



MINUTES FOR BEE CITY USA - ASHLAND MEETING

June 30, 2022

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Location: Zoom

I. CALL TO ORDER, CHECK-INS, AND WELCOME

In attendance: Kate Jackson, Leslie Eldridge, Albert Pepe, Kristina Lefever, Rachel Dials, Libby VanWyhe

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of Minutes from the 3/29/22 meeting

Kristina moves to approve, and Albert seconded. All voted to approve

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (10 minutes)

IV. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Parks and Recreation and City of Ashland budget (update)

At their June 12th meeting, the City Council, approved a supplemental budget that will reduce another 350K from Ashland Parks and Recreation, starting July 1. This is a large impact due to the fact we are still working under the loss of six staff members due to COVID. Director Black is looking at more cuts, and while the details are unclear, there are several alternatives being considered from staff reductions, to materials and services reduction, to changes in fleet maintenance. There is a special meeting next Wednesday July 6, at which Director Black will share some possible scenarios for the cutbacks.

On Tuesday July 5th, the City Council is being asked to put a question on the November ballot of securing on-going funding for Parks and Recreation through the dedication of the Food and Beverage tax. If the Council approves this initiative, then the Friends of Ashland Parks and Open Space wouldn't need to gather the 3,000 signatures. The Friends of Ashland Parks and Open Space are mobilizing and tabling for this effort.

Rachel will share Mike Gardiner's contact info, in case anyone wants to connect and support the citizen efforts.

Commissioner Eldridge pointed out that there has been a proposal regarding consolidating and reducing the City's citizen subcommittees. This is a proposal to reduce staff time and effort supporting commissions and committees in the City. This may or may not develop into action at the Council level, and if it does, we may want to contribute statements about the value of these citizen groups.

Kate inquired about how to submit comments. Citizens can call or email City Councilors with concerns and ideas. Right now, the most important citizen communication with City Council, might be putting the Food and

Beverage Levee on the ballot in November. If you have a statement about why we value the Bee City USA subcommittee, that would be appropriate to send to the Commissioners, and that decision is less imminent.

- Kate encourages subcommittee members to make their voices heard to the Council about the value of secure funding for Parks and Rec, and to the Commission about the value of our subcommittees and their work.

2. East Main Park planning process (update)

This planning process is proceeding slowly. When the project planning begins moving forward again, the planners will reach out to Bee City USA Ashland for a special meeting to hear their recommendations.

The contractor has begun planning the design using the input from the two large public meetings, but the advisory committees haven't had a chance to weigh in yet. The design company does want to be involved in the meetings with the user groups and interested groups.

There is a staff and commissioner Ad-Hoc committee about the East Main Park, but due to competing priorities, they haven't been meeting about this lately. This Ad-Hoc committee is made up of staff, commissioners and the mountain bike community. Kate suggested that if representatives of mountain biking are involved in the planning of this park, then representatives of pollinators and sustainable native landscaping should also be involved in this Ad-Hoc committee. The members of Bee City USA Ashland are requesting to have as much access and input as other interest groups.

3. Pollinator Week Proclamation (update)

Kate requested that the Mayor get this on the Council agenda, but given the budgetary and staffing challenges within the City at this time, this proclamation wasn't made. The subcommittee could ask the mayor to read the pollinator proclamation this summer, and maybe it doesn't need to be tied to pollinator week. Maybe we could suggest a re-wording, that "hereby affirms" something else, besides Pollinator Week.

- Kate will reach out to the Mayor again, and ask that we modify and release a different version of the proclamation this summer.

4. SOU student participation (update)

There may be one person from the pollinator club who might be interested in being involved. Since students are not replying over the summer, we should revisit this in the fall.

- We should invite a member of the pollinator club to attend one of our meetings. We will invite them to present about what their club is doing, and to propose how we could combine our efforts.

Other potential partners and future committee members were discussed. Becs Walker is the director of sustainability at SOU, and will begin teaching new programs with the Sustainability major at SOU. She is very busy, and she is already required to be on the City's climate and policy commission.

- Kate is interested in doing targeted outreach, with a focus on bringing on new people for the fall.

Libby suggested that we spread a wide net and invite anyone who is interested to at least attend our meetings, whether or not they become full-voting members. Kate suggested that we might want more citizen involvement in our process, so that people can participate in a workgroup rather than being a voting member. We could assign specific tasks and projects to volunteers. And if we do not make them these people voting members, then we don't trigger public meeting by getting together to work on projects.

We could also seek more involvement from our BCUA approved pollinator gardeners.

Someone should contact the approved gardeners, and ask if they'd be interested in helping us with projects. Would any of these gardeners be interested in working on the development of the pollinator garden tour.

