

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

Present: Commissioners Landt (Chair), Bachman (Vice Chair) Adams, Lewis; Seffinger; Interim Director Eldridge, Deputy Director Dials, Senior Service Superintendent Glatt, Analyst Kiewel, Senior Services Coordinator Mettler

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Landt called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. Landt welcomed new Commissioner, Stef Seffinger, and noted her previous service with the Commission.

**II. PUBLIC FORUM**

Rebeca Kay President of the Southern Oregon Aquatic Community gave public testimony regarding the potential reallocation of CIP funds. Requested that APRC keep the 2 million dollars that was designated for the Daniel Meyer pool rebuild. Kay outlined some history and rationale for keeping the budget item.

- Built in 1983, the pool is 40 years old with a 40-year-old pump and electrical system. The liner replacement is underway, but the other systems are aging.
- When discussion of a new pool becomes appropriate, the 2 million dollars will be instrumental as seed money to help secure a bond for financing.
- Other pools, such as the YMCA or Rogue Aquatic Center are not good solutions for Ashland’s swimming needs (e.g., H.S. water sports).
- A year-round pool will serve all Ashland residents, providing health benefits, community participation, and will contribute greatly towards keeping Ashland a great place to live and raise a family.

**III. PARK HOURS DISCUSSION**

Eldridge presented information and shared slides as per the packet of a proposed amendment to the Ashland Municipal Code (AMC) establishing park hours in all City parks. The main reasons for implementing park hours are:

- Increased vandalism over the past 5-10 years
- Increased damage to public property (e.g., bathrooms and playground equipment).
- Public safety concerns

Many of these incidents occur during nighttime hours. Instituting an ordinance that establishes park hours will allow the Ashland Police Department (APD) to help decrease the incidents of vandalism and damage, increase public safety, and potentially reduce the associated financial and maintenance burdens.

- An existing ordinance, AMC 10.68.380, applies a “Curfew” only to Lithia Park from 11:30 p.m. to 5:30 a.m.
- Staff is proposing to amend AMC10.68.380 to establish Hours of Parks Closure in all City parks from 12:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m.
- Proposed ordinance language replacement would read: “No person shall remain in any City Park, as defined in AMC 10.68.010, between the hours 12:00 AM (midnight) and 5:00 AM, except authorized city personnel or as authorized by the Ashland Parks and Recreation Director or designee consistent with established parks rules and regulations.”
- Suggested language has been reviewed by the City’s Legal Department several times. Eldridge further clarified that the word “remain” was designed to ensure that people transiting through the park or moving through the park at night—not remaining there for long periods of time—are permitted within the bounds of the ordinance. The language surrounding the word “authorized” allows room for events or activities that might be authorized by APRC staff.
- If the Commissioners approve this language at the Regular Business Meeting on October 11, 2023, then this language will be publicly noticed and published as a change to the Ashland Municipal Code. The ordinance would go for a first and second reading by City Council, and subsequent approval by City Council.

Seffinger asked what will happen with the public bathrooms. When will they be closed and when will they open? Eldridge explained that the bathrooms are not connected to this ordinance or amendment. However, deadbolts are being installed in all park bathrooms. In addition, a security company is currently locking and unlocking the Japanese Garden and the bathrooms at Garfield Park. Staff is considering options to ensure enough staff and capacity are available to lock and clean bathrooms at night, and then reopen them again in the morning. This would likely be closing them at dusk (or later, in the summer) and opening them at 7 or 8 a.m. Landt clarified that the bathroom closure schedule was separate from the proposed park closure hours. Dials confirmed that malfunctioning bathroom auto-locks are all being switched to deadbolts, and presently, bathrooms are opened in the morning and closed between 6-9 p.m.

Landt asked for clarification of the language in AMC 10.68.010, whether the ordinance shall apply to developed City parks, or if applies to *all* open space and park land. Eldridge noted that the intent is for it to apply to developed parks—to City parks—not to open space or to all park lands. Per Landt's request, Eldridge will contact the Legal department and ask specifically about the definition of a City Park as defined in that section.

