

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION
Minutes
October 15, 2018

ATTENDEES

Present: Commissioners Gardiner, Landt, Lewis, Miller; Director Black; Recreation Superintendent Dials; Senior Services Superintendent Glatt; Parks Superintendent Oxendine; Executive Assistant Dyssegard; Minute-taker Manuel

Absent: Commissioner Heller; City Council Liaison Mayor Stromberg

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gardiner called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. at The Grove 1195 E. Main, Ashland, OR.

PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

**PEST MITIGATION/EXEMPTION TO IPM POLICY FOR BUILDINGS WITH KITCHENS USED BY THE PUBLIC
(Information & Possible Action)**

Glatt reported that the requested exemption was due to damages to the Senior Center's HVAC system caused by rodents. She explained that while no rodents had been sighted, pest mitigation experts had stated that signs of rodent damage were visible in the attic and crawlspaces of the building. Rodents damaged HVAC conduit as well.

Glatt noted that the pest treatment company known as Integrity Pest and Home Repair (referenced as Integrity), assessed the damages and suggested a two-pronged approach for mitigation. A combination of mechanical traps and enclosed bait traps would be utilized - externally with bait boxes and internally with snap traps. She stated that Integrity also recommended spraying for ants.

Glatt indicated that after conferring with Director Black, it was determined that seeking an exemption from the IPM (Integrated Pest Management) for public food preparation areas might be appropriate.

Commissioner Discussion

In response to a question by Gardiner, Oxendine explained that each bait station presented a maze-like interior designed to attract rodents. Once inside, rodents would be unable to return outside. Poisoned bait ensured quick extermination within the station. He stated that while no rodents were found in the crawl space, snap traps could prevent rodents from entering further into the building.

Lewis stated that the primary objective would be to prevent rodents from entering the buildings. Once inside, they circulated throughout the house, causing incalculable damage. He stated that access through a crawl space or any small opening should be sealed.

Landt asked about exchanging externally positioned traps with mechanical traps to prevent poison from contaminating the environment. Oxendine replied that mechanical or snap traps could not be placed in areas of public access – for the public’s safety they must remain out of reach. In addition, the goal would be to kill in multiples rather than one by one – an efficiency on many levels. Landt commented that in his opinion, starvation would be preferable. Landt noted that snap traps were an approved strategy of the IPM. He advocated for the least amount of exemptions to the policy as possible.

Black stated that in his opinion, poison might be considered the most humane approach because it was the quickest. He talked about disposal and other ways to manage an infestation for the best possible outcome.

There followed discussion related to a possible ant infestation and mitigation remedies. It was agreed that most ant infestations occurred during the spring. Dials stated that ants had been reported as a nuisance in the kitchens the previous spring but the issue had remained unresolved.

Landt stated that in his opinion, there were better solutions than the use of pesticides. He indicated his preference for managing ant infestations organically – suggesting Orange Guard as an effective alternative. He stated that the application of Orange Guard was somewhat more complicated than using poison – that there was a process to obtain best results. He noted that bait traps attract ants to a poisonous mixture which they then ingest and carry back to the nest – killing additional ants. Orange Guard, on the other hand, sends a message that the environment is inhospitable and ants should look elsewhere for their sustenance.

Glatt expressed concern about using Orange Guard in a commercial kitchen. She noted that she uses it at home and is familiar with the process. That said, Glatt highlighted the constraints such as use by another agency and the need for a service contract for maintenance. She stated that someone would have to apply it after hours and then remove it from all kitchen surfaces before work began each day.

Landt stated that spraying at night would eliminate involvement of Food & Friends (the agency using the commercial kitchen). There followed a detailed discussion about staff’s ability to come in after hours to spray and in the morning before cooking in the kitchen begins. Oxendine talked about the levels of potency assigned to pesticides (caution, danger and warning) and the need for an exemption for commercial kitchens. Glatt noted that further research would be needed to discover what the food safety standards were and whether Food & Friends would accept alternatives to pesticide use.

Black asked for the rationale regarding pesticide application when there were issues such as rodents accessing a commercial kitchen. Landt explained that prior to development of the IPM, Ashland residents were predominately opposed to pesticide use – so much so that the IPM was designed and implemented. Gardiner stated that there was a major concern regarding herbicides as well.

