

**MINUTES FOR REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**

July 8, 2020

Electronic Meeting – 6:30 p.m.

Present: Commissioners Gardiner (Chair), Landt (Vice-Chair), Bell (joined at 6:33 p.m.), Heller, Lewis; Director Black, Recreation Superintendent Dials; Senior Services Superintendent Glatt, Analyst Kiewel, Assistant Sullivan

Absent: City Council Liaison Mayor Stromberg

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

APRC Regular Meeting – May 13, 2020

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes from May 13, 2020 as presented. Heller Seconded.

Vote: The vote was all yes

APRC Regular Meeting – June 10, 2020

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes from June 10, 2020 as presented. Lewis Seconded.

Vote: The vote was all yes

III. PUBLIC FORUM

Written testimony from the public was encouraged and accepted via email. All information submitted for the public forum has been [posted online](#).

IV. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. COVID-19 Response Update (Information)

Dials reviewed the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#). The following items were discussed:

- Jackson County is currently in Phase 2 and it is likely that Jackson County will stay in this Phase for some time
- Within APRC the following facilities are open during Phase 2:
 - All outdoor playgrounds
 - Garfield Park Splash Pad (will reopen soon)
 - The Oak Knoll Golf Course and Clubhouse
 - The Dog Park
 - Lawn areas and picnic areas in all parks (first come, first served. No reservations)
 - Brick and mortar bathrooms with signage in place (There has been a delay due to automatic lock logistical issues)
 - Trails throughout the parks system and in the Ashland Watershed remain open with physical distancing and some routes changed to one-way
 - Ballfield reservations for non-contact sports
 - The Skate Park
 - Tennis & Pickle Ball Courts
 - The BMX Track
- The following facilities continue to be closed:
 - Basketball Courts (because this is a contact sport)
 - The Daniel Meyer Pool
 - All indoor buildings such as Pioneer Hall, The Grove, The Senior Center and The Nature Center
- Staff are wearing face coverings inside office buildings where physical distancing is not possible
- Glatt reported on the following items:
 - Services are mainly being provided through phone and email communications
 - The Newsletter continues to be distributed and advertises programs such as free mask distribution through the Adopt A Neighbor partnership
 - Senior Services Division (SSD) has partnered with Ashland Fire and Rescue to provide air purifiers to seniors
 - SSD staff is planning for outdoor activities
 - Glatt is testing programming over Zoom
 - SSD programing is focusing on connection and addressing isolation issues

- Dials stated indoor facilities can begin to be open under Phase 2, however the City of Ashland is taking a more conservative approach and are not allowing public facilities to be opened
- Dials reported the first furlough day was taken on July 6. Eleven more are scheduled once per month are planned which will save approximately \$100,000
- Outdoor volunteers have begun again, including the YCC program has started and they are working in Lithia Park and North Mountain Park.
- Black clarified the decision to open indoor facilities rests with the City of Ashland because the Council has declared a state of emergency. Once the emergency declaration is lifted, Commissioners will have the ability to make decisions on which facilities to open and when
- Black clarified the decision to keep the pool closed:
 - A memo was presented to Commissioners on May 7th outlining the reasoning behind recommending the pool remain closed ([pg. 88 of the meeting packet](#)). The decision to close the pool for the season was not made based on orders from the State of Oregon, which is now allowing pools to reopen under certain conditions. In addition to COVID related concerns the pool will remain closed for infrastructure, staffing and budgetary issues
- Glatt clarified the City has expressed concern about the rising numbers of COVID-19 cases in the state and are weighing the bigger picture

2. CIP Prioritization Discussion (Possible Action)

Black reviewed the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#). The following items were discussed:

- Black stated that the discussion and possible action will focus on the desirable projects identified in the staff report
 - Daniel Meyer Pool Rebuild
 - E Main Park Development (including the Skills Park)
 - Dedicated Pickleball Courts (identified as dedicated because it was listed as such in the CIP)
- Black recommended the following:
 1. The current projected budget for discretionary projects is \$450,000. I recommend that the Commissioners add another \$100,000 to the available funds for a total of \$550,000 to be used for discretionary projects. The source for the additional \$100,000 is the Mace Property Trail – the current budget for that project is \$150,000. I propose to reduce the Mace Property Trail budget by \$100,000 to add to the discretionary projects.
 2. With \$550,000 now available, I recommend the following projects, with the associated budgets, be adopted as the priority for the CIP discretionary projects:
 - a. Daniel Meyer Pool Replacement - \$325,000 – these funds would be set aside while a financing mechanism can be identified and implemented to fund the full cost of the pool replacement. The funding mechanism could be one of many, including a revenue bond, grants, donations, etc. It is likely that the process of finding the funding mechanism will take the rest of this calendar year, at least. Providing the seed money of \$325,000 will make the options that we have for funding the most successful, under the circumstances.
 - b. East Main Park Design and Construction - \$125,000 – these funds would be added to dedicated funds of \$600,000 already in this project budget. The intent for the project would be to move forward with design and planning approval at this point and possibly develop the park in phases.
 - c. Tennis Courts Resurfacing and Pickle Ball Striping - \$100,000 – the intent of this project would be to resurface and restripe courts in Ashland at one of the APRC tennis courts to accommodate multiple uses, such as tennis and pickle ball. Since the funds are not available to construct the dedicated pickle ball courts at Oak Knoll Golf Course, this project will at least provide a higher standard of pickle ball and tennis courts than currently exists without the expense of constructing a new facility.
- Black clarified the following:
 - The design of the pool is already underway and paid for with other funds not included in the \$325,000 recommended to be earmarked for the pool
 - The \$125,000 would be for the design of the park and would include the design of the Bike Skills Park. Staff plans to work with outside groups to raise funds to facilitate construction. Construction of the Skills Park would not be funded by the \$125,000 in the recommendation or the \$600,000 already allocated for the construction of the park (secured through real estate transactions)