#### IV. ALCOHOL USE IN PARKS DISCUSSION

Dials presented staff's proposed language and policies to support focused and limited use of alcohol in parks for permitted events. This presentation is for Commissioner's review, with a possible vote at the Regular Business Meeting October 11, 2023. All language and documents are included in the packet. Dials showed a slide outlining why APRC should consider allowing the focused and limited sale/service of alcohol within parks in conjunction with an APRC Special Event permit, an OLCC permit and an APRC Alcohol Use in Parks Permit:

- Supports Biennium Goal #6 by encouraging event organizers to choose Ashland parks for their events, encouraging more events and more activity within Ashland parks.
- Enables revenue generation that makes holding these events economically feasible to organizers. Potential alcohol sales bring in more revenue for sponsorships and bands and entertainment to come to our parks.
- During the Business Economic Development roundtables that were held hosted by City Council, APRC received feedback from small business owners, the public, and event organizers that alcohol service in parks is desired.

Currently, AMC 10.68.090 does not allow any person to take any alcohol into any portion of a public park of Ashland, with a few exceptions, such as the Calle Guanajuato and the Oak Knoll Golf Course. Staff is proposing to change the language of the ordinance to read:

**"It is unlawful for any person to take any intoxicating liquor or beverage into any portion of the public parks of the City, except as authorized by the Ashland Parks and Recreation Director or designee, consistent with established parks rules and regulations. Any violation of this section is a Class II violation subject to the penalties and procedures in AMC 1.08.030."**

Dials further clarified that the proposed ordinance:

- Would allow for only permitted events that physically separate alcohol service and sales to individuals that are 21 and over, such as a beer or wine garden or holding an event in a space in a park where the entrance and exit can be controlled, such as the Japanese Garden.
- Events such as weddings or parties of mixed ages are NOT supported at this time by the proposed structure presented today. Per OLCC, licensed service is not a requirement for weddings, and would require increased management complexity and more staff time to coordinate.
- However, staff have crafted broad ordinance language to allow for changes in APRC rules and policies into the future.

Dials added that there are 3 items included in the packet that staff prepared for Commissioners' review:

- The proposed ordinance change
- A policy guidance paper with rules for alcohol use in parks that can be changed at any time

- A supplementary alcohol-use application for any event where alcohol would be served or sold in a cordoned-off area, such as a beer garden, etc. that is in addition to the existing Special Events permit and OLCC permit.

Dials added that OLCC is behind in their permitting process, so applicants will be encouraged to apply for an OLCC permit as quickly as possible at the start of the planning of an event to ensure that they get everything they need in advance.

Draft APRC Rules for Alcohol Use in Parks from the packet were included with adjustments based on comments and feedback from the Commission that were received from past APRC meetings. In particular:

- Line item #11 now states that a permit will not be issued for event hours prior to 7 a.m. or later than 10 p.m., in conjunction with established noise ordinance AMC 9.08.170. Does the Commission want to further scale back those hours?
- Line item #15 adds a checklist that ensures that the event organizer has been approved for everything, including the Special Event application and the OLCC permit.

Staff is seeking feedback on any final changes to the language in the hopes that this could be brought back for a vote at the Regular Business Meeting October 11, 2023. The Alcohol Use in Parks Ordinance will be publicly noticed and go through City Council with a first and second reading.

Seffinger asked for clarification about whether children wouldn't be allowed in the area where alcohol is served, and if only beer and wine would be served or mixed drinks/hard alcohol?

Dials clarified that it is written into the plan to only allow service of beer, wine, and hard cider. The alcohol service area would have to be cordoned off and restricted to 21 and over, with monitors checking I.D. Staff would work with event organizers to plan an area for alcohol service.

Adams wanted to know more about confining alcohol service to a particular area.

Dials clarified that the decision to cordon off an alcohol-use area was based on OLCC rules and regulations, and with the limited number of staff APRC has right now. This can be re-evaluated in the future but is similar to how other parks in Oregon allow alcohol use.

Bachman asked who would be responsible for the controlled areas?

Dials stated that it's all part of the OLCC application and would be required to be set before an event could take place. Eldridge added that the supplementary application specifically calls for the applicant to provide their security plan in detail and provide the name of any private security company and detail their services. Further, the policy states that required security will be determined at the discretion of the director or director's designee.

