissioners at a public meeting. Additional meetings were held since then to discuss the plans. Interested citizens were included all along the way and recommendations from the Tree Commission and the Historic Commission were sought.

Black explained that ADA (Americans for Disabilities Act) access to the garden became a guiding principle based upon public input. People also wanted an immersive experience – the experience of being in a garden that was authentic in detail, honoring Japanese culture. Black noted that there were several features in the current garden that were not accurate - and APRC was working to rectify that.

The Douglas fir trees were also a major theme. APRC had received approximately 80 written public comments regarding removal. Black expressed his appreciation for the public feedback.

Black reported that a certified arborist from outside the area (Michael Oxman of Seattle Washington) was asked to evaluate the trees and report his findings. Oxman stated that the two leaning trees were healthy and that removal of the trees could affect the remaining firs. Trees 1 and 2 had protected the Grove from the wind and were part of a network of roots that were underground. Removal could jeopardize that system. Oxman estimated that the remaining lifespan of the two trees was approximately 20 years. (see Attachment II)

Black stated that no public dollars had been spent on construction of the garden. He acknowledged that ongoing maintenance would increase – with current annual maintenance costing approximately \$20,000 for the .5 acre. When completed, maintenance for the enlarged and enhanced garden was estimated to be \$80,000. The Ashland Parks Foundation donor has agreed to defray \$60,000 of the \$80,000 maintenance costs to facilitate the ongoing maintenance expenses going forward. Black emphasized that with the maintenance costs covered, there would be no need to charge for admission.

Black noted that the Parks Foundation was asking for approval to move forward and if approved, it was anticipated that construction would begin as soon as was feasible. The project would be completed in the Fall of 2020.

Donor **Jeff Mangin** was called forward.

Mangin relayed that he had been working with the Ashland Parks Foundation to develop an authentic Japanese garden. The \$1.3 million dollars was gifted in honor of his late wife – Beatrice Mangin Marechal. Mangin stated that not only was he willing to finance the construction costs, he would offset maintenance costs of \$60,000 annually until such time as the garden becomes self-sufficient.

Mangin talked about the time spent in the discovery phase of the garden – the many public meetings, the gathering of information compiled from those meetings, the process of choosing a renowned landscape architect and the subsequent plan for enhancement of the Japanese garden. He spoke of the give and take - the compromises and sacrifices made. Mangin stated that the design that evolved was a best effort to balance “the desire for authenticity, respect for the integrity of the design and the desires of the public.” (see Attachment III) Mangin acknowledged that approval would mean removal of two Douglas Fir trees, stating that removal would be offset by development of a beautiful garden.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Gardiner reported that Ashland’s City attorney had reviewed the public meeting protocol to date and determined that there had been no protocol violations throughout the process.

Gardiner also noted that a citizen had asked him to recuse himself from the proceedings due to a perceived conflict of interest. He stated that there was no conflict of interest - per findings from a legal review.

Charlotte Nuessle of 156 Oregon St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Nuessle advised consideration of the impact that climate change would have on Ashland’s watershed when making a decision regarding the removal and/or replacement of trees for the Japanese Garden project. She questioned whether climate change had been considered as a factor in development of the Japanese Garden design. She suggested that careful deliberation take place from the perspective that healthy trees could better withstand wildfire.

Larry Korn of 465 Taylor St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Korn relayed his preference for a modified design for the Japanese Garden that would include the Douglas firs.

Horace Quick of 910 Glendower St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Quick emphasized the impact that wind would have on the remaining trees in the Grove, should the two Douglas fir trees be removed. He talked about the people who had planted the Douglas Firs, noting that they did so knowing that the trees would remain beyond their lifetime. He advised relocation of the bamboo grove to accommodate the existing grove of Douglas firs.

Quick also inquired about the maintenance costs and whether economic factors such as inflation had been anticipated when arriving at the proposed dollar amount for future maintenance.

