

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

January 11, 2023

Council Chambers – 6 p.m.
1175 E Main St

Present: Commissioners Landt (Chair), Lewis (Vice-Chair), Adams, Bachman, Eldridge; Director Black, 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 at 6 p.m.

II. CHAIR/VICE CHAIR ELECTION

Motion: Bachman nominated Rick Landt to continue as Chair of the Commission. Seconded by Eldridge.

Vote: The vote was all yes

Motion: Lewis nominated Leslie Eldridge for Vice Chair. Seconded by Adams.

Vote: The vote was all yes

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

APRC Regular Business Meeting – December 7, 2022

Motion: Bachman moved to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Eldridge

Vote: The vote was all yes.

IV. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

V. PUBLIC FORUM

None

VI. DIRECTORS REPORT

Black reported on the following items:

Windstorm

The recent windstorm brought down trees across the entire park system, including some larger trees in Lithia Park (large Oak across from the pickleball courts and a Douglas Fir outside of the Japanese Garden)

Butler Perozzi Fountain

Public comments on the Butler Perozzi Fountain Project are being accepted through our website. Links to the information page and comment form can be found on the City of Ashland homepage as well as the APCR homepage. The deadline to submit comments is February 6. All comments will be presented at the February 8 Business Meeting.

Volunteer Dinner

We are honoring our volunteers who put in thousands of hours of work at APCR events and programs and in our parks and trails. There will be a short program, but the main focus will be on gathering together to celebrate the work of APCR volunteers.

Lithia Park Playground

Spider Climb in Lithia has been installed There was a delay in replacement due to supply chain issues and was also delayed because of purchasing issues associated with the need to procure the item from Scotland

Town Hall Meeting

The City of Ashland will host a Town Hall Gathering on Monday, January 30, 2023, at the Historic Armory in Ashland. The Armory is located at 208 Oak St. Join the Mayor, Council Members and City staff to help identify priorities for the upcoming City's 2023-2025 Biennium budget process.

Ice Rink

The Ashland Rotary Centennial Ice Rink will be hosting the Annual Southern Oregon Adult Hockey Association 3 on 3 Tournament January 13-15, 2023. The public is welcome to come and watch the games. No Adult Hockey or Stick and Puck sessions are available January 14 & 15.

VII. BUSINESS

a) **Non- Standard Memorial Request - Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche - Redwood Bench Dedication in Lithia Park (Action)** – The full presentation begins at in [9.02 in the meeting recording](#).

Black reviewed the [staff report included in the meeting packet](#) which included the following items.

- Tom Marks-Ladd and Alex Landt have requested a non-standard memorial of a custom-built redwood slab bench that would be placed between two redwood trees just south of the Ashland Japanese Garden in Lithia Park dedicated in the memory of Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche
- The [Parks Memorial Policy](#) allows for the placement of non-standard memorials on park amenities and authorizes the Current Parks, Conservation, and Maintenance Subcommittee to provide a recommendation to the full Parks Commission for final approval
- Staff determined that the request meets several sections of the policy as outlined in the memo and recommends approval

Thomas Marks-Ladd and Alex Landt provided the following information:

- A. Landt works at a reclaimed redwood mill and will be providing the slab and forming it onsite to fit between the two redwood trees
- The slab will be installed in its raw form and will include a message that will be burned into the slab that states, "Tell everyone on this train, I love them!! Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche BIRTH AND DEATH DATE"
- The goal of the placement is for the trees to grow and eventually hold up the bench (removal of supports would then be possible)

Commissioners spoke to the importance of this memorial and praised Taliesin as a local hero who embodied the values this community strives to live up to.

Motion: Lewis moved approve the Taliesin Namkai memorial bench. Seconded by Bachman.

Vote: The vote was all yes

b) **Presentation from Friends of Ashland Parks and Open Space regarding PET-01, a Citizen's Initiative to dedicate Food and Beverage Revenue to Ashland Parks and Recreation (Action)**

Mike Gardiner, representing the Friends of Ashland Parks and Open Spaces, provided the following information

- Last year, the Friends group spearheaded a citizen's initiative to consider an ordinance change to allocate 100% of the Food and Beverage Tax (F&B) to APRC. The initiative is known as PET-01
- The initiative was suspended when the City Council placed a competing initiative on the ballot, 15-211, which was defeated in November
- Currently 75% of the F&B tax had been used to pay off the Water Treatment Plant. Now that the debt on that project is retired the funds can now be used for another purpose identified in the F&B ordinance. Parks is one of those designated uses
- Allocating 100% of F&B to APRC will provide a dedicated funding source for parks and will reduce APRC's dependency on the City of Ashland General Fund (property taxes)

Gardiner asked the Commissioners to support PET-01 and recommend to City Council that they place PET-01 on the May ballot.

