

City of Ashland
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Minutes
March 27, 2017

Present: Commissioners Gardiner, Landt, Lewis, Miller, Director Black; Superintendent Dials; Interim Superintendent McFarland; Executive Assistant Dyssegard; Assistant Manuel

Absent: Commissioner Heller; 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Study Session – February 13, 2017

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes for February 13, 2017, as presented. Miller seconded.
The vote was all yes

Goal Setting Session – February 14, 2017

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes of February 14, 2017, as amended.

Page 2 Paragraph 6: "Goals have been established and an RFP (Request for Proposal) has been completed."
Should be: "Goals have been established and an RFP is being worked on and is close to being finished and will be out soon."

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes of February 14, 2017, as amended. Miller seconded.
The vote was all yes

Regular Meeting – February 27, 2017

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes of February 27, 2017, as amended.

Page 5 Paragraph 4: "She stated that in 2010, fees increased from \$3.60 to \$4.00 per sq. ft. In 2012, the Commissioners agreed that fees would increase by \$1.00 per sq. ft. with a cap of \$7.00 per sq. ft. for restaurants and \$5.00 for the Lithia Artisans."
Should be: "In 2010, fees increased from \$3.60 to \$4.00 per sq. ft. In 2012, the Commissioners agreed that fees would increase by \$1.00 per sq. ft. per year until the fees reached \$7.00 per sq. ft. for restaurants and \$5.00 for the Lithia Artisans. In 2013 the restaurant fee was increased to \$6.00 and in 2014, restaurant fees increased to \$7.00 per sq. ft. No further changes had been made since 2014."

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Minutes of February 27, 2017, as amended. Lewis seconded.
The vote was all yes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF MINUTES

The approved Minutes were acknowledged by the Commissioners.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- *Open Forum*

There was none.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Save Our Schools and Playgrounds Report (Information)**

Black introduced the group called Save our Schools and Playgrounds. He disclosed that he had met with representatives briefly. He encouraged the group to present their request for support to the Commissioners.

PUBLIC INPUT

Mellissa Mitchell-Hooge of 271 High St. in Ashland was called forward.

Mitchell-Hooge stated that the Save Our Schools and Playgrounds group was formed in May 2004 to advocate for the preservation of the playground and playing fields at Briscoe Elementary School. Save Our Schools and Playgrounds worked through February of 2007 to secure the playground and open space for Briscoe and later for Lincoln Elementary when the two schools were closed.

Mitchell-Hooge detailed the sequence of events, noting that in the Spring of 2003, Ashland Schools Superintendent Juli DiChiro appointed a group of land development and real estate specialists to review what would be in the best financial interests of the Ashland School District regarding the Briscoe property. The group recommended that the school remain intact, setting aside the playground and field area for a mixed-use development. Neighbors came together to challenge the recommendation, eventually forming the non-profit Save Our Schools and Playgrounds. Their intent was to find a long-term solution that would preserve the playground and fields of the school as a neighborhood park. In June of 2005, Lincoln School was closed and the neighbors there joined in the effort to keep the grounds from development.

Save Our Schools and Playgrounds endorsed the widely-held idea that neighborhood parks were critical to the quality of life in Ashland. In the words of Mitchell-Hooge: "Parks are the places where young and old get outside to breathe deeply, walk and play and re-connect with nature." It became clear that the school properties of Briscoe and Lincoln were already functioning as neighborhood parks.

Mitchell-Hooge described a 2002 non-recreational grounds maintenance agreement between the Ashland School District and APRC, who agreed to maintain the School District's fields. She talked about the cost of the grounds maintenance, indicating that APRC fully funded the effort in the first year, with the City of Ashland, Ashland School District and APRC contributing equally in later years.

Mitchell-Hooge discussed the myriad ways that the City of Ashland and its citizens supported the School District. She thanked APRC for the playground equipment provided as well as the continued grounds maintenance.

APRC offered to donate all of the grounds maintenance for the non-recreational use which would be credited over a time period of five years toward the purchase of the play area at Briscoe. The proposal was initially rejected, but in February of 2007 it was agreed that the purchase would take place over five years in return for grounds maintenance of Ashland's schools, at a fair market value of \$140,000 per year for five years. An intergovernmental agreement resulted in the shared use of the facilities. This agreement lapsed in 2012.

On behalf of Save Our Schools and Playgrounds, Mitchell-Hooge expressed a desire for a permanent solution that would protect the grounds at Briscoe and Lincoln schools. She stated that the fields and playgrounds were listed as open spaces in the City's Comprehensive Plan. Mitchell-Hooge indicated that utilizing the grounds as neighborhood parks would minimize the duplication of APRC services and cut its operating costs. One idea currently under consideration would be to separate the grounds from the school buildings and give the grounds to APRC. She stated that the idea seemed fair, given the years of support the City and APRC had given to the School District and the fact that the grounds were already public property.

