

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

September 14, 2022

Electronic Meeting – 6 p.m.

Present: Commissioners Landt (Chair), Lewis (Vice Chair), Bachman, Bell, Eldridge Director Black, Deputy Director Dials, Analyst Kiewel, Irrigation Supervisor Miller, Manager Sullivan

Absent: Senior Services Superintendent Glatt

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 Special Business Meeting – July 6, 2022

Motion: Bachman moved to approve the minutes from July 6, 2022. Seconded by Lewis.

Vote: The vote was all yes

APRC Regular Business Meeting – July 13, 2022

Motion: Bachman moved to approve the minutes from July 13, 2022. Seconded by Lewis.

Vote: The vote was all yes

III. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

None

V. CONSENT AGENDA

a) Bee City USA Subcommittee Member Appointment

Motion: Bell moved to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Seconded by Bachman.

Vote: The vote was all yes

VI. DIRECTORS REPORT

Black reported on the following items:

DANIEL MEYER POOL AND SPLASHPAD

- The Daniel Meyer Pool closed for the Season on August 28. The Garfield Park Splash pad stayed open until September 9. The outdoor swim season was shortened last year due to the smoke season, and this year we were only forced to close one full day. Rec Swim Revenue last year was \$18,000 while this year it was close to \$30,000.

EVENTS

- Bear Creek Salmon Festival on Sat, Oct 1, 11am-4pm at North Mountain Park – A celebration of our watershed will be held with many community partners on-site with activities for the community.
- Tri4Youth Bike|Run event at Hunter Park for youth of all abilities. This is our first year to partner with FactOregon and bring Southern Oregon this all-inclusive youth and family event on Sat, Oct 1, 8:30 a.m. to noon. This event is a significant step forward in partnering with groups to bring events to our community with a focus on including youth with disabilities.
- The Ashland Japanese Garden Celebration on Sat, Oct 22 from 1-5pm. in Lithia Park. Please join us in celebrating a gift to the community and an enhancement to Lithia Park. There will be self-guided tours of the garden, exhibits and demonstrations.

PROGRAM GUIDE

- The 2022 Fall Community PlayGuide is now available, and registration is open. Programs in the fall guide will go through December. View programs and register by visiting AshlandParksandRec.org.

VII. **BUSINESS**

a) **Oak Knoll Golf Course Irrigation/Management Options (Possible Action)**

Attendance Note: Eldridge's feed came in and out during Black's presentation on this item due to technical difficulties

Black reviewed the [staff report included in the meeting packet](#) and gave a presentation that included two topics staff is asking Commissioners to take action on: 1) using water for greens rehabilitation 2) putting out a request for proposals to see if there is interest from a 3rd party to manage the property

Water Use for Greens Rehabilitation

- No City water is currently being used on the course
- TID (Talent Irrigation District) ran from July 2 – August 19
- Unable to keep the course green due to lack of available TID water resulting in falling revenue
- Greens will need to be rehabbed/replanted
- The residual TID water held in the pond after August 19 has been depleted. The residual water was used to water greens only
- Filling the storage pond with city water (to start green rehabilitation) would cost about \$20,000 and would provide water for 35 days
 - Watering the course for another month (before the rains start) would allow the rehabilitation process to begin
- Public Works responded to an inquiry from APRC staff with the following info
 - Water usage in the city is trending down
 - Using water on the greens would not represent a challenge to water production
 - Water for the greens would come from the city reservoir, which is at 57%
- Revenue at the course is trending down (overall, 5% off target or \$21,000 under projections)

Request for Proposal

- Staff would like Commissioners to consider issuing an RFP or RFQ to determine interest in managing the property by a 3rd party
- Interested parties have contacted staff and communicated a desire to look into submitting a proposal for consideration
- Staff recommends keeping the course open rather than closing it down if rehabilitation were to begin