Lewis emphasized the need to control rodents, distinguishing between rats and mice. He stated that rats need bigger openings to access the building – making it easier to prevent them from entering the premises. He indicated that in his opinion, poisoning animals along the outside perimeter expands the services needed without addressing the issue – i.e. stopping rodents from entering the building. He

advocated against an “industrial solution,” stating that an ongoing service did not appear to be necessary.

Gardiner voiced support for the importance of addressing rodents but said the solution needed to be acceptable to Food & Friends. He suggested that Glatt research the issue and report back. He suggested that the seasonal ant problem be referenced separately.

Landt explained that rodents would continue to be problematic because total eradication was not possible. Eliminating rats from the kitchen could be handled through a series of steps, beginning with sealing the perimeter so that the building would become inaccessible. Lewis agreed, stating that once access was denied, the infestation could be controlled. He said rodents within the building were a significant threat that should be eliminated.

Black said no rats had been seen – just damage caused by rats. He recommended additional research to determine whether the damage was due to current or past conditions.

Gardiner noted that staff was asking for a pest mitigation exemption for two locations – the Senior Center Kitchen and the Oak Knoll Clubhouse kitchen. Based upon this discussion, he said it was recommended that mechanical traps continue to be used and a system of spraying of Orange Guard be explored.

Landt suggested managing the situation incrementally – i.e. first by using the least invasive treatments for the exterior and then by fighting the internal infestation aggressively. He proposed a postponement of the ant issue until a good faith effort had been made using Orange Guard and/or other organics. If the infestation remained, then the Commissioners would consider alternative treatments.

There followed discussion about the rat infestation at Oak Knoll Golf Course. It was acknowledged that the situation was somewhat different as the infestation was confined to the shop area where grass seed was stored. A new steel container had been purchased and installed recently, leading to an abatement. It was stated that no rats had been reported in or near the commercial kitchen at the Clubhouse.

In response to a question by Gardiner, Glatt indicated that she could proceed within the direction provided by the Commissioners. She also suggested consulting with a contractor who was familiar with the APRC IPM policy and willing to work within its parameters. She relayed that Integrity had not conducted a thorough search – nor had they suggested a protocol in keeping with the IPM. Glatt noted that it would be necessary to remain vigilant in eradicating pests because of the serious responsibility to ensure food safety for Ashland’s service providers, staff and people they serve.

Glatt said she would wait until spring to address the ant issue, then work with Food & Friends to ensure that pest eradication suggestions were acceptable to them. Black noted that APRC had received

no complaints from Food & Friends related to an infestation. He said the matter seemed to be confined to the Senior Center's infrastructure.

Landt reiterated that the Commissioners were normally responsive to requests from staff and would continue to accommodate staff whenever possible. He reflected that in this case, the IPM policy had received substantial support in the community and the Commissioners were acting on its behalf.

SIGNS, PLAQUES, MEMORIALS POLICY REVIEW/DISCUSSION (Information/Possible Action)

Gardiner reported that this topic had been removed from the Agenda and the discussion would be postponed.

DISCUSSION ABOUT PARK HOURS (Information)

Black introduced the topic – noting that there was an APRC policy / ordinance for a curfew within Lithia Park but that it apparently did not apply to other parks in the APRC system. He stated that APRC had fielded many concerns about camping and people remaining in parks after hours. Ashland police had requested a tool that would assist them in protecting the parks from damage. Black stated that a curfew extending throughout all APRC parklands would be helpful. He commented that Lithia Park's curfew was from 11:30 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. – generous in comparison to the norm throughout the country which was dawn to dusk – and he requested approval to establish the Lithia Park curfew hours for all Ashland parks.

Gardiner noted that the issue had come up in discussion with Officer Billings and that he (Gardiner) had assumed that a curfew from dawn until dusk extended across the board. He stated that after researching, he discovered the specific curfew for Lithia Park but no other restrictions. He stated that APRC restrooms should be included in the curfew, given the high level of vandalism that occurs related to restrooms.

Lewis relayed that it was his impression that the curfew of 11:30 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. applied to all parks. He stated that there were legitimate reasons for being in the parks "after hours" such as summer and winter solstice celebrations, meteor events and star gazing. Parks with fire-rings such as the ones at Lithia Park and North Mountain Park encouraged people to stay and enjoy an evening fire. Lewis indicated that in his opinion, closure at dusk was too restrictive. Black agreed but stated that it was logical to assume that parks without lighting would be more limited.

