



REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

PARK COMMISSION

January 8, 2025

1175 E Main Street, Council Chamber – 6:00 PM

Present: Commissioners Bachman (Chair), Landt (Vice Chair), Gardiner, Adams, Weiner, Assistant City Attorney Zahran, Director Houston, Deputy Director Dials, Senior Services Division Superintendent Mettler, Environmental Education Manager Came, Volunteer and Events Manager Shelton, Executive Assistant Mero

Absent: None

I. CALL TO ORDER

Bachman called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM. Roll call taken.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. APRC Regular Business Meeting October 9, 2024
2. APRC Study Session November 6, 2024
3. APRC Regular Business Meeting November 13, 2024

Commissioners approved the minutes by unanimous consent

III. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Commissioner Landt asked for the Consent Agenda item to be made an Agenda item.

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

Jack Methot: Spoke to the importance of pickleball

Cori Frank: Spoke to the importance of Pickleball

Carlyle Stout: Spoke to the importance of Pickleball

Ron Owen: Spoke to the Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club wants to have a tournament in June 2025

Randall Maple: Spoke to the importance of community via Pickleball

John Lane: Spoke to a PowerPoint presentation he created on potential pickleball sites/costs

Don McClure: Spoke to the importance of not using herbicides and pesticides

Joanne Lescher: Spoke to the importance of the community Pickleball creates

Jimmy Kolker: Tennis player, turned Pickleball player, praised the Pickleball community, suggested double lining a court at Hunter Park

James Dietz: Thanked the Parks Department for all that they do – supporting pickleball is a beautiful thing.

V. CONSENT AGENDA – None

VI. DIRECTORS REPORT– Director Houston [Presentation](#)

VII. BUSINESS

1. IPM Exemption – Volunteer and Events Manager Shelton

Note: *This item was pulled from the consent agenda to provide an opportunity for Park Commissioners to ask questions.*

Situation

Pine and fir trees within the Ashland Japanese Garden are suffering from damage caused by beetles and scale. Without treatment, the pests could spread and cause major die off within the garden.

Staff requests an exemption to the APRC IPM policy to treat pine and fir trees within, and directly around the Ashland Japanese Garden in spring 2025.

Background

In spring of 2024, 4 black pines and the install cost were donated to APRC by Solid Ground Landscaping and members of the Rogue Valley community. The total value of this donation was \$31,000. These pines were to replace 4 original black pines that were installed a few years before during the Japanese Garden redesign process, and were from the garden designer, Toru Tanaka's, personal nursery. Steps were taken to ensure that the trees did not fail for the same reason the original trees failed, not having adequate drainage. When signs of stress began to appear on one of the replacement trees in October, staff brought in experts from Solid Ground Landscaping, and Canopy Arbor Care. The consensus amongst these groups was the stress was due to beetle damage, pine needle scale, and blue stain fungus. Without treatment these issues will spread to the many other susceptible pines within the garden.

In addition to multiple pines showing signs of affliction, a Douglas fir is slated for removal within the garden. This fir showed signs of beetle infection as well. There remain two prominent Douglas firs within the Japanese Garden, and 8 more directly outside the garden walls.

Assessment

The black pines within the garden are decades old, and the Douglas firs are over 100. Protecting these trees with a recommended dose of insecticide in the upcoming spring will give them the greatest chance of survival. Canopy Arbor Care would administer treatment of Safari, active ingredient, dinotefuran, to treat the pines within the garden. This would be a lower bark spray, without the need for a wider foliage spray application. Canopy would treat the Douglas firs with Boxer, active ingredient, Enamectin benzoate. This would be an injection into the tree vascular system without the use of any spray application. These treatments would be done when the weather begins to warm and beetle activity starts up again in the afflicted trees for the greatest chance of success.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the approval of an exemption to the IPM policy to allow for the treatment of pines and firs within, and directly adjacent to the Ashland Japanese Garden in spring 2025.

Discussion

The park commissioners asked questions about the application, number of trees, precautions taken during the application, cost of the application and efficacy of the treatment.

Motion: To approve an exemption from the Integrated Pest Management policy to treat the pine and fir trees within, and directly around the Lithia Park Japanese Garden in the spring of 2025.

Motion: Gardiner

Second: Adams

Vote:

<u>Gardiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Bachman</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Landt</u>	<u>Yes</u>
<u>Weiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adams</u>	<u>Yes</u>		

2. Election of Chair/Vice Chair – Chair Bachman

BACKGROUND

The Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission (APRC) elects officers at the first regular business meeting of the calendar year. Commissioners will nominate APRC members for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair. A vote for each position will be conducted by the current Chair. Upon conclusion of the voting, the chair elect will take over the remainder of the meeting.