Barry Egner of 1775 Bristol St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Egner reviewed his background in landscaping, including studies of Japanese gardening. He described the atmospheric impact that trees provide – in particular older trees. He proposed incorporation of the two firs into the design.

Julie Norman of Helman St & **Marlene Stowe** of 290 Arnos Rd. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Norman spoke in favor of retaining the trees and provided written comments as well as an informal poll resulted in 64 people opining for the retention of the firs with 2 people against. The comments were admitted into the record (see Attachment IV).

Stowe read a prepared statement describing her career as a forest ecologist. She stated that removal of the two relatively large Douglas Fir trees would change the light and wind environment as well as the below ground environment for the remaining cluster of Douglas Fir trees – potentially putting the entire cluster at risk. Stowe emphasized the 100 years of growth that had resulted in the now mature trees, noting that they were healthy and still growing. She recommended that the firs remain in place.

JoAnne Eggers of 221 Granite St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Eggers indicated that an alternate location for the bamboo forest – up-slope from what was depicted in the proposed plan – would allow the two Douglas Firs to remain in place without sacrificing any of the elements that would constitute a beautiful, authentic Japanese garden. She described components that in her opinion, are expressions of the essence of Lithia Park, advocating for the existing trees.

Eggers was critical of the public process generally. She emphasized a goal articulated early on that stated that APRC would do everything possible to preserve and respect the existing trees without encroaching on the contiguous spaces surrounding the Japanese Garden. Eggers stated that there was no need to destroy the Douglas fir trees, indicating that they were considered a part of Ashland's native culture and should not be removed to accommodate Japanese culture. Eggers stressed her respect for both cultures and the harmony that could be created if both were accommodated.

Bryan Holley of 324 Liberty St. Ashland OR. was called forward.

Holley noted his background as the former chair of the Ashland Tree Commission. He highlighted what he called “the objectification of trees” with regard to the Japanese Garden project specifically and as a common belief system generally. He stated that in fact, the two Douglas firs were living beings and worthy of the same consideration that is currently given to other living things. He advocated for postponement of any action for at least a month and recommended a book called The Hidden Life of Trees by Peter Wohlleben.

Maddie Dirienzo of Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Dirienzo talked about her experience exploring the gardens of Japan. She described the gardens as magical places, noting that they provided spiritual comfort. Dirienzo stated that others experience similar feelings about natural forests or in this case, in a grove of Douglas Fir trees. That said, Dirienzo applauded benefactor Jeff Mangin’s generous gift, stating that a renovated Japanese Garden would benefit the community as a whole and create a legacy for the people of Ashland. She expressed a concern, based upon past experiences in Ashland, that a compromise might jeopardize the entire project. Dirienzo noted that the public process was a difficult one – particularly for donors. She urged the Commissioners to support the larger vision – one that would define the future of Lithia Park – and create a world class Japanese Garden.

Mark Dirienzo of Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Dirienzo thanked the Ashland Parks Foundation for working with the donor to develop an authentic Japanese garden. He described the positive long-term economic impact that the garden would establish for the City of Ashland and its residents.

Dirienzo urged the Commissioners to consider themselves *founders of the Park* who have the responsibility to define the Park and its future. He highlighted the struggle that deciding controversial matters entails, noting that those types of decisions resulted in infrastructure for Lithia Park that would otherwise not be enjoyed. He noted that many times, trees or plants were sacrificed to accomplish components such as the bandshell and the duck ponds. He also spoke of the importance of donors and their contributions, stating that extraordinary accomplishments were difficult to achieve without them.

Finally, Dirienzo noted the complexities of designing a Japanese garden, stating that changing the placement of an element or elements could cause a ripple effect with negative consequences.

Carol Command of 635 Ashland St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Command stated that the proposed new design for the Japanese Garden was a wonderful gift – one that she did not want to associate with sacrifice. She stressed the importance of saving the trees, noting that there were only 3% of the old growth trees left in Oregon. Command asked the Commissioners to compromise so that Ashland could keep the trees and enjoy a new garden.

