

**MINUTES FOR SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
November 18, 2019
The Grove, 1195 E. Main Street**

Present: Commissioners Gardiner (Chair), Landt (Vice-Chair), Bell (joined the meeting at 5:52 p.m.), Heller, Lewis; Director Black, Senior Services Superintendent Glatt; Parks Superintendent Oxendine; Assistant Sullivan

Absent: City Council Liaison Mayor Stromberg

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m.

PUBLIC FORUM

None

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Revenue Bond – Additional Project Funding (Action)

Director Black presented on the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#) and gave a PowerPoint presentation on the item (see [Attachment I](#)). The presentation included the following items:

- The proposal is to add \$300,000 to the \$2.6 million revenue bond approved by Commissioners in October, making the total of the revenue bond \$2.9 million
- The additional \$300,000 would go toward resurfacing the tennis courts at Hunter Park (\$150,000) and to build dedicated pickleball courts (\$150,000) at Oak Knoll Golf Course
 - The pickleball courts are a Capital Improvement Project (CIP); resurfacing the tennis courts would be a repair and rehabilitation activity
- Resurfacing the courts would include doing some reinforcement work to the existing cracks to lessen the likelihood that these cracks would impact the new surface
- The projects proposed are consistent with the uses allowed for the Food & Beverage (F&B) Tax and APRC has the capacity to take on additional encumbrances
- Black provided a Funding Proposal in the PowerPoint:
 - Pool - \$2,600,000 (BOND)
 - Pickle Ball - \$325,000 (175k CIP and 150k BOND)
 - Tennis Courts - \$150,000 (BOND)
 - Total Project Cost: \$3,075,000
 - Total BOND: \$2,900,000
 - Total CIP: \$175,000
- Resurfacing the tennis courts at Lithia Park because Black was not confident both Hunter and Lithia Park could be completed with \$150K; Black stated that there is potential to secure \$25,000 from the Ashland Parks Foundation to resurface the courts at Lithia Park if there are not enough funds remaining once the courts at Hunter Park are resurfaced.
- Costs savings are likely if all courts were resurfaced at the same time
- Landt inquired why relocating the pickleball courts from the parking lot to the driving range would nearly double the cost of construction
 - Black stated that the original estimate of \$175,000 was low
 - Gardiner stated that when the \$175,000 was originally dedicated for pickleball it was not intended to cover the full project cost

- Black stated he is confident the pickleball project can be completed for \$325,000
- Lewis stated the new site mitigates potential noise conflicts with neighbors. The design is more dynamic and necessary to alter the driving range to accommodate the courts
- Black stated the F&B Tax Revenue is estimated at \$775,000; When budgeting and forecasting staff is using \$750,000 as a baseline so the funds are not overburdened
- Black identified F&B backed revenue bonds issued to complete projects as identified on the Projects Funding slide
 - Projects include Calle Guanajuato, Briscoe Park and Garfield Park
- If the revenue bond were issued at \$2.9 million, ~65% of annual F&B funds would be encumbered until 2025 when Garfield Park debt is retired
- Black is proposing a bundle of projects as outlined in the Capital Improvement Plan slide in the presentation (pickleball increase should state \$150,000 on the Capital Improvement Plan slide)
- Black displayed a conceptual design of the pickleball courts, but will bring a more detailed design to the public and to the Commission at a later date for final approval
 - The driving range would be moved 85 feet to accommodate the construction of the pickleball courts and surrounding area. Some netting would need to be removed and some netting would need to be extended to keep the driving distance at its current length
 - Black clarified that narrowing the driving range is not an issue for the Golf Course Manager
 - Black stated there are still issues to be worked out on the site plan, but funding is being sought now to take advantage of the revenue bond and pay the debt over a 10-year period before the F&B tax expires in 2030
 - Lighting may be an aspect of the project that would need to be completed at a later date if costs exceed available funds
- Heller asked for clarification on the cost of resurfacing the Hunter tennis courts:
 - Black stated the it is likely that the full \$150,000 will be spent on the Hunter Park courts
 - There will be additional costs to stabilize the structure of the courts
 - Black would like a cushion to allow for additional improvement to be made such as additional fencing, additional lines for multi-use courts and take this opportunity to address as many issues as possible at Hunter Park
- Heller stated resurfacing the courts at Lithia Park should be on the same level of importance with resurfacing the Hunter Park courts
 - Black is making this recommendation to address the concerns of the tennis community who have more issues with Hunter Park. Black also stated that if the Commissioners would like to move forward with resurfacing the Lithia Park courts, the Ashland Parks Foundation can be approached to secure funding to accomplish this
- Landt requested information on the condition of the courts at Lithia Park & Hunter Park
 - Black stated the condition of all the courts is similar and in need of resurfacing. The focus is on Hunter Park because there are eight tennis courts there and only two at Lithia Park
- Heller advocated for the new location for the pickleball courts at Oak Knoll. Noise and lighting would be less of an impact for the surrounding neighbors
- Bell inquired if these projects proposed for the revenue bond are the most shovel ready and also inquired if the E Main property is close to construction
 - Black stated in the affirmative on the proposed projects and stated that there is still design work to be done on the E Main property as well as annexing the adjacent 1-acre parcel that APRC would like to include in the park design
- Black clarified that funds for these projects could be drawn upon in 2020, but payments would not start until 2021