Mitchell-Hooge noted a sense of urgency, as the School District was in the process of appraising the Briscoe property. School officials were considering all options – with an appraisal for the building, an appraisal for the grounds and an appraisal for the property as a whole. She stated that ideally, all the parties involved would recognize the value that the playgrounds hold for the Community. She asked that APRC take action on their behalf to preserve the grounds as dedicated public parks.

Mitchell-Hooge described two current issues of concern to the Briscoe and Lincoln neighbors. She commented that the fields at Lincoln School had been neglected and the grass in the fields had not been watered for some years. Weeds and flowering plants had taken root, making the ground uneven and difficult to use for organized sports.

The other issue was a proposed plan for a toddler playground advocated by Ashland Head Start. The organization rents the Briscoe school for their programs and wants to develop the toddler playground on the soccer field. Save Our Schools and Playgrounds hopes to work with APRC in an effort to place the proposed playground elsewhere. Mitchell-Hooge thanked Director Black for his willingness to discuss possible alternatives with OCDC's (Oregon Child Development Coalition) Superintendent Jeff Lowry

PUBLIC INPUT

Su Rolle of 311 High St. in Ashland was called forward.

Rolle stated that she and her husband had lived continuously in Ashland since 1983. Both of their daughters had attended Briscoe School. She talked about the City's Comprehensive Plan and the maps that identify the Parks and Open Spaces in Ashland. Rolle advocated for preservation of Briscoe School and its grounds, stating that she was hopeful that one day the school could once again become a public elementary school.

Rolle invited APRC to work cooperatively with Save Our Schools and Playgrounds to find creative solutions for Briscoe and Lincoln schools.

Beth Geismar of 323 High St. in Ashland was called forward.

Geismar noted that she too had daughters who had attended Briscoe. She stressed the importance of finding a permanent solution to meet the needs of the community. She characterized the Briscoe grounds as a neighborhood gathering place that was worthy of preservation.

Jan Waitt of 147 Manzanita St. in Ashland was called forward.

Waitt asked that APRC give priority to finding a permanent solution for the property. She noted that when School District leadership was new, the importance of the properties as neighborhood parks might not have been readily apparent.

Wayne Rolle of 311 High St. in Ashland was called forward.

Rolle talked about the pleasure of living close to Briscoe school. He expressed his appreciation for the sounds of people enjoying the space. He supported the concept of using the property as a neighborhood park.

Sharon Javna of 219 Almond St. in Ashland was called forward.

Javna stated that she had lived in Ashland for 22 years and her children were raised there, attending Briscoe Elementary. She said the original intergovernmental agreement was intended to secure the Briscoe and Lincoln grounds over the long term. Javna commented that it was disturbing that the issue had to be re-visited. She asked APRC to assist Save Our Schools and Playgrounds in searching for a permanent solution.

Brian Almquist of 155 Susan Lane in Ashland was called forward.

Almquist reviewed the actions taken to secure the playgrounds during his tenure as City Administrator. He stated that one of the hallmarks of that period was the Agency partnerships that emerged and the synergy they created. Almquist noted that it was assumed that the intergovernmental agreement of 2007 would have been renewed.

Almquist highlighted the City's mandate, as stated in Ashland's Comprehensive Plan, to ensure that Ashland residents have access to parkland within a quarter mile of each residence. He stated that since then, most vacant land has been developed and there was no vacant land left for the neighborhood to replace the playgrounds and open spaces at the two schools. He stated that once the grounds were lost, the closest parks would be a mile or two away.

Almquist stated that the schools were already under public ownership, so transferring the properties to APRC should be a reasonable expense – neither the highest price value nor the fair market value. He indicated that the Food & Beverage tax fund held approximately \$579,000 that could be dedicated to the acquisition of parkland. He advocated for a compromise with the Ashland School District, noting that they were struggling to pay for needed infrastructure repairs or improvements.

Almquist spoke optimistically that an agreement could be reached to secure the grounds and open space of Briscoe and Lincoln schools for residents to enjoy as neighborhood parks.

Carol Walker of 826 Holly St. in Ashland was called forward.

Walker noted that she lives near Lincoln School and is able to see how much the property is used. In addition to the playground, there is a basketball area where young teens gather for a game. She stated that teens also must have somewhere to go and the basketball court is well used. She detailed other common uses, indicating that while it is understood that funds are tight, keeping Briscoe and Lincoln schools available as parkland should be a priority.

Pauline Black of 974 Pinecrest in Ashland was called forward.

Black expressed her support to save the grounds at Briscoe and Lincoln. She relayed that she represents those who do not have a park nearby and said the need for parkland is real.

Samae Horner of 399 Beach St. in Ashland was called forward.

Horner talked about her experiences with living across the street from Lincoln School and said her children often play there. She spoke about how healthy it is for children to have a place to run and play. Horner noted that parkland is all about promoting the health of children and their community.

