

**MINUTES FOR STUDY SESSION
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
October 21, 2019
Council Chambers
1175 E. Main Street**

Present: Commissioners Gardiner (Chair), Landt (Vice-Chair), Bell, Heller, Lewis; Director Black; Recreation Superintendent Dials, Senior Services Superintendent Glatt; Parks Superintendent Oxendine, Analyst Kiewel, Cottle; Assistant Sullivan

Absent: City Council Liaison Mayor Stromberg

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm

PUBLIC INPUT

None

JAPANESE GARDEN DISCUSSION

Black gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Japanese Garden (see [Attachment I](#)). The originally approved project was put on hold by the donor as a result of community discord over the removal of two Douglas fir trees. The donor worked with the original designer to revise the plan to keep the two Douglas firs in place and will incorporate them into the redesign. The presentation included the following points:

- The presentation includes a slide with the current boundary (yellow line), which is approximately 0.5 acres. The slide also includes the redesigned plan boundary (red line), which would make the garden approximately 0.65 acres
- The changes in the redesigned plan include the following:
 - Douglas firs remain at northeast corner
 - Bamboo at the northeast corner is eliminated
 - Block wall that extends west from the sidewalk over roots of Douglas firs is partly eliminated to protect Douglas fir root systems
 - Minor changes have been made to the entry gate area
 - Handwash basin added to the entry features near Douglas fir trees
 - Small bamboo fence added to Douglas fir area
 - Space has been set aside at the entry for an information booth
 - A step stone path has been added to the Douglas fir area
 - The southern boundary of the garden is being expanded about two feet to accommodate some movement with other items on the interior of the garden
- The area adjacent to the Douglas firs is planned to be a more natural area of the garden
- Black will be the day to day project manager for the Japanese Garden. Toru Tanaka will be working to implement the design
- Cost of building the Japanese Garden is \$1.3 million, which will be provided through a grant from the Ashland Parks Foundation (APF)
- The cost of maintaining the current garden is approximately \$20,000 annually

- In the Cost of Maintenance slide in the presentation, the 2nd bullet point under “Ashland Japanese Garden” should state the cost at maintaining the proposed garden would be \$60,000-\$75,000/yr. total
- The donor, through the APF, will be providing up to \$60,000 per year for 10 years for maintenance
- Revenue opportunities such as rentals for weddings will be explored
- Black stated a desire to move forward with a unanimous vote from Commissioners; If approved, APRC will move forward with a more detailed construction plan, which would include a tree protection plan; the grant from APF will need to be finalized so the funds can be released to APRC
- The timeframe on construction would be approximately two years with a goal of completion in the fall of 2021
- Other trees in the existing garden and trees in the general vicinity of the construction area will be included in a tree protection plan
- A plan for construction access has not been finalized. There is a potential staging and equipment entrance area on Granite Street. Smaller equipment may be used to move materials into and out of the garden to mitigate compaction

Public Input

Maddie DiRienzo of Ashland referenced comments made in support of the project at a previous public meeting. DiRienzo spoke in favor of the redesigned plan and is supportive of moving forward with this plan that has the potential to unify the town.

Mark DiRienzo referenced comments made in support of the project at a previous public meeting. DiRienzo spoke in favor of the redesigned plan and stated a trust in APRC staff to protect the site and trees during construction. DiRienzo concluded happiness with the donor sticking around and being willing to redesign the project.

Richard Smith of Ashland has lived in the Ashland for 30 years thanked the Parks Commission for discussing this issue and advocated for keeping the trees in place. Smith also spoke in support of aquatic opportunities in Ashland.

Patricia Holman of Ashland who lives near the current garden was impressed with how the disagreement over the removal of trees was resolved and is supportive of the redesigned plan. Holman asked APRC to consider using Winburn Way as the main staging and access point to mitigate disturbances to residents on Granite Street.

Commissioner Discussion

Black stated that staff will be proposing conditions when this item is brought back to the Commissioner on October 28. The conditions will relate to the protection of the two Douglas fir trees, including the creation of a tree protection plan. Black clarified that a finalized tree protection plan will not be presented at the next meeting, rather a condition that such a plan will be required to move forward with construction.

Bell requested a step-by-step plan that includes costs for each step of the construction process.

Landt requested an outline of a tree protection plan be presented on October 28 to the Commission. Landt expressed a concern for trees adjacent to the current garden and requested these trees be addressed in a tree protection plan.

Heller acknowledged the donor's willingness to make an adjustment to the plan. This was a challenging situation and has resulted in a great outcome.

Gardiner inquired as to when the annual donation for maintenance would start. Black responded that it will be necessary to discuss this with the APF to ensure that a maintenance staff member will be in place once the project is substantially completed and will begin to require maintenance.

In response to a question from Gardiner, Black stated that the \$20,000 per year to maintain the current garden, would most likely be entirely spent through In-kind work and equipment use provided by APRC during the construction phase.

In response to a question from Bell, Black stated that the maintenance funds would largely go to support a staff person charged with maintaining the Japanese Garden.

Gardiner would like further discussion on how maintenance will be secured after the 10 years.