Public Participation

Ken Crocker of Ashland spoke in favor of moving forward with the funding of dedicated pickleball courts and was confident that six courts will be used, but raised a concern that six courts would not be enough due to the popularity of the sport. Crocker also stated that these courts have the potential to bring visitors into the community. Crocker advocated for the Lithia Park courts to be resurfaced.

Jack Methot of Ashland representing Ashland and President of Southern Oregon Pickleball Association (SOPA) spoke in favor proposed location at Oak Knoll. Methot offered to organize the pickleball community to assist with construction to reduce costs.

Methot concurs with the projected costs of constructing the pickleball courts. Methot stated SOPA now represents just over 600 members

Commission Discussion

Motion: Heller moved to approve the addition of \$300,000 for the Oak Knoll Pickle Ball Courts and resurfacing of the Hunter Park Courts be added to the approved pool revenue bond for a new total of \$2,900,000. Seconded by Lewis.

Discussion: Heller stated that establishing dedicated pickleball courts has been a personal goal and would like to see this project move forward. Heller added that the sport is growing and advocated for lighting and stated that SOPA would be willing to do some fundraising to install lighting.

Lewis supports the motion because the pool and pickleball courts are high on the goals list. The tennis courts are facilities that APRC is responsible for maintaining them in an acceptable manner. Using the F&B funds shows that the tax comes back to the community. APRC has been discussing these projects for some time and to bring the projects to fruition is important to the community.

Landt inquired why an additional \$25,000 is not included in the revenue bond, which could result in the courts not being resurfaced.

- Gardiner stated that Black presented an option to cover resurfacing Lithia Park if the full \$150,000 is used at Hunter Park. Since another funding source has been identified for the Lithia Park courts, Gardiner does not see an urgency of increasing the revenue bond. Gardiner is in favor of the \$2.9 million bond and cited the three different user groups that will benefit from these projects

Bell stated the work done on these projects is phenomenal and has pool heating questions for Black at a later date.

Landt provided the following points:

- A revenue source will be required in the near future to start implementing recommendations in the Lithia Park Master Plan
- Decomposed granite that may be used in the surrounding area of the pickleball courts will result in more herbicide use
 - Black stated that using decomposed granite would be a temporary cost saving measure if the project was to go over budget
- In the past, when user groups wanted lighting installed those user groups played a large role in funding the installation of lights
 - Black stated that it is difficult to utilize volunteer labor with construction projects due to the bidding process and that fundraising to help pay for lighting would be a great focus for SOPA

Vote: All votes yes

Black commented that the emphasis will be on the Hunter Park courts and that the Lithia Park courts will not be forgotten. Black would like to finish the Hunter Park courts before moving forward with Lithia Park courts. Black stated he will be working to get both sites resurfaced.