Sarah Mix of 243 N. Mountain Ave. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Mix highlighted her native American heritage as a member of the Cherokee nation. She commented that the Portland Japanese Garden had incorporated some very large trees into the garden – contributing to the poetry of design that the garden expressed.

Mix stated that she was concerned about maintenance costs for a new garden and the extent of the donor's commitment to defray them.

Nichole Danziger of 192 Van Ness Ave, Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Danziger talked about the arborist's analysis regarding the Douglas Fir Tree Grove, referencing his opinion that removing the two trees could cause damage to the entire Grove. She noted the importance of the wind and sun factors as well as the synergy of the underground environment. Danziger recommended a book written by Suzanne Simard called How Trees Talk to each Other.

Danziger had questions about access to the garden – given that the proposed garden would be fenced and gated. She asked about hours of operation, expressing a concern about limited access.

Rivers Brown of 2067 Ashland St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Brown described a walk-through Lithia Park, noting his appreciation for the garden's ambiance. He talked about the existing Sycamore Grove, stating that those particular trees were not as healthy as those in the Douglas Fir Grove. Brown suggested replacing the Sycamore Grove with the proposed Japanese Garden – noting that the Douglas Fir Grove would remain in place and the garden could be accommodated.

Mary Kwart of 1467 Siskiyou Blvd. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Kwart shared her expertise in forestry and familiarity with the gardens of Japan. She stated that in Japan, Japanese gardens often incorporate mature trees into the garden's design, protecting them with bamboo stakes. She advocated for keeping the trees – noting Ashland's status as a Tree City USA.

Darwin Thusius of 897 Beach St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Thusius drew comparisons between removal of the two Douglas Firs to statements made by the then President Reagan about logging old growth timber. He questioned the donor's right to direct the use of his money to achieve an end. Thusius likened the donation to a hypothetical example of a donor converting the duck pond into a pond for other uses espoused by a donor such as rowboating.

According to Thusius, a former Parks Commissioner and longtime Ashland environmentalist stated that one Douglas fir was worth an entire Japanese garden. Thusius questioned the need to remove the two firs characterizing them as survivors who had survived 100 years. He likened the dilemma as similar to one that happened years ago where the Mt. Ashland Ski organization questioned the need to remove trees for construction of ski runs. The contractor responded to public opposition by withdrawing the plan. Thusius stated that the contractor noted that he would not take on a project unless there was widespread support.

Michael Dawkins of 646 East Main was called forward.

Dawkins noted that although he was President of the Ashland Garden Club, he would be representing his personal views. He stated that he had been fortunate to study under Chet Corey – one of the master gardeners who had shaped Lithia Park. He noted that after a lifetime of gardening - one of the lessons learned was that mistakes can be made and that sacrifice happens when it becomes necessary.

Dawkins talked about re-designing the proposed Japanese garden – likening the design to a piece of art. Once created, altering the design could be problematic. He noted the Japanese influence in creating a masterpiece – indicating the complex interplay between texture and scale.

Dawkins relayed that as a native Ashlander, he was dismayed with the direction the negative comments made. He stated that there were disparaging remarks made that disparaged the benefactor and his gift.

Candace Cave of 348 N. Main St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Cave emphasized her love of trees as evidenced by the fifteen Incense Cedars that she planted in her small yard. She described their growth – now at nineteen feet as a small forest surrounding her small corner lot. Cave also stated that she loved Japanese gardens and that the atmosphere in such a garden was different than the atmosphere she experiences in the forest.

Cave relayed her conviction that Lithia Park should be as diverse as possible and an authentic Japanese Garden should be facilitated. If that meant removing two out of twelve Douglas Fir trees, the sacrifice was a reasonable one. She commented that it was her belief that the design could not be changed without disrupting the entire garden. If found to be necessary, the only option would be to start over. Cave questioned the need to do so, however, listing all of the factors already in place or underway. She advocated for a Douglas Fir Grove of 10 trees and a formal Japanese Garden as designed.

