

MINUTES FOR STUDY SESSION
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
January 4, 2023
Electronic Meeting – 6 P.M.

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 and uploaded to the APRC YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/m9BmHolck3w>

I. CALL TO ORDER

Landt called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Landt welcomed new Commissioner, Justin Adams, who was elected in November.

II. PUBLIC FORUM

None

III. OAK KNOLL GOLF COURSE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS PROCESS

Dials reviewed the [staff report](#). The full presentation begins at start of the [meeting recording](#)

- Staff will be releasing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the operation of the Oak Knoll Golf Course (OKGC)
- Staff is seeking input from Commissioners on the RFP as a whole and specifically on the criteria staff is proposing
- The proposed criteria in the draft RFP are as follows:
 - **Continuity of Current Operations:** The proposal must prioritize the preservation of the current golf course and ensure that golfing at OKGC remains attractive, challenging, and affordable to the community. 15 POINTS
 - **Improving financial stability and sustainability:** propose a financial proposal/arrangement that is beneficial for both the partner entity as well as APRC, with consideration for the primary goal of preserving OKGC as a community golf course and enhancing ancillary offerings to support the financial sustainability of OKGC. 20 POINTS
 - **Generating Social and Economic Activity:** propose a plan for improving OKGC social and economic standing as a destination for a range of social and recreational activities. 10 POINTS
 - **Maintenance & Protecting the Environment and Operational Concepts:** The successful proposer will be expected to manage OKGC and all its operations consistent with modern management trends in the golf industry. APRC desires to offer the public challenging playing conditions, carefully manicured greens, fairways and tees and all other golf services that may be sought by OKGC users. 20 POINTS
 - **Familiarization with OKGC and the Ashland community:** In addition to showing an expertise in the elements of running a successful golf operation, proposers should demonstrate an understanding of the Ashland community and the OKGC neighborhood. 15 POINTS
 - **Creativity and ability to execute the proposal:** Proposals should show creativity in the exercise of programs and management practices to achieve the goals of this RFP and shall demonstrate the ability of proposer to execute the operational, social, business, and environmental plans being proposed. 20 POINTS
 - 100 possible points for scoring the RFP'S.
- The RFP is proposed to be opened and advertised for at least one month
- A review panel would be formed made up of staff and Commissioners to score each proposal received

Dials noted that a [draft RFP](#) was provided to Commissioners earlier in the day and was also posted to the website

Black stated the main goal of the RFP is to preserve OKGC as a community golf course, which has been stated as desirable from some Commissioners and the public.

DISCUSSION

- Eldridge stated appreciation of specific mention on how rates are established to ensure the course remains affordable for the community

- Eldridge said the RFP states the proposer is expected “to manage OKGC and all its operations consistent with modern management trends in the golf industry” and is not sure if this is clear enough regarding the level of environmental sustainability expectations and would like to see more clarifying language on the expectation to provide a water management plan.
- Dials clarified that the 5-year time frame is negotiable and could be extended, but it is not out of the ordinary for agreements to be in 5-year increments with the ability to renew
 - Black stated agreement with Dial’s statement and that if capital improvements are going to be made, staff would like to ensure that there is viable programming that will last for the duration of the value of the improvements
 - Black stated that the time frame can be left open and negotiated based on specific proposals
- Lewis stated a business plan was recently prepared for the golf course and hopes that this process will provide a viable plan, that could include aspects of that business plan
- It was clarified that the course is typically irrigated with TID water with the ability to use city water as a potential backup
 - Landt added that city water is not typically used for irrigation and is unlikely to be a viable source by any entity in the future
 - Bachman added that the Commissioners recently adopted a policy to not use city water to irrigate the golf course, unless exceptions are made
- Bachman stated support with partnering with another entity on the golf course and would like to ensure that it is clear that the land is being leased to an entity to maintain a golf course and that APRC will not assume liability that are the responsibility of the operator
- Lewis stated that APRC could help facilitate solutions to the water issue by assisting with the identification of alternative water sources, such as wells. Lewis noted that Reeder Reservoir water is available, but APRC does not have the budget to use this water
- Adams stated concern with the amount of water that a golf course uses and would like to see water and environmental concerns called out in the criteria in the RFP
- Lewis stated that he would like to see activities and event rentals continue at OKGC as well as adding pickleball courts
- Eldridge reiterated that Commissioners have heard from the community that a golf course is something that Ashland wants, cares about and is of value and she supports preserving the course through this process
- Landt provide the following input
 - Cautioned that if all of the criteria in the RFP were to be met, it could stand in the way of a viable business operation
 - Suggested recording the RFP to state the proposers should meet as many as the criteria as possible, and none of them are exclusionary
 - Adams stated he did not read the RFP to state that a proposer would have to score 100 points to win a contract, but looks at the criteria as a way to weigh different priorities
 - Dials noted that the end statement at the RFP states, “APRC reserves the right to reject all proposals, to waive formalities or to accept any proposal which appears to serve the best interest of APRC.”
 - Black stated staff can take a look at wording and suggested altering the end statement to read “add in the best interest of APRC and the residents of Ashland”
- Landt suggested changing the language regarding manicuring so there is not an expectation that the entire course is manicured
- Black noted that using the term “best practices” in the RFP is better than using “trends” because best practices speak more to drought management