Memorials Policy Discussion (Informational)

Assistant Sullivan presented on the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#). The presentation and discussion included the following items:

- Sullivan reached out to other jurisdictions, including Bend, Lake Oswego, Portland, Walla Walla & Estes Valley Parks & Recreation District, to review memorial policies in place elsewhere and found the following
 - The proposed donations to establish a memorial are similar to other jurisdictions contacted
 - Most jurisdictions have standards that guide the types of memorials installed
 - Jurisdictions that primarily install wood amenities set the lifespan of the memorial to 5-10 years; jurisdictions that primarily install steel benches set the lifespan to 20+ or the life of the amenity
- Recently, requests for memorials come in at 1-2 per month

- As proposed, at the end of a ten-year period after installation the donor would be provided the opportunity to re-dedicate the memorial at the existing memorial donation price point. If the original donor does not re-dedicate, the memorial becomes available for dedication by another donor. The cost for a new wood bench would be \$1,000; the cost of an existing wood bench would be \$700. Donors will be made aware of the ten-year time span prior to establishing a new memorial
 - Oxendine added that a ten-year time frame will allow for new memorial to be dedicated in a park such as Lithia, which is running out of items that can contain a memorial
- Landt requested that language be added to item II.E. to allow for the consideration of naming rights of a park if a donation is made to develop a property, which can sometimes be as expensive as acquiring of the property itself
 - Black clarified what major portion means in this instance: more than half
- Landt requested cleanup of a typo on item V.B – there should not be a period between stone and May. These two sentences should be joined
- Black requested input on Item IV.B. establishing a guideline that donors should wait one year after the death of the person being memorialized
 - Discussion on this item ended with direction to staff to remove any mention of a waiting period to establish a memorial
- Lewis commented that this policy will now result in a memorial program that financially supports APRC operations costs

Trails Master Plan Discussion (Informational)

Director Black presented on the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#) which included the following items:

- The Trails Master Plan is an existing document. The amendments presented in the document reflect the current status of the trails system, including updated maps
- Black recommends bringing this back to the Commissioners in December prior to the plan going to the City Council in January
- Black requested feedback on the plan from the Commissioners

Discussion

- Black clarified that APRC will have the design files and will be able to make modifications to the formatting of the document if necessary
- Landt provided the following feedback:
 - There are dates in the document that need to be addressed such as the name of plan which currently lists 2018 as the completion date
 - Black stated the name of the plan could be changed to 2020 to easily identify the last date of amendment/adoption
 - Recommendations on how to accomplish the vision of the plan should be included in the plan
 - Black stated there are some areas where specific recommendations could be given, such as acquiring easements and properties. Black further stated that identifying various tools used to implement the plan could be stated, but he did not envision including action items or recommendations for every chapter
 - A section in the plan related to the Ashland Canal Trail identifies the section that is owned by the city and the section where the city holds easements but does not provide any information on the sections that are not currently accessible. Landt would like the document to state that a portion of the trail is on private property without public easement and then break these sections of the trails into two categories: 1) sections of the trail where public access has been blocked; 2) sections of the trail where public access has been provided without an easement
 - Black stated that he does not want to call out individual property owners, but supports making a statement about different categories of access
 - In regard to coordination when development is occurring in the vicinity of trail segments, the Planning Commission isn't necessarily thinking about trails when making decisions. Anything that can be included in the document to encourage coordination with the Planning Commission would be valuable. In the document there is a statement about coordination where the word "shall" was changed to "should." Landt provided an example of a lack of coordination is when the Planning Commission approved a proposal on a property on Ashland Creek against planning staff recommendation and without the knowledge of APRC staff, which resulted in the decreased potential for trail connectivity along Ashland Creek.