Discussion

- Gardiner clarified that voters defeated the measure placed on the ballot in November 60% to 40% which shows strong support for parks and he believes that this measure (PET-01) will pass if placed before the voters and provided the following information

- Gardiner stated passage of PET-01 will relieve stress on the general fund. The F&B funds would replace what would need to be provide through the general fund
- PET-01 is still and active petition active, but is still suspended to provide an opportunity for the City Council to simply place it directly on the ballot
- Eldridge stated that 76.9% of registered voters voted on the competing measure in November and as mentioned 60.2% voted against that measure. Eldridge stated a strong belief that the alternative to that measure is allocating all F&B revenue to APRC and supports getting PET-01 on the ballot
- Landt pointed out that the Commissioners voted last June to send this initiative (PET-01) to City Council recommending that it be placed on the ballot in November, but it makes sense to reaffirm the support of Commissioners
- Bachman stated that a major goal of the current biennium is to secure a sustainable funding source, and this would support that goal

Motion: Bachman moved to respectfully ask the City Council to place this petition (PET-01) as it is in the packet on the ballot for the May 17, 2023 election. Seconded by Adams.

Discussion: At the end of the motion, Bachman stated that he believes the deadline to place this on the ballot is in February. Adams stated that this is a perfect use of F&B funds because a significant portion of the taxes are collected from visitors. Landt clarified that if passed, a letter from the Commissioners will be sent to City Council.

Vote: The vote was all yes

c) Ashland Fire and Rescue Prescribed Burning on Park Lands (Action)

Black reviewed the [staff report included in the meeting packet](#) which included the following items.

- Ashland Fire and Rescue (AFR) and APRC have successfully treated lands under the management of APRC with prescribed burns in the past
- Some APRC open spaces are located within the wildlands and urban interface such as Hald Strawberry and Lithia Park
- With the recent Alameda Fire and multiple Lithia Park fires last summer, citizens and staff have noted the need to increase measures to mitigate fire risk in and around urban areas
- Commissioners approved prescribed burning on park lands at the October 12, 2022, Regular Business Meeting
- Commissioner Landt has requested that APRC Board of Commissioners go on record as supporting AFR in their fire mitigation efforts by publicly signally their support for planning and carefully carrying out prescribed burns on park land, including Lithia Park as soon as is feasible, ideally this Spring, conditions permitting.

Discussion

- Black clarified that prescribed burning will be overseen by AFR. APRC staff, in the past, has assisted with burning piles, AFR will be completely managing all burning that takes place on APRC properties
- Landt clarified that he would like AFR to understand that this is a priority for APRC. In the past, there has been resistance to burning closer to the city and this is an opportune time to make the effort. Landt stated there will be smoke, but this can be done safely and would like to see a sense of urgency to move forward this spring
- Adams stated for the record that AFR is a leader in the country for fire prevention and control and added that increasing the utilization of the Lithia Hillside could reduce wildfire risk by discouraging people from living on the hillside, which was the cause of the two recent fires
 - Landt clarified that one of the fires was from a camp directly behind a work shed by the playground and the other fires were from someone walking through, but the point is still valid
- Lewis stated that the watershed is 14K+ acres and anything that can be done to reduce wildfire risk is worthwhile

Motion: Eldridge moved that the APRC Board of Commissioners support Ashland Fire & Rescue commencing with prescribed burn on park land including Lithia Park at the earliest possible date. Seconded by Bachman

Discussion: Bachman stated this is about getting past the talking stage and moving forward with implementation. Eldridge added that AFR did an amazing job in Siskiyou Mountain Park and this is not a brand new program being undertaken.

Vote: The vote was all yes

d) E Main Park Design Plan Presentation (Action) – presentation begins at [43:30 in the meeting recording](#)

Black introduction Piper Von Chamier and her team from Terrain Landscape, who has been contracted to design the 6.52 acre park. Black noted that stakeholder meetings have taken place with Rouge Valley Mountain Bike Association, Bee City USA and community gardeners. The full [presentation can be viewed on the meeting recording at 43:30](#). Von Chamier went through the [design plan](#). The overall plan seeks to reduce maintenance and irrigation needs, Von Chamier touched on various elements of the park that include the following.

