

City of Ashland  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes  
April 23, 2018

**Present:** Commissioners Gardiner, Heller, Landt, Lewis, Miller; Director Black; Interim Park Superintendent Jeff McFarland; Recreation Superintendent Dials; Executive Assistant Dyssegard; Assistant Manuel

**Absent:** 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, Ashland

**APPROVAL OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MINUTES**

Signs, Plaques, Memorials Subcommittee—March 1, 2018, acknowledged  
Ad-Hoc Senior Program Advisory Committee—March 12, 2018, acknowledged  
Trails Master Plan Update Committee—March 23, 2018, acknowledged  
Trail Master Plan Update Committee—April 6, 2018, acknowledged

Study Session, March 19, 2018

**Motion:** Lewis moved to approve the Minutes of March 19, 2018, as presented. Miller seconded.  
The vote was all yes, with Landt abstaining

Regular Meeting, March 26, 2018

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

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

• *Open Forum*

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

Miller noted that the Oak Knoll Golf Course was looking good for the summer season. He stated that improvements had resulted in fairways that were in excellent condition. He indicated that Ashland residents could take pride in their municipal Golf Course.

**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

There were none.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**a. Senior Services Advisory Committee of Ashland (SSACA) Discussion and Selection (Action)**

Black stated that he was proposing a name change from the previously approved Senior Program Advisory Committee – to Senior Services Advisory Committee of Ashland or SSACA. He indicated that the name change would be more representative of the Committee's purview to consider all different types of issues that face seniors in Ashland - with consideration given to potential services that could become available.

Black noted that APRC had taken on the responsibility for senior services in 2007 at the request of the City of Ashland. The program at that time focused primarily on activities conducted at the Senior Center. In the 2016-17

biennium, APCR initiated a reorganization of the senior program – with significant input from the Ad-Hoc Senior Program Advisory Committee that was convened for that purpose. Committee recommendations had been adopted by the Commissioners in March 2018 – including provisions for a permanent Senior Advisory Committee that would report directly to the Commissioners.

Black asked the Commissioners to approve four candidates as members of SSACA. He noted that the Committee’s guiding documents stated that at least two members of the Committee were to be selected from program participants and at least two members should represent community partnerships. Membership would be held for three years with no more than two consecutive terms for a total of six years. Black proposed that the initial terms be staggered with two of the four selected serving terms of three years each and two more serving partial terms of 1 ½ years each. He explained that staggering term expiries would ensure continuity, preserve institutional memory and (hopefully) reduce potential vacancies.

The four candidates were:

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Mary Russell-Miller  | <i>Community Partner</i>  |
| 2. Robert Casserly      | <i>Community Partner</i>  |
| 3. Michael Hersh        | <i>Participant Member</i> |
| 4. Sandra (Sandy) Theis | <i>Participant Member</i> |

Dials welcomed the candidates, introducing those in attendance.

There followed a brief discussion to clarify the terms, method of selection and approval criteria. Landt asked about differences between Committees and Subcommittees where the Chair appoints the membership and the necessity for approval by the Commissioners for this particular Committee. Black stated that when two Commissioners are appointed as members, the Commissioners typically review and confirm the appointments.

Gardiner asked about the process for determining the initial length of the terms. Black replied that one person from each category should be appointed for each of the available terms – i.e. one member who is a participant member and one who is a community partner.

Heller initiated discussion about the staggered terms. Lewis asked about the two-term limit in the context of the two members who would initially serve for half a term (1 ½ years of a three-year term). Black highlighted the six-year maximum noting that the time served would accrue.

Landt expressed concerns about the half-year split, suggesting two-year terms instead. In that way, a Committee member could conceivably serve for five consecutive years. He noted that both the five-year terms and the six-year terms were reasonable periods of time. He suggested that if it became important to secure an additional year then the Commissioners could take action or initiate a change in the by-laws to resolve the matter.

Heller proposed that the candidates be consulted as to their preference of terms. Gardiner recommended that Mary Russell Miller and Michael Hersh be appointed to three-year terms and Robert Casserly and Sandra Theis be appointed to two-year commitments.