Lewis asked about an exception to the rule for the Community Center.

Dials noted that when the Community Center is open again, that would be revisited. Dials pointed out that when alcohol was served at the Community Center in the past, organizers were required to have liability insurance for the venue, and to keep alcohol use inside the venue. This is the ideal situation, but APRC staff does not currently have the personnel, etc. to assure this within parks.

Landt did not feel comfortable with the permitted hours, though they conform to the noise ordinance. 7 a.m. is too early for alcohol sales.

Commissioners and staff discussed several options for permitted hours with consensus being 11 a.m. to 9 or 10 p.m.

Landt reiterated that a checklist is a good idea to confirm when all the permits, applications and fees, etc. have been received and stipulations fulfilled and approved by APRC staff within the required time frames. A comprehensive checklist is critical to ensuring good practice.

Eldridge confirmed that Landt wanted the checklist included in the packet for the Regular Business Meeting October 11, 2023. Dials said a checklist based on Landt's suggestions could be added to the rules and guidelines sheet.

## **V. PARKS, TRAILS, & OPEN SPACE MAP UPDATE**

Landt asked for the topic title to be changed from "Parks, Trails & Open Space *Plan* Update" to "Parks, Trails & Open Space *Map* Update."

Eldridge defined the Parks, Trails & Open Space Map as essentially a guide for APRC land acquisition. It provides for a range of uses, including neighborhood parks, potential sports fields, open spaces, trail connectivity and riparian areas, as well as wildlife habitat, and other ecological values. The map was first created in 1991, updated again in 2002, and had a light update in 2012. In May of 2022, the Commission formed a subcommittee to look at the most recent update. as part of the City of Ashland's Comprehensive Plan. The process for approval is that once the Commissioners approve of the updated map and narrative, it will go through the Planning Commission, and then through City Council in order to be updated within the City of Ashland's Comprehensive Plan.

Eldridge summarized the subcommittee's research and recommendations as laid out in "Parks, Trails, and Open Space Map Update Draft #9," and related maps and documents included in the packet.

- In 1991, Ashland had less parkland per capita than Roseburg, Medford, and Klamath Falls, so the original goal was to have a neighborhood park located within a quarter mile of every home within Ashland city limits. In 2023, Ashland is now one of the state's leaders in per capita parkland, so for all intents and purposes, APRC has accomplished that goal.
- The focus and emphasis on this update for the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Map is very different from what it was when it was first created in 1991, when it was looking to establish parcels for complete neighborhood parks.
- Now, with the updated map included in the packet, lands that are identified for future purchase focus on natural areas and ecological values, such as water quality, stream and riparian area protection. It also focuses on trail connectivity, allowing access for the people of Ashland to move by foot or bike through town.
- Trail connectivity can be achieved through outright purchase, donation, grants, or establishing easements on or getting rights to an easement through a property.
- The Subcommittee closely evaluated how to integrate the Trails Master Plan and all the perspectives of the different trail users and different residents.
- The Subcommittee recommends removing roughly 200 acres of property that had been identified for purchase in the previous map. And then, in some cases, identified other places to acquire for trail connectivity or ecological values that had not been on the map previously.

Landt and Eldridge presented a few examples of changes on the proposed map, including areas for possible additions of sports fields/ballfields, riparian areas, and areas for trail connectivity, and removal from the map of outdated areas that are no longer available or ideal for such development.

Eldridge highlighted areas worked on closely with the City's Wildfire Division. Those properties can provide multiple benefits in terms of fuels reduction and managing that area in the wildland urban interface. Other areas through the riparian corridor offer multiple recreational, water quality, and ecological benefits.

Lewis noted that it was important to do timely updates to master plans every 10 years or so and thanked everyone involved with the current update.

Landt noted that the 2012 "light" update was never implemented, and that the 2023 proposed update is the first time that APRC is officially proposing to remove properties—200 acres—from the plan. This is important because the parks and open space situation has changed radically from what it was when some of these properties were first placed on the plan.

Seffinger commented that from a budget perspective, the proposed update focused on properties most valuable to the city and there are some that are being let go because they are not first priorities.

