

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Minutes
March 26, 2018

Present: Commissioners Gardiner, Heller, Landt, Lewis, Miller; Director Black; Interim Superintendent McFarland; Recreation Superintendent Dials; 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 Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street, Ashland

APPROVAL OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MINUTES

Lithia Park Master Plan Committee, December 6, 2018—acknowledged
Ad-Hoc Senior Program Advisory Committee, February 12, 2018—acknowledged
Trail Master Plan Update Committee, February 23, 2018—acknowledged
Trail Master Plan Update Committee, March 9, 2018—acknowledged

Special Meeting, February 5, 2018

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes of February 5, 2018, as presented. Lewis seconded.
The vote was all yes

Study Session February 12, 2018

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes of February 12, 2018, as presented. Heller seconded.
The vote was all yes

Regular Meeting February 26, 2018

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes of February 26, 2018, as presented. Miller seconded.
The vote was all yes

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

• *Open Forum*

Dennis Miller, 1140 Siskiyou Blvd. in Ashland, Oregon, was called forward.

Miller noted safety concerns with regard to Garfield Park and the Daniel Meyer Pool.

• *Garfield Park Basketball Standards*

Miller stated that in his opinion, the basketball standards could be a potential hazard for players. He commented that he had talked with the Commissioners about the issue, resulting in further research conducted by Director Black. He indicated that Black had discussed the matter with the City's liability carrier, and it had been determined that the standards were satisfactory. Miller highlighted a missing pad and damaged net, suggesting that Parks staff review the condition of the standards occasionally and maintain the court as needed. He thanked Black for his due diligence.

• *Daniel Meyer Pool*

Miller relayed that he had suffered an accident at the pool in 2016, and in hindsight realized that an accident report should have been completed. In speaking with Superintendent Dials, he received the proper form. He stated that he was now confident that a procedure was in place to document accidents at the pool.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Gardiner asked that Agenda Item b, *Briscoe School Park Acquisition*, follow PUBLIC PARTICIPATION. It was agreed upon by consensus.

➤ *Briscoe School Park Acquisition (Action)*

Black explained that the Briscoe School playground had been used as a neighborhood park for generations. He described other uses of the structure and property, including the Briscoe Geology Park and the Head Start Program and daycare services sponsored by Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC). Black noted that the building and property were owned and currently maintained by Ashland School District (ASD), although APRC had participated in grounds maintenance throughout the years.

Black stated that a decision by ASD to sell Briscoe School and its surrounding land had caused concern about the potential for development – including a rumor that the property might be developed as multi-family housing. He noted that the City's Comprehensive Plan mandated that the citizens of Ashland have access to a neighborhood park within a quarter mile. To meet that mandate, APRC had taken steps to secure the Briscoe School property for continued use as a neighborhood park.

The property was subsequently appraised at \$800,000 and, after negotiations, it was agreed that the City of Ashland and APRC would purchase the property for \$500,000. Black stated that this would ensure that 1.7 acres of the school property would be permanently designated as a neighborhood park, owned and maintained by APRC. The City of Ashland was exploring uses for the remaining 3.7 acres. The City had not yet determined the best use of the former Briscoe Elementary School building but would continue to lease a portion of the building to OCDC. Black disclosed that an outside play area for OCDC children was required within the 1.7 acres designated as the park, so a small playground would be needed for the OCDC program. Black said OCDC had agreed to use a small grassy area adjacent to their classroom for this purpose. If OCDC decided to relocate, the grassy area would revert back to the neighborhood park.

Black detailed a plan to purchase the property with funds from the Food and Beverage Tax. He proposed that APRC would make an initial payment of \$50,000 and agree to provide nine more payments over the next ten years. Black explained that APRC received approximately \$650,000 per year from the F & B Tax, of which \$145,000 was committed to bond repayments for Garfield Park and the resurfacing of the Calle Guanajuato. Black stated that the Commissioners could decide on an alternative funding plan if preferred, as there was no prepayment penalty if the Commissioners chose to retire the balance before the scheduled ten years.

