



MINUTES FOR REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

PARK COMMISSION

May 14, 2025

Council Chamber, 1175 E Main – 6:00 PM

Commissioners Present: Gardiner, Weiner, Landt (Vice Chair – ran the meeting), Adams

Staff Present: Director Houston, Deputy Director Dials, Assistant City Attorney Zahran,
Executive Assistant Mero

Absent: Commissioner Bachman (Chair)

I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Vice Chair Landt called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

II. **ROLL CALL** – Commissioners Gardiner, Weiner, Landt, and Adams all present.

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Park Commission Regular Business Meeting March 12, 2025

2. Park Commission Regular Business Meeting April 9, 2025

Gardiner asked to have his name removed from “Commissioners Present” on the minutes from the March 12, 2025 meeting as he was not present.

Motion: I move to approve the minutes for the March 12 meeting with the above correction.

Motion: Gardiner

Second: Adams

Vote:

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

Landt asked for approval of the April 9 meeting minutes for unanimous consent.
Unanimous consent given.

IV. **ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Vice Chair Landt moved the fees item to the first item of business out of deference to the audience members who signed up to give public comment.

V. **PUBLIC FORUM**

Jack Opgenorth, Ashland: Spoke to the importance of keeping the pool open seven days a week from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

VI. **CONSENT AGENDA** – None

VII. **DIRECTORS REPORT**

- Pool will open June 10
- \$25,000 brought in at April's successful Bike Swap
- Painting at North Mountain Park underway, last painted in the 1990s
- Senior Center reroofed; there was a classical guitar performance in April; presentation on supplements.
- Golf course active; men's league up and running on Thursday nights; staff busy keeping up with the mowing and weeding.
- Interviews finishing Thursday May 15 for three Park Tech I positions.
- Seasonal jobs available

VIII. **BUSINESS**

1. **Park Fees** – Director Houston

SUMMARY – A review of sport field fees has been requested.

On April 28, 2025, with a unanimous vote of Park Commissioners, a \$5 per hour sport field fee was adopted. The previous fee was \$150 to \$250 per season, as a flat fee.

Comparable rates in the Rogue Valley vary but are generally \$20 – \$35 per hour. The adopted rate is 25% of the low end of the comparable rates in the Rogue Valley.

The Ashland Little League voiced concerns about the rate and the potential fee increase for their players. The change would result in a \$11.61 increase per player in sport field fees, based on participant numbers provided by Ashland Little League. Communications from the Ashland Little League identified a \$20 per player fee increase due to the sport field fee change.

Four alternatives to the adopted sport field rate to consider:

- No change.
 - Develop agreements for leagues to do field maintenance tasks in lieu of a fee to reduce operational costs for the department.
- Hourly rate revision.
- Flat rate revision.
- Maintain existing rates for sport fields, pending PROS Plan completion.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – City of Ashland Miscellaneous Fees and Charges

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – These fee increases are proposed to help offset general fund support and assist in managing the limited general fund resources.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTIONS – No proposed action or motion.

ATTACHMENTS – N/A

Questions/Discussion:

- How were the different fees from the current fee schedule derived? A: Per season per facility, not park. For example, Little league uses two fields which is considered one facility.
- Will the PROS plan potentially lower the fees? A: Not likely. Need an additional resource to offset costs.
- Keeping fees status quo – why is that even an alternative if completion of the PROS plan won't change anything? A: It was in the staff report.
- Ashland Park Foundation scholarships a possibility.
- Users doing more maintenance reducing park staff hours might lower fees.
- What about games that run overtime? A: We would have to attempt to collect additional fees.
- PROS plan will also involve a cost recovery policy. Our costs currently exceed what we take in. This would be true even with the \$5 per hour charge for fields.
- Transitioning from per field use to per hour will be complicated. It's not apples to apples.
- How much money does Parks spend on maintenance at NMP? A: Approximately \$600,000.00. Hunter Park? A: \$250,000 – \$300,000.00

Public Forum

Keri Pernell, Ashland: Little League is the single user at the fields they use. Should be treated differently than other users, i.e. a flat fee makes sense for them not necessarily other users. Sports necessary to keep kids out of trouble, stay in school.