- The intent of the court resurfacing recommendations is to resurface and restripe already existing courts for pickleball. The recommendation does not include specific locations. Staff plans to present a recommendation for the locations of the courts to the Commissioners at a future meeting continued discussion and public comment
- The Hunter Park tennis courts are in the most need of refurbishing. There are eight courts that need to be resurfaced. These courts are rented out and bring in revenue
- Heller made a statement about the potential of a perceived conflict of interest because he is a pickleball instructor. A discussion about elected official recusal occurred. At the end of the discussion, Heller recused himself.
 - A recording of the entire meeting is [available in the RTV archives](#) and [City of Ashland website](#) (the discussion on this subject begins at 26:37 and ends at 42:25)
- Landt stated support of the proposal as presented by staff and stated that it is not in the best interest of the community to decide which courts get striped now. Additional feedback and research would be beneficial before making a decision.

Motion: Landt moved to accept staff's proposal for \$325,000 to go towards a new pool, \$125,000 to go towards E Main and \$100,000 to go towards refurbishing the courts at Hunter Park. Seconded by Gardiner.

Discussion:

- Bell asked how important it is to set aside money for the pool in order to secure a loan through the revenue bond process. Bell stated skepticism about the possibility of securing funds for construction through grants or donations if a revenue bond is not pursued. Bell stated that holding the money aside for the pool and not allocating it to other projects is not accomplishing a lot
 - Black stated the following:
 - Having the funds allocated for the pool will help secure additional funding for the pool
 - The pool has been a top priority since he began working for APRC in 2014
 - Allocating \$325,000 now gives the project a chance to open up additional doors. It is best to solicit donors with some funds already in place
 - Allocating the funds now also shows the public that there is an intent to move forward with fixing the pool
 - Additionally, if loans, donations or grants are not available these funds can be utilized to make improvements to open in the near future
- Landt stated that if the funds were not to be set aside it would send a message to the community, potential donors or lenders that APRC is not committed to the pool and that this would be the wrong message
- Lewis stated that there seems to be consensus with recommendation a and b and would like to see flexibility in regard to funding to ensure that there will be enough money to fully complete the resurfacing project. Lewis stated a desire for additional public comment from the pickleball community before making a decision on which courts to stripe for pickleball
 - Black stated he is confident that the \$100,000 will take care of the 8 courts at Hunter Park and that the remaining question is how to fund resurfacing Lithia Park and provided the following options:
 - The estimated cost of resurfacing Lithia Park is \$25,000. The Ashland Parks Foundation could be approached to provide a grant; Funds within the \$550,000 CIP budget being discussed now could be reallocated. Black recommended \$325,000 for the pool because this is the amount of money that would be needed to cover the first payment. The \$125,000 allocated to E Main Park is an educated guess
 - Black clarified that there is flexibility in moving funds if \$100,000 does not cover the full cost of the project
- Gardiner reiterated that the issue is if there is a desire to resurface the Lithia Park courts, in addition to the Hunter Park courts, the \$100,000 may not cover it and additional funds may need to be secured
- Bell stated that the allocation as listed will result in not having a new pool and there will be unhappy pickleball and tennis players and does not seem like a solution that makes any one constituency whole
 - Black stated the proposal is a compromise to give as many groups as possible additional or improved amenities
- Landt stated an objection to reallocate money from the pool, adding the following
 - The pool is and has been the number one priority and whittling away these funds does not make sense
 - If money were to be reallocated, it should come from the E Main Park project, which is also a difficult decision that has many different constituent groups
 - He would like to stay with motion made with the understanding that once bids have been received for resurfacing the courts and there is a need for more than \$100,000, additional funding sources can be reviewed, including the Ashland Parks Foundation, other grants or reallocating funds from the E Main Park project
- Gardiner asked for clarification that the motion does not include specifics about the striping of courts and that a decision about where to stripe would be made at a future date

- Landt answered in the affirmative
- Gardiner reminded the group that Heller made a proposal at a previous meeting to make one of the courts at Lithia Park a dedicated pickleball court, which the pickleball community supports and it would alleviate concerns that tennis players have about restriping the courts at Hunter Park to include pickleball
- Lewis stated that some public comments included calls to make facilities multi-use and raised concerns about dedicated use facilities
- Landt stated that another striping option could include striping two pickleball courts on the court at hunter park that currently has bike polo, but final decisions on striping should wait for another meeting
- Bell stated his first priority is the pool and it is the most important thing that will be worked on. Bell stated he does not play tennis or pickleball, but he does swim at the pool

Motion Restated: Landt moved to accept staff's proposal for \$325,000 to go towards a new pool, \$125,000 to go towards E Main and \$100,000 to go towards refurbishing the courts at Hunter Park. Seconded by Gardiner.

