



MINUTES FOR REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

PARK COMMISSION

February 12, 2025

Council Chamber, 1175 E Main – 6:00 PM

Commissioners Present: Gardiner, Weiner, Bachman (Chair), Adams, Landt (Vice Chair)

Staff Present: Director Houston, Deputy Director Dials, Parks Superintendent Caldwell, Golf Manager Weaver, Event and Volunteer Manager Shelton, Environmental Education Manager Came, Recreation Manager Flora, Executive Assistant Mero

Absent:

I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Bachman called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM

II. **ROLL CALL** – All five Commissioners in attendance

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – None

IV. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Bachman asked the Commission for unanimous consent to pull (table) Business Item 6, FY26-27 Department Work Plan, from the agenda. Unanimous consent given.

V. PUBLIC FORUM

Jane Ferguson: Spoke to the importance of keeping Hunter Courts for tennis only.

Ward “Andy” Anderson: Spoke to the importance of keeping Hunter Courts for tennis only.

Cori Frank: Spoke to the importance of adding more Pickleball Courts. Doesn’t want animosity between tennis and pickleball.

John Spitzly: Spoke to the importance of more pickleball courts. Recommended discussion between Commissioners and court users.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Acknowledgement of minutes from November 18, 2025, ASAC meeting.

2. Acknowledgement of minutes from September 19, 2025, RDAC meeting.

Commissioners acknowledged the minutes by unanimous consent.

VII. **DIRECTORS REPORT** – Director Houston [presentation](#)

Questions: Concern expressed about PROS survey: too long, too broad. Survey won't let user advance unless every question is answered.

VIII. **BUSINESS**

1. **Golf Program Annual Report** – Golf Manager Weaver and Superintendent Caldwell [presentation](#)

SUMMARY This report provides operational and maintenance updates for Oak Knoll Golf Course (GC), as well as discussion on needed improvements. In 2024, the APRC instructed staff to review the option of having a concessionaire manage the GC program operations. This would have reduced the department's role in the customer engagement side of the program but kept the operation and maintenance of the course under department management. That review did not produce any viable concessionaires, so in spring 2024 a decision was made to consolidate GC programming and operations under a single person, the Golf Program Manager.

After a robust recruiting process, the department hired Brian Weaver in September 2024. During his five months with the organization, Brian has proven to be a critical hire in implementing the strategic direction for the GC. The first objective was to address the development of a "business plan" for the course. Brian is working with senior leadership on the development of the plan for the GC. The plan will be integrated into the Parks, Recreation, Open space, and Senior services strategic plan to ensure engagement with the community on the outcomes and align the GC strategy with the department's goals and objectives.

Working with the Water Department we have completed the installation of a secondary irrigation connection to help maximize efficiency when using potable water. Staff is working with consultants on an irrigation study to evaluate our irrigation usage, how our usage compares to our water rights, legalities for storing additional irrigation water onsite, and recommendations for water storage structures/locations if applicable. We continue to improve the playing conditions on the course, working with agronomy experts from within the golf industry. We have adjusted clubhouse operational procedures and are working on a staff handbook including standard operational procedures. Brian has increased the GC golf programming to include golf camps/clinics, outdoor concerts, and PGA certified golf instruction. We're currently working on driving range improvements including a new grass "tee" area, new hitting mats, new range balls, a new sod nursery, and we plan to paint all GC buildings this spring. Staff has cleaned and organized the grill area in anticipation of opening sometime in March/April for the upcoming golf season. To maximize golf revenues, staff recommends that we operate the grill internally with a small, limited menu that we can expand as sales increase over

time. We plan to staff the grill primarily with seasonal employees, some of whom will serve double duty receiving green and range fees at the customer service counter.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED The summary of actions and plans support APRC's FY23-25 goal #4. This includes the hiring of the GC manager, working to identify and rectify the water needs, improving playing conditions, and working on cost recovery methods for the GC.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS This is an informational item only.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(s) N/A

Questions/Discussion

What one improvement would have the biggest impact at the GC? Consistency, in the product (course) and service. Clarification requested on the graph shared in presentation. The information depicted on the graph is all revenue.