Black recommended approval to purchase the 1.7-acre park parcel at the Briscoe School site, with the understanding that APRC would collaborate with the City of Ashland to affect a partition so that the neighborhood park would become a separate tax lot and the school building and surrounds another. He stated that the partition was important to preserve the long-term viability of the park. In addition, APRC and ASD would work together to negotiate an intergovernmental agreement for the real costs of maintaining the North Mountain Park sports fields for their Varsity and Junior Varsity sports programs. Black stated that the agreement should be in place by July 1, 2018.

In response to a question by Gardiner, Black indicated that there had been no challenges to the proposed partition as described. He stated that the two entities were pooling their funds to purchase the property and once the transaction was complete, the partition would move forward.

Motion: Landt moved to proceed with the purchase of Briscoe Neighborhood Park as outlined in the Staff Report dated March 21, 2018, for the sum of \$500,000. Heller seconded.

Commissioner Discussion

Heller said he was pleased that all parties had come together in collaboration and there would be a successful outcome that ensured the permanence of the Briscoe Neighborhood Park.

Lewis commented that he was on the Commission in 2004, when Briscoe School was closed and its future became uncertain. He noted that Save our Schools and Playgrounds (SOSP) had spent a decade lobbying hard and often to ensure that the property would remain a neighborhood park. Lewis expressed his appreciation for SOSP's efforts, which had served as a positive model for community involvement.

Landt stated that it was satisfying to secure the property as a dedicated neighborhood park. He explained that APRC was committed to their goal to have a City park within a quarter mile of every Ashland citizen and pleased to be moving forward. Miller agreed, highlighting the successful outcome.

Motion: Landt moved to proceed with the purchase of Briscoe Neighborhood Park as outlined in the Staff Report dated March 21, 2018, for the sum of \$500,000. Heller seconded.

The vote was all yes

Melissa Mitchell-Hooge, Chair of SOSP, was called forward.

Mitchell-Hooge presented thank you cards for APRC's part in securing the Briscoe Neighborhood Park. She presented flowers on behalf of Bill and Nancy Grove, a large card with inscriptions describing the Park, and individual thank yous. She stated that the group was appreciative of the way ASD, the Ashland City Council and APRC had worked together to craft an agreement that worked well for everyone.

Mitchell-Hooge expressed appreciation for the many Ashland residents who participated in the SOSP effort – from the daughter of Mark and Colleen Gibbs who created the card, to Manzanita FlowerTyme who prepared the flowers, to the community at large who supported the project, plus the 26 local Ashland business sponsors who contributed. Mitchell-Hooge shared an anecdote from board member Ruth Almquist, whose grandchildren play at Briscoe Park. The Almquist grandchildren were aware that the Briscoe property might be sold and the playground lost. The little ones were so happy when it became clear that the situation would be resolved. Apparently, each time they came to visit, they asked their grandparents: "Have you saved Briscoe School yet?"

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. ASPAC RECOMMENDATIONS

Black introduced Jackie Bachman – Chair of the Ad-Hoc Senior Program Advisory Committee. He stated that under her guidance, the Committee had completed their work – forwarding 34 recommendations to the Commissioners for approval.

Jackie Bachman, Chair of the Ad-Hoc Senior Program Advisory Committee was called forward. Bachman in turn, introduced Vice-Chair Marion Moore who was also in attendance.

Bachman noted that the Committee had been comprised of five citizens members, three of whom participated in activities and/or programs at the Senior Center. There were two representatives from SOU, and three whose organizations offered services or program for seniors. Two Parks Commissioners and a City Councilor also participated. APRC staff provided support and a facilitator.

Bachman explained that the framework for restructuring and expanding the Senior Program was provided by the Nine Standards of Excellence created by the National Institute of Senior Centers and the National Council on Aging.

