

MINUTES FOR STUDY SESSION
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
October 5, 2022
Electronic Meeting – 6 P.M.

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

Absent: Acting City Attorney McGeary

This meeting was recorded and uploaded to the APRC YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fu8yIS-OTMY>

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. Public Forum

None

III. CITY ATTORNEY REPORT ON CITY COUNCIL/CITY MANAGER AUTHORITY RESPECTING PARKS AND RECREATION

Landt moved onto items later in the agenda because McGeary was not present at the start of the meeting.

McGeary was not present after the following agenda items were completed. Landt directed staff to schedule McGeary for the October 12, 2022, Business Meeting.

IV. BLUEBIRD PARK SEATING AND ALCOHOL SERVICE – CALLE POLICY EXTENSION

Dials reviewed the [staff report included in the meeting packet](#) which included the following points

- Staff recently brought a proposal to Commissioners from a restaurant owner adjacent to Bluebird Park that would allow outdoor seating and alcohol service
- While undertaking due diligence on the feasibility of this request, staff determined that Bluebird Park was purchased with Land, Water Conservation Funds (LWCF)
- The use requested by the restaurant owner does not comply with the LWCF Act (see relevant section below), which would require replacement of the property which is not advantageous to APRC

Conversion policy. The LWCF Act requires the States to operate and maintain by acceptable standards the properties or facilities acquired or developed for public outdoor recreation use. Further, Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act (now codified at 54 U.S.C. § 200305(f)(3)) and its implementing regulations at 36 C.F.R. Part 59 requires that no property acquired or developed with LWCF assistance shall be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses without the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, and only if the Secretary finds it to be in accordance with the then existing SCORP and only upon such conditions as the Secretary deems necessary to assure the substitution of other recreation properties of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location. Parks or recreation areas acquired or developed with LWCF assistance (in whole or part) are now referred to as “LWCF-assisted areas” and/or “LWCF boundary

- In light of this new information, staff is not planning on pursuing this proposal further unless otherwise directed by Commissioners. The restaurant owner has been updated with this information

Discussion:

- Dials clarified that SCORP, referenced in the memo, stands for State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Landt would like to see a policy in place before other proposals come before Commissioners having to do with commercial uses of park land
 - Eldridge stated concern with putting up obstacles to seek permission for outdoor seating
 - Landt stated a policy could state that expanding commercial use in a parking lot could be more desirable than commercial uses in area perceived as parks lands
- Bachman stated support to get a framework in place for public land uses and that more due diligence should be undertaken when entertaining these types of requests

- Landt clarified that Landt is not requesting any movement on the creation of a policy at this time

There were no objections to cease looking into this request

V. PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MAP SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

Black displayed the [Parks, Trails, and Open Space Program map](#) and provided the following information:

- The Parks Commission Chair formed an Open Space Subcommittee to review the current Parks, Trails and Open Space Program, included within the City of Ashland Comprehensive Plan, and make recommendations for amendments
- The program identified lands that were recommended for acquisition for parks and open space
- Black stated that the map was reviewed in [2012 as a "light update"](#), but those updates were never officially approved to amend the comprehensive plan. The subcommittee will be seeking an amendment to the comprehensive plan as part of this process
- Black noted that the comprehensive plan calls for a park within a ¼ mile of all residents, which has largely been achieved and this reduces vehicle traffic to and from parks
- The work of the subcommittee is ongoing, but so far, the group is recommending a little over 261 acres of lands identified for acquisition should be removed from the map in an effort to display that there is less of a need to acquire some of the properties
- Black displayed a [working map](#) with properties shaded:
 - **Purple properties** – No longer seeking acquisition (remove from program map)
 - **Green properties** – Existing APRC Parks Properties
 - **Red properties** – Divestment properties (APRC to seek sale of property)
 - Examples include small parcels on Nutley and Granite and near Riverwalk
 - **Hatched Areas** – Park properties to acquire (Black noted that if any given one of these parcels is developed, a portion of it would be desired for park lands, trails, etc., but the entire parcel would not be needed as a park)

Landt provided the following statements

- There are less than 30 acres of property to acquire and reiterated that 261 acres are being recommended for removal
- When the plan was first developed there were far fewer parks, so more total acres were identified on the map than needed so it would be possible to act when desirable properties became available
- Some parcels were initially identified to implement plans that have changed such as a parcel that would have facilitated golf course expansion. This is no longer being pursued
- Billings Ranch is also being removed because potential uses that were initially identified are no longer desired (e.g., golf course or city farm)
- There is one piece of property that could be a neighborhood park, but is dependent upon the Mistletoes/Crowson area being developed
- Having a park within a ¼ miles of every resident is exceptional. This is an equity issue. Often parks are located in more affluent areas, which is not the case here because of the completion of this goal
- Members of the subcommittee include Commissioner Eldridge, former Commissioner and resident Joanne Eggers, Torsten Heycke and Katie Larson of Ashland Woodlands Trail Association, and Eric Hansen who is an avid mountain biker
- The group is planning to meet one or two times more and will then hold a public input meeting
- The general assessment of the group is that there is sufficient parkland in Ashland with very few exceptions and recommendations to remove properties from the program reflect that
- Eldridge added that there was discussion to compare the map to the Trails Master Plan to review connectivity and improve trail access / connectivity and that more discussion needs to happen to determine where acquisition or easements are the best tool to accomplish improvements

Black provided the following information on next steps

- There will be a plan to present a draft recommendation to the public through a process and noted that the map displayed at the meeting was Draft 3 and the map could change as the map is further refined
- It is likely that the public input will be held in an open house or charette forum
- Commissioners will also hold public meeting(s) after the open house/charette meeting to eventually make a recommendation to amend the City of Ashland Comprehensive Plan
- The recommendation will need to go to the Planning Department and eventually the City Council who has authority to amend the Comprehensive Plan

Eldridge stated gratitude and appreciation to Leah Richards (Ashland GIS Staff) and Tara Kiewel for providing support to the process

VI. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

Black displayed photos of Green #9 at the Oak Knoll Golf Course showing that the rehabilitation of greens is progressing nicely and made the following comments:

- Staff is replanting the greens without the need to rebuild them; the rehabilitation period is expected to be 3 months; Black clarified that the request for proposals for golf course operations will hopefully be brought to Commissioners in November, which would be dependent on finishing up some other projects; Black clarified that rain is expected soon and the rehabilitation will not exceed \$20,000 and is likely to come in under that amount
 - Landt stated that there is a claim on social media that it would cost \$200K to rehabilitate the greens and asked staff for clarification
 - Black stated that the cost estimate, including water, will be between \$15,000 - \$20,000

Lewis attended the Salmon Festival and stated it a successful event

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting 6:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sean Sullivan, Business Operations Manager