POLICIES & PLANS

City Charter XIX.

GOALS SUPPORTED

Not applicable

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This action does not have a financial consideration.

Motion: I nominate Commissioner Jim Bachman as Chair.

Motion: Landt

Second: Adams

Vote:

<u>Gardiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Bachman</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Landt</u>	<u>Yes</u>
<u>Weiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adams</u>	<u>Yes</u>		

Motion: I nominate Commissioner Rick Landt as Vice-Chair.

Motion: Gardiner

Second: Adams

Vote:

<u>Gardiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Bachman</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Landt</u>	<u>Yes</u>
<u>Weiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adams</u>	<u>Yes</u>		

1. **Commissioner Liaison Assignments** – Chair Bachman

BACKGROUND

The Ashland Parks & Recreation Commission reviews liaison needs and makes appointments annually at the first regular business meeting of the calendar year.

POLICIES & PLANS

City Charter XIX

GOALS SUPPORTED

N/A

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

N/A

Motion: To adopt the 2025 APCR Liaison Assignments as follows:

Advisory Committees

- Ashland Senior Advisory Committee (ASAC) – Commissioner Gardiner
- Recreation Division Advisory Committee (RDAC) – Commissioner Bachman
- Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) – Commissioner Adams

Management Advisory Committees

- Bee City USA – Commissioner Bachman
- Current Parks, Conservation and Maintenance – Commissioner Bachman
- Oak Knoll Golf Course – Commissioner Landt
- Ashland Japanese Garden – Commissioner Landt

2025 APRC Representation on Non-APRC Committees and Boards

- Ashland Parks Foundation Board (501(c)3) – Commissioner Gardiner
- Forest Lands Management Advisory Committee (City MAC) – Commissioner Weiner
- Joint Powers Committee (Bear Creek Greenway) – Commissioner Landt
- Public Arts Advisory Committee (City MAC) – Commissioner Gardiner

Motion: Landt

Second: Adams

Vote:

<u>Gardiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Bachman</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Landt</u>	<u>Yes</u>
<u>Weiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adams</u>	<u>Yes</u>		

2. **Capital Improvement Plan Adoption** – Director Houston – [Presentation](#)

BACKGROUND

The Department develops a capital improvement plan (CIP) every two years to enable the Department to expend capital funds. At the October 9, 2024, APRC regular business meeting the APRC approved piloting a CIP process that develops a capital budget (two year) and capital program (four year) and associated process for reviewing and adopting the CIP.

The draft CIP was presented at the November 13, 2024, APRC regular business meeting, the culmination of the CIP process. The CIP identifies the six types of projects, the funding source(s), and fiscal years planned to complete the projects. The plan also identifies that it is resource restricted and there are more projects than resources available.

The public comment period began on November 15, 2024, and ended on December 15, 2024. At the December 4th, 2024, APRC regular business meeting, public comments were taken as well. There were two (2) public comments heard at the APRC meeting, and thirty-three (33) public comments received via mail or email. Over 50% of the comments were on the Daniel Meyer Memorial Pool major maintenance project.

Staff has reviewed all of the public comments and prepared the final CIP for review and adoption. Key changes to the draft CIP vs the final CIP are the addition of funding for the East Main Park Phase I project and the addition of a Lithia Park Master Plan work plan project to ensure capital funding is available (if needed) to complete the work identified.

The adopted CIP will be used to inform the FY26-27 budget and the citywide CIP. Staff recommends adoption of the FY26-31 Capital Improvement Plan by the APRC.

POLICIES & PLANS

Biannual budget process

GOALS SUPPORTED

BN 23 – 25 APRC Goal #7 – Perform a system-wide master plan for Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission to include the following sections, at least (sections may be completed together or independently), specifically:

c. Park system maintenance and improvements

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The CIP has identified \$6.23 million in capital projects for the FY26-27 budget. These projects have identified funding sources with resources secured or forecasted. The six-year CIP has identified \$25.4 million in projects, with about \$14 million in other funds that will need to be secured in the future. The remaining \$11.4 million is secured or forecasted. The Parks Department works closely with the Finance Department to ensure resources are available for any capital work.

Questions/Discussion

A discussion around pickleball, Hunter Park project, and the pool's importance. A study session item was suggested to review pickleball data.

Motion: To approve the Capital Improvement Plan for FY26-31 as presented.