Landt agreed and added that comments from the public and from City Councilors supported this conclusion, and that nothing is being removed from the plan that is critical to a robust, strong park system.

Landt requested staff to change the Billings property from "sports field" to "sports fields and riparian areas."

Eldridge wanted to make sure to recognize and appreciate the time and effort of Leah Light, the GIS specialist who works for the city who has gone through more than nine drafts of the map and gone back and forth with staff to support this process.

## **VI. LOOKAHEAD REVIEW**

- Landt asked to add a discussion on solar at East Main Park to a future meeting

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

Adams recognized Parks employee Jason Minica for extraordinary work in clearing a fallen tree by the Wonder Trail.

Dials announced 2 events scheduled for Friday, October 6, 2023:

1. The Ashland Walk and Bike Breakfast at Railroad Park from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m.
2. Gather Round the Railroad District, presented by Rogue World Music, from 5 to 7 p.m. in the railroad district.

More information is available on the APRC Facebook page.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Plapinger  
APRC Temporary Office Assistant

DRAFT

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

**October 11, 2023**

**Council Chambers – 6 p.m.**

**1175 E Main St**

Present: Commissioners Landt (Chair), Bachman (Vice Chair) Adams, Lewis, Seffinger; Interim Director Eldridge, Deputy Director Dials, Senior Service Superintendent Glatt, Analyst Kiewel, Senior Services Coordinator Mettler

Absent: None

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Landt called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a) APCR Regular Meeting – August 9, 2023

**Motion:** Bachman moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Lewis

**Vote:** The vote was all yes. Seffinger abstained.

b) APCR Special Meeting – September 6, 2023

**Motion:** Bachman moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Lewis

**Vote:** The vote was all yes. Seffinger abstained.

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

None

**IV. PUBLIC FORUM**

None

**V. CONSENT**

a) Approval (Acknowledgement) of Subcommittee Minutes

b) Commissioner Committee Assignments

c) Conversation Clusters Seating Project - site adjustment for Glenwood Park

**Motion:** Bachman moved to approve the consent agenda for acknowledgment. Seconded by Lewis.

**Vote:** The vote was all yes. Adams raised a point of order regarding Committee Assignments approval; Landt clarified the process.

**I. Interim Directors Report**

- Moving forward with the hiring on a Parks Superintendent and Executive Assistant:
  - The second and final round of interviews for the Park Superintendent position are scheduled for the week of October 30, 2023. Eldridge thanked Deputy Director Dials for organizing the effort.

- The Executive Assistant job posting has closed and there are 36 applications that staff is evaluating.
- All APRC staff participated in a de-escalation training that was held by Ashland Police Department (APD) This training yielded helpful tools in how to deal with potentially unsafe or aggressive situations.
- Senior Services COVID and Flu Vaccine Clinic October 13 and October 27: Superintendent Glatt has reported that the 2 sessions were completely full. Thanks to a generous grant from Mountain Meadows Community Foundation, the clinic was able to expand services to 450 shots.
- Daniel Meyer Pool liner project is underway: The pool has been drained, and repairs have been done to the sidewalls and the tiling in order to get ready for the liner installation. Park staff reports the contractor will install the liner the week of October 30, 2023.
- Ashland Rotary Centennial Ice Rink will open November 17, 2023. The ice rink structure will be raised the first week of November. Kaylee Herrick will return as Ice Rink Manager.
- North Mountain Park Nature Center Coordinator, Jen Aguayo, has been providing service-learning programs for Hellman Elementary and Trails Outdoor School.
- Ashland Japanese Garden 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary celebration will be held on Sunday, October 22, 2023. Donations collected will go to the Ashland Parks Foundation to support garden maintenance.
- The first conversation clusters were installed at Garfield Park, and the chairs for Lithia Park have arrived. The new benches' configuration for Glenwood Park was approved in the consent agenda. Superintendent Glatt will be receiving community feedback on this pilot project.

## II. **BUSINESS**

### a) **CIP Discussion (Informational)**

Eldridge presented the CIP Budget Review.