She stated that the resulting recommendations were designed to provide guidance to APRC and the new Superintendent of Senior Services. A Resource Notebook has also been prepared to provide a roadmap for an ongoing and successful Senior Program.

Bachman described the process used by the Ad-Hoc Committee to craft recommendations that were reflective of public input. The Committee solicited information based upon local expertise and experience and researched best practices that illustrated the National Standards of Excellence. She noted that Ashland's Senior Services were analyzed and compared to the data collected. Bachman noted that the existing program met standards in some areas and were deficient in others. She provided examples, noting that a collaborative vision was essential. Goals should be in alignment with the goals of the City and APRC. The new mission statement would facilitate development of planning documents that outlined goals, objectives and action plans. She stated that an annual report would quantify the results.

Bachman reviewed each of the nine standards, providing comparisons and proposing potential goals and objectives as recommended by the Ad-Hoc Committee - along with the pertinent rationale. She stressed the need for stronger programs and services for at-risk seniors, ideas for establishing a fundraising arm as a 501-C3 Foundation and promoted the previously approved Senior Services Superintendent Job Description. Bachman advocated for a Policy and Procedures Handbook, the establishment of a separate Senior Services Budget and other administrative and operational tools. She emphasized the establishment of a preventative maintenance plan and proposed future expansion of the Senior Center facility.

Commissioner Discussion

Miller inquired about the need for a separate 501-C3 Foundation, noting that APRC had a Foundation that included dedicated funding for the Senior Center. Bachman replied that a separate Foundation for the Senior Program would facilitate a more focused fundraising effort for specific purposes and would galvanize support for seniors within the community. She stated that the separate entity would not diminish the Parks Foundation and its work - instead it would provide a direct link to people wishing to support senior services and programs.

Gardiner explained that the Ad-Hoc Committee had discussed the recommendation, noting the separate paths that each entity would take. He suggested that further discussion was needed – particularly with the new Senior Services Superintendent and Senior Program Advisory Board to determine whether or not to implement a separate Foundation.

Landt initiated discussion about possible expansion of the Senior Center, asking about space limitations. Dials replied that the Center was generally full from 8:30 a.m. through 2:30 p.m. but there was classroom availability during the later afternoon. Black added that there would also be opportunities to participate in activities elsewhere in the community. Landt suggested that a request for capital improvements should occur after a thorough evaluation and needs analysis.

Bachman talked about the need for transportation for at-risk seniors, noting that transporting seniors to the Center for lunch with Food & Friends was an important step toward stabilizing the most vulnerable seniors. She described the value of providing this link, noting that visits to the Center encouraged seniors to participate in a class, attend a lecture or browse the library - activities that strengthened the independence and well-being of seniors. Bachman noted that at its height, the Center provided lunch and activities before and after lunch for up to 60 people. She suggested that a standalone classroom could address space limitations. Black stated that although there were physical constraints, the issue was more of a time issue than a space issue.

Black thanked Bachman and the members of the ASPAC for their extraordinary contributions – and for devising a framework to ensure a successful outcome for the Senior Program. He recommended approval of the 34 standards, ideas and proposals presented by Bachman on behalf of ASPAC.

Heller thanked Recreation Division staff for stepping up to provide operational assistance and management during the transition period and for their support of the Senior Program's transformation.

Motion: Landt moved for approval of the recommendations as presented with the addition of section f. under Program Development and Implementation as follows: "Emphasize programs that support "at-risk seniors." Lewis seconded.

Discussion

Landt explained that although the recommendation inferred that at-risk seniors were a top priority, it had not been stated directly.

There followed further discussion with Heller stating that the wording suggested that at-risk seniors were more important than anything else. Landt replied that the entire program was designed as a preventative measure that would support Ashland's citizens as they aged. He noted that recognizing that there were existing at-risk seniors and emphasizing their need for immediate support would be a proactive approach. He indicated that it was like the differences between putting out a fire and preventing one.

