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MINUTES FOR STUDY SESSION
PARK COMMISSION
August 6, 2025
Council Chamber, 1175 E Main – 6:00 PM

Commissioners Present: Bachman (Chair), Gardiner, Landt (Vice Chair), Weiner
Staff Present: Director Houston, Recreation Manager Flora, Executive Assistant Mero
Absent: Commissioner Adams, Deputy Director Dials

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

II. **ROLL CALL** – Commissioners Gardiner, Weiner, Bachman, Landt all present. Commissioner Adams not present.

III. **PUBLIC FORUM** -

Kyle Asher, Ashland: Spoke to the revised rates for Pioneer Hall and Community Center. Pleased that there are discounts for repeat users. First hour rate still high for some users. Wonders with a cleaning fee, if the cleaning is actually going to happen regularly (in between users). Not always the case previously.
If renting weekly, paying up front for the year will be a burden for some renters. Suggested paying month by month.

IV. **PIONEER HALL & COMMUNITY CENTER RENTAL FEE** – Director Houston

SITUATION - Review revised Pioneer Hall and Community Center Rental Fee

BACKGROUND - Each year the City reviews and updates the miscellaneous fees and charges book. The Parks Department's review this year included the addition of Pioneer Hall and the Community Center as potentially rentable assets for the next fiscal year. Currently there is no fee identified for the Community Center in the adopted miscellaneous fees and charges book. The fee for Pioneer Hall is $23.00 per hour for weekdays and $35.00 per hour for weekends.

The City Council reviewed the miscellaneous fees and charges book. They directed the Park Commission to again review their (Park Commission's) adopted fees for the Community Center and Pioneer Hall. The Council had concerns around the increase in the hourly rental rate and cleaning fee.

Staff presented two alternatives at the June 4, 2025, Park Commission study session. The Park Commission directed staff to bring back two new alternatives for consideration. At the July 2, 2025 Park Commission study session, the first hour at a higher rate and additional hours at a lower rate were supported. At the July 9, 2025 Park Commission business meeting, concerns about the increased costs for recurring users were raised and staff was directed to review new alternatives.

Staff have proposed (2) discount rates for recurring users of these two facilities. The rates are based on the rentals being booked and paid for concurrently. The proposal is a 35% reduction (first hour) for 6 to 11 rentals and a 50% reduction (first hour) for 12 or more rentals. To get the reduced rate, all reservation dates must be booked at the same time, and the total fee must be paid at the time of booking. Refunds will not occur, or a transaction fee will be charged. This is to limit unfair discount practices occurring. The reduced rate will only apply to weekdays, not on holidays or weekends.

ASSESSMENT - Following are the hourly rate options for consideration:

Facility	**Prior Rate**	**Adopted Rate**	**Proposed Rate**		
	Weekday/ Weekend	Weekday/ Weekend	Rental Volume	Weekday	Weekend/ Holiday
Pioneer Hall	$23/$35	$60/$120 +cleaning fee	1-5 6-11 12+	**$125** first hour, **$25** thereafter **$80** first hour, **$25** thereafter **$65** first hour, **$25** thereafter	**$125** first hour, **$40** thereafter
Community Center: Main Room	Null	$80/$160 +cleaning fee	1-5 6-11 12+	**$125** first hour, **$35** thereafter **$80** first hour, **$35** thereafter **$65** first hour, **$35** thereafter	**$125** first hour, **$50** thereafter
Community Center: Side Room	Null	Null	1-5 6-11 12+	**$25/hour** **$20/hour** **$15/hour**	**$40/hour**

Cost comparison for average rental times:

Facility	**Adopted Rate** Weekday 3-hour rental	**Proposed Rate** Weekday 3-hour Rental	**Adopted Rate** Weekend 5-hour rental	**Proposed Rate** Weekend 5-hour rental
Pioneer Hall	**$180**	**$175**	**$600**	**$285**
Community Center	**$240**	**$195**	**$800**	**$325**
Facility	**Proposed Rate 5-10 Rentals** 3-hour rentals	35% savings on first hour	**Proposed Rate 11+ Rentals** 3-hour rentals	50% savings on first hour
Pioneer Hall	**$130**	26% savings	**$115**	34% savings
Community Center	**$150**	23% savings	**$135**	31% savings

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS - Staff are seeking input on the proposed alternative rates and seek direction on moving an alternative forward or if needed, receiving additional information from the Park Commission.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED - Biannual budget process

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS - Fees for rentals, services, and programs assist in reducing general fund support. The next biennium budget has been adopted with identified amounts of fees being generated. The utilization rate and fees charged impact the amount of fee revenue generated.

ATTACHMENTS – N/A

Questions/Discussion:

- Why doesn't the rental fee for the small room in the Community Center (CC) include a higher amount for the first hour? A: Trying to offer a lower cost option for purposes of equity.
- How many could meet in the small room? A: 20 if there are just chairs, maybe 15 if there are tables, too.
- Could both rooms in the Community Center be rented at the same time? A: Potentially. Depends on what activities are happening/noise levels. Acoustics are an issue in both buildings – horrible.
- Is it a Finance request that we ask for payment up front so as not to have to chase people down for payment? A: Finance discouraged golf from having annual memberships. Discourages deposits and keeping users credit cards on file.
- Parks staff has limited capacity for bill collection.
- What about a non-refundable fee option? If someone rented a lot of dates then didn't show up, we wouldn't be able to rent the space to some other group.
- Had the ability to do this in the past but it was too expensive for staff to handle. Now we have a software system to do the work.
- Houston emphasized that there are other community spaces available to rent and/or use free that might better meet the needs of some potential renters.
- Trying to balance our costs. All transactions from scheduling, to collecting payment, etc. takes staff time.
- Noted that the 'adopted fees' were never actually adopted. They were the first suggestion/recommendation from the Commission to the Council. It's been five years since the spaces were rented so the increased rental fee suggestions are bound to seem high.
- Without having a higher first-hour rate, the small community room will be subsidized at a much higher rate. A: True. That's the object.

V. COMMISSIONER NUMBERED POSITION TO AT-LARGE PROCESS – Director Houston

SITUATION - Park Commissioners directed staff to review modification of the voting process for Park Commissioners to align with the 2024 revision to the City Council voting process.

BACKGROUND - In 2024, the City Council changed the Ashland Municipal Code to allow the Council candidate with the highest number of votes to be elected vs a runoff by position. The Park Commission directed staff to review the process to determine what they would need to do to implement a similar process. Staff has reviewed the process with the City Attorney's office, the City Recorder, and Jackson County Election's Office.

ASSESSMENT - If the Park Commission wants to make the change outlined above, the process would be as follows:

1. The Park Commission would take an action on changing the Park Commission from numbered positions to at-large positions.
2. Staff would provide documentation of this action to the City Recorder.
3. The City Recorder would develop the instructions on the change and provide them to the Jackson County's Election Office.
4. Jackson County would modify the ballot.
    a. For example, in the next election there will be three (3) positions open. The ballot would read "Select three (3) candidates from the list below to become City of Ashland Park Commissioners".
5. The votes would be tallied and the three (3) candidates receiving the highest number of votes would be elected as City of Ashland Park Commissioners.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS - What direction on next steps does the Park Commission have for staff?

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – N/A

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS - The change appears to have no financial impact.

ATTACHMENTS – N/A

Questions/Discussion:

- It would have been good if the Council had invited Parks to make the change at the same time they did.
- Commissioners were all supportive of the suggestion. Bring it forward next week.

VI. EAST MAIN STREET PARK DESIGN – Director Houston

SITUATION - An update on the East Main Park Design options and process.

BACKGROUND - East Main Street Park began as a replacement park for the YMCA Park that was sold to the YMCA. A masterplan was completed. The masterplan identified concerns from the westerly neighbors opposing a park vehicular entrance off Abbot Street.

This was addressed by moving the vehicular entrance to East Main Street. This required the City to annex the property into city limits because the County does not permit vehicular entrances off an arterial road. The annexation of the parkland into city limits requires street improvements to be completed on East Main Street. These improvements are estimated at $750,000 to $1 million.

At the July 9, 2025 Park Commission business meeting, staff were directed to follow up with Community Development and Public Works then report back to the Park Commission.

ASSESSMENT - The Planning Commission and City Council would review a modified proposal in consideration of the criteria for annexation (AMC 18.5.1). AMC 18.5.8.050.E requires that adequate transportation facilities be provided for the proposed development. It is a possibility, per code, to modify the requirements.

A public open house is planned for August 14, 2025. This will serve to update the community on the phasing of the project and get input on the options to align the project with the current budget. Staff have reviewed Park's Capital funds and projected the ending balance after FY26-27 capital projects are executed. The current projection is roughly $500,000 to $700,000. These funds could be transferred to this project, but it would impact future capital projects.

Staff is proposing the following options for review at the public meeting:

- Terminate/Cancel Project
- Identify reductions to Phase I
- Consider change in parking lot location and seek modification of annexation conditions to remove East Main Street improvements
- Cancel other projects and/or use capital project fund reserves

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS - Staff will hold the public open house and then present the project to the City Council on August 18, 2025.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED - Adopted Capital Improvement Plan and item #1 in the Department Work Plan.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS - The adopted capital budget for the project is $2.5 million. The utilization of any additional capital funds, above the allocated budget, would require a budget amendment. This would impact the Department's ability to implement other capital projects this biennium and in the future.

ATTACHMENTS – N/A

Questions/Discussion

- Question regarding option #3 potentially insufficient funding to complete Phase I? A: It's possible that bids may come in higher than $3 million. Isn't that true for all options? A: Yes, but we would still have the $500 thousand.
- Creating an entrance off E Main may create more hazards for pedestrians/cyclists given there are no sidewalks.
- Any land use action can be challenged by an appeal to LUBA.
- With option 1 are there rules or regulations regarding use of side streets? A: A previous traffic study showed that the infrastructure could handle the increased traffic. The issue is annexation requirements.
- There was always going to be a pedestrian entrance off of Abbott. There would have been on street parking on Abbott to access the park regardless. Overall, the impact to the community will likely be kind of minimal. Especially depending on which amenities are put on that side of the park.
- If a City road touches a park, we have to make improvements? A: Correct. We need to get a variance from the City/Planning department to ***not*** make the improvements.
- Noted that the entrance to the park off Abbott aligns with a street, not a house so that the lights of cars exiting the lot wouldn't be shine right into someone's home.
- Likely 90 – 100 days before knowing if the variance might be accepted.

Next steps:

- Open house August 14
- Director Houston will present to Council August 18
- Bring the item to Park Commission for action at the September 10 regular business meeting

VII. **PARK PROTOCOL REVIEW - RECREATION – POOL** – Recreation Manager Flora

SITUATION & BACKGROUND - Staff are seeking feedback on two draft protocols for the Daniel Meyer Memorial Pool (DMP). Per the Policy Framework 1.01.001 approved at the July 9, Park Commission meeting, a protocol is "a written statement that provides direction on the operation of the Department's programs and services."

The draft protocols for review are:

2.04.001 Daniel Meyer Memorial Pool Staffing: This protocol outlines the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department's (APRD) guidelines for staffing the Daniel Meyer Memorial Pool (DMP) facility to ensure optimal safety for patrons, efficient operations, and effective resource management. Adherence to these guidelines is mandatory for all pool staff. The goal of these adjustments is to optimize staffing levels for patron safety, cost-effective operations, and responsible resource allocation.

2.04.002 Daniel Meyer Memorial Pool Daily Closure and Schedule Extension: This protocol outlines the APRD's criteria for temporary closure of the DMP facility to ensure the safety and well-being of patrons and staff, as well as to maintain cost-effective operations. It also outlines the criteria under which the pool facility may extend its operating hours beyond the regularly scheduled (daily) closing time.
Staff presented these draft protocols for feedback at the July 17, 2025 Recreation Division Advisory Committee meeting (RDAC). There were questions related to minimum staffing levels and requirements for OHA under letter:

V. Protocols

a. *Staffing Guidelines*

Minimum Staffing Levels: *In order for the pool to be opened for the public, staff levels must meet minimum requirements set by OHA and APRD Facility Emergency Action Plans (EAP). A properly qualified/certified staff member must be present for each of the roles outlined in any one DMP facility EAP.*

RDAC had no other questions or comments related to the documents

ASSESSMENT - These protocols help the Recreation Division team make quick decisions related to pool operations and staffing.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS - Staff are seeking feedback from the Commissioners related to these draft protocols. Once feedback has been received and incorporated, the protocol will be reviewed and signed off by the city attorney and the parks director.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED - 1.01.001 Policy Framework

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – N/A

ATTACHMENTS
2.04.001 Daniel Meyer Memorial Pool Staffing Draft Protocol
2.04.002 Daniel Meyer Memorial Pool Daily Closure and Schedule Extension Draft Protocol

Questions/Discussion:

- How is it managed if you anticipate only 25 people and more show up but there's only one lifeguard working? A: Try to always have three people working. They don't all have to be lifeguards, but they typically are.
- Noted that current state law is actually 1 lifeguard per 40 people.
- Will there be additional protocol for special events? A: Yes
- What happens if too many people show up? Do you make them wait, stop admitting people? Procedure should be included in the protocol.
- Bachman – make the change ad we don't need to see this again.

VIII. **LOOKAHEAD REVIEW** – Director Houston went over the Lookahead

- There won't be the Parks Director Perf. Review at the August biz meeting.
- There will be two Executive Sessions, first one at 4:45 for fifteen minutes, the second starting at 5 and going to 6
- There is a conflict with the October business meeting being at the same time as the ORPA Conference.

IX. **ADJOURNMENT** – Chair Bachman adjourned the meeting at 7:16 PM

Respectfully submitted by Nancy A. Mero Executive Assistant