2. **Recreation Division Annual Report** – Deputy Director Dials, Volunteer and Event Manager Shelton, Environmental Education Manager Came, Recreation Manager Flora [presentation](#)

SUMMARY This report will summarize the progress of the Recreation Division during the 2024 calendar year. Staff will review the Volunteer Program, Ice Rink and Daniel Meyer Pool, Environmental Education Initiatives, Events, and more.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED Not applicable to Division Annual Review.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS This item is informational only.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(s) N/A.

Questions/Discussion – None

3. **Calle Guanajuato Lease Agreements (Action)** – Deputy Director Dials
The Calle Guanajuato (Calle) is a part of Parks. The Department oversees the leasing of space to artists and restaurants using the Calle for sales.

SUMMARY The following applicants have submitted requests for Commercial Space on the Calle Guanajuato for the 2025 season. Staff is seeking approval of these applications.

Requests

- Skout
- Café Lumina
- Little Tokyo
- Louie’s Bar and Grill
- Bar Juillet
- Oberon’s
- Greenleaf
- Mix Bake Shop
- Lithia Artisans Market

Draft 2025 Boundary Map Location

R-6, R-6a, S-2c
A-5, A-3
A-4, S-1, R-5
Part of R-4a, R-4b & A-2
Part of R-3
Part of R-3
R-2 & S-3
R-1a & R-1b
A-10, A-9, A-8, S-2a, S-2b, A-7, A-6, A-3, A-1, A-1b

Each year, restaurants adjacent to Calle Guanajuato and the Lithia Artisans Market can request rental space for seating and artisan booth placement. In 2023, the Commission approved a three-year fee schedule for the Restaurants and Artisans. Restaurants will be charged for either five or seven days per week, based on their selected season of operation and square footage. The Lithia Artisans Market is charged for two days per week. This is a one-time payment that covers the entire rental period, which historically has lasted from mid-March through mid-November (eight months). Once the agreements are approved, APRD staff, restaurant owners, and the manager of the Lithia Artisans Market will collaboratively address any issues or concerns prior to the season opening.

The 2025 draft boundary map of rental spaces on Calle Guanajuato is included in the packet to illustrate generally where Restaurants and Artisans will be located for the 2025 season. Each Restaurant and the Lithia Artisans Market have submitted a request and a site plan in accordance with the Calle Policy. A map of the front of Lithia Park and the surrounding area, depicting where the Lithia Artisans Market spaces are generally located, is included in the packet.

Season of Operation

Over the years, the season of operation for the Lithia Artisans Market and restaurants has increased:

- The current Calle Guanajuato policy states: “The default season of operation is Memorial Day through Labor Day.”
- Once the Calle Guanajuato was reconstructed in 2014, more restaurants were interested in using it for longer periods and the Commission allowed an extended season, from mid-March through Mid-November.
- In 2024, the Commission approved three options for seasons
 - mid-March through mid-November (8 months)
 - mid-March through end-of-December (9.5 months)
 - January through mid-March (2.5 months).
- For the 2025–2026 season staff proposes similar options:
 - March 10th–November 9th, 2025 (8 months)
 - March 10th–December 31st, 2025 (9.5 months)

- January 1st, 2026–March 9th, 2026 (2.5 months)

Lithia Artisans Market request for use of the front of Lithia Park

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, with approval from the Commission the Lithia Artisans Market spread into the front of Lithia Park during the season of operation. This shift gives the Artisans more visibility and allows Restaurants to utilize more of the Calle. Maintenance staff have monitored the front of the park closely, noting minimal damage associated with the Artisans' use of the space.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED Calle Guanajuato Commercial Use Policy #101

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS In this current Biennium, the revenue for the Calle has been approximately:

- FY24: \$50,951.17 in revenue.
- FY25: \$33,879.03 (July and Jan). We can expect more revenue during the months of April–June for this current contract period.
- The Commission approved a 3-year plan for fee increases. Those increases were 7% for Artisans for year one only. No increase in years two or three. Restaurants increase 9% each year of the 3-year plan. We are in the 3rd year of this plan.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTIONS A separate motion for each of the items listed below is recommended:

- Move to approve the 2025 Calle Guanajuato Boundary Map.
- Move to approve an eight (8) month season March 10th–November 9th, 2025, a nine and one half (9.5) month season March 10th–December 31st, 2025, and off season use from January 1st, 2026–March 9th, 2026, giving a choice to Restaurants and the Lithia Artisan Market to extend the months of the season of operation with a plan in place by November 1 to remove equipment, chairs, tables, etc. if a flood threatens.
- Move to approve the Lithia Artisans Market use of the front of Lithia Park during the regular season of March through November with no use of grass areas after November 1st or if one half inch or more of rain falls within a three-day period prior to the rental.
- Move to approve the nine (9) requests listed in the staff report for Calle Guanajuato for the 2025 Season.

ATTACHMENTS 2025 Draft Boundary Map, 2025 Lithia Artisans Front of Lithia Park Map, Calle Guanajuato Commercial Use Policy (see packet)

Questions/Discussion:

A request was made to leave a buffer of at least ten feet between vendor booths/tables and the sidewalk at the entrance to Lithia Park. Request will be granted. A suggestion was made to be ready to consider the costs incurred by Parks when creating the lease agreement next year.

Motion: I move to approve the seasons as outlined in the packet and on the screen in front of us.

Motion: Adams

Second: Weiner

Vote:

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

Motion: I'd like to approve the Lithia Artisans use of the front of Lithia Park as listed in the staff presentation with the clarification that booths would be kept a minimum of ten feet away from the entrance to Lithia Park.

Motion: Landt

Second: Gardiner

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 move to approve the nine requests listed in the staff report for Calle Guanajuato for the 2025 season.

Motion: Adams

Second: Landt

<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. Trail Advisory Committee Appointments (Action) – Director Houston

SUMMARY In September 2024, the Park Commission established the Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) to replace the ad-hoc Trails committee. A standing committee was necessary to meet the needs of the community and advise the Park Commission. Staff completed a public recruitment that yielded 20 applications. A review panel interviewed 18 candidates. The review panel was impressed with the candidates' professionalism, experience, and passion for trails and the community. After careful consideration, the chair is recommending seven TAC appointments. If confirmed by the Park Commission, a revision to the TAC formation policy will be required to add the two additional committee members.

The appointment recommendations will establish four appointments with four-year terms and three appointments with two-year terms to ensure a staggered TAC committee membership. The recommended appointments are:

Name	Position	Term End date
Josh Cott	Pedestrian	12/31/2029
Ethan Braught	Cyclist	12/31/2029
Brooke Hansen	At-Large	12/31/2029
Torsten Heycke	ADA	12/31/2029
Adrian Bender	Pedestrian	12/31/2027
Yu Kuwabara	Cyclist	12/31/2027
Stef Seffinger	At-Large	12/31/2027

Brief introduction to each recommended TAC member:

Josh Cott – Josh is a board member of the Ashland Woodlands and Trails Association with 18 years’ experience of use and maintenance of our local trails.

Ethan Brought – Ethan brings experience with trail volunteer groups from his work with Team Dirt (Corvallis) on maintaining a trail system that crosses state, federal, and private lands.

Brooke Hansen – Brooke served on the ad-hoc trail committee for three years. She has experience in working within government processes and experience in negotiations and conflict resolution.

Torsten Heycke – Torsten has 40+ years of trail building and maintenance experience and has sat on many local trail committees supporting the City’s and USFS trail systems.

Adrian Bender – Adrian is an avid trail user and trail volunteer with professional knowledge of geomorphology as it pertains to sustainable trail design.

Yu Kuwabara – Yu is a board member of the Ashland Woodland and Trails Association and the Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association.