- At the September 6, 2023, Special Business Meeting, Commissioners were provided with the approved CIP Budget for Biennium (BN) 23-25, based on estimates of the CIP Ending Fund Balance for FY 23.
- The budget reconciliation process was still ongoing at that time, but now, the APRC CIP Ending Fund Balance for FY 2023 has been reconciled.
- Variances typically exist between the budget and actuals, due to timing and actual activity of revenues and expenses. For example, projects that occurred but were not planned, or activity that was planned but never occurred.
- A review of the FY23 reconciliation conducted by Parks and the Finance department found a larger-than-expected disparity between the budget versus actual. This will make it necessary for APRC to adjust capital spending for BN 23-25.
  - APRC will need to reduce planned capital spending for BN 23-25.
  - Park's and City's accounting is accurate
  - Discrepancies existed in projections and financial assumptions, not in accounting.
  - Under Oregon law a budget adjustment or transfer is not required.
  - Regular review and reconciliation of budget to actual, with consistent monthly review back to financial statements.
- Actual CIP Ending Fund Balance at FY23 \$1,616,815 less than Budget.
- The discrepancy was discovered to be from:
  - Approximately \$1 million in anticipated grant revenue was not realized.
  - Land sales balance of \$691,000 (from the sale of the YMCA Park and sale of other lands) deposited in a separate account. Park's review with Finance Director Berry and the Finance team found that this balance had been transferred into APRC CIP in 2017, and the account closed. However, due to a miscommunication or other error, APRC continued to believe it existed separately in addition to the CIP balance.

Landt asked if the funds had been deposited into the Food and Beverage Fund, and if there were a few different accounts that made up the CIP. Eldridge and Berry confirmed to the Commission that there is just one CIP account, not separate accounts.

Eldridge thanked Berry for all her expertise and support on this work.

- APRC staff will work with Finance going forward to present an updated CIP budget for BN 23-25 in November bringing APRC finances into alignment with finance standards and protocols.
- This includes accounting for System Development Charges (SDC) separately, with payments for specific expenses as per APRC SDC Methodology. Parks has an existing SDC methodology written in the early 1990s that will be updated or replaced accordingly.
- Recognize the change in internal accounting that resulted in the closing of the land sales account earmarked for East Main Park and ensure that there is adequate funding in the revised CIP to build East Main Park.

Bachman commented that he is glad to see staff working closely with the City Finance department.

Seffinger commended Eldridge and Berry for their communication and working to be in alignment on language and terms, so that there will be better understanding of Finance issues going forward.

#### **b) Park Hours (Action)**

Eldridge introduced Police Chief O'Meara, who expressed support of reasonable limitations being put on overnight use of all City Parks. As opposed to ticketing and draconian enforcement policies, an adjustment in Park Hours will give Ashland Police Department (APD) the ability to make contact and inquire about whether somebody's in the park for legitimate reasons at night.

Eldridge introduced a proposal to amend the Ashland Municipal Code (AMC) to establish Park Hours for all City Parks.

- Parks have experienced increased vandalism and damage to public property. There are public safety concerns, and many of these incidents occur during nighttime hours.
- Mandating hours of parks closure can potentially improve public safety and reduce the financial and maintenance burden associated with vandalism and damage.
- The Current AMC 10.68.380 provides a "Curfew" for Lithia Park ONLY from 11:30PM to 5:30AM.
- Staff proposes amending AMC 10.68.380 to establish hours of parks closure in all city parks between the hours of 12:00AM (midnight) and 5:00AM. (See packet for exact language change to the ordinance.)
- Staff recommends that the ordinance apply broadly to all park lands, open spaces, trails and trail network, not just to discrete parks within Ashland (e.g., Lithia, Garfield, Hunter, etc.), as per the definition of "parks" in AMC 10.68.10.

Bachman asked for clarification of the process. Eldridge confirmed that, if approved, the Commissioners are recommending the ordinance to City Council for consideration. City Council would then have a first reading, a second reading, and then potentially approve the ordinance.

Seffinger asked if Bluebird Park in the Plaza is covered by the ordinance. Eldridge confirmed that it is covered.

**Motion:** Bachman moved to recommend to the City Council amending section 10.68 of the Ashland Municipal Code to establish Hours of Park Closure in all City Parks. Seconded by Adams.