Staff will be bringing this back to Commissioners in February and Black stated direct feedback from the public on the draft RFP is welcome and can be emailed to staff.

IV. SENIOR SERVICES GOALS PROGRESS REPORT

Glatt [displayed slides](#) and reviewed the [progress report](#) on Senior Services goals ([beginning at 33:40 in the recording](#)). A summary of accomplishments are listed below:

On January 19, 2019, the Commission approved the following mission and goals for the Senior Services Division, as recommended by the Ashland Senior Advisory Committee.

MISSION

The Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission Senior Services Division enhances the lives of seniors by promoting healthy aging, well-being, dignity, and independence. We empower older adults as valued, contributing members of the community and together advocate for the diverse needs of seniors and their families throughout Ashland.

GOALS

Build partnerships with the many local and regional organizations that serve seniors to foster collaboration and create a stronger safety net.

Identify and reach frail or vulnerable seniors who may be isolated and connect them to services that could help them maintain independence and well-being.

Raise community awareness of senior needs, available resources, wide range of seniors/families served, and special Ashland Senior Services Division initiatives.

Advocate for the needs of Ashland seniors and provide input to the City of Ashland and other entities (such as regional partnerships) regarding policies that affect seniors.

Evaluate/maintain/improve/add facilities to ensure sufficient, safe, accessible venues for programs and activities.

Expand programs: Provide recreation, education, and health promotion programs. Raise awareness of and diversify programs to serve a wider range of senior ages and needs.

Expand services: Provide older adults and their families with information and referrals to services, benefits, and support.

