

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

July 6, 2022

Electronic Meeting – 6 P.M.

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

Absent: Commissioner Bell

This meeting will be held electronically This meeting was recorded and uploaded to the APRC YouTube Channel:

<https://youtu.be/gMqNBmnGgQ>

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

III. PUBLIC INPUT

None

IV. USE OF RECLAIMED WATER FOR ASHLAND POND RIPARIAN RESTORATION PROJECTS (Action)

Black referenced the [memo included in the meeting packet](#) and introduced Eugene Wier from The Freshwater Trust (TFT) who is partnering with APRC and the City of Ashland on riparian restoration work along Bear Creek. Black stated TFT is requesting permission to use reclaimed wastewater to irrigate riparian restoration on APRC managed land and that APRC staff is in support of the request.

Wier made the following statements

- The wastewater treatment plant currently holds a permit to use reclaimed water to irrigate areas the wastewater treatment plant grounds
- TFT and Wastewater Department Staff will apply for a permit to use reclaimed water on APRC lands if Commissioners approve the use of reclaimed water for this purpose. TFT is currently using potable water to irrigate these areas
- TFT would plan on using reclaimed water for 3-4 years to get plants established. The water could then potentially be made available for other uses

Questions/Discussion

- Wier clarified that the flow coming out of the treatment plant into Bear Creek makes up a very small portion of the total flow of the creek
- Wier clarified that the quality of the water that would be used for irrigation is treated at the same level that is currently being released into Bear Creek and noted that the quality of the treated water is very clean
- Black clarified that if the Commissioners voted in favor of using reclaimed water for the requested purpose, TFT and the Wastewater Department would then apply for a permit from OR Department of Environmental Quality. Use of the water would not commence until DEQ approves the permit
- Wier stated that approval of the permit would likely happen over the summer, and he hopes to be able to irrigate in April/May of 2023
- Black emphasized that this action could open doors for the future use of reclaimed water for irrigation purposes on other APRC properties
- Landt stated that reclaimed water has been authorized by DEQ to be released into the creek which is eventually used for drinking water downstream and is a relatively clean product
- Landt stated there has been discussion of using reclaimed water at the golf course, but that would require a multi-million-dollar infrastructure plan. The riparian restoration project areas are in close proximity to the treatment plant, making the use of reclaimed water on these properties much easier and less costly

Motion: Eldridge moved to approve the use of reclaimed water for riparian restoration purposes on the Ashland Pond property upon approval of the plan by DEQ. Seconded by Lewis.

Discussion: Eldridge agrees with Landt's previous comments, and stated this is a no-brainer. Lewis stated this is a good starting point of using reclaimed water and thanked TFT.

Vote: The vote was all yes

Wier stated he will work with APRC staff to identify other properties that could be included in the permit.

V. POOL ENERGY ANALYSIS REPORT (Information)

The full presentation on this item begins at [11:22 of the meeting recording](#).

Representatives from Robertson Sherwood, (Carl Sherwood ([slides presented](#)) and Joe Iaccarino ([slides presented](#))) pool planning consultants, referenced the [report included in the meeting packet](#) on the pool energy analysis, which included the following points

- The previous analysis provided three options for heating
 - Option 1: Natural Gas
 - Option 2: Electric
 - Option 3: Electric Heat Pump Chiller
 - Option 3a: Natural Gas Back-up
 - Electric Back-up
- In order to address the green energy technology state mandate (1.5% of the total budget), solar energy needs to be used at least at a minimum level. The contribution could be increased and would require further detailed study as the project progresses to determine the optimal size, cost and type of solar thermal heating or power generation
- The initial analysis determined that Option 1 was the most affordable in terms of dollars spent as displayed on a comparison chart (it was noticed that the costs below are subject to change due to market fluctuations)

POOL WATER HEATING SYSTEM COMPARISON CHART			
All systems are to are assumed to have a peak capacity of 3,000,000 BTU per hour, and will meet pool water heating load requirements of 8,640,000,000 BTU over the course of one year			
OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3A	OPTION 3B
TOTAL Annual Power/Fuel Costs			
\$80,329	\$274,188	\$100,440	\$138,205
Added Capital Costs and Project Costs			
\$0.00	\$101,844	\$534,441	\$599,748
Equipment priced in Base Estimate and Project Budget	Equipment cost differential and electrical service	Equipment cost differential and electrical service	Equipment cost differential and electrical service
Simple Payback			
Lowest Cost	240% Energy Cost Increase	25% Energy Cost Increase	74% Energy Cost Increase
No Payback Gas Only Heating	No Payback All-Electric Heating	2.7yr Payback over Option 2 Elec./Gas Back-up Heating	4.4yr Payback over Option 2 Elec./Elec. Back-up Heating