Zed Lancaster of 348 N.E. Main St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Lancaster spoke in terms of three spirits – the trees, the garden, and the community. He stated that in any relationship, sacrifices happen and if two trees must be removed to retain the integrity of the garden's design then the sacrifice was reasonable. He talked about the benefits of the Garden, noting the places of respite and tranquility that that Garden would provide. Lancaster stated that visitors would come to experience the garden and it would lift their spirits as well.

Cate Hartzell of 859 C. St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Hartzell noted the importance of sustainability and the benefits of protecting mature trees. She referred to a study underway in Ashland's watershed that was to document forest edge effects -a phenomenon that seems to increase the possibility of wildfire in the region. Hartzell indicated that the potential for wildfires was a concern of Ashland residents.

Hartzell talked about the value of shared spaces and the importance of trees. She expressed a concern about introducing invasive species such as bamboo into the Park. Hartzell commented that Parks had a responsibility to set an example in ecosystem management and in prioritizing projects that would help to address climate change.

Hartzell questioned the privatization of parks and the setting of boundaries that were not compatible with community values.

Christ Hardy of 1193 Ashland Mine Rd. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Hardy described his background as a professional landscaper, stating that he was from a farming family, was a plant person and an outdoors person. He noted the science of long-term impacts of climate change and the carbon impacts of removing old growth trees.

Hardy spoke about the youth and the importance of getting the young ones involved. He suggested that Commission work to obtain feedback regarding the trees from Ashland's youth. He asked the Commissioners ensure that they are acting with integrity.

Jean Fyfer of 215 Sherman St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Fyfer expressed gratitude that the project was under consideration because of the benefits the garden would bring to the community. She also said that the Grove of Douglas Fir trees was historically and culturally significant – circumstances that should be considered prior to removing the two trees. Fyfer stated the Douglas Fir Grove had historical and cultural relevance to Lithia Park.

Fyfer noted that in Ashland private citizens must consult and abide by recommendations of the Tree Commission if removing a tree. She stated that APRC should do the same.

Angie Thusius of 897 Beach St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Thusius referred to the Parks mission to preserve and maintain the parks and open spaces in Ashland -efforts that help to avoid negative ramifications. Removing the two Douglas fir trees when they are healthy and still growing would disrupt the interlinking of the root system of the remaining trees. She indicated that in her opinion, there is no argument that supports the killing of the grandfather trees.

Thusius noted that APRC had accepted the standards developed by the City of Ashland – therefore the Tree Commission's recommendations should stand. That said, Thusius noted Japanese Garden architect Toru Tanaka had stated that he could work around the trees - a more palatable solution than removing them completely. She went on to describe the enchantment that the "garden of giants" provides.

Thusius urged the Commission to accommodate both the Fir trees and the new garden.

Dara Crockett of 162 5th St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Crockett explained her philosophy regarding the trees, as an elementary school teacher and student of Japanese culture. She stated that the venerable old trees were elders – and as such much respected in Japanese culture. She asked the Commission to send the children of Ashland the message that Ashlanders don't throw old things out when they are inconvenient – rather allowances are made.

Cat Gould of 114 Van Ness Ashland, OR. 97504.

Gould stated that she had been watching a pair of red-shouldered hawks that have been nesting in the larger of the two Douglas Fir trees. She noted that when the design for the Japanese Garden was presented to the Tree Commission, the hawk swooped through the meeting. She said that red-shouldered hawks were not common in the area and retaining them was a matter of concern.

Gould also expressed a concern about the ongoing maintenance costs that the City would have to absorb once the donor's annual maintenance contributions had ceased. She asked that the donor's contributions be clarified in a contract along with plans to maintain the garden once his support has been withdrawn. Gould also noted that the donor had indicated that keeping the trees would not be a deal breaker for the project. She asked that the Commissioners reconsider and develop a plan that works for everyone.

Michael Bryant of Ashland was called forward.

