

**MINUTES FOR REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
July 13, 2022
Electronic Meeting – 6 p.m.**

Present: Commissioners Landt (Chair), Bachman, Eldridge (present entire meeting – camera off at times due to connection), Director Black, Deputy Director Dials, Senior Services Superintendent Glatt, Analyst Kiewel, Manager Sullivan

Absent: Commissioners Bell, Lewis

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

Landt called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

APRC Study Session – June 1, 2022

Motion: Bachman moved to approve the minutes from June 1, 2022. Seconded by Eldridge.

Vote: The vote was all yes

APRC Regular Business Meeting – June 8, 2022

Motion: Bachman moved to approve the minutes from June 8, 2022. Seconded by Eldridge.

Vote: The vote was all yes

APRC Special Business Meeting – June 23, 2022

Motion: Eldridge moved to approve the minutes from June 23, 2022. Seconded by Bachman.

Vote: The vote was all yes

III. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

Gabe Howe of Ashland spoke regarding Ashland and raised concerns regarding the swim reservoir in Lithia Park. Howe stated the reservoir needs to be dredged and would like to see the area improved to better facilitate swimming.

Landt noted that he has witnessed an increase in algae which is likely due to a decrease in water flow and stated someone would be in touch with Howe regarding his concerns.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

None

VI. DIRECTORS REPORT

Black reported on the following items:

Japanese Garden

Black will be giving a presentation to City Council at their request to review a request for an increase in the project scope/contract amendment. The original bid did not include the deck because the engineering was not ready at the time. The expenses to cover the construction of the deck will be covered by private donations through the Ashland Parks Foundation.

TID Update

TID water has been released into canals. The golf course is currently being irrigated with TID water. The upper duck pond in Lithia Park is filling. Black noted that two new aerators have been installed at the upper duck pond to improve water quality.

Senior Services

There was an ice cream social held at the Senior Center that day with about 100 people in attendance.

VII. BUSINESS

a) **Crystalizing Our Call – Say Their Names Collective Public Art Location, Ashland Creek Park (Action)**

Black stated staff is looking for approval of the site location from Commissioners and stated that staff will work the artist on lighting and that APRC staff will be providing in-kind labor where possible. Black stated Commissioners previously expressed support for the City of Ashland to provide financial support as noted in the [staff report included in the meeting packet](#). The staff report also included a map identifying the location where the sculpture would be placed.

Tía Laída Fé from the Say Their Names Collective and Micah Blacklight, the artist, spoke about the community process that has led to this point. Blacklight noted that he will be working closely with APRC staff to coordinate installation and lighting (which would comply with lighting policies) if the project secures final approval from City Council. Blacklight stated that he will be seeking financial support from the City of Ashland and acknowledged that support from APRC will come in the form on in-kind labor regarding some site preparation work.

Motion: Eldridge moved to grant approval to locate the sculpture, Crystalizing Our Call, at Ashland Creek Park as identified in the location map. Seconded by Bachman.

Vote: The vote was all yes.

Motion: Eldridge moved to support the artist's request for financial support from the City of Ashland for engineering and installation. Seconded by Bachman.

Vote: The vote was all yes

b) **Bluebird Park Seating and Permission to Serve Alcohol (Information)**

Dials referenced the information included in the [staff report](#) and stated that Sean Mark Nipper, the owner of Local Pub 31, has requested access to a portion of Bluebird Park to provide food and beverage/alcohol services similar to what is allowed on Calle Guanajuato. Dials displayed images of the park and identified the areas where seating could be accommodated. Dials added the following statements during the presentation:

- This is the only building that has an entrance adjacent to Bluebird Park
- The request could be feasibly accommodated
- If approved, staff would remove some vegetation and prep the areas identified for seating. The established plants could be transplanted to other park areas
- The walkway through Bluebird Park would not be impacted
- It would be necessary to amend the current Calle Guanajuato policy to include portions of Bluebird Park and that all fees would apply to this extension
- It would be necessary to amend the alcohol ordinance to include a portion of Bluebird Park
- The entire area of Blue Bird Park is roughly 5,662 square feet. The area that could be impacted by seating is roughly 450 square feet. Dials later clarified that some of the area could not be used due to slope, and that the final rentable area would be determined by where seating can be feasibly placed.

Sean Mark Nipper of Ashland stated that this extension would benefit his business and stated that this extension could also bring attention to other business that are located around the corner from Bluebird Park

Discussion:

- Dials clarified that APRC would continue to be responsible for the vegetation and irrigation within the rented area, as is the case with Calle Guanajuato. Black reiterated that the lessee is responsible for maintaining tables and APRC is responsible for vegetation, irrigation, and other infrastructure within the park
- Bachman inquired about operating hours since the establishment is listed as being open until 2 a.m. (later corrected that it is open until 1 a.m.)

