

**MINUTES FOR THE JOINT MEETING
ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL &
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Monday, May 1, 2017
Civic Center Council Chambers
1175 E. Main Street**

CALL TO ORDER

Parks Commissioner Chair Mike Gardiner called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Civic Center Council Chambers.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Stromberg, Councilor Slattery, Morris, Seffinger, Rosenthal, and Darrow were present. Commissioner Landt, Lewis, and Heller were present. Councilor Lemhouse arrived at 6:35 p.m. Commissioner Miller was absent.

PUBLIC INPUT

Huelz Gutcheon/2253 Hwy 99/Explained a chart he submitted into the record.

Ron Roth/6950 Old 99 South/Wanted a community meeting on the Imperatrice property similar to the Water Summit with time for public input.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion of Imperatrice Property

Parks and Recreation Director Michael Black explained the Parks Commission was interested in using part of the Imperatrice property for recreation. They met with Kristi Mergenthaler, the stewardship director from the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy regarding the biodiversity of the property. Currently, the Parks and Recreation Department was participating with the Electric Department and the Public Works Department on an environmental review of the property and funding a third of the cost for the study. The City purchased the property in 1996 for \$946,000 and totaled 890 acres.

Ms. Mergenthaler explained the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy began talks with the City on conserving part or all of the land in 2009. The Imperatrice property was separated from the Grizzly Peak Preserve by two privately owned properties. The Southern Oregon Land Conservancy was interested in establishing a trail from the Imperatrice property to Grizzly Peak. She described the rare plant species and wildlife that existed on Imperatrice and the important role grasslands played for carbon storage. The property offered a beautiful viewshed as well.

Mr. Black confirmed the Parks Commission was interested in purchasing the property. The Southern Oregon Land Conservancy would help the Parks Commission find opportunities to raise funds. Conservation of the property would include an easement granted to a third party in perpetuity. It would not interfere with 10x20 discussions on using part of the property for a solar farm. The City purchased the land with money dedicated to wastewater treatment. The Parks Commission would pay for the land and establish an easement. He would provide the Commission and Council with information on the restrictions and constraints associated with the purchase of the property.

2. Discussion of regional swimming facility

Parks Director Michael Black explained one of the Parks and Recreation Department's top five goals was facilitating a partnership to build a new competition-style, year-round indoor swimming pool for the community.

The Parks Commission looked into several alternatives regarding the pool. Southern Oregon University had agreed to build a pool at the McNeal Pavilion but needed \$1,800,000 - \$2,200,000 immediately to start. It was not possible to raise the amount that quickly. Adding a bubble over the Daniel Meyer Pool was not an option at \$200,000 with \$10,000 monthly operating costs. The bubble had no structure and was temporary. They were

able to winterize the Daniel Meyer Pool that cost \$20,000 with \$8,000 monthly for operation costs. It worked well but was also a temporary fix. Forming a partnership with the YMCA had not panned out either.

Mr. Black proposed replacing the pool with a 25-yard by 25-meter pool up to six feet in depth that would allow for eight swim lanes. A seasonal cover would make it available during colder months. The estimate for the project was \$3,500,000 and included the following:

- Pool - \$1,475,000
- Design, Plans, and Permits - \$75,000
- Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing (MEP) - \$125,000
- Parking - \$200,000
- Demo, Earthwork, and Flatwork - \$300,000
- Contingency - \$525,000
- Pool Canopy - \$800,000

The Parks Commission was looking into a process that consisted of:

- Concept – in progress
 - Survey
 - Designs
 - Estimates
- Approval of Budget and Bond by Commissioners and Council
 - Prior to July 31, 2017
- Pool Campaign – Ongoing Process
- Bond Election
 - Target: November 2017

Currently pool operation costs were \$80,000 per year. They were estimating the new facility would cost \$150,000 yearly. The Parks Commission was proposing a pool upgrade so a year round program could happen with the partners. Currently these partners were paying to rent the pool. The pool would have solar heat.

Councilor Rosenthal shared the City of Medford's experience trying to pass a pool bond that failed. He suggested the bond include renovating the Senior Center, upgrading the Little League storage room, and overall making it more of a community center. He thought any new facilities should have revenue components like charging to use a pool slide.

Mr. Black explained the next steps involved a business plan, associated costs, funding, and determining public interest. Commission and Council discussed issues related to going out for a bond and timing. The Parks Commission would come to Council with more information in the future.

3. Discussion of Parks' budget priorities

Parks Director Michael Black explained the Parks Commission had a balanced budget and was able to provide all of the services offered in previous years with no cuts.

Councilor Lemhouse arrived at 6:35 p.m.

OTHER BUSINESS FROM THE COUNCIL AND PARKS COMMISSION

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Smith
Assistant to the City Recorder