Motion: Landt

Second: Adams

Vote:

<u>Gardiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Bachman</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Landt</u>	<u>Yes</u>
<u>Weiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adams</u>	<u>Yes</u>		

3. **Ordinance 3248 to Create a Parks & Recreation Department** – Chair Bachman

BACKGROUND

In an effort to clarify and strengthen the relationship between the Ashland City Council and the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission (APRC), two members from each body (Mayor Graham, APRC Chair Jim Bachman, Council Chair Hyatt, and Commissioner Justin Adams) met informally to discuss improved alignment of processes and procedures related to our shared resources and operational systems. These conversations aimed to identify the intersections of our work and develop the general outline of a proposed framework to the respective bodies regarding how to optimize our interactions for future success in serving the residents of Ashland.

These efforts resulted in a new city ordinance that creates a Parks Department and outlines the responsibilities for the elected officials and city staff to operate and manage a Parks Department. The first reading of the ordinance occurred at the December 17, 2024, City Council meeting. The second reading is scheduled for January 21, 2025.

This agenda item is to provide an opportunity for APRC members to discuss the ordinance and identify if any comments, proposed amendments, or a resolution are warranted.

POLICIES & PLANS

AMC 2.28.600 – Parks And Recreation Department

GOALS SUPPORTED

APRC FY23-25 Goals

- #1 – Employ best management practices to strengthen relationships
- #8 – Ensure long-term financial sustainability of Department

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This agenda item is not associated with a financial transaction

Discussion:

Commissioners discussed changes Legal made to the proposed ordinance from the original proposal. The Commissioners reviewed and discussed changes they would like made to the ordinance before it goes to Council for second reading (see below).

Motion: The Park Commission supports the creation of the Ashland Park and Recreation Department outlined in Ordinance 3248 as revised by City Council December 17, 2024, with the following changes:

- Section 2.28.600
 - Adds Park Commission in addition to Department for who are protected if legal action
 - Changed wording for clarity
- Section 2.28.610.B.2
 - Added “written” for clarity. A professional organization would not expect employees to be held responsible for unwritten policies.
- Section 2.28.630.D
 - If differences arise related to the respective authority of the Department Director and the City Manager over operational or administrative compliance matters,
 - Corrects typo.

- Limiting operational and administrative to “compliance matters” is consistent with the intent of the ordinance.
- Section 2.28.630.E
 - “Temporary” authority accurately clarifies the emergency transfer of authority.
 - Deleting “all” doesn’t change the intent but makes clear there is a time limit.
- Section 2.28.640.A.5.
 - Reciprocity in Hiring
 - The Parks and Recreation Director shall participate in the hiring process for the City Manager, with the same rights and responsibilities as other department heads. The Parks Director may provide input into skill set requirements, sit on the interview panel, and offer recommendations from the perspective of Parks and Recreation operations.
 - Deleted: Since this ordinance defines the entity as a department, then the Park Director, as a department head, would by definition have the same rights and responsibilities as other department heads. Therefore, does not add anything and can be deleted.
- Section 640.B.2.c
 - With “may” replacing “shall,” per post City Council first reading, ordinance would not require public meeting vote to terminate if that was the determination of Park Commission made in executive session, contrary to state public meeting law. On the other hand, if the determination in executive session was that termination was not warranted, the ordinance language would have allowed for public announcing of the decision not to terminate, violating the employee’s confidentiality. Why would a Director be publicly called out as not terminated, potentially leading to unwarranted speculation? The revised language is consistent with state law and human resources best practices.
- Section 2.28.640.B.2.d
 - Language is added to ensure collaboration between the City Council and the Park Commission by including Park Commission Chair input when this most serious of decisions is being contemplated.
- Section 2.28.650.A
 - Typo omission? Added “human resources.”
- Section 2.28.650 D
 - “The City Council shall maintain authority over the approval of all financial matters related to Parks and Recreation Department.” (Emphasis added)
 - This could in the future be interpreted to mean all purchases, no matter the amount, would have to be approved by City Council. Changed to encompass just the areas required by the apparent intent of the ordinance.
- Section 2.28.650.F