Solar configurations and estimated costs were displayed

Solar Array Structure Options



- ◆ Min. GET Solar Array/Structure
◆ 1,650sf = \$75,000/\$122,793
- ◆ Tennis Court Cover Array/Struct.
◆ 20,000sf = \$977,000/\$2,562,000
- ◆ Parking Lot Cover Array/Struct.
◆ 9,000sf = \$421,000/\$823,500
- ◆ Pool Deck Array/Structure
◆ 2,200sf = \$145,000/\$163,724

- Historic Annual Heating Consumptions = 20K Therms of Natural Gas / 117 tons of Co2 emissions (22.9 gasoline powers passenger vehicles driven for one year)
- Options reviewed were Solar Thermal System; Ground (GSHP, Direct Use Geothermal); Electric Boiler (electricity from Ashland grid has fewer emissions when compared to statewide average); Air-to-water heat pump
- Ground and Electricity are the only stand-alone systems. The other two require back-up systems/supplemental sources to meet load requirements
- The recommendation is to use an air to water heat pump and use an electric heat pump as a back-up, which would reduce CO2 emissions to 14 tons, compared to 117 tons generated from the existing natural gas boiler
 - The 14 tons of emissions is attributed to the City of Ashland's electricity source which is not 100% renewable
- In summary
 - Reduce 88% of existing GHG emissions by installing Air-to-Water HP with Electric boiler backup
 - Install minimum PV array size to abide by green energy technology requirement (~23 kW) at Pool Deck or Parking Lot Cover
 - Consider purchasing carbon offsets to mitigate 14 tons of CO2

Questions:

- laccarino clarified that the 23KW array would be able to fit within the pool deck section. The panels would act as a shade structure (~1,600 sq.ft.)
- Sherwood clarified that going to an indoor pool does not significantly reduce energy requirements. Although there would be savings from reducing requirements to heat the water, it would be necessary to heat the air
- laccarino clarified that the air to water heat pump is functional down to 20 degrees Fahrenheit

- Iaccarino clarified that the supplemental back-up system is the same size as what would be used if electric heaters were the main heating mechanism in order to meet demand when in use
- Landt inquired if a water-to-water heat exchange has been considered using municipal water (e.g., using a large water main in a closed loop system) and stated that some municipalities are using this type of system
 - Iaccarino stated that using a municipal water source, which is approximately 50 degrees Fahrenheit, would likely not be an efficient way to extract heat, but this option was not studied as part of the analysis

Black stated the following regarding next steps

- All deliverables have been received from the consultant. From here on out, staff will work on a final report with information that will include costs of covering the pool
- Staff will work with Sherwood Robertson to prepare an order of magnitude to establish the budget and contingency fund

VI. BUDGET REDUCTION PLAN DISCUSSION (Information/Possible Action)

Black reported on the July 5, 2022, City Council meeting which included the following statements

- The Council is considering two Food and Beverage ballot measures to refer to the ballot in November. City staff was directed to bring these two items back to the Council for consideration at a future meeting
 - City Managers Proposal: Maintain 25% of Food and Beverage Tax (F&B) revenue to Parks CIP Fund and 73% could be used for any general fund purpose at the discretion of the Council
 - Citizen's Initiative: The Friends of Ashland Parks and Open Space proposal would maintain the 25% to Parks CIP and allow the remaining 73% to be used for parks operations
 - Both proposals allocate 2% to the City of Ashland for administrative fees
- The Council voted to refer a Charter Amendment to the November 2022 ballot proposed by the City Manager that would remove supervisory responsibility of Parks and Recreation employees from Parks Commissioners and give that authority to the City Manager. APCR employees would essentially become a department of the City of Ashland
 - This amendment would allow the City Manager to appoint, remove and directly supervise the APCR Director which is currently done by the Commissioners
 - This amendment calls into question how the Commissioners would continue to be able to effectively have control and management authority over park and open space lands if employees are supervised by the City Manager

Black reported on budget reductions

- APCR is required to cut the budget for the current fiscal year (July 2022-June 2023) by \$350K. Additionally, the City of Ashland is requiring the following budgetary actions
 - \$140K – personnel reductions (vacancy savings)
 - In many years Directors will leave positions open as a way to roll funds over or ensure there is a healthy ending fund balance. However, if there are no vacancies within a department, it is not necessary to turn those vacancy savings over.
 - \$300K – last biennium ending fund balance that was larger than what was anticipating, the city is taking these funds and put into the City reserve fund. This is happening with General Fund Departments within the city as well.
- Black displayed a slide displaying the proposed plan to meet the cuts (see below). Black noted that this is only a proposal and that other options can be explored at the direction of the Commissioners.

