

**MINUTES FOR REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
November 10, 2021
Electronic Meeting – 6:00 p.m.**

Present: Commissioners Gardiner (Chair), Landt (Vice-Chair), Bell, Eldridge, Lewis; Director Black; Deputy Director Dials; Senior Services Superintendent Glatt, Analyst Kiewel; Manager Sullivan

Absent: None

This meeting was recorded by Rogue Valley Television (RVTV). Links to recorded meetings can be found on the [City of Ashland website](#).

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

APRC Study Session – October 6, 2021

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes from October 6, 2021. Seconded by Lewis.

Vote: The vote was all yes

APRC Regular Business Meeting – October 13, 2021

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes from October 13, 2021. Seconded by Eldridge.

Vote: The vote was all yes

III. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

None

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- a) Subcommittee Minutes Acknowledgment
 - Golf Course Subcommittee – December 2, 2020
 - Recreation Advisory Division Committee – August 12, 2021
 - Trails Master Plan Review Subcommittee – October 20, 2021
- b) Recreation Division Advisory Committee, Revisions to Bylaws
- c) Say Their Names Art Installation Location

Motion: Bell moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Lewis.

Vote: The vote was all yes

VI. DIRECTORS REPORT

Black reported on the following items:

Update on Pickleball Courts

- All 8 courts are currently playable but work on the stairs and the fencing will be happening soon. The courts will need to be closed when work begins

Organizational Chart

- As included in the budget, the following changes in staff titles took effect on July 1, 2021: Rachel Dials, Deputy Director; Sean Sullivan, Business Operations Manager; Wes Casale, Outer Parks Supervisor

Trails Subcommittee Update

- The subcommittee was formed by the Commissioners and has met twice. The Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association (RVMBA) has begun presentation on their trail proposals
- RVMBA recently made a presentation to Council, who took action to create a committee that would be working on the same issues the APRC subcommittee is working on. Black is working this out with the City so APRC and the City are not duplicating efforts. The APRC subcommittee will hold off on meeting until this issue is worked out

Senior Services

- The Firefighters Union will provide a Thanksgiving Drive-Through on Monday, November 22. They will be providing a slice of pie and a beverage in lieu of their usual full Thanksgiving meal
- Staff have been working to identify and communicate locations for seniors to get the COVID-19 booster vaccine. It has been a moving target as providers struggle to meet the sudden demand

Recreation & Volunteering

- The Ice Rink is opening next Saturday November 20. Staff training will begin early next week. The ice is being made this week. The rink will and be open through President's Day 2022
- High School swim teams (Phoenix, Talent and Ashland) will begin using the Daniel Meyer Pool next week. The season will run through mid-February 2022. The pool is rented by these groups
- The public are invited to join in monthly restoration work parties at North Mountain Park from 1-3 p.m., on the 1st Thursday of every month (Nov-Mar). Battle invasive species, plant native trees and shrubs and help care for the park. Tools and training provided

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Direction to staff on pursuing a tax levy and or a special taxing district to fund APRC operations (Action)

Black [presented slides](#) and reviewed the [staff report included in the meeting packet](#). The presentation and discussion included the following points:

- This topic was discussed in depth at the [November 3, 2021 Study Session](#)
- The City Charter established an elected body, The Commissioners, to control and manage parks lands and funds. The Charter also identified a specific level of funding for parks to separate funding from parks form other city functions. APRC funding has been reduced, beginning in 2019, from historical funding levels established in 1908
- Black stated APRC is dedicated to identifying a long-term funding source to maintain the services that are currently provided and to restore the services that were lost due to budget cuts
- Staff is seeking direction from the Commissioners:
 - To perform the work necessary to propose the following short-term and long-term APRC funding measures to the City of Ashland Mayor and Councilors:
 - A \$2.09/\$1,000 assessed value five-year levy for Parks and Recreation Operations to be placed on the ballot for voter disposition on the May 17, 2022 election.
 - Begin the process necessary to form a Parks and Recreation District with a permanent tax rate to replace the five-year levy
- Black provided the following information on the process: The ballot measure would need to be finalized and approved by the City Council by late February. The measure would then be placed on the May 17, 2022 Ballot. The citizens of Ashland would then vote on the measure to approve or deny the levy
- Bell inquired about the feasibility of placing the levy on the November 2022 ballot
 - Black stated that a November election would not provide enough time to plan for the following budget cycle

- Black clarified that there is more due diligence necessary before the language for the ballot measure can be written. Black will be working with City Staff and will be reporting back to the Commissioners
- Gardiner stated support for the proposal for a May levy for the following reasons:
 - There is a distinct disadvantage for planning and budget reasons to wait until November
 - The City Finance Director should be able to present information to the City Council on December 6, 2021 that will help determine the specifics of the ballot measure language
- Bell stated City staff have discussed allocating some of the Transit Occupancy Tax (TOT) based on the tourism value of Lithia Park and the Golf Course and inquired if this is another potential funding source for APRC
 - Black stated that the idea of evaluating these two properties and allocating TOT to APRC was included in a communication to the Council from City administration but has never been discussed in a public meeting. Black added that this is something that could be evaluated and acted upon in the future, but the City is not moving forward with this idea at the moment. The City would need to initiate the process to allocate TOT to APRC
- Black clarified that he is working with City Staff to develop a plan to put a levy on the ballot
- Lewis stated support for putting a levy on the May ballot
- Eldridge stated support for proposal and that the quality of the parks has been decreasing in recent years alongside a decrease in funding and it is time for the voters to decide what services matter to them

Motion: Landt moved to give direction to the Director of APRC to perform the work necessary to propose the following short-term and long-term APRC funding measures to the City of Ashland Mayor and Councilors:

1. A \$2.09/\$1,000 assessed value five-year levy for Parks and Recreation Operations to be placed on the ballot for voter disposition on the May 17, 2022 ballot.
2. Begin the process necessary to form a Parks and Recreation District with a permanent tax rate to replace the five-year levy.