Stacia Stimac, Ashland: Per hour fee negatively impacts volunteer nonprofit users. Spoke to the importance of youth sports for community and growth. Their volunteers pay for all of the equipment, the chalk, and do the cleaning. Need a stable predictable flat fee.

DeAnna Oakley, Ashland: North Mountain Park fields are amicably shared by high school and AYB. Spoke to the importance of a flat fee. Prioritize kids.

Emily Trivette, Ashland: City Parks and School District don't talk together enough. Spoke to the lack of support for children. Spoke to the importance of nonprofit sports teams and the volunteers that support them.

Ellie Lenhardt, Ashland: Spoke to how much time she spends at parks. Claimed children in Ashland are being thrown under the bus. Supports pausing raising field fees to gather more information.

Commissioner Landt allowed further discussion prior to having a motion.

Questions/Discussion:

- Very difficult to not support all users of programs. Alt. 2 seems reasonable.
- Other providers are backing out of offering field use. Fields are expensive to maintain. Nothing Parks does makes money. Something needs to change. Though Youth sports users are at the bottom, Parks needs to implement a per hour fee for a smidge more cost recovery.
- Looking for balance. Can't do different for each user group.
- Referenced motion passing \$5 per hour fee use. Recognized it was too big of a jump. (pointed out by many citizens' feedback). with Alt #2, Little League would be paying just about the same as before.

Motion: I move to amend the approved fee schedule to \$2.50 per facility per hour starting July 1, 2025.

- July 1 is consistent with the fee schedule. Moving to an hourly rate for all users is important for cost recovery and future building of new fields.
- City Attorney Zahran suggested considering rewording/amending the motion to clarify if the fee is per field or per facility.
- Gardiner withdrew his motion.

Motion : I move to amend the approved Park fee schedule to \$2.50 per hour per field for seasonal use of the APRD fields starting July 1, 2025.

- This is an appropriate time to move in this direction. This is what is expected of the Commission to move to reasonable cost recovery.
- Point of order: public is not allowed to participate in deliberation (Response to hand waving in the audience).
- Fees will probably need to go up in the future.
- Fees are looked at yearly. Commission/staff take public feedback into consideration. Fees are in line with other communities' practice.

Motion: Gardiner

Second: Adams

Vote:

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

2. Park Map and Naming – Director Houston

SUMMARY – The current park map has identified 42 “Parks”. Several of these parcels have not been officially named. The Department has used the prior owner and/or location as a

temporary identifier. As part of the PROS Plan planning process, a review of the current parks and classifications has led to a review of the park map and park naming.

The review of the parks was completed with consideration of proximity of parcels to each other and/or existing parks, with the intent of the purchase, character of the parcel, and long-term planning. The attached map identifies 23 proposed parks based on the current property portfolio and park classifications.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – This aligns with the Draft Department Work Plan item to complete the PROS Plan.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTIONS – Move to adopt the change from 42 park/parcel names to the 23 park/property names, as presented today.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – There is no financial impact to this agenda item or direction from the Commission.

ATTACHMENTS – Proposed Park Map (see packet)

Questions/Discussion:

- What's the point of reducing the number of parks from 43 to 23? A: The process parlays into the PROS plan, parks classifications, levels of service, etc. and makes that a little easier.
- Does Ashland Ponds – a separate park – lose its designation if it's incorporated into the Bear Creek Greenway? A: Example The Grand Canyon is one National Park but has many separate entrances. Different names for sub areas.
- For Hald Strawberry and Siskiyou Mtn. did you consider calling them Parks rather than Park? Talking about separate entities and making the name plural might make it more clear. A: No. Looking at them separately.
- Trails connect everything in Hald-Strawberry and Siskiyou Mtn. Focusing on the whole, not the parts.

Motion: I move to adopt the change from 42 parks/parcels names to 23 parks/property names as presented in the report today.

Motion: Gardiner

Second: Weiner

- Makes sense.
- Simplifies things
- Going to vote against it. It will be confusing to people. Ashland's park system is not like the Grand Canyon. Disparate areas sometimes separated by private property.

Not compelled by the need for the change, doesn't see how it makes things demonstrably better.

- Have some reservations - needs some refinement.

Vote:

<u>Weiner</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Gardiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adams</u>	<u>No</u>
<u>Landt</u>	<u>No</u>				

3. Park Specific Classifications – Director Houston

SUMMARY - In February 2025 the Park Commission established a park classification system to assist in developing levels of service for parks by classification. Each classification has unique recreational development and experiences for the community. The adopted City Comprehensive Plan identified community parks, neighborhood parks, and open spaces. However, the parks and open spaces are typically only identified by the Department.

In reviewing the current properties, the following recommendations are proposed:

Park Classification	Park(s)
Regional Park	Lithia (all parcels approx. 100 acres)
Community Park	Ashland Creek (including Skatepark, parcels downstream to Nevada St including Keener.) Bear Creek Greenway (includes Ashland Ponds, BMX area, Dog Park, Riverwalk, Kestrel, Greenway OS, Michelle Ave WL, and other parcels along Bear Creek) Garfield Hunter North Mountain (includes Lord property) Oak Knoll East Main (undeveloped)
Neighborhood Park	Briscoe Clay Creek Garden Way Glenwood Railroad Scenic Chitwood (undeveloped)
Pocket Park	Bluebird Calle Guanajuato Evergreen Sherwood Triangle
Natural Area	Acid Castle (includes all parcels Granite Street OS, Burnson OS, Lawrence OS)

Hald Strawberry (includes Piedmont, South Laurel St Access) Siskiyou Mountain (including Alice in Wonderland OS, Liberty Street OS, Terrace Pines OS, Cottle-Phillips OS)
Special Use

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – This aligns with the draft Department Work Plan item to complete the PROS Plan.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTIONS – Move to adopt the park classifications outlined by park, as presented today.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – N/A

ATTACHMENTS – N/A

Questions/Discussion:

- Based on the failed motion for park naming, are the classifications relevant? The classification list includes the groupings from the prior item.
- Great point. Maybe the item should be tabled.

Motion: I move to table item VII2. Park Specific Classifications until a later date.

Motion: Gardiner

Second: Adams

Vote:

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

4. Bandersnatch Trail Re-Route – Director Houston

SUMMARY – In 2015 this proposal was made and reviewed by the City and USFS. As I understand it, the USFS has re-approved their portion of the project. This allows the City to consider completing a roughly 130 yard re-route. This is on property acquired by the Department for this project. This project has been reviewed by the Park Commission in the past.

The USFS section is planned to be built this month, and the Ashland Trails and Woodlands Association would like to complete this re-route at the same time.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – This action supports the USFS adopted plan and prior Park Commission approved plan for this trail re-route.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – This re-route is being done by a trail adopter group, with minimal budgeted operations or Parks maintenance staff engagement.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(S) – Motion to approve the re-route of Bandersnatch.

ATTACHMENTS – N/A

Questions/Discussion: None

Motion: I move to approve the re-route of Bandersnatch Trail.

- Discussed and generally approved at a previous trails advisory subcommittee meeting. The reroute was formally approved in 2015. Current Trails Advisory Committee members all in favor. Noted this is a pedestrian trail.

Motion: Adams

Second: Weiner

Vote:

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

IX. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

a. Liaison Report

- Gardiner on ASAC. Some changes happening. Moving to meeting quarterly. They had been meeting every other month. (Houston interjected that we are moving away from having a meeting just to have a meeting, tasking committees with charges.
- Gardiner: Winburn Way Subcommittee has met several times
- Weiner: Forestlands MAC. Did some burning over the weekend got a lot done. BLM donated a bunch of pine seedlings for South Mountain Park Ashland adaptation plan II. (get correct verbiage from recording).

X. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

1. Recreation Division Advisory Committee May 15, The Grove, 4:00 PM
2. Park Commission Study Session June 4, Council Chamber, 6:00 PM
3. Park Commission Business Meeting June 11, Council Chamber, 6:00 PM
4. Park Commission Study Session July 2, Council Chamber, 6:00 PM

XI. **ADJOURNMENT** – Vice Chair Landt adjourned the meeting at 7:40 PM

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Mero Executive Assistant