

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Minutes
November 27, 2017

Present: Commissioners Gardiner, Heller, Landt, Lewis, Miller, Director Black; Interim Parks Superintendent McFarland; Executive Assistant Dyssegard; Assistant Manuel

Absent: Recreation Superintendent Dials; City Council Liaison Mayor Stromberg

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gardiner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street.

APPROVAL OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MINUTES

Trail Master Plan Committee, October 20, 2017—acknowledged

Lithia Park Master Plan Committee, October 26, 2017—acknowledged

There followed a brief conversation regarding an item in the Trail Master Plan Minutes regarding burn piles that were being vandalized. McFarland updated the Commissioners regarding the perpetrator and the intended outcome. He reported that the matter was currently under advisement, with the City of Ashland working with the Courts toward suitable resolution.

Regular Meeting -October 23,2017

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 23, 2017. Lewis seconded.

Discussion:

Landt proposed an amendment to a statement about plans for a pool cover.

Page 7 Paragraph Two: "Landt noted that the cost to replace the cover would be approximately \$80,000 per year. Based upon the longevity of the product, approximately \$3,000 per year should be set aside to defray the cost of a new cover when the time comes."

Should be: "Landt noted that **since** the cost to replace the cover would be approximately \$80,000, based upon the longevity of the product, approximately \$3,000 per year should be set aside to defray the cost of a new cover when the time arrived."

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 23,2017, as amended. Lewis seconded.
The vote was all yes.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- **Open Forum**

Sherri Morgan of 484 Euclid St. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Morgan stated that she had been an active hiker along the Grandview Trail for many years, along with many others in Ashland. She explained that a new property owner on Grandview, situated at the north end of the Grandview Trail, was objecting to people parking on the property, as if it was official parking for those who wished to access the trail. Morgan stated that the Grandview Trail was a well-used trail – particularly for people with mobility issues.

In the past, the parking area had provided easy access to the trail and Hald-Strawberry Park. Currently there were signs there prohibiting parking.

Morgan explained that access to the trail from the southern end was much more problematic. She detailed difficulties locating the trail as well as other issues, with the end result a significant decline in the number of people utilizing the trail. Morgan stated that petitions asking for better access, safer passage and parking had been circulated.

Morgan recommended that APRC work with the current owner to arrive at an equitable solution. She indicated that the owner might agree to a sale of a portion of the property to allow for parking and trail access – if APRC would offer reasonable (by her standards) compensation, and assurance that fire suppression efforts would be undertaken.

Gwen Davies of 860 Harmony Ln. Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Davies submitted written testimony regarding the Senior Center and related issues - the highlights of which are as follows:

In August 2017, APRC laid off Senior Program staff. In so doing, Ashland seniors lost people who had 72 years of combined experience working with the elderly. They specialized in assisting seniors in maintaining independence and, when no longer possible, providing a link to referral services.

Davies referred to a goal by APRC to provide additional outreach to an underserved population. She stated that in her opinion, this meant adding recreational programs for active seniors. She highlighted a different group of seniors – those needing to be connected to social services -- noting that they were the most vulnerable of the seniors in Ashland. Davies indicated that outreach to the homebound was almost non-existent. Ancillary services and referrals seemed to be superficial and limited.

Davies explained the need to assist the community in navigating community resources. She told a story about assistance that had been given to a family when their senior became too fragile to continue independently – detailing the practical support that was supplied. Davies asked that the Ashland Senior Program be restored as it was when knowledgeable staff and specialized services were available.

Ed Green of 390 Patrick Street, Ashland, OR. was called forward.

Green shared a story about the elderly mother of an Ashland resident and the path to well-being that was the outcome of assistance by the Ashland Senior Program. He questioned the layoff of Senior Program personnel, stating that it was incomprehensible. He characterized former staff as skilled, compassionate and effective. Green noted that they had been replaced with APRC employees who were, in his opinion, unqualified to care for the aged.

Green stated that concerned citizens sought to rectify the situation – asking that the Commissioners address the issues and “roll back the mistakes.” He reported that the citizens were rebuffed, resulting in an enthusiastic recall effort within the community.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Landt stated that he would like to clarify the functions of the proposed pool – a topic that was explored in depth at the Study Session held on November 20, 2017. He noted that the new pool would preserve all current functions of

the Daniel Meyer Pool. The pool would have a shallow end and a deep end that would facilitate diving, water polo and swimming competitions. The plan also called for a smaller warm-water pool that could be used as a therapy pool and a small children's pool. All of the recreational components now offered at the Daniel Meyer Pool would be duplicated and additional amenities would be added without increasing the pool's footprint.

Landt emphasized that the current pool would require replacement at some point during the next ten years. A repair and re-build of the pool would cost approximately \$2 - 2.5 million. The proposed new pool was estimated at \$3 - \$3.5 million. A cover would permit use throughout the year and high school swim teams would be able to compete nationally. The new venue would also facilitate other users such as the Rogue Valley Masters Swimmers without taking away any of the community's recreational uses.

NEW BUSINESS

- ***Draft Policy for Landscaping Protection (Information, Possible Action)***

Black referred to the Central Area Patrol (CAP) Officers' report recently presented, noting that the officers had asked APRC to institute a new rule designed to minimize damage to Lithia Park's flower and shrub beds. He explained that the beds were not designed for people to actively use – rather, those beds provided an esthetically pleasing backdrop for people to enjoy. Park lawns and facilities were available for active use, but recreation in the beds had caused some erosion issues, damaging plants and irrigation equipment.

