

From: Allen Baker [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 26, 2021 3:52 PM
To: Sean Sullivan <sean.sullivan@ashland.or.us>
Subject: For the Parks Commission ahead of the March 3 meeting

Honorable Commissioners --

Popularity of outdoor recreation has increased dramatically with the virus pandemic. Changes in work patterns and school patterns are likely to remain after the crisis has passed. The crowds at Mt. Ashland on weekdays are startling, and they show that people will get more involved in these activities if their time is less structured via working from home. That's a good thing, because it means healthier Ashlanders. It also means more pressure on our public parks and their facilities.

I note that you have included new basketball/pickleball facilities in Ashland Creek Park. That's a positive step. But the plans for a pickleball facility at Oak Knoll Golf Course appear to have been deleted. I think that is a mistake.

For my own park usage, I play tennis at Hunter Park four or five days a week, and the courts there are frequently full with people waiting to play at peak times. That happened a couple weeks ago, on a sunny Wednesday. Not a sunny Wednesday in June, but a sunny Wednesday in February.

Now I am a tennis player, not a pickleball guy, But if we are to retain full use of the Hunter Park courts for tennis, we need other options for pickleball.

But we also need to restore some of the tennis options in Ashland that have been lost in recent years.

I know it's a common misperception that there are always tennis courts available at Hunter, which indeed is a wonderful community resource. But the reality is that the times it's feasible to play outdoor tennis are much more limited than non-players might realize. In summer, it's too hot to play starting from around 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. or so. So yes, the courts are empty, but they are roasting. In winter, the weather gets feasible for tennis around noon or 1 p.m. most days, for three or maybe four hours. Of course, demand is much less in winter, but there are still a fair numbers of players out there. In spring and fall, the conditions are more conducive to play during more of the day -- when the wind doesn't shut things down.

When I moved to Ashland in 2003, we had the eight excellent courts at Hunter Park, two at Lithia Park, eight at the Stadium Courts at the university, and six more where the new dorms stand now. Until recently (I don't know when they were built), we also had two courts at Helman School, which also could be used for pickleball. Those just got torn out for a school expansion there.

So out of 26 courts, we have now lost all but the eight at Hunter and only one court available for tennis at Lithia Park.

On top of that, the economic realities of the indoor private tennis club could well lead to its shutdown and the transfer of that demand to our public outdoor courts. I know the finances of the tennis club from my time as treasurer in the non-profit days. It's commendable that the current owner feels she can make a go of it, but the club's survival isn't guaranteed. Several owners already have tried and given up, and it nearly became a warehouse at one point.

The demise of the private tennis club would make Hunter Park basically the only (tennis) game in town, and it would lead to major crowding where demand already is pretty intense.

Your plan for the biennium notes the importance of outdoor recreation to the tourist economy of Ashland, and certainly the availability of good tennis facilities is important for that, We often have visitors from other areas. Prior to the virus, the Big Al's tennis tournament brought a major influx of tourists. At this point, with the courts we currently have, it would be difficult to hold that event, and it could occur only with the generous contribution of space by the indoor club.

I would suggest that new courts are needed for our city. I realize the proposed pool rebuilding is a big hole in available finances. As worthy as that certainly is, we need to look at the future needs for other forms of outdoor recreation. Tennis has long been a major draw for our residents and guests.

One option might be to pursue joint projects with either the school district or the college. There might also be good spaces at North Mountain Park or at the planned East Main Street park. Someplace that already has available public restrooms certainly would be best.

Tennis courts turn out to be a lot less expensive than I had thought. Basic costs start at about \$25,000 per court. And it is possible we could turn to the tennis community for financial help, or ask for a donation from the proceeds that come out of the Big Al's tournament, which is run by volunteers for the good of the sport and the community.

Thank you for your attention to this, and for your community service as commissioners.

Allen Baker

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Stefani Seffinger [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 26, 2021 6:44 PM
To: Sean Sullivan <sean.sullivan@ashland.or.us>
Subject: Public Input - May 13, 2020

Dear Park Commissioners,

I would like to present my concern as a former park commissioner who was involved with establishing a priority for a side walk section along Lithia Park to be completed as a Capital Improvement priority many years ago. I continue to believe this is a high priority item as Lithia Park does not allow dogs and that means many folks with dogs have to walk on the road with both cars and mountain bikers zooming by. This is unsafe and is particularly hard for seniors who cannot jump out of the way as easily.

I also want to raise a concern about having Pioneer extension between Pioneer and the park office being used as a mountain bike route. This will impact one of the only senior / dog friendly routes in/near the Park, one of the only places in town where you can walk with a dog and not encounter deer.

I also want to express support for the services and programs being offered for seniors. The staff of the senior center has provided invaluable services to seniors during the pandemic.

The APRC needs to be recognized also for their pro - active approach to foreseeing and taking action during this constrained budget season.