Gardiner thanked those present for sharing information about the two schools. He stated that the Commissioners would consider the matter and include the item on a future agenda for discussion. Gardiner said providing neighborhood parks within a quarter mile of each resident was not only in the Comprehensive Plan, it was also an APRC goal.

Lewis thanked Mellissa Mitchell-Hooge for her work on the issue. He agreed that the properties should remain as neighborhood parks. He stated that in his opinion, the properties were priceless and said APRC would make a good effort to help resolve the dilemma.

a. Banner Request from Little League (Action)

Dials introduced the request to place sponsorship banners on the outfield fences at Hunter Park. She noted that revenue from the sale of the banners provided scholarships for children who could not afford to participate. Dials indicated that there had been a trial period for the 2014 and 2015 seasons with no complaints regarding the banners. She recommended approval for the season that runs from April 1, 2017, through early July 2017, and asked that the approval process be streamlined to reoccur annually.

Representatives **Alisha Smith** and **DeAnna Oakley** were called forward.

Smith noted the importance of providing positive activities for children. Oakley stated that there were more participants in the program than ever before. She relayed that sponsors were providing baseball games for children in between Little League for youngsters and organized sports for older children. She commented that the games were a stopgap measure to keep children busy and out of trouble and on the team until they are able to participate at the next level.

Discussion Among Commissioners

The Commissioners considered ways to streamline the process while maintaining an annual application process. Landt suggested that the policy be amended to authorize staff to approve banners "until further notice." In that way, staff could review the application to ensure that the approval criteria process had been met.

Gardiner questioned the wording, stating that it implied that there was no limit to the number of years approved. Black advocated for periodic reviews. Landt indicated that the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy did not accurately reflect actual practice. He stated that the approval criteria were adequate but the descriptive language was not.

Landt recommended approval of the Little League's request for sponsorship banners at Hunter Park until further notice. He advised staff to return to the Commissioners if an issue of concern should arise. Black stated that if staff came forward with a concern, it would place them in an awkward position because, in essence, they would be asking that the application be denied. He also suggested using a timeframe as a safeguard.

Moved: Landt moved to approve the Ashland Little League request for sponsorship banners during the season as set and that the approval be renewed every five years. Lewis seconded.

The vote was all yes.

It was agreed that the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy would be reviewed as part of a regularly scheduled review of all APRC policies. In addition to revamping language within the policy, streamlining the process would be given further consideration.

b. Banner Request from the American Legion Baseball (Action)

Dials reported that this banner request was new to Ashland American Legion Baseball, and a first request for banners at North Mountain Park. The American Legion's program provides scholarships for student athletes. Dials recommended approval on a one-year trial basis. In response to a question by Landt, Dials indicated that the sponsorship banners would be placed on fencing that was in both the infield and outfield.

Ken Buccino from American Legion Baseball was called forward.

Buccino applauded efforts by Ashland Little League volunteers to provide funds for those in need. He noted similar needs at the high school level, stating that baseball was an expensive sport.

Buccino described his intention, if approved, to position the banners on the right field fence because the location minimized the advertising impact on those driving past. He estimated that there would be no more than three potential sponsors. He stated that the banners were a way to say thank you to their sponsors and let participants know who was supporting their team.

Gardiner asked about a plan for additional banners should there be a need for more space. Buccino replied that they would most likely use the left field fence as well. He noted that while the left fence would be more visible from the street, it would not obstruct views of the field.

There followed a brief discussion about sight lines and clarification of the exact location - whether the temporary fence on site would be utilized or the taller fence along the foul line.

Motion: Landt moved to approve, on a one-year basis, the American Legion proposal to place sponsorship banners along the right field fence between the foul line and the temporary fencing. Miller seconded.

The vote was all yes.

a. Volunteer & Events Coordinator Annual Update (Information)

Dials reviewed the factors that resulted in the appointment of Lori Ainsworth as Volunteer Coordinator for APRC. She reported that the position began in 2010 with a mission to assist APRC in decreasing reliance on pesticides and herbicides. Because chemical applications for weed control were limited, much of the weeding done in Ashland's parks was completed manually – by volunteers. She said Ainsworth met with volunteers individually to acquaint them with APRC practices and ensure that volunteers were placed appropriately.

It was stated that Ainsworth coordinates forty to fifty work parties each year for work in Ashland's parks, trails, fields and open spaces. She organizes APRC's involvement in special events, such as mountain bike races, runs and other local events. Ainsworth ensures that APRC rules and regulations are followed and APRC approval criteria are met.

Dials concluded by recognizing Ainsworth for the extraordinary level of volunteerism that she administers, with each volunteer recognized and appreciated.

Update:

Ainsworth noted the huge impact volunteers contribute, day to day, in Ashland's parks. She stated that in 2016, volunteers offered their time and expertise in every division of APRC: Nature Center, Senior Center and miles of trails, gardens and parkland.

