

MINUTES FOR REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
October 12, 2022
Electronic Meeting – 6 p.m.

Present: Commissioners Landt (Chair), Lewis (Vice Chair), Bachman, Bell, Eldridge; Director Black; Acting City Attorney Doug McGeary; 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

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

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Landt stated there are corrections to both sets of minutes. The proposed corrections were [displayed on screen](#).

APRC Special Business Meeting – September 7, 2022

Motion: Bachman moved to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Bell

Vote: The vote was all yes

APRC Regular Business Meeting – September 14, 2022

Motion: Eldridge moved to approve the minutes as amended. 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) Subcommittee Minutes Acknowledgement

- [Bee City USA Subcommittee – June 30, 2022](#)
- [Parks & Open Space Map Subcommittee – July 1, 2022](#)
- [Parks & Open Space Map Subcommittee – July 7, 2022](#)
- [Ashland Senior Advisory Committee – July 11, 2022](#)

Motion: Bell moved to acknowledge the subcommittee minutes. Seconded by Bachman

Vote: The vote was all yes

VI. DIRECTORS REPORT

Black reported on the following events:

The Commissioners are invited to attend the Opening Celebration for the new Senior Outdoor Activity Space on October 14, 2:00-3:30pm. The space is in Hunter Park next to Ashland Senior Center.

The Commissioners are invited to attend the VIP event for the Japanese Garden on Thursday October 20th beginning at 3:30pm. The event goes until 6:30pm. Speeches will be around 5pm. The public event will be held on Saturday October 22nd, 1pm-5pm.

VII. BUSINESS

a) City Attorney Report on City Council/City Manager Authority Respecting Park and Recreation (Information)

Landt introduced Doug McGeary, the acting City Attorney. McGeary was invited to the meeting to discuss a legal opinion regarding the authority of the Parks and Recreation Commissioners over all aspects of the organization. Conversely, the memo is also about the City Managers authority over the same organization. The legal opinion begins on [pg. 13 of the meeting packet](#). The full presentation begins at [9:42 in the video recording](#). McGeary reviewed his opinion and there were concerns raised from multiple Commissioners on various aspects of the opinion including that it does not seem to take into consideration that the Charter Amendment from 2020 which added language clarifying the oversight of APRC (see relevant Charter language below).

Section 4. The City Manager must:...

4. Appoint, supervise, and remove all non-elected department heads and other city employees, except as follows:

a. The Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission shall have responsibility for appointing, supervising, and removing its employees, subject to state law, Ashland Municipal Code, written mutual agreements between the City Council and Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission, and formal, written City administrative policies.

b. Employees who report directly to the Mayor and City Council shall be appointed, supervised, and removed by the Mayor and City Council and shall be termed appointive officers.

5. Organize city departments and administrative structure, except that the City Manager shall have no responsibility for the supervision of the City Attorney's Office or the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission;

b) Ashland Parks Foundation Report – Butler Perozzi Fountain Restoration (Information)

Black reviewed the [staff memo in the meeting packet](#) and made the following comments.

- The Ashland Parks Foundation (APF), an independent 501(c)3 charitable organization, recently contracted with Architectural Resources Group to provide and analysis and recommendations for the restoration of the Buter Perozzi Fountain located in Lithia Park. The cost of the analysis was \$15,000 and was fully paid for using foundation funds
- The fountain and surrounding area are in fair condition with poor conditions existing in some areas
- Recommendations include
 - Replacing the pedestal that supports the upper bowl
 - Address water flow issues from the fountain
 - Repair joints
 - The lower and outer rim of the pool should be demolished and replaces
 - The lower pedestal should be repaired
 - Cracks and spalls should be repaired
 - Treat the graffiti host when the upper bowl is removed from replacement of the pedestal
 - Install a leak resistant pool and replace the mechanical and plumbing system
 - Remove cracked and spalling concrete and replace
- The proposed recommendations would have a lifespan of 30-50 years at \$475,000
- APF currently has approximately \$240,000 set aside for this project. All funds are from private donations

Black introduced Mike Gardiner, the President of the Ashland Parks Foundation who stated the APF goal, in regard to the Butler Perozzi Fountain, is to provide as much information as possible to the Commissioners to determine the best path forward and also raise funds to help complete the project.

DISCUSSION

- Bell inquired if the material of the marble was not intended to be out in the elements should there be consideration of replacing the fountain with a more durable material such as bronze
 - Gardiner stated that there is historic value to the fountain which is why restoration was the main focus of the analysis, but there is a short section on replacement
 - Black clarified that areas where replacement is recommended could use materials that are more durable, but match the rest of the marble fountain