Seconded by Bell.

Discussion: Gardiner stated support and noted that time is of the essence on this issue.

Vote: The vote was all yes

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

a) **Intent to Bid – Irrigation Central Controller for Lithia Park and North Mountain Park Update (Information)**

Black and Sullivan referenced the [staff report included in the meeting packet](#). The presentation and discussion included the following points:

- Black stated a central irrigation control system communicates with individual clocks to initiate run-times and also communicates with flow devices and master valves to detect leaks and shut the main line off when necessary
 - The existing central controller was installed in the late 1990s and is failing
 - The Capital Improvement Plan budget includes \$150,000, total for the biennium, to replace the central controller. The plan is to replace the central controllers in Lithia Park and North Mountain Park at an estimated cost of \$135,000
 - A system wide replacement could be accomplished over a handful of years
- Sullivan stated replacing the existing system with a cloud-based system would provide the following benefits and allow APRC staff better manage the budget, conserve water, and increase staff efficiency
 - Real-time water flow monitoring and real time alerts to maintenance staff
 - Alerts will point staff to a specific location where the issue was identified
 - Data analysis will allow staff to better monitor and manage the water budget / conserve water
 - Baseline data will be uploaded to the system so we can compare before and after usage
 - Ability to map irrigation infrastructure

- Sullivan clarified that the upgrade includes a software package that uses weather data to adjust the amount of water that is used on a day-to-day basis
 - The system can also be adjusted to overrule the smart irrigation feature as needed from zone to zone
- This irrigation system is used by private companies, institutions and municipalities across the county use this system
- The hardware that will be replaced are the master valves, flow devices and clocks
- Black clarified that the end goal is to provide access to the irrigation division staff and that the irrigation supervisor would be the manager of the system. Additionally, Sullivan will be involved in monitoring and will be trained to run the system and provide support. Black would be able to access the system to pull higher level reports to monitor usage
 - Sullivan added that there are extensive customer service and training resources made available for the vendor
- Sullivan clarified that the software system runs on cellular network and updates will be pushed out over the network without the need for an onsite tech and that if there are issues with hardware there is a local vendor that can provide support
- Gardiner stated that APRC is a big water users in Ashland and it is imperative to implement an irrigation system that is capable increasing water conservation capabilities
- Black clarified that once bid(s) are submitted, staff will have a better idea of the cost to upgrade the remaining APRC parks
- Black stated that once bids are submitted, staff will bring back a contract to the Commissioners to approve and then send the contract to the City Council for approval (because the contract will be over \$100,000)

b) Japanese Garden – Construction Update (Information) *In meeting presentation. Materials are not included in the meeting packet*

Black [presented slides](#) and reviewed the [staff report included in the meeting packet](#). The presentation ([starts at 1:04:15 in the video](#)) included the following points:

Black provided the following updates:

- The plan was approved on October 28, 2019 with construction beginning 1 year ago in November 2020
- The slate work at the entry way is complete
- The cinderblock wall will be skim coated and Japanese roof tiles will be installed and will look similar to the entry way at the Portland Japanese Garden
- The sand and stone garden is essentially complete along with stone steps that lead from this area to the upper garden
- The pond and stream have been constructed out of concrete and sealed. Large stones have been placed in the water feature areas
- Two new gates are in the process of being installed (north and south approaches)
- The Tori Gate that was at the top of the stairs on Winburn has been taken down and will be relocated to the south side of the garden
- All of the trees that were maintained are doing well and will provide mature vegetation when the garden opens
- Black stated that he would like to bring a couple issues before the Commissioners at a future date, but would like to provide some initial information for Commissioners to consider
 - Disposition of the stairs that lead to Winburn Way
 - The stairs are a safety issue and do not lead to a pedestrian path and no longer align with the entrance of the garden. Black stated that may be an opportunity to construct stairs further down the road where a pedestrian crossing was installed prior to construction. Black would like to weigh different options for the stairs that could include decommissioning the stairs, removing them, or using them for a different function.
 - Adding security cameras at the four corners of the garden

- Part of the donation could provide security cameras if the Commissioners approve. The cameras would only function when the garden is closed as a way to mitigate property damage / vandalism
- Four decorative posts could be installed that are 12-15 feet tall. A camera could be located within a miniature teahouse and would not be visible
 - Black would like to bring these items to the Commissioners at a Study Session in January or February
- Black estimated that the project is two-thirds complete. However, the remaining tasks are finish-work that will go slowly and there may be delays because of shipping issues. Black stated the goal is to open the garden in September / October 2022, but Toru Tanaka will determine when the garden is ready to be opened to the public
- Black stated the pond will include vegetation and fish

IX. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

Black stated that staff is in the process of looking at a solution to improve the water quality at the upper duck pond and may be able to implement a system soon.

Landt stated he has been watching the change of the JV baseball field at North Mountain Park to soccer. Landt agrees with the change of use and pointed out that this could be viewed as a cautionary tale in planning because it was known at the time the park was being planned that there was not enough room to have two functional baseball fields. The plan moved forward anyway, which was not a wise use of money due to the cost of making the change that is occurring now and the cost baseball infrastructure (backstop, dugouts, and bullpens) that will no longer be used.

Gardiner stated he and Eldridge visited Siskiyou Mountain Park to explore areas identified in the Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association (RVMBA) trail proposal

X. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- a) APCR Special Meeting—December 1, 2021
 - Electronic Meeting—6:00 p.m.
- b) APCR Regular Business Meeting—December 8, 2021
 - Electronic Meeting—6:00 p.m.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted
Sean Sullivan, Business Operations Manager