- Adds Park Commission to who “shall work to develop long-term financial strategies and forecasts for the maintenance and expansion of parks and recreation services.”
- Throughout Document
 - Changed from Parks & Recreation Department to Ashland Parks & Recreation Department and APRC to Park Commission because:
 - Much of branding on Park and Recreation vehicles, logos, letterhead, etc. is “Ashland Parks & Recreation.” Adding Ashland would minimize needed changes, saving money.
 - Other departments like Ashland Fire & Rescue and Ashland Fiber Network use “Ashland” in their branding. (Show picture of Park Cabin in Lithia Park)
 - The Department is commonly known as APRD.
 - The name Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission (APRC) was created for branding of the entity and was not intended to refer to the Park Commissioners. But it has over time been used to mean both, creating continuing confusion. In the two instances where APRC is referenced in the City Charter, one instance refers to the Commissioners and the other instance refers to the organization/department. This ordinance is an opportunity to reduce the confusion.
 - Most Charter references to the Department refer to the elected body as Park Commission with later amendments adding Recreation Commission but clarifying that it is the same body as the Park Commission. Thus, by Charter, the Park Commission encompasses the Recreation Commission.
 - Park Commission is the most common name of the elected body, both in official documents as well as in common usage.

Motion: Landt

Second: Adams

Vote:

<u>Gardiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Bachman</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Landt</u>	<u>Yes</u>
<u>Weiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adams</u>	<u>Yes</u>		

4. Budget – Park Operations Data – Director Houston – [Presentation](#)

BACKGROUND

The City of Ashland follows a biennium budget. The FY26-27 budgeting process has begun. This process begins in January and will conclude in June 2025 after the budget committee holds public hearings and the City Council adopts the budget.

On January 20th, 2025, the Parks Department will be provided with a budget template. This draft budget will be required to be submitted to the budget office on February 13,

2025. The department was provided with the following budget direction: No increase in budget for FY24-25 and no increase in staff.

The department plans to break out the budget engagement with the APRC over the next 30 days. This will be as follows:

- Review of current budget
- Review of operational needs/challenges
- Review of potential budget request items
- Review of draft budget
- Adoption of proposed budget

The FY 24-25 adopted budget was for \$31 million. This was divided into \$14.4 million for operations and \$16.6 million for capital projects. Based on the draft Capital Improvement Plan, our capital projects budget is projected to be \$6.23 million for FY 26-27. Assuming we have a similar sized operations budget of \$14.4 million, the department's total budget will be around \$20.63 million. This is a reduction of about 40%. The presentation will review the current budget and identify some key changes in how the budget will be prepared for the next biennium.

The department's operational needs have been assessed via historical staffing allocations since 2000 and assessing the park operational maintenance standards established in 2012 via a maintenance management plan (MMP). An MMP reviews routine maintenance needs for a park system. It begins with identifying the number of assets per park.

The frequency of routine maintenance is established by the level of service identified for the park. A level of service (or service level) is determined by the development level and/or park classification. For example, Lithia Park is a highly developed park with ornamental gardens, 7 different restrooms, and hundreds of thousands of users every year. In contrast, Evergreen Park is a small green space with a bench and a gravel trail connecting two neighborhoods. The use level and development level require different frequencies of routine maintenance.

The MMP was developed based on the 2012 maintenance standards, not on what our staff is actually doing. The MMP breaks down the hours per task, per day, per month, per year, per park. These hours are then turned into a full-time equivalent to assist in determining how many staff are needed to meet the maintenance standard.

This assessment is currently only possible for park operations. We have searched for a similar model to assess our staffing needs for recreational programming and senior

services. A consistent model has not been identified and is therefore a task we will address in our strategic planning this year.

The presentation will review the MMP findings and what we are doing currently to address the maintenance standards and discuss how we will prioritize maintenance work to ensure our park patrons have a safe and enjoyable experience.

POLICIES & PLANS

City Charter – Article XIX, Section 3

GOALS SUPPORTED

BN 23 – 25 APRC Goal #7 – Perform a system-wide master plan for Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission to include the following sections, at least (sections may be completed together or independently), specifically:

- c. Park system maintenance and improvements

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This agenda item does not have a financial action item associated with it; however, it will lead to a request for a recommendation to move forward a proposed budget for the department for the FY 26–27 biennium.

Discussion:

The Commissioners communicated that they liked the data and analysis, and that the department is on the right track.

VIII. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

None

IX. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

1. ASAC Meeting January 13, at the Senior Center, 3:30 PM
2. RDAC Meeting January 16, at the Lithia Park Cabin, 4:00 PM
3. APRC Work Plan Retreat January 17, at the Lithia Park Cabin, 10:00 AM
4. APRC Study Session February 5, in Council Chamber, 6:00 PM

X. ADJOURNMENT

Bachman adjourned the meeting at 8:30 PM

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Mero, Executive Assistant