

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES
May 3, 2017

ATTENDANCE

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

Others Present: SOLC Stewardship Director Mergenthaler; SOLC board members Keith Emerson and Kevin Talbert

Absent: Commissioner Miller; City Council Liaison-Mayor John Stromberg

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gardiner called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. at The Grove, 1195 E. Main Street in Ashland.

SOLC Stewardship Director Kristi Mergenthaler spoke about conservation values of the 829-acre property located across I-5 at the base of Grizzly Peak.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

James Stephens, 640 Oak Street in Ashland, spoke about his involvement with several local groups including the Ashland Climate and Energy Action Plan, Ashland Citizens for Transit and the 10 by 20 Ordinance (creating 10% of local electricity from sustainable energy sources by the year 2020). He said he hoped to see the Imperatrice Property conserved for future uses.

TRAVEL TO IMPERATRICE PROPERTY; TOUR THE PROPERTY WITH SOUTHERN OREGON LAND CONSERVANCY (SOLC)

After carpooling and arriving at 4:22 p.m., Mergenthaler guided the group as they walked up to the ditch and then the ridgeline. It was stated that Public Works plans to use 63 acres of the land and APRC will control a portion of remaining land based on reasonable subtractions for other City uses. Mergenthaler said the property is a wildlife corridor, full of native flowers and pollinator habitats. She spoke about specific plants and said the property is largely intact as it was minimally plowed over the years and converted to pasture grasses. She said some landowners around the property reported occasional concerns about trespassing. It was pointed out that the acreage is known to be visited by elk and deer.

Discussion continued in terms of the City's Comprehensive Plan in which the land is described as an irreplaceable viewshed for Ashland residents. Heller asked about the potential value of the land for mountain bike trails. Black said the mountain biking community was approached but expressed little to no interest in building mountain bike trails there. Discussion followed about the importance of pedestrian trails for public access on the land and as an eventual access point to Grizzly Peak. Landt spoke about the value of the property in terms of viewshed and environmental preservation.

With regard to next steps, Black said staff was currently in discussions with City Administration and waiting for the results of a biology study. Mergenthaler asked if the project would be pending much longer; Black stated that all involved City entities needed to come together to talk about and decide upon a common, unified goal. He said staff was working on coordinating that future interaction.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Dyssegard, Executive Assistant
Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission