

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Real Estate Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
April 16, 2018

ATTENDEES

Present: Commissioners Heller and Landt; Director Black; Interim Parks Superintendent McFarland; Forestry and Trails Supervisor Minica

Absent: None

Public: Susan and John Hawksley of 1230 Ashland Mine Road; Eric Poole and Eric Herron of Full Circle Realty

I. CALL TO ORDER

Director Black called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. at the APRC Administration Office, 340 S. Pioneer.

II. NEW BUSINESS

a. Ashland Mine Road Property

Black explained that this was a subcommittee of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission and it included two Park Commissioners, Joel Heller and Rick Landt, with Black, McFarland and Minica serving as staff liaisons. The subcommittee focused its efforts on real estate matters, with any recommendations forwarded to the full commission for further review and possible action. Black displayed two maps, one featuring a .17-acre portion of land off Ashland Mine Road and the other the Open Space Plan. He pointed out the established parks on the plan as well as other areas not owned by APRC such as the City Cemetery. Black said the subcommittee had been approached about purchasing the Ashland Mine Road property, a small parcel with no connecting trails or nearby parks.

Discussion and Conclusion

Landt affirmed that there were some low-density areas in town without a park within a quarter mile of residents [a goal of the Open Space Plan]. Landt said small park areas had more edges, which seemed to require the most maintenance. The Hawksley parcel didn't appear to fit the needs of APRC as it would increase maintenance for APRC staff and provide insufficient space for amenities. Landt expressed appreciation to the Hawksleys for their generous offer and for pointing out the lack of a park in that area. Heller asked if there was a homeowners' association in the neighborhood and the response was no. Heller said Mr. Hawksley had indicated that neighbors offered to help maintain the land and one neighbor said the neighborhood should start a maintenance fund. Landt said Heller's suggestion for a homeowners' association would be something to consider. Black said the land parcel would work as an HOA park but not as an APRC park. He identified some areas APRC was considering for acquisition in that vicinity and said pocket parks generally didn't work in lower density areas. At this time, he said there wasn't sufficient commission interest about the Hawksley's land. He expressed hope that other properties in the area, as identified on the Open Space Plan, could be acquired in the future.

b. Billings Property

Black said he received a phone call from someone loosely associated with the Billings family who voiced interest in donating the Billings house, barn, other structures and 5.5 acres but not the entire Billings Ranch. He said their idea was that APRC could restore the buildings and create another Nature Center.

Discussion and Conclusion

Landt said what they were proposing was having APRC take on all the maintenance. He said the creek corridors were the most important parts but were excluded from the offer. Black said APRC did not have the ability to do what they were proposing.

Review Appraisal of N Mtn Ave Property

Black said he previously sent the appraisal to everyone and asked if they had a chance to look at it.

Discussion and Conclusion

Landt said a parcel of property was needed for a Parks Shop in that vicinity. Black said the City was acquiring the Hardesty property and that could also be considered as a Parks Shop location. Landt said another use could be the Skate Park as it was currently located in a riparian flood plain [Water Street]. The other proposed use could be a dog park or a tennis area with a cover over it like the ice rink cover. Black pointed out that the proximity to other parks was very close, since Garfield, Railroad and N. Mtn. parks were in that area. Landt said a high priority location was Clay Street but they hadn't been able to find a piece of land to acquire. Landt said the idea was to have something centrally located but if the acquisition dollars went to another parcel for a dog park, those at the north end of town would have to go through town to get there. He pointed out that the City of Ashland Comprehensive Plan proposed focusing on reducing trips back and forth across town so it was important to be strategic about locations. Black said in order to move forward with property acquisition discussions, commissioners had to be kept apprised in executive sessions. Landt said having things centrally located was better in terms of the City of Ashland Transportation Plan and for the community. Black said APRC had paid for an appraisal and he would like to get something out of that so presenting it to the Parks Commission was the next step. Heller asked what the appraisal came out at and Michael responded \$2.8 million which was \$6.76 per sq ft for the developable 9.5 acres. The proposed lower Clay Street Dog Park land had an R2 density designation and was \$9.75 per sq. ft. Black asked about a plan for taking the appraisals to the Commissioners. Landt said they should plan on a couple of months so they could do due diligence in terms of potential uses and alternatives. Heller asked if there has been discussion with the City about sharing their shop area. Black said they were selling the B Street property so that they could buy another property that was a more conducive to their needs. He said the City made an offer on the Hardesty property off Oak Street and it was in escrow. Landt suggested doing an assessment of APRC land acquisition options and getting it on a meeting agenda.