Bryant stated that he had recently taken his parents on a tour of Lithia Park and they were able to view the proposed plan, agreeing that it was beautiful. He stated that the information circulating was somewhat confusing – with some maintaining that the design could be changed and others stating that it could not. Bryant advocated for a compromise – so that the trees could remain and the new garden could be built.

Bryant praised the donor for his willingness to pay for construction of the garden as well as donate an annual fee for maintenance. He stated that he believed that the Commissioners would make a good decision – one that would allow the Japanese Garden project to move forward and the Douglas Fir Grove to continue to grow and thrive.

Victor Novic of Ashland was called forward.

Novic stated that in some gardens in Japan the trees were worshipped and surrounded by prayer ropes. He suggested that the veneration of the trees should be a characteristic of Ashland's Japanese garden.

Novic reiterated a concern regarding access to the garden, stating that the garden should be enjoyed at all times and access should not be restricted.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

In response to a question by Bell, Director Black indicated that Lithia Park was closed from 11:30 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. and that it was assumed that the Japanese Garden would follow the same guidelines. He explained that the fencing and gate were preventative measures to keep the wildlife from damaging the garden.

Landt read a prepared statement as follows:

I am disappointed that the re-envisioning of the Japanese Garden has moved us towards a zero-sum game, where there would be clear winners and losers. I am frustrated that Ashland Parks Foundation staff has put Parks Commissioners in a position where we have to take sides, by asking us either to protect the pair of one-hundred-year-old four-foot diameter Douglas fir trees or cut the trees so the Garden plan can be implemented exactly as shown on the presented plan.

I believe most people in this room, and most of the eighty plus people whose emails I have read on the topic, and most people in Ashland would support a well-designed, authentic Japanese Garden and the preservation of the Douglas fir trees.

I believe a win/win solution is possible and reasonable. What I am going to propose has come from comments of Ashland citizens.

I am going to make every effort to vote for the Japanese Garden renovation if I possibly can, because it is a generous gift and because I believe it will enhance the current Japanese-style Garden and Lithia Park as a whole. In the spirit of offering a win/win solution I move:

Motion: Landt moved to approve with the Park's Commissioners acceptance, the presented design of the Japanese Garden with the following conditions:

- 1) All twelve of the Douglas Fir Boy Scout Grove to be retained.
- 2) Construction and any other work within the drip line of the Douglas Fir Boy Scout Grove would only occur as recommended by certified arborists with the goal of maximizing protection for these trees above and below ground. The exception to the above being that the area within the drip line south of the existing north south sidewalk by the Douglas fir trees may require root disturbance to gain ADA access and other reasons. It is understood that work in this area would include supervision by certified arborists but reasonable measures to allow Garden construction and planting work would be allowed.
- 3) The garden may be expanded into the adjacent mostly lawn areas shown on the accompanying diagram to compensate for the areas lost around the Douglas fir trees.
- 4) With acceptance of this motion, Park Commissioners sign off on the project, in an effort to expedite completion of design, as long as the Parks Foundation, staff and Japanese Garden Committee approves the final plan, consistent with this motion.
- 5) All parties would agree that new issues would not trigger reconsideration by Parks Commissioners of the modified Garden.
- 6) Park Commissioners authorize that work may begin on digging up plants to store for future inclusion in the renovated Garden and other preliminary Garden construction work.
- 7) Plantings that occur within the drip line of the Douglas fir trees shall not be invasive plants like bamboo.

Bell seconded the motion.

Commissioner Discussion:

Bell commended donor Mangin for his extremely generous offer to development an authentic Japanese Garden. That said, Bell explained that the garden would generate a large amount of carbon pollution and the most efficient solution for carbon sequestration was mid-age Douglas Fir trees. For that reason, he expressed the view that it was important to leave the two Douglas firs in place.

