

**MINUTES FOR STUDY SESSION  
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
February 2, 2022  
Electronic Meeting – 6 P.M.**

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

Absent: Commissioner Bell

This meeting was recorded and uploaded to the APRC YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idtDtM9Tozk>

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**II. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Black requested an agenda item be added to discuss filling the vacant seat on the Parks and Recreation Commission.

**III. PUBLIC FORUM**

None

**IV. DISCUSSION ON POSITION #3 VACANCY**

Black provided the following information on this item:

- Mike Gardiner recently stepped down and his position needs to be filled
- The process was discussed by the City Council at their Monday Study Session
- The city charter states that the City Council is responsible for appointing all elected positions in the City of Ashland
- The Council decided to have the Parks and Recreation Commission vet all applicants and send three ranked applicants to the Council for appointment
- Available APRC and City of Ashland resources will be utilized to advertise the application process and all applications will be submitted to the City Recorder
- Commissioners will need to determine the details of the vetting process
- The appointment needs to be made within 60 days as of February 1, 2022
  - Landt recommended allowing a 14-day application process starting February 2, 2022
    - No objections were raised
    - Black stated the press release could be sent out the following day
- The latest the recommendation could be made is the March Regular Meeting and Commissioners may want to make the Study Session a Special Meeting and make the recommendations at that meeting (March 2)
  - Landt suggested that he and Black provide a proposal on the process and will present it at the February 9, 2022 APRC Regular Business Meeting

**V. APRC LONG TERM ORGANIZATIONAL & FUNDING STRATEGY DISCUSSION**

Black referenced the [staff report in the meeting packet](#) and provided the following information on this item:

- APRC is primarily funded through the City of Ashland's General Fund; The City is still working on evaluating General Fund services and will be identifying mandated services versus quality-of-life services
- Black stated, generally speaking, when there are budget constraints in local government, quality-of-life services are typically cut
- Black asserted that many people in the community have chosen to live here because of quality-of-life amenities, including amenities provided by APRC
- The City of Ashland is in the process of planning the release of a survey to the community, and it is likely that APRC will be listed as a quality-of-life service provided in the City, but that there is not a mandate to provide parks and recreation services
  - Black stated the survey is likely to answer two basic questions regarding APRC: 1) Will APRC be cut further to address the budget shortfall or 2) Will revenue enhancements be accepted by the community to maintain services provided by APRC

- Black stated that Commissioner Bell requested an evaluation of budget scenarios and provided the following information based on a preliminary assessment (The new biennium will begin in July 2023, which is what this exercise is covering)
  - If APRC were to go into the next biennium at the same funding level as the current biennium (\$1.89/\$1,000 of assessed property value) there would be a \$750,000 deficit in the first year of the biennium with an increase in the second year, as much as a \$950,000 deficit. That would be at the current staffing level. Black noted that the current level of staffing has been reduced because of impacts from COVID
    - APRC is currently at 34.75 FTEs; APRC had 41 FTEs a few years back
    - If some staff members were brought back to facilitate increased recreation offerings, once COVID restrictions have lessened, the first-year deficit could be as high as \$900,000
  - If funding was reinstated at \$2.09/\$1,000 of assessed property value, there would still be a deficit because the Central Services Fees charged by the City of Ashland have increased; PERS and other expenses that cannot be controlled by APRC continue to increase
    - Water expenses are increasing significantly, and staff attempts to maintain an acceptable level of service but does not always meet community expectations based on comments received regarding the state of lawns and ponds. If TID (Talent Irrigation District) is not available in the coming season, there will be significant impacts to the level of service that can be provided
  - Black stated that the services being provided this biennium were made possible by using the ending fund balance that will not be available in the future. Black summarized that cuts in service will need to be made even if the current funding level stays the same as this year. If the City Council makes additional cuts to APRC services and programs will be further reduced
- Eldridge stated that many organizations in the community are in the process of planning to deal with existing circumstances and is looking forward to hearing more about cost recovery efforts and would like to see APRC engage in additional discussions about how the organization will adapt to changing times and stay up to date with the needs of the community
  - Black recognized that it is impossible to operate the same way as has been done in the past and sees the water situation as something that will need to be addressed immediately. Black stated there have been discussions on how to deal with the water needs of one of the top three largest parks (acreage) because TID water is becoming less and less available and using potable water does not seem to be a feasible solution. Black stated appreciation for this sentiment coming from APRC policy makers and also looks forward to having these kinds of discussions for all aspects of the organization
- Black added that Bell also asked about feasibility of town halls and suggested holding off for now and discussing that later