**Discussion:** Bachman expressed support for the APD helping with the unhoused situation and the coordination with Parks.

Adams compared the concept behind this ordinance to posting a no trespass order at La Clinica that might risk alienating the population one means to serve. He appreciates the sensitivity of staff and Chief O'Meara in crafting this ordinance to serve the entire community respectfully.

Landt pointed out that the amended ordinance will expand Lithia Park Hours by 1 hour. In addition to protecting public safety and aiding APD, park closure will provide much-needed resting time for wildlife. Though restricting park access is hard to be in favor of, the trade-off for wildlife of less human interaction is a positive.

**Vote:** The vote was all yes

#### **c) Ashland Fire Department Wildfire Division fuels reduction on parkland (Information)**

Chris Chambers, Ashland Fire Department Forestry Officer discussed Prescribed Burning on APRC Forestlands and Forestland Climate Change Adaptation—Siskiyou Mountain Park

##### **Prescribed Burning on APRC Forestlands:**

- Chambers commended APRC for maintaining a fire safe community for open space and working closely with APF.
- Fuels reduction on Lithia Hillside and elsewhere had been done previously that reduced fuels when fires were set last year.



- Prescribed burns reduce fire severity by reducing available fuels. Part of the Ashland Forest Plan and the draft Lithia Park 100-year Strategic Plan is to implement prescribed burning on Lithia Hillside, Acid Castle, Hald-Strawberry, and Westwood properties.
- Prescribed Fire Objectives:
  - Reduce fire severity by maintaining low fuels.
  - Reintroducing frequent, mild fire as an ecosystem process of fire, recycling nutrients, guiding vegetation, etc.
  - Facilitate successful fire suppression by keeping low fuels in strategic areas.
  - Reduce non-native species using fire, i.e., fall burning.
  - Reduce smoke exposure to the community, both by keeping the fuel low and burning under conditions when smoke can move away.
- Grayback Forestry will continue to conduct prescribed burning in Ashland and has had their contract renewed by City Council.
- Chambers recommends prescribed burning of 5-10 acres of Lithia Hillside at the very top this fall, minimizing negative smoke impact on the community. Also, the southern tip of Hald-Strawberry, if conditions are right.

Seffinger asked about the Cottle property. Chambers said it could be addressed in the future.

Lewis said in the past there have been grants available and wondered if there were any available at this time. Chambers said right now the prescribed burning would be under the AFD Wildfire Division Budget.

Adams asked for clarification of the Lithia Hillside area: Chambers confirmed that it's the area below Glenview, above Pioneer and closest to Fork Street.

Landt clarified that the Commission has endorsed and embraced fuels reduction in Lithia Park, including prescribed burns.

#### **Forestland Climate Change Adaptation—Siskiyou Mountain Park:**

- The changing climate can contribute to unpredictable forest conditions and forecasts predict increased climatic stressors affecting our municipal forestlands, which are governed by the 2016 Ashland Forest Plan (AFP). Recent insect outbreaks have reached epidemic levels, with Douglas-fir (DF) tree mortality measured at 20% in the lower watershed and Siskiyou Mountain Park (SMP),
- SMP was particularly hard-hit this spring. Results from the City's drone-based survey of forest health in July of this year showed SMP DF mortality (aka The Douglas-fir Decline Spiral), creating an elevated fire danger. As of July, 30% of DF are dead or dying (probably 40% by now) and die off is continuing. Many dead trees are near trails. Additionally, climate studies predict most lower elevation sites in SW Oregon will be inhospitable for DF by 2055.
- The 2023 Climate Change Addendum to the Ashland Forest Plan lays out a strategy and objectives associated with climate change.
- Through the Forest Lands Committee and in consultation with the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy (SOLC), the City is proposing a 6-part Proposed Course of Action, including a helicopter-based thinning project to remove dead and dying trees, transition to resilient species of trees in forests, thin green trees to reduce competition and build resiliency to future drought and heat in surviving Douglas Fir.
- Lomakatsi Restoration Project will work with AFP on this project, helping to identify which trees to remove, and which to keep.

Adams (a member of the Forest Lands Commission) commended the leadership in this area to make these decisions early before anything bad happens. He encouraged people to explore the watershed and see for themselves the dying trees and impact of the beetle infestation attacking the trees.