Stef Seffinger – Stef has extensive experience in Ashland city government and is an advocate for safe trail use for all trail user groups including dog walkers, hikers, seniors, and cyclists.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED The appointments of TAC members facilitates the objective of having an engaged community assisting the Park Commission in meeting the recreational needs of the community.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS There are no financial impacts to this action. The action will require additional staff time to manage the Committee and public meetings.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTIONS Motion to amend the formation of the Trails Advisory Committee to include seven members (one additional cyclist and pedestrian representative) and appoint the seven members, with the first four on the list to serve a four-year term and the final three to serve a two-year term to provide staggered committee terms.

Questions/Discussion:

Clarification on the motion that the Commission consents to the Chair's appointment of the TAC members.

Motion: I move to amend the formation of the Trails Advisory Committee to include seven members with one additional cyclist and pedestrian representative.

Motion: Adams

Second: Landt

Vote:

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

Motion: I move to consent to the appointment of the seven members by the Chair as outlined in our report.

Motion: Adams

Second: Weiner

Vote:

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

5. Park Classifications (Action) – Director Houston

SUMMARY The Parks, Recreation, Open space, and Senior services (PROS) strategic plan includes development of a level of service model for park acreage by park type. In order to do this, the Commission needs to adopt a park classification system.

Historically, the department has used two measurements for the level of service of parks. The 2005 City Comprehensive Plan identified there were parks and open spaces. Each type identified an acreage per 1,000 residents. In addition, a goal of having a park within walking distance (generally quantified as 0.75 mile) was identified.

Information on this was presented by staff at the September 4, 2024, Study Session.

Staff is recommending the following park classifications:

- **Regional Park** – Provides a unique natural or cultural feature and regional-scale recreation facilities. Typically, 100 acres or more in size, a regional park serves

areas within 45 minutes driving time. Regional parks can be large natural reserves or developed for large group activities. They can support large events, festivals, and other revenue-generating events to enhance the City's economic vitality and identity. Recreational amenities vary widely, but off-street parking, restrooms, reservable shelters, amphitheaters, etc. are typically available.

- **Community Park** – Provides a destination experience with a service area of 3 miles. The parks are generally larger (10 to 100 acres) and provide active and passive recreation opportunities. They generally have restrooms and off-street parking to accommodate a larger number of people. Recreational amenities include sport courts, organized sport fields, playgrounds, reservable shelters, swimming pools and splash pads, community gardens, and extensive trail systems.
- **Neighborhood Park** – Provides close-to-home recreation opportunities with a service area of 0.25 to 0.5 miles. Generally, 2 to 20 acres in size, they provide playgrounds, non-organized sport fields, picnic tables, non-reservable shelters, open spaces, and trails. They generally do not have restrooms or off-street parking, except for ADA parking stalls.
- **Pocket Park** – Smallest park classification, provides basic recreation opportunities on less than 2 acres. Provide limited recreation amenities, such as benches, picnic tables, and playgrounds. Generally, they do not have restrooms or off-street parking.
- **Nature Park** – Land set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering. They may preserve or protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as wildlife habitats, riparian corridors, or unique and/or endangered species. They vary in size from less than 10 acres to more than 200 acres. Development is limited to passive recreation and amenities to support the passive recreation. These could include trailheads (pedestrian and vehicular), trails, interpretive displays, benches, and structures that support the preservation of the site.
- **Trails** – Trails can include natural surface (soft) and improved (hard) surface trails. They can be referred to as pathways, bikeways, or active transportation routes. They can accommodate a variety of uses including walking, running, biking, dog walking, roller blading, skateboarding, and horseback riding. Trails can be located within parks, along road rights-of-way or on public easements. Trails are generally linear in nature and provide wayfinding signs, benches, drinking fountains, lighting, informational kiosks and interpretive signs.

- **Special Use Park** – The special use classification covers a broad range of park and recreation lands that are specialized or single-purpose in nature. Special use parks that have a community or regional draw may require supporting facilities such as parking or restrooms. Park size is dependent on the special use and can vary from very small to many acres.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED The adoption of park classifications will assist in measuring the department's outcomes and comparing our park system with other park systems.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS There are no financial impacts to this action.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTIONS Motion to adopt the park classifications as outlined in this agenda brief for park planning purposes. Direct staff to develop a policy on park classifications, once the new department policy format is adopted.

