

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
STUDY SESSION
Minutes
February 12, 2018

ATTENDEES

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

Absent: City Council Liaison Mayor Stromberg; Executive Assistant Dyssegard

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gardiner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at The Grove, 1195 E. Main.

PUBLIC INPUT

There was none.

UPDATE ON AD-HOC SENIOR PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASPAC)

Black stated that ASPAC would be bringing three ASPAC action items to the Regular Meeting on February 26. The first recommendation would be to increase staffing to 2.75 FTEs (full-time equivalents) – one (1.0 FTE) Superintendent, one (1.0 FTE) Coordinator, one half-time (.5 FTE) staff assistant and .25 FTE for a second staff assistant. Black noted that if approved, staffing would increase by one FTE – one more than currently budgeted. Funding for the extra staffing would increase from approximately \$170,000 to \$309,000 per fiscal year.

Black explained that the lead staff person would function at the Superintendent level and participate with APRC leadership along with the Parks and Recreation superintendents. Black recommended that the proposed staffing be approved by the Commissioners at their Regular Meeting on February 26, 2018.

Black talked about the challenges of funding the Senior Services Superintendent position, stating that the goal would be to cover the increased personnel costs from the APRC General Fund. He noted efficiencies that would reduce the budgetary impact, such as assigning the task of programming for seniors to the Senior Center Coordinator, thereby relieving other divisions from absorbing that expense. Black indicated that a more extensive discussion about efficiencies could take place in the future. In addition to the increase in personnel expenses, he said there would be extra expenses for materials and services, including advertising expenses and training.

Black commented that funding the enhanced program would highlight APRC's commitment to fulfill the recommendations developed by ASPAC. Those recommendations were in alignment with APRC goals to create a more robust and inclusive Senior Services Program.

In response to a clarification from Landt, Black acknowledged that APRC was nearly at the midpoint of the 2017-2019 biennial (BN) budget. He stated that the new Senior Services Program leadership would begin at the start of fiscal year 2018-2019, prior to the budget planning season for BN 19-21.

Dials affirmed the establishment of an upcoming permanent Senior Program Advisory Committee (SPAC). She stated that APRC would guide the process, following a protocol similar to appointments for other APRC committees and subcommittees. Interested parties would be invited to apply to serve during a four-week open application

period. The Commissioners would review the applications in April, then appoint committee members who would convene in May 2018.

Commissioner Discussion

Landt noted differences in the makeup of SPAC versus other APRC subcommittees. He stressed that structurally it must remain the same – i.e. the Committee would not make decisions on its own; rather, they would forward recommendations to the Commissioners for approval.

Gardiner agreed, stating that the mission would be to assist the Senior Services Superintendent in an advisory capacity. Any committee recommendations would be forwarded to the Commissioners for review and approval. Dials reiterated that the function of SPAC would be to advise APRC on matters related to the Senior Services Program and to coordinate with the APRC Director and the Senior Services Superintendent in matters related to general operations, promotions and programming.

Landt suggested further review of the responsibilities and oversight granted to SPAC. He described the protocol followed by other APRC subcommittees, noting that no decisions were made at that level and reports were forwarded directly to the Commissioners for establishment of policies, decision-making and funding. He questioned the word “coordinate” and how that would be interpreted.

Lewis stated that the makeup of the Advisory Committee would be very different from other APRC subcommittees. Landt agreed, emphasizing the importance of clarity of purpose. Black noted that the bylaws would outline the scope of Committee responsibilities. He highlighted other APRC committees such as Bee City USA or the Golf Course Subcommittee – indicating that, in his opinion, SPAC would operate in a similar way. He explained that there would be meetings where no recommendations were made – only questions asked or information and expertise shared. Landt agreed, stating that the level of expertise available was extraordinary. He indicated that his primary concern was about the development of a separate power base if the organizational structure was not sufficiently clear.

There followed further discussion about the protocol for committees and subcommittees. The inclusion of a City Councilor as a member of SPAC was explored. Dials noted that the rationale for City involvement was because senior services impacted all Ashland residents in some way and communications with Ashland City Council would broaden awareness and enhance support. Gardiner agreed, stating that the City of Ashland had goals surrounding social services and coordination with Ashland’s seniors should be integrated at all levels.