Seffinger commended Chambers work on the AFP, and asked about what species of trees would replace DF. Chambers said at present the plan is to take locally grown varieties of Ponderosa Pine and Sugar Pine, and a mix of Black Oak and Pine. SOLC will assist with this determination.

Landt asked what percentage of trees are currently dead in SMP, and which are alive? Chambers answered that the exact number won't be known until the trees are marked, but approximately 50% DF in SMP are dead or dying. Landt asked Chambers to bring the justification, for why such a large percentage of the trees will be taken out alive to the next meeting.

Chambers noted that there is a need to act quickly because if the dead and dying trees aren't removed now, they will lose their value at a mill, resulting in negative financial implications for the project.

#### **d) Salmon Safe Certification (Information)**

Eldridge introduced Lulu Brazeau, a recent SOU graduate from the Environmental Science, Policy and Sustainability Department, who is an intern for Terrain Landscape Architecture through SOU's Institute for Applied Sustainability.

- APRC has the opportunity to achieve system-wide Salmon Safe Certification through a Pacific Northwest region peer-reviewed certification program.
- Research and feedback from APRC staff led to the conclusion that the Salmon Safe Certification was the best fit for the East Main Park project.
- Salmon Safe is a peer-reviewed eco label that focuses on preserving water quality and protecting salmon habitat on the West coast from Alaska to California. The company is a nonprofit that is based in Portland, Oregon and was founded by Pacific Rivers in 1996.
- Park System Certification is performance based and non-prescriptive. Salmon Safe works on a case-by-case basis to provide a set of park management practices that are site specific.
- Salmon Safe works in collaboration with the Parks department to develop strategies that would enhance watershed protection, and to determine which solutions are attainable and which are not feasible.
- Assessments of management issues such as irrigation efficiency, stormwater management, pesticide reduction, conservation of night-native biodiversity and management of stream sides and wetlands.
- The evaluation will be carried out by 2-4 qualified independent experts hired by Salmon Safe. This team will help to set management standards to protect the ecology found within Ashland's park system that would enhance watershed function.
- Certification would be valid for five years and subject to annual verification of adherence to salmon safe performance standards.

**Cost estimates:** Dr. Vince Smith, Director of the Institute of Applied Sustainability, was excited about the opportunity of working with Salmon Safe and has made a commitment to cover half of the costs of the initial certification and extend the additional support of staff resources from the Environmental Science Department. Furthermore, Salmon Safe also expressed strong interest in wanting to work with APRC as their Park System Certification was developed with Ashland parks in mind over 20 years ago, when Salmon Safe was still operating as Pacific Rivers in collaboration with the World Wildlife Federation. As a result, estimated costs for certification of the entire Ashland Parks system would be similar to certifying just East Main Park, with Salmon Safe offering their services at cost.

- Park Systems Certification: pre-assessment \$5,000, certification \$15,000 for a total of \$20,000 to certify the entire Ashland Parks System. One-time fee for the 5 years, including the cost of annual verification.
- Individual Park Certification (i.e., East Main Park): pre-assessment \$5,000, certification \$13,000 for a total of \$18,000.

Brazeau further outlined Salmon Safe maintenance and development strategies, and proposed design features for East Main Park, as well as ecological reasons for helping salmon.

Landt thanked Brazeau for the presentation and will work with staff to put it on a future meeting agenda.

Eldridge emphasized the excitement and educational benefit of partnering with SOU on Salmon Safe Certification.

#### **e) Alcohol Use in Parks (Action)**

Dials presented the proposed ordinance change for alcohol use in parks:

- Supports Commission Goal #9 by encouraging event organizers to choose Ashland parks for their events
- Enables revenue generation that makes holding these events economically feasible to organizers.
- APRC has received feedback from small business owners, the public and event organizers that alcohol service in parks is desired.
- Creating the ability to serve alcohol during events within the Ashland parks system will create more opportunities for revenue generation for event organizers and in turn will attract more events to Ashland, supporting the local economy
- Currently, the Ashland Municipal Code 10.68.090 does not allow any person to take any intoxicating liquor or beverage into any portion of the public parks within the City with only a few exceptions such as the Calle Guanajuato and the Oak Knoll Golf Course.