## VI. E MAIN PARK DESIGN UPDATE

Black provided the following information on this item:

- Black stated this update is about the process; He will not be presenting on the design
- The 6.5-acre property on E Main was purchased using revenue from real estate sales, including the YMCA Park and will be developed as a replacement for the YMCA Park. Funds from the real estate sales are also being used for design and initial construction phase(s)
- A local consultant, Terrain Landscape Design, is working on the design of the park and the process is going well
- A preliminary plan will be presented to the public within the next four weeks. A specific date has not been identified yet
- The park is being designed to be low maintenance and could include the following uses/amenities: community garden, dog park, pump track, bike skills park, playground, court facilities, walking trails, pollinator gardens with the potential for more amenities
- After hearing from the public, changes to the preliminary plan could be made and reviewed by the subcommittee with a presentation to all Commissioners at a future meeting

## Public Comment

**Kate Jackson, Chair of Bee City USA Subcommittee** stated Albert Pepe, a member of the Bee City USA Subcommittee, is interested in participating in the design phase of the park and was not sure when stakeholders would have an opportunity to provide input.

Landt stated that responses are not typically provided during call to the public but stated that it is clear that Bee City USA is a stakeholder and that discussions on vegetation will happen later in the process and there will be an opportunity for input from Bee City USA.

## **VII. PROPOSAL FOR SECURITY CAMERA USE AT PERIMETER OF JAPANESE GARDEN**

Black provided the following information on this item:

- Black is bringing this to Commissioners as a primer for a future request. He was expecting to have a design for the cameras by this time, but it is not ready yet. He will be making a formal presentation and request in the future to place cameras at the four corners of the Japanese Garden
- Once complete, the garden could become a target for vandalism and cameras could act as a deterrent . Black noted that vandalism occurs in all Ashland parks
- Black would like to establish the use of cameras in the most unobtrusive way possible and noted APRC has worked with Ashland Police to install a camera at the Skate Park
- Cameras could be installed on a pole and disguised as a model tea house
- Black reiterated that vandalism occurs regularly in parks and restrooms and requires resources to address it. Black added that it likely occurs more than the average person realizes because staff does a good job of addressing issues in a timely manner
- The cameras would be funded through private donations
- Black stated that the City of Ashland does not have a policy prohibiting the use of cameras in public spaces
- Black clarified that there may be a concern about privacy for some members of the public
- Lewis noted that there are a significant number of cameras in use by the public and private sector and requested a list of where cameras are in use by the City of Ashland and Ashland Parks properties
- Landt requested information on the frequency of vandalism in Lithia Park, specifically the Perozzi Fountain and stated that the Skate Park likely has a higher frequency of vandalism than some parts of Lithia Park
  - Landt stated a concern with privacy issues and wants to make sure there is a problem before moving forward with installing cameras

Black will bring more information to Commissioners at a later date

## **VIII. OPEN SPACE PLAN REVISION DISCUSSION**

Landt provided the following information on the [Parks, Trails and Open Space program](#)

- The program was adopted in 2002 with minor changes made to it in 2012
- The map has become outdated and includes lands that should be reviewed for removal from the plan, such as the property adjacent to Helman School, which is now being utilized for the expansion of the school
- Landt stated that with a few exceptions, there is not a need to expand the park system at this time and having the map reflect that is good governance
- Landt suggested that he and Black review the plan and bring back recommendations to the Commissioners
  - Landt then clarified that the recommendations and plan as a whole will be discussed in detail in at least one Study Session, and maybe more, before any action is taken by Commissioners at a business meeting
- Landt clarified that the Parks and Recreation Commission will make a recommendation to the City Council who holds the authority to make final decisions on this plan because it is a component of the City of Ashland Comprehensive Plan
- Landt stated that updating the plan provides an opportunity to display fiscal responsibility by reducing the number of properties identified as potential additions as parks, trails, or open space

## **IX. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF**

Landt stated there will be a Regular Meeting on February 9, 2022

## **X. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted  
Sean Sullivan, Business Operations Manager