- Dials clarified that her recollection is that Calle Guanajuato is available for use by lessees through 10 p.m. or 11 p.m. but would need to report back
- Black clarified that because park hours are listed in municipal code and the code has yet to be amended, Lithia Park is the only park that is officially closed at night
- Bachman stated support for continued and increased outdoor seating
- Black noted that this item is for information only and additional details can be worked out
- Black stated the door to this business opens directly into the park and is currently being used as a right of way into the businesses, which can be considered when determining if any rules need to be different from what is allowed on Calle Guanajuato or consider altering the hours or other rules on the Calle
- It was noted by various individuals that this business is not located adjacent to a residential area
- Landt stated the following:
 - Whenever it is possible to say yes to business partners it should be done as has been done on the Calle when the season was proposed to be extended (later denied by the City Council), but he would like to look at this differently
 - If the seating was taken out of the Calle it would be a paved hardscape. Bluebird Park is different. When he visited today there were people using the park in a quiet manner as an oasis and is not sure if this would be the right spot for this kind of activity
 - Almost half of the park is comprised of the creek bed or land on the other side of the creek, which is not useable. This leaves approximately 2,500 square feet of usable space. The 450 square feet of space under consideration comprises 15-20% of this area
 - The Calle has a much wider walking path with pavers to the side of that to facilitate tables and Bluebird Park is much smaller and is much more vegetated
 - He would like to be cautious and not move too fast on this issue to avoid public backlash after the fact
- Eldridge stated preliminary support for the concept of using this area for outdoor seating and would like to continue the conversation and take Landt's concerns into consideration

Dials stated more information will be brought to Commissioners at a future meeting

c) APRC Budget Reductions - City of Ashland Strategic Choices (Action)

Black reviewed the budget cuts that are being required by the City Council

- \$350K from the operating budget
- \$140K from Personnel Reductions (vacancy savings)
- \$300K ending fund balance transferred to the City of Ashland
 - The Commission is being asked to act on the cuts needed to meet the \$350K reduction to the operating budget

Blacks proposed reductions are listed below. Black noted the differences from the proposal given at the July Study Session include a smaller reduction in Parks Temps/Seasonals (\$82.5K to \$12.5K) which was replaced by \$70K that was budgeted to cover half of the cost (\$140K total) of the Executive Analyst position which is now being shared 50/50 with the City of Ashland administration who will be covering half of the expense (\$70K from the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT)). This was not presented at the last meeting because the details of sharing the position was unclear at the time. Sharing this position is a pilot project that will be revisited at the end of the year. Black noted that the loss of half of this position will result in securing contract services and transferring work to other employees.

Reductions – Materials and Services

- Equipment Replacement: \$50K (50% of annual budget)
- Pioneer Hall: \$18.5K (100% of budget – APRC would no longer manage this facility. It has always been operated at a loss)
- Recreation Materials and Services: \$25K (multiple lines – Recreation Supervisor to determine)
- Parks Materials and Services: \$57.5K (multiple line items – Director to determine)

Reductions – Personnel

- Office Assistant Reduction: \$59K (Senior Services and Recreation Position.)
- Temps/Seasonals: \$12.5K (Open Space Temps)

- Admin .5 FTE: \$70K (Executive Analyst position to be split with City Admin)
- Parks Tech III being backfilled with a Tech I: \$46.5K (golf course)
- Management Reduction in Pay via Furlough: \$11K (the Director is the only position that will be taking furlough days)

Black noted that the total FTE count for regular APRC employees would be at 33.5 FTE if approved

- This accounts for the .75 from Recreation and Senior Services and the .5 that is being shared with the City of Ashland are accounted for

Motion: Bachman moved to approve the total reduction in APRC expenses of \$350,000 as presented in the line-item detail in the staff report to address the reduction in general fund revenue for the 2022/2023 fiscal year. Seconded by Eldridge

Landt noted that what was presented in the staff report is not what Director Black presented in the meeting. Bachman amended the motion as follows with agreement from Eldridge.

Amended Motion: Bachman moved to approve the total reduction in APRC expenses of \$350,000 as presented by Director Black this evening to address the reduction in general fund revenue for the 2022/2023 fiscal year. Seconded by Eldridge

Discussion: Bachman stated that since the Director is responsible for implementing these cuts and he does not see a problem with the proposed cuts, this is an appropriate way to reduce expenses. Eldridge stated support for the reduction in cuts assuming that the staff person who is being split with the City Administration does not have any concerns. Black confirmed that the employee is willing to accept this change. Landt stated that he is glad to see that temporary staff is being reduced less because this is the most efficient and cost-effective way to deal with the seasonal nature of landscape maintenance work, but also noted that there is still a loss of 1.75 FTE and cuts to materials and services that will have an impact on operations. Landt noted that Black is voluntarily taking a reduction in pay and praised his leadership in this action.

Vote: the vote was all yes

VIII. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

None

IX. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- a) APRC Study Session—August 3, 2022
 - Canceled
- b) APRC Regular Business Meeting—Aug 10, 2022
 - Electronic Meeting—6 p.m.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted
Sean Sullivan, Business Operations Manager