Landt stated his preference for as few rules as possible. He indicated that there should be a compelling reason to institute curfews. He conveyed pride in Ashland's support for dark sky initiatives. Landt highlighted the current rule that renders camping in the parks illegal. He suggested the possibility of removing campers from the park for the rest of the night, once discovered.

Gardiner advocated for broadening the reach of the existing 11:30 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. so that it applied to all parks – not just Lithia Park. He explained that such a rule would give police the opportunity to enforce the curfew rule and remove people from the park after hours – a sort of reset. He stated that in his opinion, the curfew would limit vandalism and other types of abuse.

Black added that providing a consistent curfew throughout the parks system would be beneficial. Lewis agreed, stating that illegal camping played host to a myriad of ills, allowing dogs and people to scare others away from enjoying Ashland's parks.

Miller noted that the police had been talking about this issue for some time. He advocated for the curfew, stating that if law enforcement encountered questionable activities they would have an additional tool to utilize.

Black indicated that from time to time, parks were inundated with users that didn't leave. Closing the park for a period of time would help. Lewis added that overnighters could cause a park to be labeled undesirable – the antithesis of a neighborhood gathering place. Gardiner concurred, highlighting the situation at Ashland Creek Park as an example.

There followed a brief discussion about possible exceptions. Lewis suggested that North Mountain Park be exempted because of the nighttime amenities. Areas where permits were needed to stay longer than the curfew would allow were considered. Miller proposed that the new rules contain a clause that indicated that a curfew was in effect unless preempted by permit. After further discussion, it was agreed that permits would be given upon administrative approval.

In response to a question by Oxendine, Black stated that the new rules would apply to all park lands.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

- ***Forest Lands Commission Update***

Miller stated that the Forest Lands Commission was interested in reviewing the Lithia Park Master Plan when completed. Black explained that the Plan would be presented incrementally. The plan called for sets of recommendations applicable to specific areas and accompanying drawings. He stated that the first set of recommendations should be received by October 17, 2018.

- ***Wastewater Treatment Plant***

Gardiner announced that the City of Ashland Public Works would soon be conducting a public meeting at Helman School to discuss plans for the relocation of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He encouraged Commissioners to attend because of discussion about the relocation of an outfall pipe that would affect Ashland Creek and Bear Creek.

Oxendine reported that he had been able to discuss the relocation of the outfall pipe with appropriate personnel. He stated that in his opinion, receiving warmer water from the plant would help to condition the Dog Park when water was needed. He commented that this would also result in a cost savings – creating a win-win situation.

- ***Ad-hoc Pool Committee***

Gardiner stated that the Pool Subcommittee had conducted its first meeting, with the second scheduled for the first week in November.

Landt reported that an email from a resident objecting to the pool had been received. He stated that he had responded with an inquiry about specific issues related to the new pool. He noted that the citizen was concerned about the cost of the rebuild. Landt responded with an explanation detailing the age of the Daniel Meyer Pool and the need for its replacement or closure.

Gardiner noted that there was a citizen who indicated concern about neighborhood involvement. He highlighted the public process for Subcommittee applicants and public meeting announcements. He suggested a sandwich board to communicate meeting times and agenda items, stating that all citizens would be heard if they wished to participate.

- ***The Grove as a Temporary Shelter***

Black announced that a request from the City of Ashland would be received asking to use The Grove as a temporary shelter for a period of 90 days. A City representative planned to bring the topic to the Parks Commission regular meeting scheduled for Monday, October 22nd.

- ***Ashland Creek Park***

Oxendine relayed that the buses of people spending quantities of time in Ashland Creek Park had since departed. He said he anticipated fewer incidents of concern and a return of the park to its neighborhood status.

Landt cautioned against objections to certain classes of people because of their personal situations. He stated that the emphasis should be on bad behaviors. He noted the lack of a homeless shelter in Ashland, stating that people needed to be able to sleep as long as they did so responsibly.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Manuel, Assistant

The minutes are not a verbatim record. The narrative has been condensed and paraphrased at times to reflect the discussions and decisions made. Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission Study Sessions and Regular Meetings are digitally recorded; the recordings are available upon request.