Staff Recommendations

- Water
 - Staff recommends that the Commissioners authorize the expenditure of \$20,000 on City Water to facilitate the rehabilitation of greens at this critical time
 - Staff will identify how the overage will be covered and report on the line items that will be reduced to accommodate the overage
- RFP
 - Staff recommends that the Commissioners support the creation of an RFP or RFQ to solicit interest from private groups
- Closure
 - Staff recommends that the Golf Course remain open and playable while the green rehabilitation takes place

Public Input

- [Written testimony from Jim Hatton](#) of Ashland was received and distributed to Commissioners prior to the meeting

Discussion

- Black clarified that the Council approved a reduction in the APRC budget of \$350,000 from Materials and Services and \$140,000 from personnel

- Bell stated the golf course has been maintained with TID irrigation water. In recent years, there is less and less water available and this trend is likely to continue and stated rehabilitating the greens would be prudent if next year is a good water year but he is concerned that the trend is not favorable for a rebound. Bell concluded that the \$20,000 investment is acceptable to attempt to keep the course open and playable
- Black clarified that the \$20,000 could be taken from a couple lines and will report back on specifics with the goal of pulling from lines that would result in less impacts to the community compared to the closing the golf course
- Black clarified that the City of Ashland rates for water are set and not likely to change
- Black clarified that revenue for July and August is \$29,000 and expects that play should continue at this level during greens rehabilitation
- Lewis mentioned the possibility of including disk golf as a use and supports staff recommendations

Motion: Bachman moved to direct staff to pursue the RFP approach to possibly forming a partnership of any kind to run the golf course. Seconded by Bell

Discussion: Black speculated (at a prompt from Bachman) that spending the money to keep the greens healthier would positively impact discussions with third parties who may submit a proposal. Bell stated that to date, the course has operated at a loss, and this should continue to be expected.

Vote: The vote was all yes

Motion: Bell moved to direct staff to purchase culinary water to water the greens for the next month. Seconded by Lewis.

Discussion: Bachman would like to amend the motion to state “not to exceed \$20,000”. Lewis seconded the amendment.

Eldridge stated that this is an extremely difficult personal decision for her and she was initially opposed to using potable water, but will be voting yes, with some concerns, as a result of input received from the community

Vote to Amend the Motion: The motion would direct staff to purchase culinary water to water the greens for the next month, not to exceed \$20,000

Vote: The vote was all yes

Vote on Amended Motion: Bell moved to direct staff to purchase culinary water to water the greens for the next month, not to exceed \$20,000

Discussion: Landt stated the damage to the greens and decrease in revenue could have been avoided if culinary water were used all season, but that would have been extremely costly and there was not an easy decision to make under the existing circumstances and he supported using the funds

Vote on Motion: The vote was all yes

Landt stated that in order to have a long-term viable golf course, there needs to be another water source and would like to explore the feasibility of the use of wells. Black stated that staff is looking into wells and increased storage capacity on site.

b) Calle Guanajuato Season Expansion (Possible Action)

Dials reviewed the [staff report included in the meeting packet](#) and gave a presentation that included the following items:

- The Commissioners approved a fee increase and season extension for the Calle Guanajuato early in 2022; however, when the item went to the City Council for the adoption of the fee increase, the Council denied both the fee increase to which the season extension was predicated on
- The renters on the Calle are still interested in a longer season and APRC staff are proposing that the Commissioners move forward with the longer season without a per square foot increase in fees
- Renters would be charged for extended use based on the current fees

CURRENT FEE
\$ 1.00 per sf per month (7-days/wk)
\$.62 per sf per month (weekdays only)
\$.68 per sf per month (weekend only)

- APRC cannot change the consolidated fee schedule and the City Council is unwilling to do so for the Calle rental fees at this point, but the Commissioners can extend the season based on the current fee rates in the approved schedule
- Staff recommends extending the season for year-round use by current renters through March 10, 2023 using the existing fee schedule

Motion: Bell moved to direct staff to arrange to extend the season to the end of March for the current Calle Guanajuato renters at the current rates. Seconded by Bachman

Vote: The vote was all yes

c) City of Ashland Management Resolution / COLA (Action)

Black reviewed the [staff report included in the meeting packet](#) and gave a presentation that included the following items:

- The City of Ashland recently passed a management resolution for unrepresented, confidential and management employees. APRC staff is asking Commissioners to adopt the same resolution for all APRC. The management resolution includes the following items
 - COLA increases for all APRC employees would be as follows:
 - Year 1: effective July 1, 2022: 4% increase
 - Year 2: effective July 1, 2022: 4% increase
 - Year 3: effective July 1, 2022: 3% increase
 - HRA Veba Increase
 - Increase in City/APRC contribution from 2% of salary to 3% of salary
 - Longevity Pay Program
 - 5 years of service: \$1,000 annual bonus
 - 10 years of service: \$1,250 annual bonus
 - 15 years of service: \$1,500 annual bonus
 - Healthcare Adjustment
 - Deductibles would go up to \$1,500 and \$4,500 (individual and family) with the option to purchase lower deductibles
 - This keeps the employee contribution at the same level
- The financial impact to APRC to fund this for one year is \$82,000, which will be covered for this year with savings from vacant positions
- Staff recommends approval of the Management Resolution

Discussion:

- Black clarified that these benefits are the same as has been approved for City of Ashland non-represented employees
 - Bachman stated that the COLA increase is less than what inflation is coming in at and is concerned that the reduced COLAs would be locked in for three years resulting in employees making less in real dollars
- Landt stated there is a Commissioner policy that directs how annual COLA calculations are determined and since this package does not meet that policy the motion should include a waiver of the policy for the three year period this package covers

Motion: Landt moved to waive APRC COLA policy for the duration of this recommendation and approve Resolution 2022-26, known as the “Management Resolution” for APRC employees effective immediately. Seconded by Bell

Discussion: Landt clarified that the policy states the COLA is based on the West Coast CPI not to be below 1% and not above 5%. Bachman stated this locks in the COLA at 4%, 4% and 3% which would come in at 5% for the next three years if inflation continues at

the rate it is at and does not want to tie hands of Commissioners. Bachman stated he is trying to be an advocate for employees and will not support the motion. Black stated that in recent years staff received less than what the policy called for and sometimes did not receive a COLA at all and concluded that an actual benefit is better than the potential for an unrealized benefit in the future. Black added that this will be the largest COLA APRC will receive during his tenure at APRC. Landt stated that COLA catch-ups have been made in the past when inflation was very low. Bell stated passing this is important for staff morale

Vote: Lewis, Bell, Elbridge and Landt voted yes. Bachman voted no.

d) Commissioner Position on Ballot Measures (*Food and Beverage Allocation / City Charter Amendment pertaining to APRC employees reporting to the City Manager*) (Action)

Black stated the Commissioners asked staff to provide information on two City of Ashland ballot measures for deliberation and action. A summary of the measures was displayed onscreen (see below).

Ballot Measures from City Council

- CAPTION: Proposed amendments to Ashland's Food and Beverage Tax Ordinance
 - Question: Shall the ordinance be amended to dedicate a portion of revenues to general government services and extend the sunset date?
- CAPTION: Amend Ashland City Charter Article VII-A
 - Shall Ashland amend its city charter to delegate all authority to appoint, supervise, and remove employees to the City Manager?
- Landt prepared a proposed resolution with background information that was read aloud

Background

Measure 15-210 would move management of the Parks Director from elected Park & Recreation Commissioners to an unelected City Manager. This would create confusion and conflict as the City Charter still gives "management and control" of parks to APRC Commissioners. But if measure 15-210 passed, the Parks Director and staff would be under the direction of the City Manager, who reports to the City Council. Given City Council's recent questionable involvement in minor APRC business, increased conflicts would seem to be inevitable. The Parks Director would be in the untenable position of having two bosses, ostensibly directed by APRC Commissioners, but would be hired, fired and paid by the City Manager. And,

Discord would likely become the norm in future years as Commissioners, Councils and the City Manager all tried to have their say. Measure 15-210 attempts to solve a problem that would be more appropriately resolved by a Memorandum of Understanding than by a change to the City's constitution, the Charter.