Lewis noted the importance of working with City Council – especially during the budget process. He talked about the extra expense of moving the Senior Program to the next level and the need for a coordinated effort with the City of Ashland to adequately fund a stronger program. Black emphasized APRC’s commitment to initiate a more robust program, stating that appropriate funding must be identified, particularly given the necessity for expanded social services.

Heller supported the City’s involvement, stating that it shouldn’t be “us” and “them.” He said working together would benefit seniors and their families while building a strong foundation for the program’s future. Miller agreed, intimating that increased awareness would lead to greater involvement in the program.

Gardiner highlighted a recent report from ASPAC, noting that Chair Bachman had shared the information with the City Council. He stated that there was a high level of interest that could lead to increased City involvement.

Jackie Bachman, ASPAC Chair, was called forward.

Bachman noted that it was exciting to convey the first set of recommendations from ASPAC to APRC. She explained that the recommendations were based upon nine Standards of Excellence developed by the National Institute of Senior Centers, beginning with purpose and planning. Additional standards addressed administration, human resources, the evaluation of facilities and others. She talked about the similarities between planning a program for seniors and administration of a public school and said a certain level of service was essential for successful programs. Bachman explained that anytime humans were involved, processes were complicated.

Bachman emphasized the time spent planning – developing a vision in coordination with APRC and the City Council. She stated that the City was exploring the concept of a *Commission on Aging* and other avenues of involvement for and with seniors. Partnerships were beginning to form. Bachman talked about joint visits with Ashland's Mayor to explain the ASPAC process and to field questions about the recall.

Bachman said that only one category of the nine Standards of Excellence had been completed and the other eight were projected for completion by the March deadline. Bachman noted that the outcome might include a minority opinion in addition to the final recommendations proposed by ASPAC.

There followed a brief discussion about the minority opinion and whether that would generate additional animosity. Landt expressed the hope that Committee recommendations would be unanimous. He stated that if the recommendations were approved by a slim majority, more work might be needed to achieve consensus. Landt compared the work of ASPAC with the work of a jury in that strong majority agreements strengthened cases. Bachman expressed optimism that a consensus could be reached.

Landt said he was proud of the quality of work coming from ASPAC. He said the work had been done under duress and the level of excellence demonstrated by ASPAC was truly appreciated. Landt emphasized his belief that the Committee had worked diligently toward an outcome envisioned by APRC. Black described the work of ASPAC as productive and positive. Lewis agreed, speaking at some length about the decades of expertise ASPAC members brought to the table. He stated that ASPAC had produced a stellar body of work that would provide guidance on many levels.

DISCUSSION ON HUNTER PARK TENNIS COURTS

Minica reviewed the progress in filling the cracks on the Hunter Park tennis courts. He stated that volunteers worked hard to restore court surfaces but there was still work to be done. Minica explained that the filler used minimized the damage but because the materials had been applied during cold weather, additional treatment would be needed in warmer weather. He added that re-painting the boundaries could also wait for warmer weather.

Heller stated that in general, tennis players were satisfied with the work. He noted that cracks in the Lithia Park courts were not as severe but would need attention as well.

Landt observed that patching the courts was a stop-gap solution. He asked about the life-cycle of the courts, noting that plans would have to be made to address the issue more permanently.

Minica noted that a fiberglass seal called "Guardian Crack Repair" could add five to eight years to court surfaces. He stated that repairs and resurfacing using the fiberglass material would be fairly expensive.

In response to a question by Landt, Black stated that due to budgetary constraints, such a large capital improvement project (as full resurfacing) was not feasible. He estimated that it would cost a minimum of \$600,000 to restore APRC's courts.

Landt called for an evaluation of the courts to determine how much longer they would last before resurfacing became essential. Gardiner noted that the courts had been rebuilt in 2004. He stated that it was thought at that time that the courts' resurfacing would last for a lifetime.