- Black added that mitigation efforts need to be reviewed to reduce impacts from the freeze thaw cycle which is a main factor in the 30–50-year lifespan and that mitigation efforts may be able to extend the lifespan of restoration efforts
- Black stated that determinations such as the material used, and mitigation efforts will be evaluated at length during a public process
- Lewis stated that while Chair of the Historic Commission in 1988, restoration on the fountain cost approximately \$200,000 so the current figure does not seem out of line. Lewis also stated that an attempt was made to cover it in the past, but the material used was not durable enough and did not stand up to the elements
 - Gardiner clarified that the cost estimate includes the rehabilitating the surrounding concrete area and plumbing upgrades
- Landt stated that at some point in the past the area surrounding the pool was elevated which created a trip hazard on the stairs because the last stair has a different rise and would like clarification on the remedy for this from the consultants
- Landt stated that when looking up the stairs at the fountain it seems the walls surrounding the fountain platform were re-done in the past and not original because the lines and proportions are different from everywhere else and would like to see a comparison done with historic photos to verify or dispute his hypothesis
- Landt stated that he does not think that the foundation, staff, or the Commissioners should hold the sole responsibility to determine the question regarding historical accuracy (restoration) vs. longevity (replacement with a more durable material) and would like to see a robust public process put into place
 - Black agreed with this sentiment and would hold meetings to get an idea of what the public would like to see at the discretion of Commissioners
- Bachman inquired if the Public Arts Commission might be brought in to be part of the process
 - Black stated that the Historic Commission would be a better fit, but is unsure of what City Commissions are still operating
- Eldridge supported an involved public process to determine restoration vs. replacement and would like to see a side-by-side cost comparison for both options
 - Black stated a cost estimate was received in the past for complete replacement and could be used as a comparison
- Gardiner stated that fundraising efforts would likely need to be put on hold until the question of rehabilitation vs. replacement is resolved so solicitations can be tailored accordingly

Black stated staff will draft a public process plan and bring it back to Commissioners for adoption and stated the likely timeline to start meetings would not be until after the first of the year.

c) Prescribed Burning on Park Lands and Open Space (Possible Action)

Black stated Deputy Chief Chambers was unable to make the meeting and he was asked to fill in and make the presentation. Black reviewed the [staff memo in the meeting packet](#) and made the following comments

- Ashland Fire and Rescue is seeking permission to do prescribed burning on parks properties to reduce wildfire risk
- Prescribed burning entail burning the understory by applying fire across a larger area
- There are ecological benefits to prescribed burning including nutrient recycling, discouragement of noxious weeds and encouragement of native species
- One of the areas that could be treated is the Lithia Park Hillside so smoke management and public outreach will be key components to a successful program
 - A strong foundation about the benefits of fire mitigation has been laid in the community
 - Alerts go out to the public via Nixle
 - Burns closer to residential areas will be designed to minimize smoke
- Mitigation on the Lithia Hillside has been done in the past, but that entailed creating burn piles, the prescribed burns would have fire move through the understory which is more efficient and effective than burning piles
- Prescribed burns will reduce risk to homes that are adjacent to areas that currently have non-native grasses that are prone to fire

Staff recommends that the commission approve APRC staff and Ashland Fire & Rescue to implement prescribed burning as an ongoing program to reduce community wildfire hazard and increase the resilience of APRC lands included in the 2016 Ashland Forest Plan.

DISCUSSION

- Black clarified that under burning has not been done on park lands in the past, which is why this request is being brought before Commissioners. Black noted that under story burning has been done of lands the City of Ashland manages in the watershed
- Black stated that burning is not without risk to adjacent areas, but the benefits of under story burning outweighs the risks
- Black clarified that burning could occur on park properties as early as this fall if approved by Commissioners
- Black clarified that AFR will be fully funding and fully managing the burns
- Lewis stated this is an efficient way to treat large areas and that this seems like a prudent measure to reduce risk to wildfire
- Eldridge referenced that staff report where it stated that, *Burning could begin as soon as this fall using smaller burns this year as demonstrations for neighbors and the general public*, which was reassuring that the public will be eased into the change in fire mitigation management on parks lands
- Landt noted the recent unauthorized fires on the Lithia Hillside that were easily suppressed by AFR and other agencies, which is additionally reassuring that prescribed burns can be safely managed

Motion: Bell moved to approve the staff plan to use prescribed burns to clear brush on APRC properties with the assistance of Ashland Fire and Rescue. Seconded by Lewis

Landt raised a concern that the motion limits the burning to brush only. Black also noted a concern that APRC will not be assisting AFR. Bell and Lewis agreed to withdraw the motion.

New Motion: Eldridge moved that the Commission approve APRC staff and Ashland Fire & Rescue to implement prescribed burning as an ongoing program to reduce community wildfire hazard and increase the resilience of APRC lands included in the 2016 Ashland Forest Plan.

Discussion: None

Vote: The vote was all yes

VIII. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

Landt stated Eldridge is being appointed to the Public Arts Commission to replace Commissioner Lewis

IX. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- a) APRC Study Session—November 2, 2022
 - Electronic Meeting—6 p.m.
- b) APRC Regular Business Meeting—November 9, 2022
 - Electronic Meeting—6 p.m.
- c) Ashland Senior Advisory Committee—November 14, 2022
 - Electronic Meeting—3:30 p.m.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Sean Sullivan, Business Operations Manager