Respectfully submitted,
Stefani Seffinger
Resident

From: Albert Pepe [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 02, 2021 8:45 AM
To: Sean Sullivan <sean.sullivan@ashland.or.us>
Subject: E Main st Park

Greetings sending this to be included in Parks study session for March 3rd. We have an opportunity to create an amazing city park that can include a dog park pump track and a Community Food Share Garden as proposed during the public meeting October 24th 2019. As a gardener and seed savor I encourage Parks to think outside the box when planning for a community garden. A food Share garden is so much more than a my plot your plot type of garden we see in most places. It includes a true Community component of bring people of all ages to Share in the process of growing some of our food locally. It has the potential to educate children and adults of the beauty and rewards of Sharing in the process with regular workshops and classes run by volunteers. The Access Food Share Garden model is an excellent choice in that it provides the resources to establish the garden through procured grants for garden set up i.e.: fencing compost seeds tools irrigation etc. The best part is that people get to work together knowing that a thriving Food Share garden is being created and the work and reward is shared by all involved and that surplus food is offered to those in need of fresh local produce. I strongly encourage Parks to look more closely into the Access food share garden model as proposed by community members at the October 24th 2019 meeting as you may recall the Access food share garden coordinator was in attendance and open to making this a reality. The best part is that it's volunteer run by community members who choose to partake. There are several such Gardens in other local towns to observe to see how they operate. I encourage Parks staff and Parks commissioners to contact Emily Mann at [REDACTED] or by phone [REDACTED]. I am open to discussing this in more detail and would like to be part of the continuing process in creating an Awesome Park that serves the greater community and as a member of the Bee City Ashland Committee encourage the planting of pollinator friendly plants in the design of E Main Park perhaps even making it into a Pollinator friendly park that is a model for future open spaces throughout our community and region. I can be reached at [REDACTED] I look forward to continuing this process and would like to have a site visit at some point to discuss the future of this exciting opportunity with Parks and members of this community. May we grow together in creating a better world for all of us. Thanks for sharing
Albert Pepe [REDACTED] Ashland

From: John and Melissa Mitchell-Hooge [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 2, 2021 2:29 PM
To: Sean Sullivan <sean.sullivan@ashland.or.us>
Subject: Public Testimony for March 3, 2021 Study Session

Dear APRC and Director Black,

We'd like to thank you and express our appreciation for your support as well as any help that you can provide regarding the future of Lincoln School Park. We will be sticking with this and persevering on this issue until there is a permanent solution that benefits the community and benefits this under served neighborhood. This is a health equity issue and a social equity issue. Lincoln School Park is another "face of Ashland" on the 4th of July as it is a prime location for viewing fireworks and enjoying a picnic dinner before the show.

I'd also like to acknowledge the fact that we're all in this together. In that spirit, I'd like you to know that our group is in favor of other worthy APRC projects, as well. We support the RVMBA pump track and skills park and their beginner's trail. We support the new pool. We support the new E. Main Park. We support the renovation of the Japanese Garden. We support the marketing of Ashland as a mecca for outdoor recreation. We support pickleball. Not only do all of these projects have our full support, but we are also excited about them, as well, and we are rooting for their success.

Thank you for your continued support of our vision of Lincoln School Park becoming an official city park. We are hopeful that the new School Board and APRC can come together for a joint meeting towards the end of 2021 to discuss the many options that are available to us in this situation. The one thing that this issue has going for it is the extent that there are creative options that are available to us. For example, it's possible for payments to commence in 2028, once Briscoe Park is fully paid for in 2027. That would give APRC seven years to budget and plan.

Our group will also be advocating for the extension of the Food & Beverage Tax beyond 2030. The extension of this tax is critical not only for the future of Lincoln Park but also many other worthy park projects and endeavors.

Thank you all so very much for your time, for your service, and for your valuable work on goal setting and overseeing our wonderful parks system here in Ashland. We are beyond grateful to you for your work!

Sincerely,
Melissa Mitchell-Hooge
Save Our Schools & Playgrounds and Friends of Lincoln Park

From: Janice Tacconi [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 2, 2021 6:29 PM
To: Sean Sullivan <sean.sullivan@ashland.or.us>
Subject: Public Testimony for March 3, 2021 Study Session

Commissioners,

I have been a resident of Ashland for over 25 years, and I am a lifelong swimmer. I am writing to support funding for the Daniel Meyer pool upgrades, as well as opening the pool with limitations now.

The Daniel Meyer pool supports wellness, health and recreation for kids, seniors and adults in Ashland. Many if not most kids in Ashland learn to swim at Daniel Meyer pool. School sports including swimming and water polo occur there, fitness swimming through Masters and lap swim, plus adult classes for aerobics and other fitness activities all occur at our community pool. I think Ashland needs to continue to support these activities by upgrading our only community pool. Please support this project through prioritization and funding.

Please support funding for opening the pool as soon as possible for groups that regularly contract time at the pool, as well as opening the pool to the public this summer. Pools all around the state are open with restrictions, and I believe that Daniel Meyer pool can be safely opened.

Thank you.

Janice Tacconi