Gardiner stated his appreciation for the framework provided by the Ad-Hoc Committee, noting that the Senior Services Superintendent would find the information helpful, possibly leading to accelerated improvements that would increase the quality of life for Ashland's seniors.

Landt also expressed his appreciation – highlighting the professional work completed by ASPAC, which APRC would be pleased to implement.

Motion: Landt moved for approval of the recommendations as presented with one addition to Program Development and Implementation: f: "Emphasize programs that support at-risk seniors". Lewis seconded.

The vote was all yes

b. Senior Services Program Budget

Black stated that funding for the Senior Program would include salary for a Superintendent for the Senior Services Division and additional personnel. An increase of \$124,000 would be needed to fully fund the revised program with 95% of the increase accounted for by the approved personnel changes. He noted that the Superintendent would be required to meet more rigorous management criteria and standards. A full-time assistant and two part-time staff would be added to support the program as well. Black illustrated the abbreviated budget, noting that providing a benefit package for the employees was approximately \$39,000 of the \$117,000 increase. The remaining 5% of the budgetary increase would go for training, programming and advertising.

Black talked about ways to stretch the allocated dollars, and the advantages in doing so. He stated that the extra funding would be an investment that would positively impact the organization on all levels – in administration, program development, with continuous improvements measured and tracked through data collection and evaluation. Partnerships and community connections would coalesce, resulting in strategic outcomes and enhanced lines of communications. He emphasized changes that stressed the value of direct communications with the Superintendent and the Senior Program Advisory Board – enabling the Commissioners to guide the program with informed decisions.

Black reviewed the Senior Services budgets from past years, ranging from a low of \$150,444 to a high of \$220,000. He projected that there would be increases in the budget over the next two biennia regardless of the current increases. Black proposed an amended budget of \$307,713 to fully fund the program as approved.

Black explained that APRC's budget had been strained in the last few years with extraordinary expenses for PERS and insurance costs. He highlighted the commitment of APRC staff who came forward with proposals to fund the new Senior Program, stating that some of the revenue allocations would be temporary – covering the upcoming fiscal year, and some would be realized permanently from savings in other areas. He stated that there were no projections for expected revenue until there was a manager in place to assist in the development of revenue sources.

Black suggested an evaluation at the end of one year to assess the budget and to secure funding, which might include projected revenue. He stated that he would work with the Senior Services Superintendent to determine the possibilities for revenue generation.

Funding for fiscal year 2018-2019 was proposed as follows:

- a. Decrease contract help, reducing outside assistance by \$10,000.
- b. Backfill an open full-time position with part-time assistant and use part of the funds from that position to fund \$50,000 toward the Senior Program.
- c. Consolidate adult recreation services, saving \$70,000 in duplicate services and providing senior activities and programs in-house without staffing assistance from Recreation Services.
- d. Realize savings from re-organization of Golf Course staffing, reducing one full-time employee to half-time and re-allocating a half-time position at the Ice Rink.

Black recommended approval of the proposed budget by granting the Director the authority to move funding as described to amend the Senior Services budget by \$124,000.

Discussion Among Commissioners

Heller asked about securing funding for the Senior Services Program in the future. Black replied that there would be additional opportunities for funding the Senior Program during the new biennium. \$50,000 from the proposed amended budget described above would become a permanent allocation. He stated that the proposed budget did not account for any revenue or fundraising generated by the Senior program and that could be adjusted accordingly. Black stated that APRC would commit to fully funding the program for as long as necessary. He expressed confidence that opportunities for continued funding would arise.

Gardiner clarified that the motion would approve the recommended budget for the Senior Services Program and associated revenue allocations as presented in the staff report dated March 21, 2018.