Black stated that the new rules were based on the request from the officers and staff, with a goal to preserve and protect landscaping in, around and throughout APRC-owned and managed properties as follows:

“No person or domesticated animal shall trespass upon any flower bed or landscaped area within APRC facilities. Violations will include standing, walking, sitting or reclining thereon. No person or domesticated animal shall be permitted to pick, break or in any way injure or destroy any flower, tree, shrub or bush standing within or growing upon the grounds surrounding, adjacent to or within APRC-managed facilities.”

Commissioner Discussion

Heller stated that it was his belief that the concern was about people hanging out in the beds. He advocated against creating a violation if a mother or child picked a flower – an occasional occurrence.

Landt suggested adding language to make it clear that a violation occurred when soil was compacted or destruction of the shrubs or flowers was significant. He argued against a violation that would include children playing “hide and seek,” for example. Black replied that CAP Officers, the police and staff with discretion regarding policy and ordinance violations, used the rules to educate people about suitable activities and behaviors in the parks. He indicated that defining specific actions considered violations could be problematic – for example, compaction of the soil could give rise to an argument about the severity of the damage.

Miller stated that the rule should leave room for law enforcement to interpret and enforce the rule when necessary. They should be granted enough discretion to decide whether a warning was appropriate and use the rule as an educational tool.

Landt commented that the rule should clearly outline the expectations without language as severe as “no person shall trespass...” He cautioned against creating a rule that could become unenforceable.

Black noted that rules are typically designed to help those who don't know what is or is not permitted. It was stated that there are people in Lithia Park who are going into flower beds and sitting, camping or otherwise conducting themselves in an inappropriate manner.

Lewis said that if the rule became too specific it could create additional issues. He talked about trying to legislate an earlier rule against feeding ducks in Lithia Park. No one wanted to arrest a child who was feeding the ducks. On the other hand, feeding the ducks was harmful and there was a need to educate the public about the issue. Lewis advocated for a general rule designed to stop bad behaviors while allowing staff and volunteers to get into the beds to weed and maintain healthy plants and shrubs.

Further discussion focused on illegal camping, damage to infrastructure and ways to work around subjective language in order to grant CAP Officers and staff the authority to prevent damage to park beds. Based upon a recommendation by Miller to table the issue and Black's proposal to make changes toward clearly defining the purpose for the new rule, it was agreed by consensus that the topic would be revisited at the next regularly scheduled APRC meeting in December.

SUBCOMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

- ***Subcommittee Assignments for 2018***

Black highlighted the large number of Committees and Subcommittees, proposing to combine the Lithia Park Master Plan Committee with the Large Donation Subcommittee. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that the two committees would be combined, but updates for each topic would be handled separately.

After further review, it was agreed that the roster of Committees and Subcommittees, as assigned in 2017, would remain the same for 2018. The Trail Master Plan Update Committee would most likely continue with a shift in focus toward identifying and updating the Open Space Master Plan.

Motion: Landt moved to approve the existing Subcommittees and Committees that would remain as listed with the exception of the Lithia Park Master Plan Committee and the Large Donation Subcommittee, as those two would be combined. Miller seconded the motion.

The vote was all yes

ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

- ***Park Views***

Landt stated that he and Miller would volunteer for an article in December that would discuss two items of interest – an update about the Lithia Park Master Plan and an update about the proposed pool. He noted that he would like to clarify for the public the intended uses of the pool.

Black commented that the focus to date had been on the addition of a pool for competitive swimming. He suggested emphasizing the recreational aspects as well, stating that the proposed pool would provide programs and services for the community at large. Landt offered to submit the article to the Director for review prior to sending it on to the Tidings. Gardiner stated that the article should be sent to the Tidings by December 15.

Gardiner asked whether the Commissioners would like to continue with articles for Park Views in 2018. He stated that feedback had been positive. Black suggested that each Commissioner be assigned two months each, with APRC staff completing articles for the remaining two months. Landt agreed with the assignments, particularly if there was flexibility to change the order if an article became time-sensitive. Discussion followed regarding the process of assigning responsibilities and determining topics for articles. It was agreed that assignments would be on the Agenda for the next regularly scheduled meeting.

- ***Lithia Park Master Plan Update***

Black stated that a Lithia Park Master Plan kick-off was scheduled in early December. It would include all of the MIG consultants. A tour of the gardens would be conducted and a meeting scheduled with key staff and stakeholders. People instrumental in helping the park move forward would meet on Wednesday, December 6, 2017. On Thursday the 7th, a Lithia Park field trip would include APCR staff and the two Commissioners assigned to the Lithia Park Master Plan Subcommittee. An open house would also be held at the Community Development Building on Wednesday, December 6, 2017, allowing the public to speak with consultants.

In response to a question by Landt. Black stated that the public Open House would be promoted with a multimedia approach. Landt suggested press releases, signs in the Park and other efforts to invite the public. Black noted that the Open House would not be substantive but would allow for the sharing of goals and objectives while facilitating public input about the process.

- ***Request to Purchase Property***

Black noted that he would be attending the City Council meeting on December 5, 2017, to ask for approval to purchase property located at 345 Clinton Street. This would be for a trail extension of the Riverwalk Subdivision that would provide connectivity along Bear Creek from Oak Street to North Mountain Avenue.

- ***Ashland Senior Program Advisory Committee (ASPAC) Meeting***

Gardiner announced that the next meeting of the ASPAC Committee was scheduled for Monday, December 11, 2017, at 3:15 p.m. in Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street.

Black reported that the group had created three Subcommittees to work on various topics. One subcommittee would address the need for a survey and needs analysis for Senior services, another would plan and conduct open houses to obtain additional public input and the third would explore valuable agency partnerships within the community, regionally and statewide toward benefiting Ashland seniors.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

Regular Meeting, December 18, 2017 @ Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street – 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Manuel, Assistant

These 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 and are available upon online.