- Lewis responded that APRC is now part of the pre-application process allowing APRC staff to raise issues and be fully involved in the process. This was not the case in the past
- Black did not think that even if “shall” were to be added back into the plan. It would still be necessary for APRC staff to review planning actions and submit comments when necessary. Oxendine and Black receive all planning actions and review them for issues related to APRC planning concerns
- Lewis commented on the process to initially create the Trails Master Plan. It was a community process spearheaded by volunteers dedicated to the trails system in Ashland. The document produced provided great benefit and the process to update that original document was similar in nature and required a significant amount of volunteer hours

NEW BUSINESS

Age Friendly Communities Application (Action)

This item was listed after the IPM exemption item on the agenda. Gardiner moved this item up to accommodate the presenters.

Superintendent Glatt and Sandy Theis, Chair of the Ashland Senior Advisory Committee (ASAC), presented on the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#) which included the following items:

- Theis stated ASAC is seeking approval from the Commissioners to have Chari Gardiner sign and send the application for designation as an Age Friendly Community. The program is managed by AARP.
- ASAC will also approach the City of Ashland Mayor for a signature on the application to show a commitment from both organizations
- The Mayor has submitted a letter of intent and was subsequently invited to send an application to AARP
- Designation as an Age Friendly Community would provide benefits
 - Access to a global network of participating communities, as well as aging and civil society experts
 - Access to key information about the program, such as the latest news and information about best practices, events, results, challenges and new initiatives
 - Opportunities for partnerships with other cities, both domestic and international
 - Mentoring and peer-review evaluation by member cities
 - Public recognition of the community’s commitment to become more age-friendly
 - Special consideration when there are AARP funding and training opportunities
 - Speaking engagements at conferences and events hosted by AARP and promotion through AARP’s media channels
- The Age Friendly Community program is building on the larger concept of livability with an emphasis on seniors
- This program advocates for the consideration of the needs of different age groups when planning for and improving infrastructure in the community
- Gardiner mentioned that the Mayor and City Administrator recently attended an ASAC meeting and communicated city administration is directing the committees and commissions under the authority of the city to recognize and consider senior issues when conducting regular business
- There is no direct cost to the Senior Service Division budget aside from the time Glatt has and will put into participating in the Age Friendly Community network. Glatt stated that volunteer members of ASAC will be the primary drivers of activities associated with the network
- Heller advocated for sustainability to be included as a key component of the Age Friendly Community network
 - Theis will be attending a gathering of people working on making Oregon an Age Friendly Community and may push that idea at the state level to then leverage with AARP at the state level

Motion: Landt moved to support staff’s recommendation for becoming a part of AARP’s network of Age Friendly Communities. Seconded by Heller.

Vote: The vote was all yes.

IPM Exemption Request – Burrow Fumigation (Action)

Superintendent Oxendine presented on the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#) which included the following items:

- There have been rodent issues in parks in recent years including at Lithia Park, Oak Knoll Golf Course, North Mountain Park and Ashland Creek Park
- Contractors have been used in the past at Oak Knoll Golf Course and Lithia Park to deal with rodents
- Oxendine has looked into various types of traps
 - Live traps
 - Necessary to deal with the rodent after capture
 - Staff has contact with rodents which is a safety concern
 - Does not discriminately kill wildlife trapped
 - Environmentally friendly poisons
 - Not available for use in the United States
 - Kill Traps
 - Set at Ashland Creek Park for 3 weeks with no kills. Oxendine stated this is likely due to the ground squirrels hibernating
 - Burrow Fumigation
 - Place device in burrow, light and fill in opening with dirt
 - Heavy gases sit in the bottom of the burrows
 - Lessens potential health impacts on APRC staff since it is not necessary to handle any of the rodents
 - Colder months are the best time of year to use fumigation to knock down large populations of burrowing rodents
 - Ground squirrels are causing negative impacts at Oak Knoll including damage to trees, fairways and mowing equipment
 - Oxendine noted the following downsides to using this method
 - The treatment is staff intensive as it is necessary to find burrows, place all devices at the same time and fill in burrow entrances if gas is seen to be escaping
 - There is a possibility of killing animals living in the burrows that are not considered pests