Motion: Heller moved to approve the Senior Services Program budget as clarified. Lewis seconded
The vote was all yes

c. Lithia Master Plan Update (Information)

Black introduced Laurie Matthews, Director of Preservation, Planning and Design for MIG Consultants. He stated that Matthews would present the draft Foundation Report – a first step in the process of developing the Lithia Park Master Plan.

Matthews noted that the Foundation Report was a work in progress, providing preliminary findings in preparation of

Lithia Park Design Week, scheduled for June 2018. She stated that the information was gathered from a variety of sources, based upon field work, site analysis, a review of historic records and planning documents. The purpose for the Report was to develop a basic understanding of the Park and to uncover opportunities and issues that would be addressed during design week. Public input would be intensive – beginning with an interactive map / survey scheduled for an online opening of March 30, 2018. She stated that the meeting would allow people to explore how they used the Park and where they saw issues and opportunities.

Matthews talked about the MIG team, noting that the team included fish biologists, architects, a cultural landscape historian, civil engineers and others that would evaluate the Park through a variety of lenses. She shared the initial hand-drawn plan for the park, designed by McLaren in 1893, as well as influential work done by Chet Corry who detailed plans for individual areas within the Park. Matthews noted that this foundation undergirded the transformation of the Park over many decades.

Matthews explained that looking at how the design impacted the environment would be part of the comprehensive review. Nine character areas had been identified from the original Native American camp to the manicured landscape and formal pathways and lawns at the entrance to the Park. She stated that the pathways evolved from the formal entrance to a more natural setting where the areas were less paved and built up. Matthews highlighted the focus on Ashland Creek, stating that the relationship of the trails to the Creek was an interesting dynamic.

Matthews summarized some of the elements that were indicative of the McLaren plan such as the Enders Shelter, the Bandshell, Butler-Perozzi Fountain and the Rose Garden. She noted features that were no longer present, such as the zoo and campground, and newer aspects such as the Japanese-style garden and tennis courts. She said the east slopes along Glenview and in areas nearby would be studied for their vegetation, erosion issues and fire suppression characteristics. Access challenges and water quality of the Reservoir would also be addressed.

Matthews described Lithia Park as a regional ecological peninsula of sorts – tied to a larger ecosystem. She stated that there would be a strong emphasis on the creek's restoration and health. Matthews noted that the creek had begun to separate from the flood plain, producing a variety of impacts such as the speed of the water and the content of the water. Finding a balance between the water's health and the Park's recreational use would be helpful given the future of climate change and its expected impacts.

Matthews talked about the two duck ponds in Lithia Park and the ways water entered the park. Access to the creek and the park's bridges and historic buildings would be evaluated, as would recommendations for the support buildings. Circulation within the Park would be explored in relation to parking, with particular attention to ingress and egress to and from the Park. She stated that one of the goals would be to present options that would facilitate the park's transportation system and safer access for pedestrians.

Matthews discussed the varied character of the pathways – the differences in textures, linkages and variable widths. She stated that one focus during Design Week would be circulation and parking and ways to get more out of the uses. Matthews noted the importance of public input that would clarify what people do in the Park and what people would like to do in the future. Mapping activities in the Park would be helpful in crafting the 100-year plan.

Commissioner Discussion

Heller stated that he appreciated the thoroughness of the Foundation Report. He noted that illegal camping in the park was a challenging issue for APRC, suggesting that the matter be addressed within the Master Plan. Matthews indicated that user surveys would no doubt document that concern and the challenges and opportunities would be discussed during Design Week.

Landt highlighted the importance of Ashland Creek to Lithia Park. He also emphasized that the majestic trees were a defining characteristic of Lithia Park and there was a need for a plan to ensure replacement of the trees as they reached the end of their lifespans.

Landt outlined his views about the park, stating that paved pathways marking the formal entrance into the park changed in character as one moved through the Park – giving way to narrower non-paved hiking trails, producing less human impact on the natural world.