### **Motion**

Landt moved to approve the committee positions as follows: Mary Russell Miller and Michael Hersh appointed to three-year terms and Robert Casserly and Sandra Theis appointed to two-year commitments. Lewis seconded.

The vote was all yes

Black thanked the applicants for their willingness to serve – noting that he appreciated the sacrifice of their time. He stated that staff was looking forward to working with the Committee members on improving the Senior Program. Landt agreed, intimating that the applicant’s expertise would contribute to the impetus for continued improvements.

Further details regarding membership of the Committee were reviewed. Gardiner volunteered to serve on the Committee representing APRC. Black stated that he would write a letter to Ashland’s Mayor asking that a City Councilor be appointed to the Advisory Board as well.

**Motion:** Gardiner moved to approve the appointment of himself on the Senior Services Advisory Committee of Ashland. Lewis seconded.

The vote was all yes

Black reported that the posting for a Superintendent of Senior Services had resulted in receipt of 48 applications. He relayed that the posting had expired April 16, 2018, and that the City of Ashland’s HR Department was currently reviewing the applications to ensure that the candidates met the basic criteria outlined in the job description. Black stated that there was a diversity of applicants from Southern Oregon and elsewhere.

Black described the next steps – including development of a panel of stakeholders to further review the applications and conduct interviews.

#### Commissioner Discussion

Landt commented that the proposed name change had connotations that could be problematic. He stated, for example, that the words *Senior Services* had a specific meaning that had to do with the providing of services. In contrast, Ashland’s Senior Program mission is to provide *referrals* for those services. In addition, in his opinion, using Ashland in the title could cause some confusion as to the identity of the supporting entity.

Heller noted that in his opinion, Senior Services of Ashland clarified the difference between senior services locally and those entities that provide actual services.

Landt proposed that the name remain as approved. He stated that if no change was agreed upon, a motion to confirm the title would not be necessary. In response to a question by Gardiner, Landt noted that the approved title was “Senior Program Advisory Committee” or S-PAC.

Landt indicated that there was an additional opening on the Committee. He asked whether a qualified candidate could be considered even though the posting had expired. Dials replied that the posting could be added to the City’s website under announcements for Commissions and Committees – clearing the way for additional candidates.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. *Oak Knoll Golf Course Update (Information)***

Dials introduced Golf Maintenance Superintendent Laura Harvey and Golf Course Coordinator Tom Cronin. She stated that the duo would be discussing progress on capital improvement projects at the Golf Course, as well as current events and the Community Survey.

Cronin noted that the Commissioners had included capital improvements for the Golf Course in APRC’s budget so that staff could replace antiquated equipment and provide needed maintenance for the 90-year-old Golf Course.

Harvey displayed pictures of the new sprinklers noting that 100 new G-85 sprinkler heads had been installed with 260 more to go. Thirteen (13) ICV valves have been installed with an additional eighteen (18) planned. Seven main

shut-off valves were installed, allowing staff to isolate the section where water leaks or irrigation breaks are present for repair. Isolating an area where the break has occurred will improve efficiencies and limit water usage. Four drain lines have also been installed on the greens with more to go. 37 G70 sprinkler heads will improve management of the greens. Cronin commented that customer feedback had been positive. Areas that were formerly marshy have been eliminated.

Cronin highlighted activities such as tournaments for charity and other events. He stated that hosting fundraising events strengthened ties to the community. Cronin talked about two new events – a Veterans golf day and a fundraiser for the Ashland Community Hospital Foundation that have been added to the roster. Other plans to create opportunities for the Golf Course included a course within a course for junior golfers. He stated that the new program would be based upon the PGA (Professional Golf Association) program called *Tee it Forward*. Cronin stated that mapping out a smaller course for junior golfers with separate tee boxes and a scorecard for kids, would encourage kids to play alongside their parents and/or become engaged.