In 2016, 1,849 volunteers donated 16,364 hours of labor. Instructors lined up to participate in the teaching experience at the Nature Center. North Mountain Park benefited from the work of 431 volunteers who spent 4,075 hours teaching, gardening, researching and grooming the grounds as well as participating in other diverse volunteer opportunities.

Senior Program Food & Friends volunteers logged over 4,803 hours in 2016. Volunteers of all ages can be found at the Senior Center – running blood pressure clinics, offering computer classes and helping with senior activities and holiday events.

103 Recreation volunteers helped with the Cisco de Mayo celebration, adaptive golf lessons and recreation classes. They also hosted seasonal activities at the ice rink and outdoor pool. 1,213 volunteers logged over 5,341 hours in 2016 in weeding, removing invasive species and maintaining the trails. Ainsworth reported that there were 47 work parties, down slightly from the previous year due to inclement weather.

The Ashland Youth Conservation Corps participates in the summer land stewardship program for middle school and high school students. Entering its sixth year, it continues to be a popular program where students earn community service hours, learn about environmental restoration and provide grounds maintenance, including removal of invasive species. The time, energy and support volunteers provide to APRC every day is invaluable.

Lewis highlighted the significant achievement of the Senior Program's 39 volunteers who dedicated over 4,000 hours in 2016. Ainsworth explained that the Food & Friends volunteers, including Meals on Wheels drivers, are a significant factor. She added that the Senior Program provides a myriad of other programs and services.

Black highlighted the 47 work parties – noting that that was almost a work party every week of the year. The number of those participants was impressive, given the population of Ashland. Ainsworth further emphasized the diversity of participants, noting as an example that OSU students would soon be spending their "alternative spring break" volunteering at North Mountain Park.

Landt asked about a national standard or established ratio of coordinator hours to the number of FTEs (full-time equivalent) employees. By his calculations, volunteers provided the work of eight employees.

There followed a brief discussion about ways to measure the productivity. Black stated that the cost savings amounted to approximately \$17.00 to \$18.00 per hour of benefit. Ainsworth indicated that there might be Federal standards and she volunteered to research the matter.

a. ***Project Updates (Information)***

McFarland welcomed Project Manager Jason Minica and invited him to speak.

Minica displayed pictures of projects completed or underway in the 2016/2017 biennium.

➤ Garfield Park

Minica talked about the progress at Garfield Park – a large project underwritten by a revenue bond. He stated that the basketball courts, volleyball courts and water park were well underway. The project, estimated to cost approximately \$890,458, was slated for completion by the end of May. Expenditures to date were \$364,918, with \$525,539.16 remaining. Minica noted that the project was expected to come in under budget.

➤ Hunter Park

The playground at Hunter Park was described next. The newly installed equipment includes a Forest Service truck, a stand and spin structure and rocking bears for toddlers. A toddler/parent swing set is in use. A ramp that will lead to a large play structure will make the area handicapped accessible.

The budget for Hunter Park was \$70,000 and expenses were \$69,448.34 so the savings came in at \$380.67.

➤ Ashland Creek Park

A shade structure for picnic tables was ordered and received. Staff expected to install it with the return of good weather. Once completed, the sheltered area would be fourteen ft. by thirty ft. The budget for the shelter was \$20,000 and expenditures were at \$7794.00. The remaining \$12,206.00 would pay for installation of the pad and the setup of picnic tables. Minica said he anticipated the project to come in around \$10,000 under budget.

Landt clarified the flower bed mentioned for Garfield Park. He noted that flowers are labor intensive and costly compared to other types of vegetation. Landt supported the placement of shrubs that would provide protection from an elevation change and efficiencies of labor.

Lewis inquired about the bike station at Garfield Park and the type of shade shelter that would be placed in that area. Minica noted that construction of the shelter would occur soon and the bike station would be covered with permanent roofing rather than a shade cloth.

c. RFP for Lithia Park Master Plan (Action)

Black referred to the staff report regarding approval of the RFP (request for proposal). The Lithia Master Plan Subcommittee had completed work on the RFP, formulating a list of goals and objectives for the project and outlining the scope of the project and proposed timelines.

Black reviewed the categories linked to the goals and objectives. They were as follows:

- Lithia Park Infrastructure
- Master Plan Public Involvement
- Lithia Park Circulation/Transportation
- Lithia Park Interface and Environment
- Lithia Park Historic/Aesthetic
- Lithia Park Policy
- Activity and Lithia Park Usage

Black said objectives describe actions that must be undertaken to achieve the goals listed under each category. Specific deliverables detail what the consultant is expected to provide APRC as a part of the development process and at the conclusion of the project. The types of communications throughout the process are described, and expectations regarding methodology are specified.

Black indicated that the draft RFP would include some last-minute minor changes. He asked that the Commissioners approve the draft so the process could move forward, with the understanding that the goals, objectives and timelines would remain inviolate. Black stated that sentences would be added to clarify APRC's intent. The deliverables would then be detailed as a list.