Staff is asking the Commissioners to approve the use of burrow fumigation to knock down the ground squirrel infestations at Ashland Creek Park and Oak Knoll Golf Course. Staff also requests the ability to use this method to target specific outbreaks of gophers and moles throughout the park system.

Discussion:

- Landt expressed reluctance to allow the use pest control that results in indiscriminate killing of animals. Using live traps allows land managers to determine in the animal caught is a pest or should be released. Landt has witnessed desirable predators within Ashland Creek Park
- Oxendine stated the largest infestation is at the golf course
- The most complaints about rodents from the public have come from community gardeners at Ashland Creek Park where ground squirrels are having a negative impact on garden plots
- There are issues with moles and gophers in Lithia Park near the bandshell and volleyball court
- There are issues with burrowing rodents at the sports fields in North Mountain Park
- Landt stated that it is easier to justify using this method at the golf course since synthetic herbicides are used there and because it provides less wildlife habitat when compared to other park properties
 - Bell stated that there is an effort to get Audubon Society certification and install pollinator gardens at Oak Knoll
- Lewis advocated for not restricting staff too much and allow them to use their best judgement when dealing with rodent issues and reporting back on the results
- Landt suggested that any exceptions to the IPM outside of Oak Knoll should be discussed at a regular meeting that is streamed by RVTV
- Gardiner stated a concern about damage done to the heritage trees at Oak Knoll

Motion: Gardiner moved to approve a pilot project to use burrow fumigation techniques at the Oak Knoll Golf Course. Seconded by Landt.

Vote: The vote was all yes

Oxendine will report back to the Commissioners on the pilot project and evaluate feasibility of using this technique at other park properties.

2020 APRC Meeting Schedule Discussion (Informational)

Director Black presented on the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#) which included the following items:

- This is timely because City Council has amended their start time for Regular Meetings to 6:00 p.m., which will likely become the norm for public meetings in Ashland
- Staff is proposing the start time of business meetings and study sessions at 6:00 p.m.
- Staff reviewed availability of the Council Chambers, which would require a move to Wednesdays if Commissioners would like to hold all meetings in Council Chambers
- There was discussion about transitioning to the new start time and day in the spring to allow time for the public to become aware of the change
- Holding meetings on the first and third Wednesday could provide more time for staff to prepare packets for the regular meeting
- The fourth Wednesday of the month does not work for multiple Commissioners
- Gardiner brought up the possibility of increased meeting absences due to travel if meetings are not held in back-to-back weeks
- If the meeting day is moved to Wednesday, the packet would be sent out the Thursday before the meeting
- Black suggested adopting a maximum time length of three hours for meetings
- Commissioners and staff will think on holding the meetings on the first and third Wednesday of the month and will continue the discussion at the December Regular Meeting
- Deciding on meeting times and dates at the December meeting is ideal so staff can secure the meeting space and also set the schedule for advertising in the Mail Tribune and booking RVT to record regular meetings

ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

Heller commented that Ashland residents have approached him regarding the status of the Community Center. The item will be placed on the November 25, 2019 regular meeting agenda. Black will present on the status of the community center and provide information about how the City of Ashland owns the property and is responsible to maintain it and that Parks managed renting the space for community events.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- APRC Regular Meeting—November 25, 2019
 - Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main St., Ashland—7:00 p.m.
- Ashland Senior Advisory Committee—December 9, 2019
 - Ashland Senior Center, 1699 Homes Ave—3:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20am

Respectfully Submitted

Sean Sullivan

Office Assistant II