- Staff proposes amending AMC 10.68.090 to allow for alcohol use in parks as authorized by the Ashland Parks and Recreation Director or designee, consistent with established parks rules and regulations.
- Specific changes to the list of rules in the packet: item #11 now specifies that a permit will not be issued for event hours prior to 11 a.m. or later than 9 p.m. as per AMC 9.08.170. Item # 16 now contains a specific checklist of items that the event organizer is responsible for.
- The next step after approval by the Parks Commission is to take the ordinance to the City Council for a first and second reading in November.

**Motion:** Adams moved to recommend Ordinance 3227 to allow use of alcohol in city parks go to City Council for consideration. Seconded by Seffinger.

**Discussion:** Adams thanked staff for their time and stated that this is a good first step.

Seffinger liked this as a first step and would like to see it available for weddings in the future. Eldridge said that staff is supportive of future growth. Dials said plans for Pioneer Hall and the Community Center should allow for that.

**Vote: The vote was all yes**

**Motion:** Adams moved to approve the APRC rules and guidelines for alcohol use in parks as presented. Seconded by Lewis.

**Discussion:** No comments

**Vote: The vote was all yes**

#### f) Parks, Trails, & Open Space Plan Map (Action)

Eldridge thanked the Parks, Trails, & Open Space Plan Map Subcommittee members, Torsten Heycke, Katie Larsen, Joanne Eggers, Eric Hansen, GIS Manager Leah Richards and Analyst Kiewel for all their work on the map.

Eldridge presented the Parks, Trails, and Open Space Map Update Draft #9—part of the City of Ashland’s Comprehensive Plan—included in the packet and highlighted the history and recommendations of the Subcommittee as outlined in the packet, and discussed in detail at the October 4, 2023, Study Session.

- The Park, Trails, and Open Space Map is a guide for APRC land acquisition and designates properties for different usage including neighborhood parks, potential sports fields, open spaces, trail connectivity, and riparian areas.
- Guide for land acquisition for long term planning that makes sure that Ashland has the facilities, connectivity, and ecological protection that it needs as it grows over time.
- Strategic long-term planning has evolved over time from creation of discrete city parks to:
  - protection of significant natural areas, such as streams and riparian areas
  - lands on wildland urban interface critical for fuels management
  - trail connectivity (either through outright purchase, donation, grants, or easements)
- Subcommittee recommends 200 acres of property that had been formerly identified for purchase be removed from the Map
- Subcommittee recommends additional Properties Designated for Purchase or Easements and Projected Use

See packet for map draft and lists of properties by name.

Eldridge explained that as part of the City of Ashland’s Comprehensive Plan, if the Commissioners approve the Draft, it will next go to the Planning Commission.

Landt stated this update is the first time since the Map was drafted in the early 1990’s that properties are being removed.

Seffinger noted that eliminating properties that we no longer need, because we’ve gained so much parkland, is fiscally responsible.

Eldridge added that priorities have changed as well and are emphasizing ecological protection and trail connectivity.

**Motion:** Adams moved to recommend the Parks, Trails and Open Space Map Update and Summary Language as presented, for review by Planning Commission and consideration by City Council. Seconded by Bachman.

**Discussion:** Adams thanked Landt for the historical context and appreciated APRC's successes over the last 30 years and making parks a priority for all the citizens of Ashland.

**Vote: The vote was all yes**

III. **ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF**

None

IV. **UPCOMING MEETING DATES**

- a) Recreation Division Advisory Committee - October 19, 2023, Lithia Cabin 4:00 pm
- b) Parks Commission Study Session - November 1, 2023, Electronic Meeting via Zoom 6:00 pm
- c) Parks Commission Business Meeting - November 8, 2023, Council Chambers 6:00 pm
- d) Council Business Meeting - Park Hours and Alcohol in Parks Ordinances - November 7, 2023, Council Chambers 6:00 pm
- e) Ashland Senior Advisory Committee— November 13, 2023, Electronic Meeting via Zoom 3:30 p.m.

V. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Plapinger  
APRC Temporary Office Assistant

DRAFT