Measure 15-211 would allow $\frac{3}{4}$ of food and beverage tax revenue to go to virtually anything that the City Manager recommends to City Council. APRC Commissioners have supported directing $\frac{3}{4}$ of F&B revenue to APRC operating expenses, replacing property taxes dollar for dollar. APRC Commissioner Landt believes this to be a wiser use of F&B revenues that the voters originally approved to support parks.

Resolution of APRC Commissioners

14 Sept 2022

Whereas, the Ashland Parks Commission was established by a vote of the electorate in 1908; and,

Whereas, said Parks Commission has had control and management of over park land, resources and staffing since 1908; and,

Whereas, said Parks Commission has built and maintained a first-class Park and Recreation system for the citizens of Ashland with the help of thousands of volunteers; and,

Whereas, passage of Measure 15-210 would be a significant step in ending APRC's role in managing Parks operations; and

Whereas, passage of Measure 15-210 would lead to confusion and conflict between APRC Commissioners, City Council and the City Manager; and

Whereas, passage of Measure 15-211 would likely exacerbate APRC's already difficult budget environment; and,

Whereas, the APRC Commissioners believe they are the proper elected body to carry out the mission of preserving and improving Ashland's public lands;

Be it Resolved that the APRC opposes both Measures 15-210 and 15-211.

Motion: Bachman moved to approve this resolution. Seconded by Bell.

Discussion: Eldridge noted there is a typo in the year of the resolution shown on screen. There was consensus to fix the typo to state 2022 rather than 2002. Bell stated Ashland is a different place than other parts of Oregon and one of the reasons is because there is an elected parks commission, which is a structure that was set up over 100 years ago with the idea that it would protect the park system and maintain separation from other city affairs. Bachman stated that should 15-210 be approved, it would be the effective end of APRC, without the control of the organization the Commissioners would cease to be relevant.

Vote: The vote was all yes

e) Parks Irrigation Report (Information)

Black reviewed the [staff report included in the meeting packet](#) and gave a presentation that included the following items:

- Staff reported to Commissioners in [May 2022](#) that if the same level of watering that occurred in the last irrigation season (2021) was used for the current irrigation season (2022), expenses would have exceeded the parks water budget by \$75,000
 - Staff is now projecting an average of ~\$30,000 and will continue to bring that number down by continuing the irrigation prioritization plan presented in [May 2022](#)

Sullivan provided the following information:

- TID was made available this year from July 5 – August 19 (45 days)
 - TID was available for approximately 30 days last year and was shut off on July 19
- TID was not fully utilized at Lithia Park and NMP because of issues with the installation of the new irrigation system.
 - NMP utilized TID water off and on in July and was taking full advantage in August
 - Lithia Park was able to partially utilize TID water in August
- Commissioners authorized the purchase of new irrigation controllers for North Mountain Park and Lithia Park to begin to modernize the irrigation system
 - Some installation issues have arisen, but are being dealt with and are expected to be addressed prior to the next irrigation season
 - Benefits from the new system, such as leak detection and optimized watering schedules, were realized during the current irrigation season
- The Upper Duck Pond is losing water faster than expected due to the ongoing drought
 - Unlike the lower duck pond, which is lined with concrete, the Upper Duck Pond has a natural bottom
 - Staff will be looking into a longer-term solution to water loss, such as lining the pond
 - Water quality will continue to be an issue as long as water quantity is low, however aerators have been installed to improve water movement

VIII. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

Landt stated there is a Council meeting on September 20 that will be discussing the management and responsibilities of APRC.

Landt stated support for the Say Their Names display at Railroad Park and recently noticed that plastic flowers have added to the display and is concerned about the plastic degrading and becoming litter.

IX. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- a) Bee City USA Subcommittee—September 20, 2022
 - Electronic Meeting—3 p.m.
- b) APRC Study Session—October 5, 2022

- Electronic Meeting—6 p.m.
- c) APRC Regular Business Meeting—October 12, 2022
 - Electronic Meeting—6 p.m.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sean Sullivan, Business Operations Manager