Leslie suggested that we might want to help find a beekeeper to support the hives at the SOU farm. This is a potential working group outreach activity that could strengthen the connection with SOU. Our preference is to support native bees and other pollinators over honeybees and hives. Leslie assured the group that Vincent Smith applies an integrated approach to pollinator diversity at the Farm.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. New member application Carolyn Reed (vote for approval)

Kristina makes a motion to approve Carolyn as a full voting member, contingent upon being able to attend meetings. Albert seconds.

All voted in favor. Once approved by the Commission, our meeting will have 6 full-voting members.

Libby will send Carolyn Reed's application to Rachel for Commission approval in the July meeting.

We need to reach out to Carolyn to congratulate her, and ensure she can make it to the next meetings.

2. Review current subcommittee project goals (summarize any action taken)

a. Supporting Pollinator Friendly Landscapes

b. Educating about Pollinators and their Conservation

c. Affecting Systems, Policies and Organizational Change

3. Committee member updates. (any other activities that support the goals of Bee City USA Ashland)

Kate has been working on the integration of the Firewise, water wise and pollinator landscaping recommendations. And Kate is involved in city action regarding water conservation. Kate was able to table at Earth Day, but hasn't done the farmer's market tabling.

We need to establish a working group to help plan for a Firewise and pollinator garden tour for next year. This group will need to develop the criteria for assessing a "Firewise" pollinator garden, and try to locate properties that qualify for both designations.

Albert hasn't moved many of Bee City goal projects forward, and will be gone for part of the summer. He is still interested in tabling at the Farmer's Market when he's in town. If we do undertake tabling it would be good to commit to offering it with some regularity, and knowing that we have sufficient support from committee members to staff it so that the responsibility doesn't all fall on one person.

Albert and Kate may table in at the farmer's market in September, and continue until November and the close of the farmers market season.

Leslie and Kate have discussed grants and student projects which could move the plant list project forward. Right now, they are still in the phase of researching regionally-applicable (Rogue Valley) plant information and putting it into the database that already exists. There is a possibility of getting grant funding if this is a concrete project. There's also the project idea of developing a digital landscaping plant app that can give plant recommendations. Could OSU extension already have resources or the ability to help?

Leslie had a conversation with Jamie Trammel, chair of her department at SOU. In order to bring SOU professors into this project, we would need funding to be available to pay them for their involvement. Jamie suggested that anyone interested in working with student interns, needs to come up with a specific scope of work. Including timeline, deliverables, and what kind of support is being offered to the students

Kate will involve Brian Hendrix, Charise, Leslie and Jamie Trammel to establish a scope of work for the plant database project.

Kristina just completed a pollinator-themed art show and an anthology focused on local artists. The anthology is a 300 page book full of educational info, children's activities and art. Pollinator Project Rogue Valley had sponsors who helped with the printing of the book, and they are on sale for \$40 or \$70 for the special edition. Kristina is still staying connected with Mountain Meadows. She has had two conversations with local HOAs about pollinator landscaping and reducing chemicals. Once these are firmed up, Kristina will bring these HOAs to our attention as partners. Kristina and Nancy are still doing pollinator garden approvals, but there are still a couple of applications that are still pending and awaiting approval.

VII. OTHER ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee members, please report volunteer hours to Libby. It is especially important to keep track of your contributions, given the current budget climate.

VIII. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

Week of September 19? Kate will be out of town until September 10. Albert prefers later in the day.

Libby will send a Doodle Poll for afternoon times, September 13, 14, 15, or 20, 21, 22

ACTION ITEMS

- Rachel will share Mike Gardiner's contact info, in case anyone wants to connect and support the citizen efforts.
- Kate encourages subcommittee members to make their voices heard to the Council about the value of secure funding for Parks and Rec, and to the Commission about the value of our subcommittees and their work.
- Kate will reach out to the mayor again and ask that we modify and release a different version of the proclamation this summer.
- We should invite a member of the pollinator club to attend one of our meetings. We will invite them to present about what their club is doing, and to propose how we could combine our efforts.
- Kate is interested in doing targeted outreach, with a focus on bringing on new people for the fall.
- Someone should contact the approved gardeners and ask if they'd be interested in helping us with projects. Would any of these gardeners be interested in working on the development of the pollinator garden tour.
- Libby will send Carolyn Reed's application to Rachel for Commission approval in the July meeting.
- Libby will reach out to Carolyn to congratulate her and ensure she can make it to the next meetings.
- We need to establish a working group to help plan for a Firewise and pollinator garden tour for next year. This group will need to develop the criteria for assessing a "Firewise" pollinator garden and try to locate properties that qualify for both designations.
- Albert and Kate may table in at the farmer's market in September and continue until November and the close of the farmers market season.
- Kate will involve Brian Hendrix, Charise, Leslie and Jamie Trammel to establish a scope of work for the plant database project.
- Committee members, please report an estimate of your volunteer hours to Libby.
- Libby will send a Doodle Poll for afternoon times, September 13, 14, 15, or 20, 21, 22 .