Bell stated that in his opinion, the proposed Japanese garden design was flexible and could be re-designed. Trees, on the other hand were not flexible. He talked about the value of a long-term investment for both the trees and the garden – arguing for preservation of the Grove and a new design plan that would work for everyone in Ashland.

Lewis highlighted the protocol of discussion and debate that the Commissioners typically follow, noting that for this proposal, the process had not yet taken place. The debate would be more difficult to achieve because of the preempted motion. Lewis referred to the public statements received, indicating that the opinions of those present should be thoroughly deliberated and the project critiqued. Lewis noted that the conditions proposed by Commissioner Landt should also be reviewed and discussed.

Landt replied that he did not want to vote against the proposed Japanese Garden – that if a motion had been proposed without conditions, he would have to vote against the plan – something he was reluctant to do. Staff's recommended motion was to approve the proposal or approve with conditions.

Bell stated that Landt's motion touched on the issues that he felt were important.

After some back and forth between Lewis and Bell, Lewis stated that the proposal had been presented by the Ashland Park's Foundation and that their ideas should be reviewed and discussed prior to adding conditions.

Heller indicated that he was uncomfortable going forward with a new design or a plan to shift the location without discussion with the designer and donor. He stated that the proposal was the result of months of study along with a robust public process and to change the design without the benefit of the designer's analysis, and donor feedback, Heller would be reluctant to approve the changes.

Heller noted that a second plan had been submitted by another designer that was much more extensive than the one presented. At that time, the donor and Director Black declined to entertain the proposal – stating that a more modest expansion was more appropriate for Ashland.

Lewis spoke out against the savaging of the donor, stating that disparaging commentary was reprehensible. He noted the long history of donors that benefited Ashland. He stated that without donations, there would not have been a Lithia Park – and that the Park had begun as the brainchild of civic leaders at the turn of the century. Those leaders established funding and a Board to oversee the creation of Lithia Park. Others such as the Perozzi's, the Enders, and the Butlers contributed to the community through enhancements in the Park. Other examples of donor largess include the Walter Phillips family - who donated the football field in honor of Walter Phillips who was an aviator during World War I. The Meyers family's donation helped to create the Daniel Myer Pool. These people were all proactive in our community and Ashland continues to receive donations of all kinds that benefit Ashlanders.

Lewis talked about his relationship to Douglas firs – noting that he has planted thousands, and picked cones for reforestation. He has also logged firs. He noted that many homes were built of Douglas fir – homes that contribute to the well-being of many Ashlanders. Lewis stressed the complexities that are inherent in our use of natural resources, remarking that the issues surrounding them were not simple. He said that he was saddened by the characterization of the donor's intent – stating that it was not commercialization – rather one donation of many that Ashlanders have considered a civic duty.

Landt responded to Heller's concerns, stating that the conditions were meant to provide direction as well as to propose an alternative. He indicated that he would be amenable to a better alternative, and that some re-design would be necessary regardless.

Heller replied that he did not want to suggest a better alternative without talking to the designer and the donor. He noted that the Japanese Garden was one of his favorite places in Lithia Park and that the Douglas Fir trees seemed to be less well-known. A letter that resonated with him talked about fir trees as the most common tree in Oregon - and in fact there were hundreds of firs within Lithia Park and in the surrounding forests. Comments from a friend who is also a Master Gardener emphasized that trees and plants were often replaced or re-planted if there was interference with a garden's plan. Heller indicated that he would be supportive of continued research into alternatives prior to a vote.

Bell reiterated that the donor was very generous and most people would support the proposed Japanese Garden because of its added value to the City and Lithia Park. In his opinion, it was not unreasonable for the Commissioners to have some input into the design. He stated that the issues regarding the Douglas firs was a small part of the overall design. Bell stated that the public's concern was sufficient to make an effort to either incorporate or work around the trees.

Gardiner stated that he was prepared to discuss the Ashland Foundation's plan for a Japanese Garden, followed by a motion to approve or decline the plan as presented. He indicated that the project had many challenges and opportunities and it was understood that his decision would not please everyone. Gardiner described his view as a broader view in the trees versus garden debate. He explained that in his opinion, the garden was more important and he would not vote for the motion as currently proposed.