Cronin noted that a survey had been initiated online asking for public input regarding the Golf Course Clubhouse. The survey was for the purpose of soliciting ideas for expanding services at the Clubhouse – particularly with regard to concessions. Once the data was gathered, it would be shared with the Commissioners. Dials relayed that information gathered from the survey would assist staff in preparing a proposed budget for the upcoming biennium.

Cronin shared an ad produced by a local videographer. The concept was to increase awareness of the Oak Knoll Golf Course and the goal was to increase use. Two 30-second ads and one two-minute ad had been prepared for use in various advertising platforms. Ads featuring the Oak Knoll Golf Course was currently airing on the Ashland Cable Network, and plans were to include coverage on Facebook, Twitter and other social media outlets.

#### Commissioner Discussion

In response to questions from Landt, Harvey stated that the Golf Course fairways would have complete head-to-head water coverage once the sprinkler heads were installed.

Landt inquired about the profitability of the charitable events. Cronin replied that community events were typically profitable. He stated that tickets for such events were discounted but concessions such as beer and wine ensured profitability.

Gardiner asked about promotions for the *Tee it Forward* program. Cronin explained that promotional materials were provided by PGA. He stated that the program was designed to attract young golfers who would become the golfers of the future.

## **2. Budget (Information/Action)**

Black presented the quarterly budget update prepared by the City of Ashland's Finance Department. He noted that APRC reviewed the information on a monthly basis – and the update provided by APRC was current to the end of March. The Finance Department's review was as of the end of the calendar year.

Black noted that APRC was at 66% of the total expenditures for fiscal year 2017-2018 with the target being 74.97%. He explained while currently below target, there would be additional expenditures prior to year-end that would help to meet budget expectations. Black reviewed specific categories, highlighting the Operations and Administration budget and Recreation budget that are below target numbers. He stated that unfilled staffing positions were partially responsible for staying within budget parameters. He highlighted the Community Center as an exception, exceeding budget expectations due to the timing for expenditures and the inclusion of accrued expenses. Black highlighted

revenues from summer activities such as golf and swimming that could potentially offset any unrealized but stated expenses.

Black noted that revenues were close to target at 72% without the revenue projected for the Senior program. He expressed optimism that APRC would come in at or below budget.

#### Commissioner Discussion

In response to a question from Heller, Black indicated that recreation revenue was on track compared to the previous year. Seasonal revenue from the Ice Rink exceeded expectations and Ice Rink expenditures were below budget.

Landt questioned the numbers for the Senior Center, expressing surprise that expenses were close to average even though staffing was down and the Center functioned without a manager for a number of months. Black replied that the Senior Center was actually 10% below budget. This compared with the Nature Center – currently at 71%; Recreation Programs at 58% and the Community Center at 96%. Black explained that the extra staffing provided by APRC along with temporary help had resulted in a payout of 100%. As a result, monies that would have been paid for a Senior Center manager were partially applied to temporarily staff the Center.

Gardiner asked about staffing projections for the upcoming year. Black indicated that one position would remain unfilled for the next year as part of the strategy for funding the extra expenses incurred for senior services. Half of the revenue from the position would be applied to the Senior Program and half would remain in Parks for part-time personnel. Black explained that hourly rates were increased to match wages that the City pays for part time or temporary help. In addition, with the low unemployment rate, workers are more selective and a shortage of available workers has contributed to the necessity for more competitive wages.

**Motion:** Landt moved to accept the Parks Budget status as of March 31, 2018; Miller seconded.  
The vote was all yes

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS**

- ***Ice Rink End of Season Report (Information)***

Dials introduced APRC's Recreation Manager Lonny Flora. She stated that Flora would report on the end of season for the Ashland Rotary Centennial Ice Rink. Dials noted that Flora was also gearing up for swim season – hiring lifeguards and training staff.

Flora stated that the Ice Rink season began on November 17, 2017 – and closed on February 19, 2018. He explained that the date of closure was scheduled for the end of President's Day weekend – after which attendance typically declined and the weather becomes too warm to sustain the ice. There were other closures as well – notably during the Thanksgiving holiday when the weather remained too warm to maintain the ice.