Lewis noted that the Ashland Historic Commission had been the impetus behind the listing on the National Register of Historic Places. He stated that the Commission was interested in preserving historic infrastructure such as the Perozzi Fountain and should be invited to participate in the Master Plan process. He suggested that a representative attend their meeting of April 4, 2018, to explain the Foundation Report and discuss a role for the Commission in the next 100 years of Lithia Park's history.

Lewis indicated that there would be pressure to keep the urban creek as natural as possible. He emphasized the 600-year history of the historic gardens of Kyoto, Japan, noting that intensive planning for the continued vibrancy of Lithia Park was an exciting and worthwhile prospect. Matthews agreed, stating that all of Ashland would be invited to participate in Design Week.

Landt said another component for the Foundation Report should be safety – from the significant issues with regard to unsafe infrastructure to the multiple uses for Winburn Way. He suggested that the challenges inherent in keeping invasive species from overtaking the natural areas of the park also merited discussion in the Foundation Report.

Heller commented that planning for climate change and the sustainability of the Park's natural elements, as water became limited and droughts became more prevalent, also warranted mention.

Black extended his thanks to MIG for the presentation of the Foundation Report in advance of Design Week.

NEW BUSINESS

- ***Request from Siskiyou Challenge for Amplification at Lithia Park Reservoir***

Dials introduced Sheila Carter and Greg Dills – representatives for the Rogue Valley Farm to School group. She stated that the group was requesting amplification at the swimming reservoir in Lithia Park for the annual Siskiyou Challenge event scheduled for Saturday, April 28. Dials said entertainment was planned that would include a performance of the SOU Steel Drum Band.

Dials described the event – stating that it was multi-sport relay race held in several locations throughout the day. The swimming reservoir served as a staging area for multiple legs of the relay.

Dials reported that the electrical outlet located at the Reservoir restroom was insufficient for the band's sound system. Plans were to amplify the bass drum using a small generator on site from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. She said amplification was not allowed in Ashland's parks without a special permit from the Parks Commission. If an exception was approved, event organizers were obligated to notify neighbors in the vicinity of the event. Dials recommended approval of the amplification request for the 1.5 hours planned.

Dills suggested that changing the start time of the entertainment to 10:00 a.m. rather than 9:30 a.m. might lessen the impact for neighbors. In response to a question by Heller regarding acoustics at the Reservoir, Dills replied that

it had been determined that only the bass drum would need amplification. He stated that amplification for the entertainment would be brief – for the music only, during the times agreed upon.

Motion: Lewis moved to approve the request for amplification at the Reservoir on April 28, 2018, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Heller seconded.

Discussion Among Commissioners

Landt stated a concern about the impact of amplification in the more natural area of the Park. He talked about the experience of solitude in the natural world and the unknowns regarding amplification. He suggested that permission be granted for one-time only with follow-up to ascertain whether there was a negative impact.

Carter explained the rationale for the entertainment, noting that the intent was to include the community at large in the festivities. Feedback would be welcomed to determine the impact and whether the entertainment was enjoyed. Lewis agreed, noting the City of Ashland's Noise Ordinance was somewhat permissive and that the entertainment could be mitigated in the future if needed.

Motion: Lewis moved to approve the request for amplification at the Reservoir on April 28, 2018, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Heller seconded.

The vote was all yes

- ***Selection of the ACAG Committee Staff Representative***

McFarland reported that Ashland's Public Works Department was undertaking a project to pipe a 2-mile section of the TID Ditch that ran through town from Starlite Place to Terrace Street. The proposed Advisory Committee was in the formative stages, putting together a group of stakeholders to assist with ideas for the design phase of the project. Public Works had requested representation from APRC - someone with trails experience and knowledge.

McFarland noted the importance of the trail easements along the canal advocating for a proactive stance to preserve the easements in place and possibly increase trail connectivity once the project had piped the canal underground. McFarland indicated that property owners along the canal, and people who hiked in the area had been actively questioning the project, with APRC fielding many of the calls.