Lewis stated that a Commissioner's duty was to address the big picture rather than a narrow focus on two trees. He discussed examples of healthy trees such as the library's Gingko tree that were removed for the good of the community. Pieces of the Gingko are currently on display in the library today. In addition, there was an alder tree that was converted into a totem pole, now residing at the SOU library -and trees along the Plaza that were removed because of an issue with the sidewalks and so on. Lewis emphasized that civic leaders often much make decisions regarding trees and that the decision should be based upon what is good for the community at large. He noted that the Commissioners have a project before them that was an opportunity to do something special. He characterized Lithia Park as an idea that was transformed into a Park as the result of human ingenuity. He stated that the purpose currently awaiting a decision, was to put in place a garden that Ashland's citizens could enjoy. He stated that the conditions proposed by Landt would most likely remove the opportunity. Lewis stated that he was saddened by the narrow focus rather than the bigger perspective.

Bell replied that climate change was not a small issue. Landt explained that three of the seven conditions would not limit the project. He stated that he was attempting to accommodate the plan in order to expedite the process and if the motion would pass, it would continue to move forward even if new issues were to develop.

Heller asked about the possibility of talking with the designer prior to a vote. He stated that it would be difficult to support the proposed conditions without the input of designer and donor. Their feedback as to whether the proposed conditions were workable would be essential to his decision.

Gardiner indicated that the Ashland Park's Foundation had asked for a vote on the proposal as presented. He cautioned against attempts to design a better plan rather than voting for or against the proposal. Landt replied that Mr. Tanaka had stated that if asked to so do by the Ashland Parks Foundation, he could design a garden with the trees in place.

Gardiner called for a vote.

Motion: Landt moved to approve with the Park's Commissioners acceptance, the presented design of the Japanese Garden with the conditions listed above. Bell seconded.

Commissioners Landt and Bell voted in favor of the proposal with conditions.
Commissioners Heller, Lewis and Gardiner voted against.
The motion failed.

Bell called a point of order, asking that if the proposed amended motion failed could a vote then be called for the original proposal? Gardiner answered affirmatively.

Motion: Lewis moved to approve the proposal submitted by the Ashland Parks Foundation as presented. Gardiner seconded.

Commissioner Discussion

Lewis summarized the project process noting the many opportunities for public input, the multiple discussions and presentations that had taken place since October 2018. He stated that the community would benefit socially and culturally, spiritually and aesthetically. Lewis talked about the many economic and educational aspects of the garden as well.

Gardiner acknowledged that there were different points of view and that his decision was based upon his perceived obligation to future generations to create a space that will be useable and appreciated for 100 years or more. He stated that he accepted the plan as presented.

Bell stated that the Japanese Garden would be a great asset to Ashland but that in his opinion, it did not have to be the presented design. He suggested that there was room for compromise.

Lewis replied that people who are unfamiliar with design techniques might assume that changing a design is a simple matter. In his experience, once a component is changed, it has a ripple effect affecting other elements of the design as well. He stated that the proposed design has a sense of entry, a symmetry, a flow, a logical progression throughout each area, centered around a pond. The well-thought-out design is comprised of many individual areas that are part of a cohesive whole. He stated that the effects of Landt's conditions were unknown, but the proposal as presented seems to work well. Lewis emphasized that Lithia Park and the gardens within it have been created for people to enjoy and the opportunity to have an authentic Japanese Garden was a chance that shouldn't go away.

Heller added that the Commission had listened to the comments received from the community at large. He stated that in his opinion, the comments were fairly evenly split between those who accept the garden as it and those who do not.

Landt disagreed, indicating that the split was closer to 40% in favor the proposal of and 60% against. Landt stated that he had discussed the design with other designers and it seemed to be a consensus that the design could be reconfigured. He noted that the process was flawed in that the removal of trees was not known until after the design had been completed. Landt stated that removal of the trees would create an unnecessary stain on the garden and in his opinion, the trees and the garden could exist harmoniously together.