- Entrance and parking lot off Main St
- Vehicle and Pedestrian Entrance off Abbot St
- Dog Park
- Pump Track and Skills Parks
 - The skills park will surround the pump track
- Nature Play Area
- Central Restrooms (portable units with a cover)
- Community Garden
- Fruit Tree Orchard
- Lawn Area
- Natural Prairie Area
- Walking Paths
- Sports Courts

Discussion Points

- Landt suggested moving the orchard closer to the community garden
- The pump track will be a custom design for Ashland
- The restrooms will be sheltered porta-potties and will be located in a central location
 - Standard restrooms are expensive to install and require a significant amount of maintenance. Using porta-potties seeks to address security issues and have been successfully used in Bend and Redding. Bend. Redding,
 - Black stated that one of the directives given to the consultant was to move in this direction and was supported by subcommittee. There are ongoing issues with restrooms and parks and this option seeks to mitigate negative issues while still providing a sanitary restroom for park users
 - Eldridge stated portable units are an eye sore and would like to see if there is an inexpensive way to not see the door of the porta pot to level up the aesthetic
 - Black stated that shelter materials are being reviewed to level up the aesthetic.
 - Landt noted that the units will be covered on three sides
 - Black stated this is an attempt to look at alternatives to brick and mortar restrooms and other options can be brought back and used in this park. Black concluded that these restrooms will be made available 24 hours per day
- The sidewalk improvements on Main St will take place between Clay St and Crocker St. The other portions of Main St. in this area are county roads and will not be improved by the county. Further improvements could be made if the street is taken over by the City of
- Adams inquired about connectivity between the park and the Central Bike Path
 - Black stated that connectivity is a needed but cannot be resolved with this plan. Having the park built could be a factor in moving connections forward.
 - Clay St is planned to be a Bike Blvd.

Black stated this design keeps the process moving forward. There is still work to do with planning, entitlements, and engineering. Black is asking Commissioners to approve the design to keep the process moving forward. Commissioners will continue to receive updates on the design prior to construction and will have multiple opportunities along the way to make specific changes to the plan.

- Bachman asked if Commissioners are being asked to approve a conceptual plan before construction
 - Black stated this design is more like a Master Plan with design elements for the park where specific elements are identified and laid out
 - Von Chamier stated that the design process is currently at 60%. At 90%, a construction plan will be completed that would provide information to contractors

- Black added that approving this design would be approving the location and elements of things including design and general materials to be used
- Lewis stated the ACP garden committee has recommendations and hopes those can be integrated into specific design plans
 - Piper stated that the specific design of the Community Garden will be a collaborative effort with the gardeners

Public Input

Carol Carlson of Ashland spoke about various aspects of the design as outlined in [written comments received by Carlson](#) prior to the meeting.

Landt made the following statements:

- There is an incredible amount of good work here and 80-90% is great
- There are some things that need to occur prior to finalizing the design and the subcommittee (technically a working group) never made a recommendation on the design plan
- Landt recommended that the plan be approved contingent on the approval of a positive recommendation from the working group
 - There was discussion on this point with and end result of an understanding that the working group will make a final recommendation which could result in the formal adoption by Commissioners if the motion includes language authorizing this. Black noted it is not uncommon for a plan to be approved by a body contingent on the approval of another body. Black noted that Commissioners will still have an opportunity to make alterations to specific elements of the plan as the process moves forward and that the alterations that come out of the working group will be minor.

Motion: Landt moved approve the E Main plan that's been presented tonight conditional on approval of the E Main Subcommittee. Seconded by Adams

Discussion: Adams stated appreciation to the design team and community members, specifically Casey Botts.

