

**MINUTES FOR SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING  
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
December 23, 2021  
Electronic Meeting – 4:00 p.m.**

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

Absent: Deputy Director Dials

This meeting was recorded and uploaded to the APRC YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpufw-9Fwx0>

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

**II. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

None

**III. PUBLIC FORUM**

None

**IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**a) APRC Funding (Action)**

Black reviewed the [staff report included in the meeting packet](#), which included the following items:

- Commissioners have been considering future funding options. Since 1908, APRC has been funded through property taxes that came directly to the Commission. In 1997, Measure 50 had the City collect all property taxes and distribute. Until 2018, APRC was funded at \$2.09 per thousand, per the Charter, and then was cut to \$1.89 in the previous biennium. In this biennium, APRC was cut an additional \$562,000. For the next biennium APRC funding is undetermined
- The Parks Commission has directed staff to put together information regarding a funding levy for \$2.09 to be put on the May 2022 ballot. Commissioners have two options: 1.) Request that the City Council refer the levy request to the voters 2.) Public initiative, which requires registered voter signatures to be placed on the ballot
- Due to the timing requirement of putting a levy before voters in May, this meeting is being held to have the Commission give staff direction on how to proceed

Chair Gardiner added:

- Due to timing to get on the levy on the City Council Agenda for January 4 meeting, the Commission needs to clarify what to bring forward. Currently, it does not appear that this item has support from City Council and will not be added to the meeting agenda. Feedback from some City Councilors is that the levy request is not in alignment with the City Council budget timeline and public outreach plan

Commission Discussion:

- Bell asked if the Commission can still request the item to be placed the January agenda and if not move forward with a voter initiative process. Black stated that it is up to the City Manager and Mayor if this item will be added to the City Council Agenda
- Eldridge asked for more information regarding the initiative process. Commissioner Landt stated that it requires a few thousand signatures and will require organization and volunteers. Black stated that February 28, 2022 is the cutoff date for submitting register voter signatures and ballot language, working on getting more information from Jackson County.
- Landt thinks that formalizing the request to City Council has value as a trail showing how the Commission has utilized all opportunities and pathways forward
- Landt stated that the City Council is unclear about the general fund for Parks, Fire and Police. APRC as an elected body, has a clear idea what funding is required to operate the organization
- Lewis asked if there were more than one issue on the May ballot. Gardiner stated that this is unknown. Lewis feels like this is a hard sell to the community for a \$2.09 levy, rather than structuring the initiative to the budget shortfall in the City's General Fund

- Bell stated that what we are asking for is a dedicated funding source for APRC to keep it whole
- Landt shared his written [comments](#). APRC has clear funding needs based on the robust Parks system. Waiting for City Council process, there are no guarantees that there will be a funding measure or that it will include APRC and that we may not have input. There has been no commitment to APRC funding from Council. Forming a Parks district may be clearer to citizens
- Eldridge asked what it would look like if we only pursued the formation of a District and not the funding levy
- Landt thinks that we should still request the levy be added to the Council Agenda and then move forward with the District
- Gardiner is concerned about asking for the funding for APRC without moving forward in concert with the City Council
- Landt thinks that we still need to meet on January 6, 2022 for a strategy meeting

**Motion:** Landt moved to formally request that City Council refer a \$2.09 levy to the May election and that we ask that they do that at the January 4 meeting and if they are unwilling to do that, we reserve the right to move forward with an initiative. Seconded by Bell

**Discussion:**

- Bell stated that APRC has been around for more than a century and is an important source for a quality of life for the citizens of Ashland. The City Council has made no guarantees about the fund level for the future of APRC. As elected officials we need to address for the needs of our system and taking the request directly to the voters
- Lewis agreed with the motion and keeping the next APRC meeting
- Eldridge agreed with the Commissioners and wanted to know what would happen if APRC requested less for the levy. Landt stated that \$1.89 has not been enough. APRC has reduced staff and have used the ending fund balance to balance the current budget. APRC would have to make significant cuts if the request is less than \$2.09

**Vote:** The vote was all yes

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

None

**VI. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF**

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted  
Tara Kiewel, Administrative Analyst