McFarland noted that there would be requests from residents wanting mitigation during the construction phase and/or to continue use of the trails currently in place. He indicated that there might also be an opportunity to seek continuity – closing gaps between easements where trails start or stop.

There followed a brief discussion about APRC representation as well as membership from the Trail Master Plan Update Committee. McFarland stated that Trail Master Plan Chair David Chapman would represent the Committee, and that representatives from APRC were also needed.

Motion: Landt moved to appoint Jeffrey McFarland and Jason Minica to the ACAG group. Lewis seconded.

The vote was all yes

Gardiner noted that the group was also open to the public and public input would be sought.

SUBCOMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

- a. ***Annual Volunteer in Parks (VIP) Program Presentation (Information)***

Dials introduced Volunteer Coordinator Lori Ainsworth. She stated that Ainsworth oversaw the intake and placement of APRC volunteers. Ainsworth ensured that volunteers were assigned to work that was aligned with

their interests, preparing them for a successful experience. Duties included identifying business partners and sponsors, coordinating work parties and organizing special events. In addition, Ainsworth had been assisting at the Senior Center during this year of transition.

Ainsworth noted that 2017 volunteer numbers were down slightly from 2016 but remained substantial, with 1400 volunteers donating over 15,000 hours of time and effort. She reported that the North Mountain Park Nature Center remained popular and 282 volunteer instructors contributed approximately 1100 hours of instruction in addition to the almost 4000 hours at North Mountain Park. Ainsworth explained that North Mountain Park provides the most diverse experiences and opportunities – from community gardens, to education, to administration and research and preschool programs such as the puppet theater – as well as special events.

Ainsworth highlighted the 1400 hours donated for the Senior's Food & Friends program, explaining that volunteers often began by serving meals and branched out to conduct classes or create programs for seniors in other areas, depending upon their personal areas of expertise. She noted the collaborative relationship with Jackson County Library volunteers and the popularity of the computer classes.

Ainsworth indicated that the largest concentration of volunteers was in the Parks Division. Parks maintenance was provided by many volunteers, seasonal workers providing a plethora of specialized volunteer services, acting as guides in Lithia Park, conducting specialized gardening and participating in work parties. 5400 hours were donated for weeding and trails maintenance in support of the no-pesticide use in Ashland parks. The Adopt-a-Park Program represented local businesses service groups, school groups and individuals. The Youth Conservation Corps accomplished its 7th year of learning about environmental restoration while providing valuable grounds maintenance.

Ainsworth emphasized the tremendous support from Ashland's community and the time, energy and support that all of the volunteers provided.

Commissioner Discussion

Landt noted the continuous progress of the VIP Program – moving from 8000 volunteers early on and engaging about 14000-15,000 volunteers in recent years.

Heller inquired about the percentage of volunteers who were not directly solicited. Ainsworth replied that indirect marketing, advertising and outreach accounted for approximately 50% of the solicitations. She stated that the special events and educational opportunities were typically word-of-mouth. Ainsworth noted that outreach had created strong growth in the Adopt-a-Park Program and Dials added that Ainsworth met with up to five new volunteers each week – and that her efforts were responsible for the strength of the VIP Program.

Lewis thanked Ainsworth for going above and beyond in assisting at the Senior Center.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS OR STAFF

Dials reported that there would be a public input session for those interested in talking about lap swimming at Daniel Meyer Pool. The session would be held on Wednesday, April 4, 2018, at the Senior Center, 1699 Homes Avenue, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

McFarland stated that the Trail Master Plan Update Committee had taken advice from Parks Commissioners at the previous Study Session and tentatively scheduled a public input meeting/open house for May 2, 2018. Further details would be announced.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

Study Session, April 16, 2018 @ The Grove, 1195 E. Main - 5:30 p.m.

Regular Meeting, April 23, 2018 @ Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main - 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 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.