There were approximately 21,300 visitors with 612 hours of open recreational skating. The Ice Rink staff hosted 37 different school groups in addition to other program offerings. Flora stated that the number of admissions was tallied by new cashiering software - capturing data numbers from the point of sale. Other methods for tracking recordkeeping data were also employed. Private lessons increased due to the availability of skate instructors and augmented flexibility in scheduling.

Flora reported that individual signups for youth hockey was limited due to increased numbers of pre-registered hockey teams. On Saturdays, three different age groups were able to participate in youth hockey during open skate times – an improvement over the prior year. Adult hockey was very successful as was the tournament conducted by

the Southern Oregon Hockey Association held on Martin Luther King weekend. There was also significant growth in the Learn to Skate program.

Overall attendance statistics are as follows:

<b>Attendance</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
Recreational Skate	18,462 admits	18,537 admits	<b>21,309</b> admits
Figure Skating	27 signups/lessons	18 signups/lessons	<b>34</b> signups/lessons <b>21</b> Private Lessons
Youth Hockey	125 Drop In Youth Hockey 19 Youth Stick and Puck 16 Ice Bears – Team Pre-reg	105 Drop In Youth Hockey 6 Youth Stick and Puck 16 Ice Bears – Team Pre-reg	<b>48</b> Drop In Youth Hockey <b>22</b> Youth Stick and Puck <b>20</b> Ice Bears – Team Pre-reg
Adult Hockey	105 admits 4 teams in tournament	100 admits 6 teams in tournament	<b>108</b> admits <b>45</b> players in SOAHA tournament
School Groups	37 Reservations	35 Reservations	37 Reservations

Flora detailed changes for the season, highlighting Ashland Rotary’s donation of a trailer for Ice Rink operations. He stated that the trailer provided an opportunity to provide services in a consistent manner. Labor costs were significantly reduced as time was not needed to set up or take down a leased trailer. The cost savings for a leased trailer translated to approximately \$6000 per season.

Flora noted that rental skates were now organized and stored in place. For the first time, a permanent manager from APRC was assigned to oversee operations at the Rink. Thanks to her efforts to schedule more efficiently, the right people were present at the right times, decreasing the need for temporary staff. Well-trained staff was an additional efficiency – with increased staff awareness of APRC’s policies and procedures.

Flora announced that efforts to increase cost recovery numbers resulted in a new advertising program for sponsors. The project began this year with two sponsors – Rogue Community Health and AFN (Ashland Fiber network) and was limited to areas where the advertising could not be seen from the street (per Ashland City Ordinance).

Expenses increased due to one-time expenditures such as construction costs for the new trailer, and IT hook-ups for automating the new cashiering system. Increases in staffing costs were offset by decreases in temporary help, contributing to decreased expenses for the season overall.

Revenues were up in three categories. Cost recovery was at 70% versus 64% in 2016-2017. APRC’s subsidy was \$2.42 per visit versus \$3.13 the previous season. The total cost per visit was \$8.00 for this season versus \$8.80 previously.

- **Plans for the 2018-2019 season**

Flora emphasized that one of the goals for cost recovery for future seasons would be to seek additional advertising opportunities – particularly from the business community. Other improvements included upgraded skate care such as sharpening skate blades. Plans to do a feasibility study regarding outsourced concessions are also under consideration. Flora explained that providing bottled water, hot chocolate and coffee was a significant cost of about

\$2800 per year. A canopy to shelter people working out of the trailer was also needed. Current rental costs for renting a cover were approximately \$3000 per year.

#### Commissioner Discussion

Lewis inquired about the Ordinance restricting advertising so that it was not viewed from the street. Dials replied that the restrictions came from a City Ordinance protecting the view scape from the public right-of-way.

Heller suggested additional advertising in Olympic years when people's awareness of winter sports such as ice skating was heightened.

Landt asked about year-to-year comparisons in admittance counts due to the technical changes – possibly providing an apples-to-oranges review. Flora noted that the new system capabilities differ somewhat from the previous system in accessing numbers differently. He indicated that in his opinion, differences were slight.