350,000 Budget Reduction Proposal

Reductions – Materials and Services

- Equipment Replacement: 50,000 (50%)
- Pioneer Hall: 18,500 (100%)
- Recreation Materials and Services: 25,000 (multiple line items)
- Parks Materials and Services: 57,500 (multiple line items)

Reductions - Personnel

- Office Assistant Reduction: 59,000 (.5 Senior Service; .25 Recreation)
- Parks Temps/Seasonals: 82,500 (52%)
- Parks FTE Tech III backfilled as Tech I: 46,500 (Golf Course)
- Management Reduction in Pay via Furlough: 11,000 (Director)

- Black made the following points regarding individual cuts
 - Equipment Replacement: Most of the equipment and fleet are in decent shape so this is not an issue in the short term, but it will push out replacement of vehicles/equipment that should have been replacement earlier which will increase maintenance costs and purchase costs and require larger annual expenditures. This is not a long-term sustainable solution to manage budget reductions
 - Pioneer Hall: APRC would 100% divest from operating Pioneer Hall
 - Parks M & S: This will create deferred maintenance by cutting parks improvement, irrigation maintenance, and general maintenance. These cuts will result in a decreased level of maintenance that will likely be noticeable and cost more in the long run to get them back to pre-reduction levels.
 - Office Assistant Reduction: Recreation and Senior Services previous had a total of 2.75 FTEs for office support. This cut will require the divisions to share 1 FTE
 - Parks Temps/Seasonals: This is a large cut to seasonal maintenance and will result in visible impacts. The other option would be to reduce a full time FTE
 - Tech III backfill with a Tech I: The specialized, currently vacant, Tech III position would be replaced with a Tech I. This would result in some loss to expertise, but would retain labor
 - Management Reduction in Pay via Furlough: This is only applicable to Black (Director). No other APRC staff would be furloughed

Discussion/Questions

- Black stated that action should be taken next business meeting if possible. Action could be taken in August if more time is needed
- Lewis stated comfort with the proposal and that losing temps will have an impact to the way parks looks which is likely to result in an increase in complaints about parks maintenance
- Bachman stated support for recommendations while allowing time for public input and consideration of other options by Commissioners
- Eldridge stated agreement with statements made by Commissioners and welcomed Black to present additional options if there are any available for consideration
- Black reiterated that there will be impacts to services provided and levels of park maintenance as a result of these budget cuts

- Landt stated an understanding with the rationale of this proposal but stated concern with losing the equivalent of an FTE in parks maintenance (seasonal workers) which has already been reduced recently. Landt stated that next spring parks are not going to look the way that the community expects them to look and pondered if there are other approaches that do not cut into parks maintenance/seasonal employees
- Landt stated that during the presentation to City Council in May, Manager Lessard stated there would be no personnel cuts, which is true on the city side, but there is no way to achieve the cuts on the parks side without cuts to personnel

VII. WILDLIFE SANCTUARY MANAGEMENT AREAS (Information)

Black stated that Commissioner Landt requested this item be placed on the agenda for discussion. Landt clarified that the intent behind this item being placed on the agenda is to establish Wildlife Sanctuary Management Areas where educational materials are made available to users to explain why certain rules are in place and how certain activities can have a negative impacts on wildlife. Additional discussion on this item included the following points:

- The Nature Center, Lithia Park and Riverwalk areas are loosely managed to protect wildlife
- Educational materials may give pause to users to engage in activities such as off leash dogs that may impact wildlife
- Black stated that this kind of designation could be used as an overlay that would come with specific rules
- Eldridge stated agreement with the overlay concept such as Wilderness areas on National Forest Lands and also supports the educational component and would like to see a thorough scientific/ ecological spatial analysis completed to have justification for such a designation
- Lewis raised concerns about people who disregard ordinances or rules and normalize unwanted activities
- Landt clarified that he is not proposing any new rules, he simply would like to institute an educational campaign for certain areas that warrant a designation such as Lithia Park, Ashland Pond, parts of North Mountain Park, Siskiyou Mountain Park and Riverwalk
- Bachman stated that an educational approach is better than setting up unenforceable regulatory approaches and inquired what the next steps would be
- Black stated that he is hearing that there are no new rules proposed and all that is needed to move forward is direction from Commissioners or Black can work with staff to provide a map that outlines specific areas to include and will schedule it for an upcoming meeting
 - Landt stated boundaries should be logical and easily signable
- Landt mentioned that the why dogs are not allowed signs in Lithia Park is an example of the type of educational signage envisioned

VIII. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

Lewis stated he may be absent at the next meeting dependent on internet access while traveling

Landt stated the August 3 Study Session will be canceled

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sean Sullivan, Business Operations Manager