POOL FINANCING AND SITE PLAN PRESENTATION

Black gave a PowerPoint presentation on pool financing and the site plan (see second part of [Attachment I](#)). The presentation included the following items:

- The current location has been identified as the most favorable location due to existing infrastructure such as the bathhouse facilities, parking lots, etc.
- The current plan will meet the current uses already underway at the existing pool, which would not necessitate adding additional parking
- The Senior Center will not be physically impacted by the construction of a new pool
- The plan extends the footprint into the parking lot, but will not result in a decreased number of parking spots due to available space in the travel lane
- The 8-lane pool is 25 yard x 25 meter. The therapy pool is adjacent to the 8-lane pool and is included in the 25 yard x 25-meter area calculation.
- The plan shown in the presentation includes the extension into the parking lot
- The therapy pool includes a zero-grade ramp that would allow wheel chair access into the pool
- Extending the deck towards Hunter Court allows for a greater potential for preserving existing trees as well as the surrounding turf area
- The pool is not proposed with a cover but would use year-round. Cold weather safety mitigation will be included in the planning process
- The deck area will be large enough to allow for construction of a cover at a later date
 - If an outside group is able to raise funds for a cover by a specific end date, there will be an opportunity to plan and construct the pool with a cover
- There are city ordinances that require environmentally friendly components for municipal projects. Black will be consulting with the City's Conservation Division to identify if chlorine alternatives and other sustainable features can be incorporated into the pool design
- Alterations to the bathhouse would be made only if it is possible to stay under the proposed budget of \$2.6 million
- The pool will be planned as a community pool but will also take aquatic sports needs into consideration, such as depth of the pool. The pool would have a portion of it that is shallow
- The budget plan includes a large contingency to cover unexpected construction costs. The contingency is currently set to 30-40%, which will be reduced once the scope of the project is more detailed

Funding Options:

Revenue Bond

- Annual food and beverage income could be leveraged to secure a revenue bond to cover the construction of the pool
- The food and beverage (F&B) tax will expire in 2030
- Current encumbrances equal 25%, adding \$300K per year for 10 years would increase the encumbrances to 65% of the projected \$750K of annual revenue from the food & beverage tax

General Obligation Bond

- A general obligation bond would require voter approval
- Other general bond projects, such as a county jail, would compete against a general obligation bond for the pool

Do not fund a pool

- This would result in the loss of the only community pool

Black recommends moving forward with a revenue bond.

Black stated that other CIP project funding for the current biennium would not be impacted by securing a revenue bond since payment of the bond will not be made until the next biennium

Operations Costs:

- Current Budget
 - \$175,000 Expense
 - \$95,000 Revenue (sales, admit, contracts)
 - Total Budget Cost: \$80,000
- New Pool Budget
 - \$275,000 Expense
 - \$150,000 Revenue; \$45,000 F&B
 - Total Budget Cost: \$80,000

The expense increase is based on information from pools operators of similar size, cost of maintaining is somewhat determine on the surface area of pool

Climate, Energy and Action plan staffer will be consulted to identify more sustainable and potentially cost saving infrastructure

Public Inut

Douglas Smith of Ashland advocated for keeping the pool at the current size by repairing the current infrastructure. Smith also advocated for moving the location of the pool to decrease impacts to the neighbors. Questioned spending significant resources on a pool that serves a small number of people who use if for organized aquatic sports activities.

Rebeca Kay of Ashland stated the existence of a community pool and a Masters Swim Team were large factors in making the decision to relocate to Ashland and spoke in favor of moving forward with maintaining the existence of a community pool. Kay spoke about the importance of teaching children to swim.

Richard Smith of Ashland spoke in favor of the moving forward with a community pool.

Sara Jeske of Ashland spoke about the importance of aquatic experiences for youth. Jeske's child participates in Ashland High school water polo and comes home late due to time restrictions at the YMCA. Jeske is in favor of moving forward with the pool to provide better access at reasonable times for youth sports.

Jocelyn Sanford of Ashland thanked APRC for keeping access to aquatic activities as a goal. As a certified pool operating, Sanford spoke to the deterioration of the current pool and which does not serve fully the community. Sanford spoke on behalf of the current location and spoke about the diverse users of the pool outside of competitive users.

Shannon Kegan of Talent teaches swim lessons and provides swim lessons to people who are unable to participate in swim lessons offered by APRC and advocated for the proposed plan and increasing opportunities for swim lessons.

Commission Discussion

Heller inquired about a contingency plan if once the specification of the pool is complete and the plan exceed budget. Black stated that if necessary, the plan could include a phase two that would include constructing the therapy pool at a later date.

Heller advocated for maintaining grassy areas around the pool.

Landt inquired if vehicular access from the parking lot will be maintained in the new plan. Black responded in the affirmative.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

Heller received a letter from a parks planner in Central Point community center 30,000 sq ft. In addition to a pool and pickle ball courts should be a priority moving forward.

Gardiner mentioned Thursday at 6 p.m., the E Main public input held at Ashland High in the IVS meeting. Black stated the purpose of the meeting is to take public input on possible uses in the park.

Dials announced Lori Ainsworth is departing and the Volunteer & Event Coordinator position will be posted.

Gardiner stated the October 28 meeting includes two executive sessions 5:30 p.m. with City Attorney Dave Lohman and a performance evaluation from 6 to 7 p.m..

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 pm

Respectfully Submitted
Sean Sullivan
Office Assistant II