Vote: Landt, Lewis & Gardiner voted yes; Bell voted no; Heller recused himself – Motion passes

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Calle Guanajuato Fee Waiver Discussion (Possible Action)

Dials reviewed the staff report included in the [meeting packet](#). The following items were discussed:

- Currently on the Calle Guanajuato, the following restaurants and the Lithia Artisans Market have Commercial Use Contracts for use of the Calle. Those are:
 - Sesame
 - Ashland Creek Café
 - Little Tokyo
 - Louie's Bar and Grill
 - Ostra's
 - Oberon's
 - Greenleaf
 - Mix Bake Shop
 - Lithia Artisans Market
- All leased spaces are currently being used
- Staff recommended that all fees be waived for the 2020 season
- The loss of revenue if fees are waived were factored into budget projections presented to Commissioners at previous meetings
- Dials clarified that staff is recommending that all fees be waived for leaseholders, including the artisan market and the restaurants
- The Ashland Chamber of Commerce and the City of Ashland are organizing a weekend activity called the Ashland Summer Celebration which will take place for 10 weekends between now and end of September. The plaza is closed to vehicle traffic on these weekends to expand seating onto the plaza to accommodate physical distancing
 - Since the plaza is closed to vehicles on these weekends, staff is recommending making adjustments to artisan market booth locations to the front of Lithia Park to allow for greater physical distancing
- Dials stated total revenue from the Calle fees was budgeted at \$32,000
- Dials clarified that it is unknown if the City will officially waive their sidewalk seating fees
- Heller stated surprise that with the reduced budget staff is recommending an elimination of all fees rather than a reduction of fees
 - Black stated that there are not a lot of areas where APRC has control over economic stimulus and as a landlord APRC has a direct impact on expenses for local restaurants. It is possible that APRC can recoup these waived fees through economic development grants. APRC will benefit through the F&B Tax if restaurants are successful
- Landt stated that his long-time position has been the spaces rented on the Calle should be set at market value, but under these extraordinary times a different tact is necessary to provide support to struggling businesses where it is possible for APRC to do so. Landt also expressed a reluctance to allow the use of the park area along Winburn Way for weekly use because of potential degradation, but cited the need to allow this under the current situation

Motion: Landt moved that we allow Lithia Artisan Market to use the space as coordinated by staff for the park row between Winburn Way and the entrance to Lithia Park. Seconded by Heller. Landt clarified that the motion pertains to the 2020 season only. Heller agreed.

Vote: All voted yes

Motion: Landt made the following motion. Seconded by Bell. Subsequent to the motion #4 (below) was added as a friendly amendment by Landt and agreed to by Bell.

Whereas the coronavirus pandemic has devastated local businesses;

Whereas APRC is in a position to assist a limited but significant number of local businesses by waiving space rental fees on Guanajuato Way;

Whereas the current contracts with Guanajuato Way renters do not allow for the flexibility advantageous during a pandemic;

I move that APRC waive the space rental fees for Guanajuato Way users for this, the 2020 season, with the following conditions:

1. Current contracts be voided and replaced with contracts that rent the spaces for one dollar per renting entity
2. That the new contracts contain a stipulation that if Lithia Artisans Market is moved to another location this season, or if there are other extraordinary pandemic-related situations, that APRC may redistribute the seating spaces in a way that provides the greatest good for the greatest number of renters
3. If a renter declines to sign the new contract with the above stipulation, the current contract will be honored including the payment of fees
4. Seniority will be based on 2019 not 2020

Discussion: Landt stated that the Artisan Market could move to the Plaza and there would then be an opportunity to spread out the seating onto the Calle. This could not be done easily without allowing for the temporary redistribution of seating on the Calle.

- Dials stated that staff supports the motion and will be able to implement it. Dials did state a concern about that if seating is rearranged that seating seniority for future seasons should be based on the 2019 season rather than the 2020 season. Landt stated he is open to a friendly amendment to the motion to state seating seniority will be based on the 2019 season. Bell agreed.
- Heller stated that Black is being optimistic about receiving grants to recoup the lost revenue from the Calle fees since it is his understanding the Oregon Recreation and Parks Association is not proving grants in the near future and that economic impacts are not likely to be mitigated by the state. Black clarified the budget projects do not include reimbursement and that there is potential for grants supporting economic development

Vote: The vote was all yes

VII. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

None

VIII. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

Black stated that staff is reviewing the logistics and cost for holding Study Sessions via Zoom, which requires streamlining on RVTV. Staff is working on allowing the public to make direct testimony by joining the Zoom meeting.

1. APRC Study Session—August 5, 2020
 - Location TBD—6:30 p.m.
2. APRC Regular Business Meeting —August 12, 2020
 - Location TBD—6:30 p.m.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sean Sullivan, Executive Assistant