Vote: The vote was all yes

e) FY23 Budget Report (Information)

- The City has not approved the quarterly finances yet, so this report/update covers July 1, 2022 – November 30, 2022
- APRC has 3 funds. The General Fund which is the operating fund. CIP Fund for capital projects and the Equipment Fund (see chart below).
 - The is chart shows the General Fund Expenses broken down by department which includes personnel and materials and services
 - The target percent of general fund expenses for November is 41.67%. We are trending slightly under budget at 40.78% year to date.
 - The Administration department total includes the expenses for the Central Service Fees charged by the City of Ashland which is 1,361,024 million of the total

APRC Budget Status Report As of 11/30/22						
General Fund	Revised Budget	YTD Expended	MTD Expended	ENCUMBRANCES	Balance	Percent Used
Administration Totals	\$ 1,938,665	\$ 736,624	\$ 146,651	\$ 4,608	\$ 1,197,432	38.20%
Open Space/Forestry Totals	\$ 764,114	\$ 202,171	\$ 46,092	\$ -	\$ 561,944	26.50%
Operations Totals	\$ 2,568,703	\$ 1,187,437	\$ 206,085	\$ 153,123	\$ 1,228,143	52.20%
TOTAL PARKS DIVISION	\$ 5,271,483	\$ 2,126,233	\$ 398,828	\$ 157,731	\$ 2,987,519	43.33%
Recreation Admin Totals	\$ 389,910	\$ 127,537	\$ 28,783	\$ 14,378	\$ 247,995	36.40%
Recreation Programs/ Comm Center Totals	\$ 716,494	\$ 220,898	\$ 41,470	\$ 38,055	\$ 457,540	36.14%
Nature Center Totals	\$ 294,082	\$ 123,194	\$ 23,862	\$ 5,318	\$ 165,590	43.70%
TOTAL RECREATION DIVISION	\$ 1,400,487	\$ 471,629	\$ 94,115	\$ 57,752	\$ 871,125	37.80%
TOTAL SENIOR SERVICES DIVISION	\$ 399,597	\$ 138,768	\$ 29,177	\$ 11,693	\$ 249,136	37.65%
TOTAL GOLF	\$ 541,138	\$ 140,844	\$ 26,343	\$ (67)	\$ 400,362	26.01%
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 7,612,705	\$ 2,877,474	\$ 548,462	\$ 227,108	\$ 4,508,142	40.78%

- Revenues for general fund which includes property taxes, maintenance agreements, and charges for services are currently 29.0% of budget at \$1,674,492
- Included in the General fund in Charges for Services which includes revenue for recreation which is budgeted at \$609,926 for FY23
- The Calle Guanajuato made more than budgeted biennium revenue in fiscal year 22
- Ending fund balance from the previous biennium of \$1,483,225 was budgeted to use for APRC operations. There was an error in the staff report that references the fund balance as \$300,000 when it should have been listed as \$280,242 (see below table)

General Fund FY23

Total Revenue	\$1,674,492
Total Expenses	\$2,877,474
Beginning Fund Balance	\$1,483,225
Current Fund Balance	\$280,242

- Capital Improvement Fund (CIP) includes Food and Beverage Tax (F&B) revenue was estimated to be \$537,234 for this fiscal year. Year to date F&B collections are \$789,449
- FY 23 Budget Reductions
 - On June 14, 2022, City Council passed Resolution 2022-17. This Amendment reduced expenditures for Parks for the 2021-2023 Biennium (see table below).
 - Black noted the \$1.9 million is expected to be transferred to the APRC CIP in the next budget

APRC Departmental Cut	\$ 350,000
APRC Payroll Cut	\$ 140,000
Ending Fund Balance Cut	\$ 300,000
Total APRC Cut	\$ 790,000

Removed from Parks General Fund (Food and Beverage Tax)	\$ 2,390,000
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General Fund Transfer (Property Taxes)	\$ 1,900,000
From CIP	\$ 385,000
Transferred to Parks General Fund Total	\$ 2,285,000

- The following outstanding budget issues were reported (Black noted he has an upcoming meeting with the City Manager to discuss these items)
 - The approved FY23 budget included a transfer of \$435,000 from CIP Funding to the Parks General Fund. The transfer of FY23 \$435,000 has not occurred
 - Reimbursement for half of the salary of the shared Communication Position for \$70,000. This transfer has not occurred
 - Food and Beverage Tax \$2,390,000 that was originally approved for FY23 Parks General Fund has not been allocated to CIP

VIII. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

None

IX. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- a) APRC Goals Setting Meeting—January 24, 2023
 - Lithia Park Cabin—11:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- b) APRC Study Session—February 1, 2023

- Electronic Meeting—6 p.m.
- c) APRC Regular Business Meeting—February 8, 2023
 - Council Chambers—6 p.m.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meetings was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Sean Sullivan, Business Operations Manager