Questions/Discussion:

Clarification, are there six different classifications rather than five? Correct.

Are we approving classification categories tonight and not how individual parks will be classified? Correct.

Request made that walkable distance match that in the Comprehensive Plan (.25 miles instead of .75 miles).

Request that the 'Pocket Park' classification be changed from two acres or less to one acre or less.

Motion: I move that we adopt the parks classifications as outlined in the agenda brief for parking planning purposes with the following change, that pocket parks be changed from two acres to one acre. Further, direct staff to develop a policy on park classifications once the new Department policy format is adopted.

Motion: Landt

Second: Gardiner

Vote:

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

6. FY26-27 Department Budget Recommendation (Action) Director Houston
Houston noted that the numbers in the agenda brief have shifted downward.

SUMMARY The Commission adopts a budget on a biennial basis. The budget below is reflective of the input received at the January 17, 2025, Park Commission retreat and feedback

from the February 5, 2025, Study Session. The department budget includes the following additional budget requests:

- Senior Services Administrative Assistant to meet service level needs
- Park Technician I (Boulevards) to meet non-park City landscaping requirements
- Park Technician I and service and supply costs for FY27 for East Main Park
- Recreation Coordinator, services, and supply costs to address service level needs and the re-opening of Pioneer Hall and the Community Center
- Phase I transition to Citywide fleet replacement model

The proposed FY26-27 Department budget is as follows:

Budget Category	FY 26-27 proposed	FY 24-25 Adopted
Park Operations Budget*	\$15,981,613	\$14,719,756
Park Capital Program Budget	\$6,228,000	\$17,457,093
Total Park Department Budget	\$22,209,613	\$32,179,849

*Park Program budgets will be presented at meeting

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED The recommendation of this budget follows prior practices, consistent with the City Charter and budget rules.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS This recommended budget, if adopted by council, would ensure basic services and programs are able to operate during the FY 26-27 budget cycle.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTIONS Motion to recommend the FY 26-27 Department budget of \$22,209,613 and move it forward to the Finance Department.

Questions/Discussion:

In the materials, why is the total amount for the FY 24-25 budget \$300,000 less than what was adopted? That was a transposition mistake.

Clarification: The Commission doesn't approve the budget. They make a recommendation to move it forward in the City budget process.

Does the Boulevards position work on more than just the Boulevard? Yes, that position works on all non-park properties.

Noted that there were wrong numbers for Environmental Education in the table.

Why the reduction in the Capital Budget from FY 24-25? The previous budget was aspirational. We didn't actually have the funding.

A request was made to have a motion to table the item until March.

What would be helpful for staff from the Commission to move the draft budget forward? Support for the 'Budget Request Considerations'.

Motion: I move that we support and support the budget request considerations provided to us by Staff in their presentation to us tonight.

Motion: Landt

Second: Gardiner

Vote:

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

IX. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

Liaison Report(s)

1. Gardiner, Liaison for Ashland Parks Foundation (APF) shared that Micha BlackLight, the artist for the Crystalizing Our Call sculpture intended for Ashland Creek Park, approached the APF to sponsor the project.
2. ASAC: City Councilors are no longer being assigned to Parks advisory committees.
3. Weiner, liaison for the Forest Lands Management Advisory Committee, shared that slash piles were burned in the Watershed near Fell on Knee trail. Burning of slash piles in Siskiyou Mountain Park are on hold due to weather.
4. Bachman: Follow up to TAC appointment: Staff will be in touch with the new members, they will get trained, a meeting will be scheduled initially led by staff, members will elect chair/vice chair in a meeting.

X. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

1. APRC Study Session March 5, in Council Chamber, 6:00 PM
2. ASAC Meeting March 10, at the Senior Center, 3:30 PM
3. APRC Regular Business Meeting March 12, in Council Chamber, 6:00 PM
4. RDAC Meeting March 20, at the Lithia Park Cabin, 4:00 PM

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Bachman adjourned the meeting at 8:34 PM

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Mero, Executive Assistant