Minica suggested an analysis of the causes for failure of the court surfaces. He explained that there were several possibilities – either water seeping into the cracks or simply because of the expansion and contraction of the concrete base. Minica stated that a fiberglass patch might solve the problem if water was the culprit. The price tag for the patches would be approximately \$180,000, including repainting the tennis court boundaries and pickleball lines on two of the courts.

After further discussion focused on the possibilities for a longer-term fix, it was agreed that the matter would be discussed during the next biennial goal setting session.

DISCUSSION ON RESOLUTION TO APPLY FOR OPRD GRANT

Dials introduced Nature Center Manager Libby VanWyhe and said she was planning to apply for a grant through the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) toward creating a Nature Play area at North Mountain Park. She said one criterion for eligibility was a Resolution stating that APRC would support the project and commit to funding future operations and maintenance. Dials distributed the draft Resolution, noting that the City Attorney had reviewed it and was satisfied with it.

VanWyhe said approval of the OPRD grant was contingent upon provisions for 40% in matching funds via APRC. She said matching funds could include estimated labor expenses for irrigation, grading and in-kind donations. VanWyhe relayed that funding for the Nature Play area was currently at 43.9%; therefore, APRC was eligible to make application for that grant. The grant, if approved, could provide \$91,000 of needed funding for the Nature Play area. In addition, she was working on several other grant applications for additional funding.

VanWyhe outlined the progress completed to date including a commitment from Clauser Drilling to drill for a hand-held water pump. Green Valley Pump would donate and install the pump. A community member contributed a beautiful work of art that would become the entranceway into the Nature Play area. She stated that the carved wooden structure was valued at approximately \$10,000. The piece depicted animal carvings of riparian wildlife.

Discussion followed regarding the artwork. Landt expressed concerns about the piece – whether it was made for outdoor display and the extent of possible long-term maintenance. He recommended proceeding with caution as the artwork could become a burdensome expense. VanWyhe replied that the artwork met the test for best practices in that it signaled that children were entering into a special place that had value and meaning. She stated that in her opinion, the piece seemed to have been intended for the outdoors as it was framed in metal. VanWyhe invited the Commissioners to view the piece at the artist's studio.

Gardiner asked for the artist's contact information. Lewis recommended that VanWyhe discuss the Commissioners' concerns with the artist and relay additional information to the Commissioners about the suitability of the piece. Landt stated that asking an arborist about the wood's weathering ability would be helpful as well.

VanWyhe noted that the next step would be to begin the design process. She indicated that money had been set aside to hire Green Works – the company who created the Nature Play concept. They would prepare drawings and provide the engineering details to answer questions about the designated space.

REPORT ON REPAIR OF SMALL PORTION OF LITHIA HILLSIDE

Black explained that vandalism and/or damage to park grounds was typically taken care of internally but there had been substantial damage to the hillside in Lithia Park – not just once but repeatedly – and the Commissioners might be asked to comment.

Minica reported that several young men cut into the hillside, pushed dirt onto the oaks below and created a 6 to 8-foot berm. Trails were constructed across the hillside to a specific point designated by the perpetrators as memorial grounds.

Minica stated that the amount of dirt removed from the hillside was sufficient to kill the large oaks below. Staff excavations had not uncovered any memorial items – instead there were torches, pipes and other drug-related paraphernalia as well as tools stolen from APRC. After the area was restored by APRC staff, the damage was repeated – this time occurring over a larger swath of the hillside.

Black relayed that staff would take steps to re-stabilize the hillside, then post signs prohibiting entry into the area. The police would be contacted and asked to monitor and ticket those choosing to ignore posted warnings.

There followed a discussion about the situation – including identification of the perpetrators, legal issues in terms of personal property and next steps. Landt suggested documenting the destruction of property and the cost of repairs. Heller advised staff to inform City officials for greater awareness.

STAFF AND COMMISSIONER UPDATES

There were none.

ADJOURNMENT INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

By consensus, Gardiner adjourned into executive session at 7:00 p.m.

Executive Session: Real Estate Discussion and Disposition, ORS 192.660 (2)(e)

ADJOURNMENT OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

By consensus, Gardiner adjourned out of executive session at 7:50 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 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 available upon request.