The new sentences would read: "The proposer is expected to independently recommend a plan that would address all of the goals and objectives of the RFP. It is at the proposer's discretion to suggest a method to accomplish all of the objectives including APRC's desired plan and policy outcomes. However, APRC has identified at least the following elements that will be expected to be included in the final set of deliverables:

- Structures proposed and existing uses
- Circulation for autos, pedestrians, cyclists and domestic animals
- Parking management
- Stormwater management
- Pollution reduction
- Energy efficiency
- Natural resources
- Interactive interpretive mapping and wayfinding
- Zoned maintenance
- Historic preservation, maintenance and replacement
- Public art and entry elements
- Natural disaster update
- Recommended policies to support the goals of the Master Plan

Black explained that the intent was to obtain plans for each of the areas listed, or at least a series of combined plans.

Black relayed the timing for the RFP, stating that the Subcommittee hoped to publish the RFP in April if approved by the Commissioners. The deadline for receipt of the proposals would be two months from the date the document was made available to the public. Once received, contract negotiations could begin. The contract would then be awarded upon approval of the Commissioners. Black estimated that the entire Master Plan process would take a year or more to complete.

Commissioner Discussion

Landt asked that the Commissioners approve the RFP goals and objectives with the acknowledgment that there would be some minor revisions after approval. He noted that the timeline would not include a specific date as a deadline; rather, it would close two months from the time it was made public.

Landt noted that problematic wording would be revised because it would set the tone for the entire process. Black stated that there would be attachments to the RFP as well; he cited the March "Park View" article in the Ashland Daily Tidings about the Lithia Park Master Plan as an example.

Motion: Landt moved to approve the RFP goals, objectives and two-month timeline from the time when the RFP is publicly distributed. In addition, the RFP for the Lithia Park Master Plan Update was moved for approval with the understanding that there would be some minor changes to the document before its finalization. Miller seconded.
The vote was all yes.

d. Two-Year CIP Approval (Action)

Black stated that because the budget was still in process, the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) should be approved provisionally.

The list of CIP projects evolved from the Commissioners' goals and objectives for the 2017/2019 biennium. They were as follows:

CONTINUING PROJECTS

- Butler-Perozzi Fountain
- Lithia Park asphalt
- Hunter Park asphalt overlay
- Calle Guanajuato improvements (bond repayment)
- Garfield Park upgrade
- Lithia Park Master Plan
- Second Dog Park construction
- Project manager
- Land acquisition
- Ashland Creek Public Works requirement
- The Grove admin-office remodel (placeholder)
- Winburn Way sidewalks (placeholder)
- Trails and Open Space Update

Black reported that The Grove admin/office remodel originally was funded so that all APRC staff could be housed together. During goal setting, the project was not prioritized. Black asked the Commissioners for direction regarding listing the project as a placeholder or holding it for the CIP in the next biennium.

Landt stated that in his opinion, because of budget restrictions, his preference would be to look at it again in the next biennium. Black stated that he would keep a list of possible projects for the next biennium but it would not be listed in the CIP.

NEW PROJECTS

Black explained that the new projects were those that had been prioritized. Budget estimates had been prepared because if not listed in the budget, money would not be allocated, nor sources of funding identified.

Daniel Meyer Pool Cover and Re-build

Black noted that a general obligation bond would be proposed as the source of funds for the improvements to the Daniel Meyer Pool. The project was estimated to cost approximately \$3,250,000.

Transfer to Park General Fund for Maintenance

Black relayed that in 2016, the restrictions regarding the use of Food and Beverage tax funds (F & B funds) had been modified to include using money for general maintenance. The F & B funds were originally limited to new projects and/or major remodels. The change would facilitate funding for projects that had been too small previously. \$140,000 had been identified as necessary for a transfer into general operations for maintenance expense.

North Mountain Park Nature Play Area

The Nature Play Area was another project that was not prioritized. Black suggested that because the source of funding would be a grant, he would like to keep the project earmarked as a potential project should a grant come through. No matching funds were currently identified in the CIP. No dollars had been set aside.

Master Plan for Parks Shop/Yard Areas; Dog Parks; Skateboard Park

Black noted that \$75,000 had been set aside in the CIP to be accessed the second year of the biennium. He stated that there were too many projects slated for the first year, making it unlikely that a master plan process could be initiated during that timeframe.

Neighborhood Park Development (Replacement of YMCA)

Black noted that this was a placeholder, with \$750,000 earmarked for replacement of the YMCA park if needed.

Oak Knoll Improvements (Irrigation, Fairways and Greens)

\$70,000 was set aside for irrigation improvements. Black noted that having the money dedicated for that purpose rather than waiting to find the funds if an emergency occurred was helpful.

