ASHLAND | OREGON
Park Commission
Better Together
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MINUTES FOR REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
PARK COMMISSION
March 12, 2025
Council Chamber, 1175 E Main – 6:00 PM

Commissioners Present: Adams, Bachman (Chair), Landt (Vice Chair), Weiner
Staff Present: Director Houston, Deputy Director Dials, Senior Services Superintendent Mettler, Senior Administrative Analyst Terry, Executive Assistant Mero
Absent: Commissioner Gardiner

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

II. **ROLL CALL** – Five Commissioners in attendance

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
1. Park Commission Regular Business Meeting December 4, 2024
2. Park Commission Regular Business Meeting January 8, 2025
3. Park Commission Work Plan Retreat January 17, 2025
4. Park Commission Study Session February 5, 2025
5. Park Commission Regular Business Meeting February 12, 2025

Bachman asked for unanimous consent to approve the minutes. Unanimous consent given. Minutes approved.

IV. **ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA** - None

V. **PUBLIC FORUM** - None

VI. **CONSENT AGENDA** – None

VII. **DIRECTORS REPORT** - Director Houston

VIII. **BUSINESS**

1. **FY 26-27 Department Work Plan (Action)** – Director Houston

SUMMARY - The Commission adopts department goals or a work plan on a biennial basis. The work plan below reflects the input received at the January 17, 2025, Park Commission Work Plan Retreat and feedback from the February 5, 2025, Study Session.

The proposed FY 26-27 Department Work Plan, prioritized, is as follows:

1. Complete projects identified in adopted Capital Improvement Plan for FY 26-27
   - Preventative Maintenance Projects
   - Lithia Park Butler-Perozzi Fountain Restoration
   - ADA Improvements
   - East Main St Park Phase I Development
   - Hunter Park – Tennis Court Rehabilitation
   - Irrigation Controllers
   - Siskiyou Mountain Park Trail Re-route

2. Improve recreation and senior programming access by replacing staff positions eliminated during COVID-19 and developing a cost recovery policy.
3. Complete the Parks, Recreation, Open space, & Senior services strategic plan (PROS)
4. Establish equipment replacement and repair program to be consistent with City fleet standards.
5. Update employee onboarding, training, and safety program
6. Complete work plan items identified for FY 26-27 to implement the Lithia Park Master Plan:
   - Fuels Reduction Between Glenview Rd and Ashland Creek
   - Hazard Tree Removal
   - Development and Promotion of Citizen Science and/or Other Environmental Education
   - Winburn Way Traffic Speed and Road Design
   - Trail Map Update
   - Replacement of Interpretive Signs for Flora

7. Develop funding strategy for future capital projects, specifically:
   - Daniel Meyer Pool replacement project
   - East Main future development phase(s)

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED - The adoption of the FY 26-27 Department Work Plan would establish a plan for the Department to measure its actions during FY 26-27.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – N/A

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTIONS - Motion to adopt the FY 26-27 Department Work Plan.

ATTACHMENTS - FY 26 – 27 Lithia Park Master Plan Project List, 2025 – 2031 Ashland Parks and Recreation Capital Plan (see packet)

Questions/Discussion:

- How did the Siskiyou Trail Re-route get on the list? Staff recommended it and it was high on the scoring rubric.
- Concern expressed regarding having the Siskiyou trail re-route included without input from the Trails Advisory Committee (TAC).
- Support for Staff proposing work without input from advisory committees.

Motion: I move to support the Work Plan as presented with the extraction of the Siskiyou Mountain Trail project until it gets consideration from the TAC.
Motion: Adams Second: Weiner

Questions/Discussion:

- Important to get community input.
- Concern expressed that removal of the project might result in a delay to do other trail work.
- What's the name of the trail? In the area of White Rabbit/Red Queen/Mike Uhtoff
- Clarification: Removing this project results in removal of the funding dollars for trail work in the next biennium

Commissioner Adams withdrew his motion.

Motion: I move to approve the Work Plan as presented.

Motion: Landt Second: Weiner
Vote:

Weiner	**Yes**	**Bachman**	**Yes**	**Adams**	**Yes**
Landt	**Yes**				

2. **FY 26-27 Department Budget Recommendation (Action)** – Director Houston presentation

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 Work Plan Retreat and feedback from the February 5, 2025, Commission Study Session. The Department budget includes the following additional budget requests:

- Senior Services Administrative Assistant to meet service level needs
- Park Technician I to meet non-park City landscaping requirements
- Park Technician I and service and supply costs for FY 26 - 27 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 FY 26-27 Department budget is as follows:

Budget Category	FY 26-27 Proposed	FY 24-25 Adopted
Parks Operations Budget*	$15,795,925	$14,719,756
Parks Capital Program Budget	$6,228,000	$17,457,093
Total Parks Department Budget	**$22,023,925**	**$32,179,849**

*Parks Program budgets will be presented at the meeting

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

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS - The recommended budget, if adopted by City 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 $22,023,925 and move it forward to the Finance Department.

ATTACHMENTS - FY 26-27 Proposed Budget by Fund Organization (see packet)

Questions/Discussion:

- Clarification on what Personnel Services means. Answer, Payroll.
- Clarification asked on if one FTE was going to be running the entire golf course. No, we have separated the front facing customer service staff from the operations staff.
- Clarification on how a Park Tech I could be moved to the Senior Center. The position is being reclassified.
- A goal should be to increase revenues at the Nature Center.

Motion: I move to approve the proposed FY26-27 Department budget of $23,096,343 and move it forward to the Finance Department.
Motion: Weiner Second: Adams
Vote:

Bachman	**Yes**	**Adams**	**Yes**	**Landt**	**Yes**
Weiner	**Yes**				

3. **Recreation Division Advisory Committee Appointments (Action)** – Deputy Director Dials

SUMMARY - The Recreation Division Advisory Committee (RDAC) currently has three open seats. Ashland Parks and Recreation Department (APRD) advertised the openings from January 7, 2025, to February 5, 2025. Seven applications were received. One applicant did not qualify due to living outside the City limits. Another candidate rescinded their application when contacted for an interview.

APRD Staff scheduled interviews for the five remaining candidates. The interview panel consisted of Deputy Director Rachel Dials, Recreation Manager Lonny Flora, and RDAC Chairperson Cori Grimm. The panel asked the candidates four questions matching those recently used to fill vacancies on the Trails Advisory Committee (TAC). The interview panel members separately scored the applicants. The questions were worth five points each for a possible high score of 20 points.

The following recommendations will establish three appointments with four-year terms.

Name	**Term End date**
Katharine Danner	12/31/2029
Mary (Julia) Chapman	12/31/2029
John Spitzley	12/31/2029

Brief introduction to each recommended RDAC member:

Katherine Danner: BA in Public Recreation and Parks Administration from Purdue University, experience in recreation and non-profit services, Interest in inter-generational programming, past Member of Ashland Transportation Commission, Senior Services Ad-hoc committee, YMCA Board Member, Lithia Springs Rotary Club President.

Mary (Julia) Chapman: Senior Level Category Manager for packaged gifts at Harry and David, (the largest division)**,** parent of young children involved in many local sports and daily park users**,** regular users of the golf course and pickleball courts.

John Spitzley: BS Environmental Resource Engineering, Humboldt State University, MS Civil Engineering, Utah State University, Shasta Community Services District Board member, member of multiple technical committees related to mine, contaminated site cleanup, familiar with government work and solving problems, cyclist in favor of safe biking routes, active participant and member of Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED - The appointment of RDAC 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 appoint the three recommended RDAC members to serve a four-year term.

ATTACHMENTS N/A

Motion: I move to appoint the three recommended RDAC members to serve a four-year term.

Motion: Adams Second: Weiner

Vote:

Weiner	**Yes**	**Bachman**	**Yes**	**Adams**	**Yes**
Landt	**Yes**				

4. **Trails Advisory Committee Charge (Action)** - Chair Bachman

SUMMARY - The Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed and committee appointments made. Prior to the first meeting, the Park Commission is asked to provide direction or a charge to TAC to direct the committee's work for the next 12 to 24 months.

With input from the Park Commission, staff are proposing the following charge for TAC for 2025:

Advise on the Department's trail system

- Review new trail proposals and the process for reviewing proposals
- Work with staff on the PROS Plan trail related items
- Review trail program items, as requested by staff

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED - Ashland Municipal Code, APRC Policy

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS - N/A

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTIONS - Move to adopt the charge for the Trails Advisory Committee for 2025 to review and provide input on policies for the review, development,

and/or management of trails; Engage with staff on the PROS Plan on trail-related items; review and provide input on trail standards for development and maintenance.
ATTACHMENTS - N/A

Questions/Discussion:
Was the charge for TAC originally for two years? Possibly. Director Houston thought he heard on year at the Study Session.

Motion: I move to adopt the charge for the Trails Advisory Committee for 2025 – 2026 to advise the Department's trail system by reviewing new trail proposals and the process for reviewing proposals, work with staff on the PROS plan trail related items, and review trail program items as requested by staff.

Motion: Weiner Second: Adams
Vote:

Weiner	**Yes**	**Bachman**	**Yes**	**Adams**	**Yes**
Landt	**Yes**				

5. **Subcommittee for Winburn Way – Travel Management Project**

SUMMARY

The draft Lithia Park FY 26-27 Work Plan has identified Recommendation #20 from the adopted Lithia Park Master Plan (LPMP). This project would look at the redesign of vehicular roads to increase safety for all modes of travel.

To assist in moving this project forward, the formation of a subcommittee is being proposed. The subcommittee will consist of two Commissioners and Director Houston. The committee will be tasked with the following charges:

- Developing a public engagement plan and travel management options for the travel management of Winburn Way.
- Presenting the plan to the Park Commission.
- Completing the public engagement plan (Director Houston).
- Reviewing input, developing a recommendation, and presenting it to the Park Commission.

The subcommittee will meet as needed scheduled by Director Houston. The subcommittee is planning to meet for nine to twelve months. It will terminate upon delivery of the recommendation to the Park Commission.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED
AMC
APRC Policy

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS
N/A

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTIONS
I move to form the subcommittee for Winburn Way – Travel Management Project and appoint Commissioner's Gardiner and Weiner and Director Houston as staff to the subcommittee.

ATTACHMENTS – N/A

Clarification: A fact-finding subcommittee, not making a recommendation.

Motion: I move to form the subcommittee for Winburn Way
Motion: Bachman Second: Adams
Vote:

Weiner	**Yes**	**Bachman**	**Yes**	**Adams**	**Yes**
Landt	**Yes**				

IX. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

a. Liaison Report
   - Weiner reported on the Forest Lands MAC. The committee is doing great work putting together a grant proposal for funding more fire risk mitigation. Vast majority of slash piles have been burned – ahead of where they thought they would be by this time.

X. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

1. Parks Commission Study Session April 2, Council Chamber, 6:00 PM
2. PROS Plan Kickoff Meeting April 8, Senior Center, 5:30 PM
3. Parks Commission Regular Business Meeting April 9, Council Chamber, 6:00 PM
4. Parks Commission Joint Study Session with City Council May 7 Council Chamber 6:00 PM

XI. ADJOURNMENT – Bachman adjourned the meeting at 7:39 PM

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Mero, Executive Assistant