Landt suggested installing a frost-free water fountain. He estimated that installation costs could be recovered within a season or two. Black relayed that there was no hook up for water service in the vicinity and connecting to City water lines could be expensive.

Landt inquired about the difference between advertising approved by staff and advertising reviewed and approved by the Commissioners. Dials noted that the Sponsorship Policy, approved previously by the Commissioners, enabled staff to approve advertisements at APRC facilities. The policy described distinctions between advertising that benefited APRC and advertising that benefits other non-profit organizations.

Heller commented that the APRC subsidy offsetting the expenses for the Ice Rink had decreased somewhat from the prior year and that it was assumed that the goal would be to continue to decrease dependency on it. Black applauded staff's efforts to decrease the subsidy without increasing ticket prices. He stated that staff was working hard to save money and it was clear from the steps taken that their approach was entrepreneurial. Black talked about the efficiencies gained in staffing as an example. He expressed his appreciation for staff's innovations.

Landt agreed, highlighting the importance of continued efforts to work toward cost recovery. He stated that Commissioners recognized that as efficiencies were implemented, it would become more difficult to find ways to decrease expenses. That said, Landt advised staff to remain diligent.

#### **ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF**

- ***Public Input Regarding the Daniel Meyer Pool***

Dials reported that a Community meeting had been held on April 4, 2018, regarding the upcoming season for the pool. At the meeting, challenges and opportunities for lengthening the swim season were discussed. The Rogue Valley Master Swimmers gave a presentation about the Club, extending an invitation to swim during times that were set aside for the group.

Dials stated that there was a demand for open lap swim from 11:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. She noted that APRC would consider offering open lap swim if staffing with aquatic training could be identified. Dials relayed that surplus funds in the budget could be used to train additional staff for the extra hours.

Dials explained that approximately 10 to 12 people had been interviewed for the summer season. Those qualified to act as lifeguards were limited. It was determined that people were interested in becoming lifeguards but didn't follow through because of the high cost of certification. Dials stated that once APRC staff had identified the conundrum, a scholarship program was initiated to assist those without the means for training. She noted that a recruitment

campaign was underway at the high schools and SOU that was creating awareness for the scholarship opportunity. Black added that the Scholarship program was another example of the entrepreneurial spirit that exemplified staff's efforts to overcome hurdles.

Miller followed up, highlighting grant requests that were currently being accepted by the Ashland Parks Foundation. The Foundation hoped to announce the awards by the end of May.

In response to a question by Heller, Dials noted that manager Lonny Flora was certified as a lifeguard trainer. A class would be offered on the May 18 and 19 at the Daniel Meyer Pool. She noted that using Foundation funds dedicated to Recreation would assist in financing the endeavor.

- **Trails Master Plan Open House**

Lewis announced that a Trail Master Plan Open House would be held on May 2, 2018, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Senior Center. The Trail Master Plan Update Committee was seeking public input for the Master Plan while it was still in draft form. Stations would be set up with maps depicting sections of the trail system and Committee members would be available to answer questions. McFarland added that *SAVE THE DATE* cards were available as handouts.

- **Nature Walks**

Gardiner reported that volunteers would again be conducting nature walks in Lithia Park beginning May 1, 2018. Walks were offered on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays early at 10am, with Saturday tours available during July and August.

- **Park View Articles**

Gardiner offered to prepare an article for Park Views. Landt requested that the Park Views articles be added to the APRC website as well as on Facebook.

- **Bike Swap**

Dials noted that the annual Bike Swap event was held on April 14, 2018. She stated that the annual event was typically a two-day affair for volunteers with time to prepare the bikes for sale, set up staging and take down/clean-up. Dials commended Lori Ainsworth, APRC's Volunteer Coordinator, for spearheading the event. She noted that Lori was responsible for creating a very successful event while also doing extra duty at the Senior Center.

## **UPCOMING MEETING DATES**

Study Session, May 14, 2018 @ The Grove 1195 E. Main—5:30 p.m.

Regular Meeting, May 21, 2018 @ Council Chambers 1175 E. Main—7:00 p.m.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was 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 available upon request.