Resurface/Reclaim Tennis and Pickleball Courts

Black indicated that he had been hoping to work with other organizations to identify tennis courts that could potentially be retrofitted as pickleball courts. He stated that \$55,000 would be dedicated for resurfacing four full-sized tennis courts. He stated that a retrofit would cost approximately \$12,000 apiece, with \$7,000 as contingency funds.

Black stated that an email from Commissioner Heller seemed to be referring to a new pickleball facility. He announced that he would read the email into the record.

Restoration of Beach Creek Below the Pedestrian Bridge

This project was prioritized at an estimated cost of \$50,000. The area was a newly renovated site that was destroyed in a series of unusual rainstorms. The funds would be dedicated to repairs.

Commissioner Discussion

Landt asked about the Ashland Pond project that had been prioritized but was not listed in the CIP. Black replied that preserving the property as a wildlife refuge area could be completed in-house without the purchase of additional property. He stated that the project would entail the negotiation of access easements with private property owners. For that reason, the \$1.8 million set aside for land acquisitions included purchasing access rights. He stated that the project was listed as a priority in the biennium goals.

Lewis asked about the process to obtain a general obligation bond for the Daniel Meyer Pool. Black explained that the proposal for a bond would be presented for approval by the Commissioners and by the Ashland City Council. The next step would be to prepare a plan, a budget and a timeline that would meet requirements for a bond. If

approved in May, a campaign for public awareness would be conducted throughout the summer. The bond request would be placed on the November ballot for public approval.

Black talked about the timing for the bond request, noting that the City was preparing to ask for a bond to pay for seismic upgrades. The School District would be requesting approval for a much larger bond for their needs in 2019. The School District had asked for a discussion with APRC regarding three bonds in quick succession given the uncertainty of public approval.

In response to a question by Miller, Black noted that one of the financing options would be to combine the bond requests. The benefit to APRC would be a larger reach – support that could come from outside the Ashland City limits. Black stated that he was confident that the options could be explored and a recommendation prepared to place before the Council on May 1, 2017.

Sources of Revenue

1. Food and Beverage Tax

Black reviewed the sources of funding available to APRC. The Food and Beverage tax provides the majority of funding for capital improvements that are not financed by a bond, donations or grants. Revenues are restricted to property acquisition and major capital improvements. With the new rules, there is also the flexibility for a portion of the funding to be dedicated for general maintenance if necessary.

Black noted an ending fund balance of approximately \$350,000. Due to regulatory changes in 2016, APRC was expected to get a larger portion of the Food and Beverage tax funds – changing from 20% of the proceeds to 25% of the proceeds. Black estimated that the funding would provide the CIP with approximately \$730,000 the first year of the biennium and \$756,000 in the second year of the biennium.

2. Systems Development Charges (SDCs)

Black explained that revenue from SDCs received from the City of Ashland were a portion of charges from building fees and building permits for new construction. The money was dedicated to new infrastructure for Parks.

The ending fund balance for SDCs was at \$293,000, with \$50,000 in new revenue expected for the year.

3. General Obligation Bonds/Revenue Bonds

The third source was bond revenue. If the City of Ashland approved, the bond request would be placed on the ballot for approval by the citizens.

Black reported that there was a potential for bond revenues for the first year of the 2017/2018 biennium. Pool renovations and the possible acquisition of the Imperatrice Property, early in the biennium, would affect plans for the funding. Black estimated that \$4.5 million would be needed for fiscal year 2017/2018, with funding for the second year at \$950,000.

Black presented a chart depicting all sources of funding by year. Looking ahead, SDCs provide a very small amount of revenue (\$394,500) while bonds are an outsized portion (\$7,654,190). F & B funds continue to be a major source of revenue (\$1,834,690).

Landt stated that in the past, there was a significant carryover in CIP money but the funds were not readily apparent for this budget cycle. Black relayed that carryover in the CIP was approximately \$693,000. He noted that

money would be spent on the projects that were underway. This carryover was included in the ending fund balances. For the years 2016/2017, \$293,000 came from SD's and \$350,000 from F & B revenue.

Total resources for the upcoming biennium were at \$1,834,690, with funding requirements of \$1,625,000. The difference of approximately \$200,000 would be listed as a contingency fund. Black emphasized that there were no holdover funds from bonds – and that bond revenue would be for the amount needed only.

Black spoke about the F & B commitments: the bond repayment for the Calle Guanajuato of approximately \$40,000 per year and the Garfield Park bond repayment of approximately \$97,000 per year until fiscal year 2026. He said the Garfield Park obligation would be paid in its entirety before the repayment for the Calle. Money had been set aside for the CIP project manager along with a proposed transfer of \$140,000 for general maintenance. Black stated that the maintenance transfer would help offset the extra PERS expense and the insurance payouts.

Black read an email into the record from Commissioner Heller as follows:

Dear Fellow Commissioners and Michael,

I'm very sorry (and a bit frustrated) to miss this meeting, Monday eve. This is my last spring break with my Senior daughter and we had planned to visit colleges in Az, before I became commissioner. I hope that this can help to express some of the concerns I would have raised if I were able to be there.

I wanted to express my hopes that the amount of funding for pb (pickelball) courts, can be significantly increased. As I mentioned in my research, \$180,000 was a ballpark figure for construction, and that's what I assumed it would be funded when we did the dotmocracy.

My recollection and understanding was that among the goals there was the option of building courts or if SOU was willing to donate and share their courts, the cost might be very significantly diminished. If it were to work out with SOU, that would be great, and I would support returning excess money to other priorities. But, it seems foolish to plan on that ideal solution at this point in the process when we have no commitments.

On a weekly basis, I have citizens asking me how it's looking for dedicated pb courts in Ashland (remember there are over 100 players in our area) and whether they should show up to meetings, write letters, etc. Up till now I have been telling them it appears to be on course, and they didn't need to be vocal with their concerns. (45 people showed up for a Y meeting to discuss pb use of the gym.)

I would ask that in light of our limited financing, we shift \$100,000 from the property buying fund to help make pb courts a reality. 900K to 800k, would not radically change our ability to consider properties, but it will ensure funding for six courts. It also seems to me that funding for creating a dog park is quite generous and perhaps there is some wiggle room there.

Hoping that my fellow commissioners can address this in my absence so that we don't have to hear from frustrated citizens who find out that Grants Pass can make it happen, to the tune of \$200,000, and we can't get to \$150,000.

I apologize again for the unfortunate timing of my last spring break with my daughter and hope that my fellow commissioners and Director Black can adjust the funding numbers to reflect what I thought we were addressing. I remain optimistic that we can find a way to approach this in this biennium.

Thanks for your consideration...

Black described the funding restraints of the various pools of money. He talked about the Dog Park, indicating that in his opinion, the second dog park was not generously funded. He detailed the complex mechanisms that had been initiated to pay for the second dog park.

Gardiner asked for any further comments by the Commissioners regarding the proposal for a pickleball facility. There were none.

Discussion Among Commissioners

➤ *Paving Projects*

In response to a question by Landt, Black replied that there were two parking lots at Hunter Park of which one was slated for new asphalt. He stated that a decision as to which one would depend upon the greatest need at the time.

Landt proposed that the asphalt paving be placed on hold until the swimming pool renovations were completed. He noted that running heavy equipment over a newly paved area could be problematic. Landt suggested that the paving project for Lithia Park be held as well, noting that the Lithia Park Master Plan would address the park's needs.

There followed further discussion about the priorities for the two paving projects. Black indicated that there had been no reported emergencies because of the condition of the asphalt in those areas. He agreed that placing the projects on hold was appropriate.

Landt suggested that any excess be used for land acquisition. He relayed that in his opinion, additional funding for land acquisition might be needed, given the number of projects underway and the number of projects scheduled for the upcoming biennium.

➤ *Pickleball*

Gardiner spoke affirmatively about the prioritization process. He stated that it was an objective way to rank individual projects after a thorough vetting by the Commissioners. Gardiner supported the 2017/2018 CIP with the funding currently allocated for pickleball courts.

Landt responded that there were a number of new sports gaining ground. He explained the permaculture design principles used by APRC wherever possible - noting that multiple uses for a single element increased efficiencies – in this case refurbishing tennis courts to better accommodate pickleball. Landt advocated for continued attention for all new sports (pickleball, bike polo, indoor soccer and others), including information gathering and data collection that allowed APRC to move forward in the most expeditious ways.

➤ *Nature Play Area*

Landt inquired about the \$15,000 in matching funds for the project. Black replied that the project was not prioritized by the Commissioners and therefore no funds had been set aside for that purpose. Lewis referred to a previous conversation about the Oak Knoll Golf Course irrigation project and the requirement for matching funds if a grant to build the play area was to be pursued.

There followed a brief discussion about provisions for the project. Lewis stated that not allocating matching funds would reduce the potential for a successful grant. Black indicated that the Commissioners could decide to set aside the money prior to final approval. Once the CIP was approved, no changes could occur until the next biennium.

Gardiner identified the two \$15,000 asphalt line items that had been put on hold.

Landt reminded the Commissioners that they had agreed to focus on a small group of key goals. He stated that while the \$15,000 was reasonable, it was the staff time involved that was a concern. Landt explained that there were now eleven projects and adding another would dilute the focus on the priorities. Lewis responded – noting that the project was small in comparison with others in the CIP and the amount of time and effort would be limited. If grant funding was not awarded, then the matching funds could go back into the CIP.

Landt acknowledged that the majority of work on the grant would be completed by Nature Center Manager Libby VanWyhe, limiting the project manager's time spent on the project. He expressed an additional concern regarding the amount of matching funds required, stating that the percentage of matching funds could change. Black compared the risk, stating that the question would be weighed when the grant was awarded.