Motion: Lewis moved to approve the proposal submitted by the Ashland Parks Foundation as presented. Gardiner seconded.

Commissioners Landt and Bell voted against the proposal as presented.
Commissioners Heller, Lewis and Gardiner voted in favor.
The motion carried.

Black stated that he would forward the approval to the Parks Foundation.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. ***Proposed Senior Service Division Mission, Goals, and Priority Strategies (Action)***

Glatt referred to the Senior Services goals for 2019 that the Commissioners had approved, noting that the strategies proposed to support those goals were the result of a long study. The development of goals and strategies for the reorganized Senior Services Division were developed beginning with the Ad-Hoc Senior Program Advisory Committee and adoption by the S-PAC Subcommittee. The results of both processes were merged into a cohesive whole with the strategies prioritized.

Landt asked about accomplishing the goals and strategies within the existing budget. Glatt replied that the strategies would provide a starting place towards accomplishment of the goals. The initial steps taken would be within the general budget.

Gardiner added that the goals and strategies articulated the future direction of the program and various ways to achieve that direction.

Landt indicated that he was uncomfortable with the title of the Statewide program that will be utilized. He stated that in his opinion, the Gatekeeper name does not appropriately describe its function. He asked Glatt to determine whether the program could be known locally by another name that more accurately describes the intent of the program.

Glatt replied that the intent was to be an organization that opens the gate – that provides a bridge or an essential connection. She stated that the program was chosen because it included a valuable training component that would teach the community to recognize the signs of seniors that need help and how to connect them to the services they need. She committed to determining whether a name change would be feasible.

Bell asked about connections to other entities that provide services to seniors, such as Rogue Community Health. Glatt replied that a program was not yet in place – but that building partnerships was a priority. She stated that the Gatekeeper program, for example provided a conduit for the average citizen to connect with a source that will direct seniors to programs based upon their needs. The source is an Agency called the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC). Once the needs are identified then the senior is connected to the proper organization such as Rogue Community Health or La Clinica or other service providers. There are so many resources in our community that it takes intensive navigation that is often difficult for seniors. ADRC provides that direction.

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Senior Services Division mission, goals, and priority strategies as recommended by the Senior Services Advisory Committee. Lewis seconded.

The vote was all yes.

SUBCOMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

- ***2019 Subcommittee Assignments and Appointment of Parks Commissioner to serve on the Ashland Parks Foundation Board (Action)***

Gardiner explained that the current list of Subcommittees and Committees had been reorganized and their mission expanded for broader applications. Black noted that the consolidation combined like Subcommittees.

Motion: Lewis moved to approve the Subcommittees as presented. Heller seconded.

The vote was all yes.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

- **Ice Rink**

Landt recognized the Ice Rink, stating that the program provided so much enjoyment for participants, that he wanted to recognize the hard work that staff does to operate such a successful endeavor. He thanked the Commissioners of the past who had approved the program and the donors who helped to make it happen.

Dials noted that it had been a good year and that an End-of-the-Year report would be presented in March or April 2019.

- **Budget Alert**

Black announced that Budget season was underway with planning for the upcoming biennium.

MB: The Budget season is beginning and it is for two years. Looking forward to the process that will continue to June.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

Golf Course Subcommittee	February 6, 2019	@ Oak Knoll Golf Course - 3070 Hwy. 66	-2:00 p.m.
S-PAC	February 11, 2019	@ Ashland Senior Center - 1699 Homes Ave.	-3:30 p.m.
Study Session	February 11, 2019	@ The Grove -1195 E. Main	- 5:30 p.m.
Pool Ad-Hoc Subcommittee	February 13, 2019	@ TBD	- 2:30 p.m.
Regular Meeting	February 25, 2019	@ Council Chambers - 1175 E. Main	-7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 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 online.