Glatt reviewed work that has been accomplished under each goal

- Building Parentships
 - Continued relationships with established partners through many changes of staff at partner agencies.
 - Expanded sponsorships to include financial sponsors for ongoing programs (weekly movie, three game groups, Young at Art) as well as all major events.
 - Expanded collaboration with Jackson County Library System for reciprocal marketing of programs and enhanced programming at Ashland Senior Center (see Goal #6).
 - Expanded collaboration with AARP Oregon, which awarded us an Age-Friendly Communities grant to build an Outdoor Activity Space (see Goal #5). Resumed hosting the AARP Smart Driver course in person at Ashland Senior Center.
 - Recruited Rogue Valley Manor as annual education sponsor for 2023.
 - Established Mike Hersh Memorial Food Pantry as a joint project with Ashland Emergency Food Bank.
- Identify and Reach Frail and Vulnerable Seniors
 - Gatekeeper program concept abandoned due to lack of capacity at regional services to manage additional referrals.
 - Evolution of programs for most vulnerable:
 - COVID-19 specific Senior Resources webpage and Adopt a Neighbor Ashland ended.
 - Ashland Senior Phone Buddy modified to permanent program with trained volunteers calling isolated seniors
 - Outreach calls continued quarterly for most vulnerable seniors
 - Collaborated with City departments and commissions on solutions for extreme heat and smoke. Identified local and state resources for adding cooling to homes of low-income seniors.
- Raise Community Awareness
 - *Senior News*: Further increased distribution to 885, now 385 via mail and 500 via email.
 - Public Outreach: Made presentations for APRC, OLLI, and Ashland Kiwanis. Connected with new patrons at OLLI Open House.
 - Website: Redesigned Senior Services Division web content and moved from an old external site to the City of Ashland website at ashland.or.us/senior, so that it is integrated with APRC and City pages. (URL ashland seni or services.org now redirects to the new site.) The change also allows for more efficient updates and prepares the Division for the City's planned website redesign (which has been delayed 2 years).
 - Brochure: Completed a long-standing objective to create a tri-fold brochure for the Division. [View here.](#)
 - Publicity for new Outdoor Activity Space also made link to the larger all-age-friendly initiative and the Livable Ashland Alliance. The opening celebration drew many partners as well as seniors who had never engaged with Ashland Senior Center before.
- Advocate for the Needs of Seniors (mainly being accomplished by ASAC)
 - Participate in Livable Ashland Alliance, now an independent community group to pursue all-age friendly livability improvements. ASAC members continue to provide leadership and have presented a progress report to AARP, Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission, and Ashland City Council.
 - ASAC members have advocated with elected officials regarding budget for senior programs and consideration of senior needs in master plans and ordinances.
 - Advocated with local agencies to ensure senior access to vaccines.
 - We continue to advocate with RVTD to resume Ashland Connector van service as a top priority as soon as they have enough drivers
- Evaluate/Maintain/Improve Facilities
 - Continued facility improvements at Ashland Senior Center
 - Replaced patchwork of peeling hard flooring with continuous vinyl planking to reduce tripping hazards and update appearance of the dated Senior Center.
 - With the help of a grant from AARP Oregon, created a new outdoor activity space with a safe, level floor surface for outdoor classes and events. The new space will ensure that social connections can continue even when gathering indoors is unsafe.
 - Replaced and added chairs, tables and program supplies to better meet current programming needs and reduce risk of staff injury from moving previous heavy furniture.

- Installed hand sanitizer stations throughout. Upgraded two additional sinks with soap and paper towels to encourage frequent handwashing.
- Installed acoustic panels in the Activity Room in December 2022 to make to make hearing easier in this second room, especially for events and workshops when multiple people are speaking at once.
- Expand Programs
 - Resumed in-person activities, classes and education events starting March 2022.
 - Activity participation has now reached numbers close to pre- pandemic rates.
 - Resumed large events in 2022: Ice Cream Social, Opening Celebration for Outdoor Activity Space, Firefighters Thanksgiving, and Holiday Party.
 - Added digital education with Jackson County Library System, now featuring a monthly Technology Basics class with rotating topics. Resumed one-on-one computer tutoring with two tech-savvy senior volunteers.
 - Added a Senior Walking Group that moves each season to a new park and neighborhood and provides a new opportunity for seniors to exercise and socialize outdoors.
- Expand Services
 - Implemented a client database customized by the City of Ashland IT Department, modernizing and unifying our tracking systems and allowing us to now collect and track emergency contact information for participants.
 - Added the Mike Hersh Memorial Food Pantry as a joint project with Ashland Emergency Food Bank. (See Goal #1)
 - Reinvigorated our Free Library of books, DVDs, jigsaw puzzles and magazines and our ongoing Free Table of resources donated by community members.
 - Acquired free COVID-19 test kits, COVID-19 masks, and smoke masks from partners or donors and distributed to seniors.
 - Added free Advance Directives Assistance by ASAC member Debra Johnson.
 - After budget cuts resulted in loss of Office Assistant, changed hours to be closed Fridays by moving rather than cutting programs. Recruited and trained volunteers to expanded reception role to maintain excellent customer service despite reduced staff.

V. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

None

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Sean Sullivan, Business Operations Manager