Landt highlighted the value in supporting staff. He stated that he could agree to split the asphalt funding, with \$15,000 going to land acquisition and \$15,000 set aside for matching funds should a grant be awarded.

The two asphalt projects would be closed until revisited at a future date. The following vote approved the changes to the CIP:

Motion: Gardiner moved to approve closing the Hunter Park asphalt project and the Lithia Park asphalt project and transferring \$15,000 into the land acquisition fund and \$15,000 into the Nature Center Nature Play project. Landt seconded.

The vote was all yes.

Discussion Among Commissioners

Black asked that the CIP be provisionally approved pending completion of the budget process and approval of the budget.

Motion: Gardiner moved to conditionally approve the 2017-2019 CIP. Miller seconded.

Discussion

Landt expressed discomfort with the \$140,000 F & B transfer of funds for general maintenance. He stated that a portion of the APRC budget had been withheld by the City, with a commitment to transfer the money as needed. Now that the funds were no longer available, the ending fund balance for APRC was at zero. Consequently, radical cuts to the operational budget had to be made – impacting the next biennium as well.

Gardiner commented that the City was unable to meet the commitment. The transfer of funds from the CIP to Maintenance was a stopgap measure to balance the budget.

Black stated that there would still be a deficit of approximately \$313,000 even with the transfer of funds from the CIP. He reiterated that the intent was to move forward with as small a deficit as possible. We will ask the City to fund the deficit. If the City had fully funded APRC for the current biennium, there would have been approximately \$200,000 in reserves. Black added that he would ask the City to cover the deficit in the next biennium, providing further details about the actual deficit and the budget shortfall.

Lewis suggested discussing the deficit with the City at the joint meeting with the City Council on May 1, 2017. He commented that the F & B tax would sunset, making it imperative that there be no reliance on those funds for operations. He stated that APRC was in an emergency situation.

Black noted that a concerted effort had been made to reduce the deficit. He stated that the number of temporary personnel had a direct effect on the amount of projected revenue. Black indicated that another trouble-spot was the cost of water. Due to the breakdown of water pipes, water for the last biennium had created a budgetary shortfall of about \$200,000. Everything possible was being done to prevent more breaks in the future. He disclosed that new hires had been delayed as a tactic to recover from such emergencies.

Landt emphasized the value of parkland. He observed that staff has been asked to do more with fewer resources. While they had responded admirably, the time had come to talk with the Budget Committee about balancing the budget.

Motion: Gardiner moved to conditionally approve the 2017-2019 CIP. Miller seconded. The motion failed.
The vote was five against.

There followed discussion focused on ways to avoid transferring money from the CIP into the operating budget. Black committed to doing everything possible to balance the budget without the \$140,000 if so directed.

Motion: Gardiner moved to approve the 2017-2019 CIP provisionally without using the Food and Beverage tax funds to balance the budget. Landt seconded with a friendly amendment that the \$140,000 be placed into a contingency fund.

The motion was all yes.

SUBCOMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

- ***Report on Signs, Plaques, & Memorials Subcommittee Meeting***

Lewis said he and Commissioner Heller attended the Signs, Plaques & Memorials Subcommittee meeting on the 14th of March and heard a presentation by Bob Black of Trails West. Black asked the Subcommittee to consider the placement of an Applegate Trail Marker at Ashland Creek Park. The area was a camping spot for the first Applegate group that came through Ashland in the 1800s. Bob Black referred to a camper's excerpt from a journal written at that time. He said the plaque's manufacturing would be handled in its entirety by Trails West. Lewis said the subcommittee approved the trail marker and its installation, which would be handled by APRC staff.

Lewis said subcommittee members also discussed alternatives to memorials on benches or plaques in Lithia Park. A pollinator garden was discussed for a specific memorial. Possible alternative sites were identified such as plaques embedded in picnic tables or a memorial wall.

Landt cautioned against creating gardens that required maintenance. Lewis replied that a lavender garden was a new idea that would require limited maintenance but any further discussion would include the need for an endowment for maintenance.

Lewis stated that the Signs, Plaques and Memorials policy was in need of some editorial changes. He stated that the Subcommittee would prepare suggestions for consideration by the Commissioners.

ITEMS FOR COMMISSIONERS

Gardiner authorized the creation of an Aquatics Subcommittee. He appointed Commissioners Gardiner and Miller as members.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

Study Session on April 17, 2017 @ The Grove, 1195 E. Main—5:30 p.m.

Regular Meeting on April 24, 2017 @ Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main—7:00 p.m.

Joint Commission/Council Meeting on May 1, 2017 @ Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main—5:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

By consensus, Gardiner adjourned into executive session at 9:55 p.m.

Executive Sessions pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2)(a) and ORS 192.660 (2)(e)

ADJOURNMENT OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

By consensus, Gardiner adjourned out of the executive sessions at 10:56 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:56 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.