Discuss Ongoing Projects

Terwilliger Property

Eric Herron of Full Circle Realty said his focus was on commercial real estate and they were in the process of getting an appraisal for the proposed property on lower Tolman Creek Road. He said a surveyor came out to survey the property and a flood engineer received the survey and was working on determining the flood plain, which would affect the appraisal to a large degree. Landt noted that the flood plain appeared to go right through Albertsons. Herron said the appraisal would not be firm as he didn't know what was needed with regard to the flood plain and he recommended having an engineer do some additional work. Black said they needed to spend an additional \$5000 to get a more accurate appraisal. He said a pipe ran through the property and possibly into the pond and there was an easement for it. Black said they had the title report. Landt said if easements weren't on the deed then they probably weren't enforceable. Black said because of the amount of fill that came in during construction of Albertsons, there was obviously an agreement between the property owners and Albertsons. Heron said the flood plain survey would be completed the next day and the appraiser would need two or three more weeks before completing the report. Black said the flood plain was a much larger issue than anticipated. Black said they would be limited in terms of the areas where they could have physical properties on that land.

East Main Property

Black said this was a 5.5-acre parcel with a price tag of \$1.8 million and the owners had approached APRC. He said it had a double frontage on both Abbott Avenue and East Main and included a small amount of wetland. Black said they met with realtor Noriko Hansen as representative for the seller. Black said they shared with Hansen that they were looking at another property in the area and had asked the seller if they were willing to donate a portion of

it. The owners said they would be interested in APRC coming up with some cash and they would donate a portion. Landt said this land would be more easily accessible to the community than others under discussion. He asked about the square footage and Black said it was about 7.7 and \$335,000 per square acre.

Acreage Adjacent to the YMCA

Black said the City was going ahead with the sale to the Housing Authority as long as they could get another property. Landt said he didn't see any other options in the vicinity. Black said he did a conceptual plan with a dog park, playing field, playground, garden and natural area. He said this would normally fall into the category of "neighborhood park" but with the addition of a dog park it fell into the "regional park" designation. Landt said they really needed a second dog park in Ashland. He asked what would happen if both properties were available and Black said the Commissioners would then have to make a decision. Minica said one of the properties would be easier to maintain than the other. Landt asked Herron if there would be any ethical issues associated with looking at two properties simultaneously. Herron and Black responded that there were no ethical issues as there were no contracts at this time. Landt said both properties were basically in the same area. Black said no offers were currently on the table.

Review of Past Discussions

Black said the Mace property had closed the previously week and in the next few years a large capital improvement project would be needed. Landt said it would be lovely to get something there so people could start walking it. Black said it might be a good time to go before the Rogue Valley Transportation Commission to ask for money because that would solve a regional transportation issue [if the Bear Creek Greenway were extended over to North Mountain Park]. The project would qualify for grants and could potentially get funding from ODOT. Heller asked what the determining factor would be and Black said it was air quality and numbers of cars on the road.

Gibbs Property

Black said there were limits to what could be done on the property as it was designated as open space. The thought would be to deed it back to the owners and let them maintain it. Landt said this was an example of a parcel that should have never been purchased. Heller said the HOA might take it back and Landt said being part of an HOA gave them more control. McFarland said the Mace property included a series of ponds and creekways that had to be crossed so staff installed bridge footings. He said there were two ways to cross over to Riverwalk: 1) go down and up into the swell or 2) cross a 12-foot-wide ledge of flat ground leading onto the land. He said staff cut back blackberries by ten feet every year. Black said if community dollars were being used for maintenance, it shouldn't be closed off.

Briscoe Property

Black said staff recently mowed all of the Briscoe School land and it took about two hours. Landt suggested moving forward with the partition; Black responded that he'd spoken with the City Attorney the previous week.

Tuttle Property

Black said Tuttle was considering selling APRC another portion of his land. The current parcel was 4.26 acres in size and APRC was interested and recommended purchasing it over time. Black said Tuttle was willing to talk about allowing APRC to potentially put money down and make payments. Black suggested offering \$20,000 initially and making payments of \$20,000 a year until it was paid off. He said he wanted to bring it to the Commissioners with a plan for moving forward.

Ashland Pond

Landt said he understand a property owner adjacent to Ashland Pond was not willing to sell or donate an easement across the main access path, as he felt that the dollar amount offered by APRC was too low. Landt said it was important to tell the property owner that this would be moving forward.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Wysocki, Staff Assistant
Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission