



Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting Agenda

ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, July 10, 2024

Council Chambers - 6:00 PM

1175 E Main Street

To attend the meeting or to provide public input, see public participation instructions at the end of the agenda.

An Executive Session will be held immediately after the regular meeting Pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2)(e) to deliberate with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. APRC Business Meeting - April 10, 2024

III. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

V. CONSENT AGENDA

VI. DIRECTORS REPORT

VII. BUSINESS

1. Appointment of Parks and Recreation Director
2. City of Ashland New Website Update
3. David's Chair Route in Lithia Park

VIII. LOOKAHEAD REVIEW

1. Lookahead

IX. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

1. Liaison Report

X. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

1. RDAC Meeting July 18, in Person at Lithia Cabin, 4:00 PM
2. APRC Study Session August 7, Electronic Meeting via Zoom, 6:00 PM
3. APRC Business Meeting August 14, in Person at Council Chambers, 6:00 PM

XI. ADJOURNMENT

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Administrator's office at (541) 488-6002 (TTY phone number (800) 735-2900). Notification 72 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the meeting (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title I). Parks Commission meetings are broadcast live on Channel 9, or on CHARTER CABLE CHANNEL 180. Visit the City of Ashland's website at



Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting

Agenda

www.ashlandoregon.gov.

Public Participation Instructions

This meeting will be held in-person in Council Chambers 1175 E. Main St. Those who wish to provide oral testimony must attend the meeting and fill out a speaker request card. The public can view on Channel 9 or Channels 180 and 181 (for Charter Communications customers) or live stream via rvtv.sou.edu - select RVTV Prime.

Written testimony will be accepted via email sent to nancy.mero@ashland.or.us. Please include "**Public Testimony**" in the subject line. Written testimony submitted the Tuesday before the meeting by 11:00 am will be made available to the Parks Commissioners before the meeting. All testimony will be included in the meeting minutes.

**MINUTES FOR REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**

April 10, 2024

Council Chambers – 6:00 PM

1175 E Main St

Present: Commissioners Bachman (Chair), Landt (Vice Chair), Lewis, Adams, Seffinger, Interim Director Eldridge, Deputy Director Dials, Parks Superintendent Caldwell, Senior Services Superintendent Mettler, Sr. Administrative Analyst Terry, Executive Assistant Mero

Absent: None

I. CALL TO ORDER

Bachman called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. APRC Special Meeting February 7, 2024

Motion: Bachman asked for unanimous consent.

Vote: All yes. Minutes approved.

III. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Bachman: Adding to the agenda under VII. Business: Item c. Lithia Park Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Parking Improvements.

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

Ron Owen: Lives in Ashland and is the Chairperson of the Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club. Has 139 members and was formed on June 8, 2023. Founded to promote good sportsmanship in pickleball and foster quality of play, and to encourage adequate and available pickleball courts in Ashland. He's played at Rogue X in Medford. Phoenix and Talent are getting ready to update their pickleball courts. Courts in Ashland are by far the best in southern Oregon. The club works with local organizations that have an interest in pickleball in Ashland. They are in discussion with Ashland Parks and Recreation staff on topics they are interested in. Volunteer as instructors in local schools and in other organizations. We promote donations to the Ashland Parks Foundation pickleball fund, and we host pickleball events. Cori Frank is in charge of club membership and external affairs, and she has additional information that may be of interest to you. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Cori Frank: Want to piggyback on that I have been meeting with folks who have come and gone through Parks and Recreation, and we have been talking about various pickleball sites because it is extremely popular. We are having more and more players. I am very concerned about the summer because when you have to wait 20 – 30 minutes to play a game people get very frustrated, the locals, but we have visitors, and we understand that. Currently we have seven out of the eight courts that are fully useable. There's one court that really needs to be repaired. I am hoping that when the funds come through and you get the repairs done at Hunter Park you can piggyback on and maybe fix that one court at least so that we have eight fully functional courts. Would also like to see, and I notice Oak Knoll Golf Course is on the agenda at one time it was discussed that we would have some additional pickleball courts there and I'm really hoping at some point we actually have some indoor pickleball courts built there because it's quite windy out there. I also want to say we really appreciate particularly Rachel who keeps us updated and we've had some issues with noise, we know that, and she is working on getting some quiet balls tested which we are going to help with that of course. We also want to work with the City and Parks and Recreation to develop guidelines for use of the courts because they have gotten so popular, and we have had some abuses at the courts, and we don't want to have that. Thank you so much and we hope to see more pickleball courts.

Cat Gould: Good evening, my name is Cat Gould and I'm from Ashland. Here to give a quick update on what I've been up to at Ashland Pond. Since the Alameda fire tore through the Ashland Pond Area in 2020, we had a massive loss of amateur trees but also a clean slate in terms of the invasive weeds. As there was a lot of construction work going on right after that time installing the new pipe, I could see the weeds starting to get their foothold back in there, so I went into consultation with the Oregon Dept of Fish and Wildlife, Lomakatsi, the Fresh Water Trust, and City Parks staff to see what I could do to help the situation down there, so it didn't just end up a huge blackberry pile and another fire hazard for the future. Since last year, myself and other volunteers have put in up to 100 hours down at the Ashland Pond. We have recently planted 100 Oaks, 29 Bark[?] 10 Skunk bush, Nootka roses, Spireas, Black Cottonwoods, Maples and 16 Ponderosa, a total of 186 plants. What I would love from Parks is some support to irrigate those plants over the next two years until they are established. I have tried to talk with Freshwater Trust and most of the planting that they've got on down there they are pulling the irrigation at the end of this summer so it's not suitable to share the irrigation plan. One of the ideas I had is to have a large storage tank at top of that access road there right below the neighborhood which can get filled up with a City vehicle and just have a gravity fed irrigation system which would be really simple to apply. I would also love it if - I've spoken to Rick about this in the past - that the Pond was supposed to be designated a wildlife zone and there is a conflict between dogs that are not on leash and the wildlife down there. The birds are constantly getting scared off their nests and sometimes attacked. A muskrat got attacked this winter and I would love to see some signage down there to encourage people to be respectful of the wildlife and have their dogs on leash. So some signage and some irrigation, I would love that support. Thank you.

Bachman: I'm sure staff would be happy to work with you on those issues.

V. CONSENT

None

VI. DIRECTORS REPORT Interim Director Eldridge

- Citywide Facility Condition Assessment. Cost shared between APRC and the City, primarily Public Works. (APRC cost \$71,471) Every facility within Parks was assessed. Supervisor Wes Casale led the contractors all week.
- New City of Ashland Website. A huge undertaking. Expected to go live May 21 or thereabouts. Staff from all City departments, including Parks, have been taking extensive trainings, up to three hours long, and working to get webpages up. Functionality for City and Parks staff is going to be incredible and it's going to be a big improvement for the public as well.
- Hiring: Just finishing up a round of interviews for an Office Assistant II for Rec. Almost ready to make an offer. Also in the process of hiring the raft of seasonal positions needed to run Parks for the summer, including Daniel Meyer pool staff, and staff to help with volunteer work parties and events.
- Very excited to formally welcome Brandon Terry to our team. Brandon is our new Senior Administrative Analyst. We are thrilled to have him. Brandon was born and raised in Ashland and went to Ashland High School. He went to U of O for his Bachelor's and then worked in Washington D.C. for the Architect of the Capitol, a small federal agency that is responsible for facility management on Capitol Hill. He moved back to Ashland a few years ago, continuing to telework, until this position came up.
- We have a new facilities team to replace Pathways contracted staff. One of their primary tasks is cleaning park bathrooms and removing trash. Parks have recently been plagued with vandalism, issues with the homeless population, and other destruction of property. To try to minimize such destructive activity, we decided to bring responsibility back in house. Ric Deckelman is supervising Jesse and Drew. The team is in the parks during nights, days, weekends, and holidays from 6:30 AM until about 8:30 PM. They unlock deadbolted restrooms each morning and lock them at night. This change has resulted in cost savings while providing full time work to members in our community.

Canceling the contract with Pathways (their costs went up 30% in the last several years) and a contract with Maksimum Security for locking/unlocking the Japanese Garden saved APRC about \$90,000. We are beginning to realize that a team of two is not sufficient and are considering adding another member to the Facilities team.

Bachman: Yesterday I was in Lithia Park around 5:00 going to a meeting at Com Dev and saw two gentlemen in security uniforms patrolling, and I knew that was coming back but didn't know when. That's the Police Department and probably the cadet program. So, in addition to what we're doing, we are getting more eyes, ears, and boots on the ground. Because APD is getting more funding they are able to provide security again.

Eldridge: There are also volunteer folks walking the parks. There is a meeting scheduled with APD to collaborate with Parks Facilities crew. They will be working together a lot.

- This Commission heard the DEIA assessment, and the number one biennium goal was best management practices to improve relations amongst coworkers, the community, the City, etc. Along those lines, in the last several weeks I have done four 'Lunch With Leslie' small team meetings/lunches. One with each of the three Parks Supervisor's teams and then one with Rec and Senior Services staff together. Relevant highlights: Commitment and caring for the community and the service provided; concern over budget limitations; not enough staff to do the job well; Recreation and Senior Services departments desperately need a marketing and outreach coordinator for their success; desire for more professional opportunities, certifications, and training.
- Summer Playguide is out! Swim lesson registration opens on Monday April 15. Best to go online to sign up as they sell out quickly. Examples of upcoming events: Rogue Valley Bike Swap Saturday April 27 12:00 – 2:30 PM; Children's Day at the Ashland Japanese Garden (AJG), May 5 from 11:00 AM-2:00 PM; Lithia Park guided walks are back for 2024. Initially, the free walks will take place Saturdays at 10:00 AM. May add Thursdays in the future.

Landt: What are the dates the AJG is closed?

Eldridge: This is an entire agenda item. It reopens this Saturday.

- Senior Services: There is now an electric wheelchair charger at the Center that can be used free of charge. Fabulous recognition in the Sneak Preview by way of an article by Beth Morris, a fitness instructor at the Senior Center. She teaches personalized strength and balance training for older adults and her classes are extremely popular.
- Update on the Ashland Forestlands Climate Change Adaptation Project. City of Ashland Wildfire Division is the lead. Cutting of trees began April 5. Most of the east side lower watershed trails are currently closed. There is a live map on the CoA website to check before going hiking/biking. It is extremely dangerous to enter the areas that are closed.

Adams: "Fell on Knee" trail is actually closed but is not signed. Where it intersects with Wonder, I have talked to two different trail users who, not knowing about the closure, turned right off of Wonder onto Fell on Knee and ran into felled trees and then had to go miles out of their way because there were no signs. (The lower part of the trail is marked, but not the upper part.) Someone should notify whoever does the signing.

- The real noise starts April 15. Helicopter logging begins, there will be logging trucks coming out of Timberline Terrace and up and down Walker. Parks is playing only a small supporting part in this project. Open Space Supervisor Minica and his crew graveled the private dirt road for logging trucks on the east side of Siskiyou Mountain Park. Also helped with some of the road closures.

Landt: Is the map of closed trails going to change as the project continues?

Eldridge: Yes, it is live.

- Update on Pioneer Hall and Community Center: Staff attended the final page turn of the engineering construction documents with Public Works and the engineering team ZCS that are working on the renovation. The RFP is out, closing on April 30, 2024. Estimates run from summer to fall of this year for the project start date. Public Works has engaged Parks at every turn to talk about the various needs we might have if we use these buildings. Both buildings will be retrofitted to make them ADA accessible.

Landt: Will the kitchen and restrooms be brought up to 21st or at least 20th century standards?

Eldridge: Both bathrooms in both buildings are being completely redone. The kitchen is a question mark. Possible supplementary move to replace all appliances and make it ADA compliant.

Seffinger: Regarding the work at the Community Center, there was a lot of concern about the hillside from the owners of the property nearby. Will the hillside be reinforced?

Eldridge: Fairly confident that a larger retaining wall is part of the plan. Will confirm.

VII. BUSINESS

a. Ashland Japanese Garden Koi Pond Improvements (Information) Parks Superintendent Caldwell

The AJG redesign was completed in June of 2023. Since that time there has been an excessive amount of algae growth in the Koi pond, compromising water quality for the fish. The work currently being done by Sage Hill Landscape will help eliminate the problem by installing equipment that will address the algae problem. They will also provide an operation and maintenance plan for staff to follow. The AJG is currently closed for the duration of the project. The closure began April 2 and is anticipated to end April 14, ahead of schedule! The work being done includes new pumps, filters, UV disinfection, and installation of a Koi "exerciser" jet manifold. Many thanks to the Ashland Parks Foundation for their support in providing all of the funding for this project!

Eldridge: Explained a Koi "exerciser" as basically a hot tub jet that shoots out air that the fish can swim into and against. So it increases circulation while cleaning and exercising the fish. Like a hamster wheel for Koi using a current.

Seffinger: Where are the fish being kept?

Caldwell: In Phoenix or Talent at Wishing Well. They are on sabbatical.

b. Oak Knoll Golf Course Update and Discussion (Information) Interim Director Eldridge

Eldridge invited Caldwell and Deputy Director Dials to chime in at any time. In February 2023 Commissioners directed staff to issue an RFP for management of the Oak Knoll Golf Course GC). Golf Automation was selected, and contract negotiations began in summer of 2023. We were unable to reach an agreement and negotiations were terminated. Now working on next steps.

Due to drought, a year ago the grass at the GC was all brown. Through the hard work of staff, especially Bill Miller and Jeremy Christensen, one year later the grass at the GC is once again beautiful and green. Players are returning to the course and revenues are rebounding. APRC is at an inflection point with the management of OKGC. We have an existing Golf Manager position on our org. chart with funding approved in the FY 23-25 biennium budget. Another option would be to put out another RFP.

To seek feedback, parks staff met with the Golf Management Advisory Committee and community members, including representatives from the HOA of the neighborhood surrounding the course, the men's and women's golf clubs, and the SOU golf coach. The belief is that the potential for the course is immense and that it could generate much more revenue. The budget is a limitation on that potential; however diversification of uses could help increase revenue as it did pre-COVID. With some variation everyone agreed that the GC needs coordinated, integrated on-site leadership as well as someone who can do marketing and development. Some feel that the budget should go into materials to continue to improve the course and/or to making temps into full time employees and giving raises to current staff rather than to hiring a new manager.

The GC has adequate TID water rights. It needs increased storage capacity. The retention pond holds about 370,000 gallons of usable water. At full capacity the pond can sustain approximately four days at full irrigation (fairways, tees, greens and roughs) and 21 days using a very conservative amount of irrigation limited to tees and greens. Increased storage capacity is an important next step. There are some jurisdictional and legal complexities to adding water storage and a feasibility study would be required.

Landt: What capacity could we get for how much money if we put in an additional water storage? Is that what the feasibility study would be for?

Caldwell: The feasibility study would be for looking at location, legalities, how much storage, what water, where, etc.

Eldridge: It sounds like you're describing a cost benefit analysis of putting in a pond, which is doable.

Landt: It is critical to know if adding storage makes sense/would pay off in the long term.

Bachman: Agree. It will require some input from the City as well. A big project that might need financing. Contingent on getting revenues up.

Seffinger: Much of the community surrounding the GC considers it their park. There was once talk of putting in a playground and a dog walk path. All our parks require money to maintain.

Eldridge: Yes, thank you, it is currently a multifunction park. Shouldn't be expected to have to pay for itself. Might need to be subsidized like all other parks.

Eldridge: BN 23-25 total budget for GC is approximately \$1,260,155. This includes personnel, materials and services, golf grounds, and utilities. This BN, all of the grounds maintenance for all parks has been removed from the actual item and been lumped into the Parks Division budget. Had to look at past budgets to come up with an approximation for GC grounds maintenance. This budgeting change hinders our ability to track expenditures from one park to the next. Would like to change it for the next BN.

GC revenues have varied a lot. COVID was actually a boon for parks. FY 2021 and 2022 saw GC revenues close to \$400,000. At that time the course was under dynamic management. Revenues dropped considerably in 2023 with the drought. We have already brought in more this year than in all of 2023 and expect that trend to continue with the GC in such great shape.

Dials: During FY 22, our highest revenue year, the restaurant was in operation, which added to the revenue.

Caldwell: There are no major plans right now. We need to figure out where we're going with management of the GC.

Adams: Has played exactly one game of golf, knows little to nothing about the game. The primary issue is water as we cannot afford to irrigate the GC without TID water. This year looks good so far with Emigrant Lake full and seemingly plenty of TID water. We will be able to maintain the miraculous work staff has done in bringing the GC back. Currently it looks like it's costing us a half million dollars to keep the course open. Even in 2022 with great revenue we still had to pay half of that. Hard on our current budget. Want to keep the golf course affordable, too. Suggested a community input session for people who know about golf to collect ideas like a par three course which would take far less land and less water. This year looks like a good one for the GC, but climate change is real.

Lewis: Has served on the golf course subcommittee for years. Got to know the course and the passionate golf community. Does not want to see the course management given away to an outside group lacking community commitment.

c. Lithia Park ADA Parking Improvements Parks Superintendent Caldwell (Information)

Caldwell: Staff initiated this project. Would like input from Commissioners. The project would see ADA parking added in Lithia Park off Winburn Way adjacent to the pickleball courts and across the street from the Japanese Garden. There is a lack of ADA parking in this part of Lithia Park. Between the Butler Bandshell and the swim reservoir there is only one designated ADA parking spot (by the Lithia Cabin). We contracted with Adkins Engineering. If we complete the design, the total cost will be \$35,000. For that cost, we get a set of construction drawings and informational help during construction. So far, we have expensed \$3 - \$5k for preliminary drawings. There are drawings of three options. The design engineers are tasked with assuring the plan(s) meet all State and City requirements. One option has angled parking spots. Typically, the angles match the traffic flow. Currently Winburn Way has two-way traffic flow so the suggested spots would be angled to traffic heading east on Winburn (toward the plaza). There is a connecting ADA path on all the options. Pictures were shown of the location. It is right up against the volleyball court.

Adams: Is the intention that all of the parking spots would be designated ADA?

Caldwell: Yes.

Seffinger: Is a loading zone where people could be dropped off in the works?

Caldwell: Hadn't considered that as I'm not familiar with loading zones.

Seffinger: They use them at places like OSF. A driver can drop off a passenger and then go find parking.

Caldwell: Our intent was to provide parking spots, but we can consider a loading zone as well.

Adams: The angled parking doesn't make sense in this case as the traffic flow in the area is very slow. Imagine most of the traffic accessing this parking lot will be coming from the downhill side, forcing them to make a 270 degree turn into the parking lot or having to drive up the street and turn around.

Landt: The plans seem to suggest that Winburn Way will always be as it currently is. Referenced the Draft Lithia Park Master Plan (LPMP) proposal of having Winburn Way be one way and only 10 feet wide which would prevent backing in and out of a parking lot. The Draft LPMP suggests another option where Winburn would be 20 or 22 feet wide but even that would be tight for a parking lot. There needs to be more planning. Consider hiring a landscape architect. Agrees angled parking would not work on that side of Winburn. Should explore another option. Also, why are there two right angles in the sidewalk? Makes using/pushing a wheelchair very difficult.

Eldridge: Assume it is due to root and drip lines of trees.

Caldwell: That was our direction, but you could achieve that with a straight or curved path as well.

Landt: A curved path would be good. Non-handicapped people are going to cut the right angles every time creating wear outside of the sidewalk.

Eldridge: We have a very rarely used Volleyball Court. Would setting the parking lot further off the road into the volleyball court area address some of your concerns?

Landt: It potentially could but would use up a lot more space, paving a lot more paradise to do it. But there might be a good reason to do it.

Seffinger: Would like to follow up on the idea of a loading zone in the interim. In a way it would provide more use as people wouldn't be parking there all day. Asking staff to look at that.

Bachman: An excellent idea if the drop off point would be closer to the ADA access to the AJG.

Eldridge: Commissioner Seffinger, is the loading zone in addition to some ADA parking or in place of?

Seffinger: [Could not hear response.]

Adams: Wheelchair users can also drive so a drop off zone wouldn't work for all. The volleyball court is not used much though it might be altered to be more desirable, like the courts at Garfield Park. We might consider some sort of fence around the court to prevent balls from being spiked onto vehicles.

Landt: Thinks putting the parking lot on the Japanese Garden side of Winburn should be considered despite the grade. At the next meeting would like to talk about possible changes to Winburn Way and how that would interface with the proposed ADA parking.

Bachman: Would like staff to consider putting on the Lookahead before the meeting dates.

Eldridge: We can do that.

Bachman: We are thinking only of wheelchairs, but there is a whole spectrum of mobility issues making the drop off idea sound better and better. Maybe even carving into the hill a bit to pull off Winburn Way while dropping people off. We need both. Part of a bigger plan to talk about the LPMP.

Landt: This project is complicated enough that involving a landscape architect would be valuable.

VIII. LOOKAHEAD REVIEW

Eldridge reviewed the Lookahead. Announced the May 8 Business Meeting is being canceled and the May 1 Study Session will be a Special Meeting.

IX. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

Landt: Would like to talk about the modifications to the configuration of Winburn Way at the May or June meeting to get some clarity so that staff can move ahead on the ADA parking. We would be preapproving one part of the LPMP ahead of the entire thing.

Bachman: Would that be an action item?

Landt: It may need to be an information item so that the public has more time to be involved.

Bachman: So, an information item in May and action in June.

Eldridge: So, Commissioner Landt you're going to prepare that item, because we have nothing.

Landt: Yes, though I may need some staff help. We can talk about it offline.

Seffinger: I would like some clarification. When we talk about Winburn Way, there is a desire from the biking community to have a path through that area. The dog walking community would also like to have someplace with access to Lithia Park. Winburn Way was at one point talked about for those kinds of things. Will that be part of the discussion?

Landt: That is the discussion.

X. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

a. ~~APRC Study Session May 1, Electronic Meeting 6:00 PM~~— APRC Special Meeting May 1, in person 6:00 PM in Council Chambers.

b. ~~APRC Business Meeting May 8, in Person at Council Chambers 6:00 PM~~ - canceled

c. Ashland Senior Advisory Committee May 13, Electronic Meeting 3:30 PM

d. Recreation Division Advisory Committee May 16, in Person at the Lithia Park Cabin 4:00 PM

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Bachman adjourned the meeting at 7:36 PM

Respectfully submitted by
Nancy A. Mero, Executive Assistant

ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

340 S PIONEER STREET • ASHLAND, OREGON 97520

COMMISSIONERS:

Rick Landt
Jim Bachman
Justin Adams
Jim Lewis
Stefani Seffinger



AshlandParksandRec.org
parksinfo@ashland.or.us

STAFF MEMORANDUM

TO: Ashland Parks and Recreation Commissioners (APRC)

FROM: Rachel Dials, APRC Acting Director

DATE: July 10, 2024

SUBJECT: Appointment of Parks and Recreation Director (Action)

Situation

The Commission will discuss and vote on the appointment of Rocky Houston as Director of Ashland Parks and Recreation. Rocky Houston was recommended by the hiring panel which included the Parks Commissioners. On July 10, the Commission is being asked to proceed with a motion, a second, and final voting decision to hire the director and affirm the City Manager's execution of the employment contract.

Background

The City of Ashland conducted a search for the next Parks and Recreation Director to replace Michael Black who held the role for just over nine years. For the past nine months, APRC has been led by Interim Director Leslie Eldridge.

On March 6, 2024, the Commission voted to have the City of Ashland's Human Resource (HR) Department conduct a search for the new Parks and Recreation Director (as opposed to an outside firm). The HR Department followed through on this directive and began the search for a Director in March of 2024. The HR Department received 19 applications. Of those 19 candidates, six were interviewed. Of those six candidates, three were invited back for in-person interviews with a hiring panel that included City staff and the Parks Commissioners.

The interviews were held in a series of executive sessions under ORS 192.660 (2) (a) and in coordination with our Human Resources Department. The executive sessions were held on April 19, April 24, and May 10. These were noticed on the City of Ashland website.

Proposed Candidate

Rocky Houston comes to APRC with a wide range of knowledge and experience. Rocky is a seasoned professional in natural resource management, previously serving as the Parks & Lands Division Manager

for Clark County Public Works. Since July 2021, Rocky has overseen 13,000 acres of natural areas and developed parks, managing a budget of \$40 million and a diverse team of 96 full-time and seasonal staff along with a robust volunteer program.

Rocky's tenure at Clark County Public Works involves operating 87 developed parks across the Greater Clark Park District and regional areas within the 632 square miles of Clark County. His initiatives include the Greater Clark Parks District, Regional Parks system, Parks Planning and Development Program, Noxious Weeds Program, Conservation Futures Program, Forestry Program and Short Line Railroad. Additionally, he managed the division's budget and oversaw six advisory committees, representing the division at various community events and presentations.

Prior to his role with Clark County, Rocky served as the Parks Department Director & Lands Department Director for Douglas County, OR, from July 2016 to July 2021. There, he was responsible for 69 parks across a 3,000-acre area, managing budgets, coordinating staff activities and overseeing real property transactions and forestry management.

From April 2004 to June 2016, Rocky was the State Trails Coordinator for the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department in Salem, OR. He managed the State Parks trails program, including planning, design, development and construction, as well as a grant program providing up to \$7 million annually to various land managers.

Rocky holds an Executive Masters of Public Administration from Portland State University, a Bachelor of Science in History and Psychology from Western Oregon University, and a Project Management Professional Certificate from the Project Management Institute. His exemplary work has earned him several awards, including the Safety Award (2019) and Asset Management Award (2018) from the Oregon Recreation & Parks Association.

He has served on numerous committees, such as the Oregon Coast Trail Gap Project, Oregon Recreation and Parks Association Board, Scenic Byway Committee, Oregon Recreation Trails Advisory Council and Oregon Scenic Bikeway Committee, demonstrating his commitment to enhancing public parks and recreation facilities. Additionally, Rocky has contributed to community projects and initiatives, such as the Capital Futbol Club in Salem, OR, where he served as Director of Operations and was instrumental in the development and management of a 40-acre soccer complex.

Proposed Motion

I move to appoint Rocky Houston as Director of Parks and Recreation on behalf of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission. I move to acknowledge that the City Manager executed the agreement prematurely when the HR Director tendered the document to management. We ratify the attached employment agreement in support of hiring Rocky Houston.

Attachment

Parks Director Employment Agreement

**CITY OF ASHLAND
EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT
DIRECTOR OF PARKS & RECREATION**

This Employment Agreement ("Agreement") is entered into between the City of Ashland, an Oregon municipal corporation ("City"), and Rocky Houston ("Employee"). This Agreement is effective as of July 15, 2024, and shall remain in force for the length of the employment. The Agreement may be renegotiated at any time, subject to mutual agreement.

1. POSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1.1 The City, acting with the approval of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission ("Commission"), hereby agrees to employ Employee as the Director of Parks & Recreation to perform the functions and duties specified in the job description for the position, and to perform such other legally and ethically permissible and proper duties and functions as the Commission or the City Manager shall from time-to-time assign. The Director of Parks & Recreation shall devote full time to the performance of his duties.
- 1.2 Except as may be provided otherwise by the Ashland City Charter the Ashland Municipal Code and other applicable law, or the City's agreement with any other person, Employee shall have the authority to establish internal rules and procedures for the Parks and Recreation operations, which the Employee deems necessary for the efficient and effective operations.

2. EMPLOYMENT TERM

The term of employment under this Agreement shall commence on July 15, 2024, and shall terminate under the conditions of Section 3.

3. TERMINATION

The employment of the Employee may only be terminated under the following circumstances:

- 3.1. Breach of Agreement: The City may terminate the Employee's employment for a material breach of this Agreement that remains uncured for a period of thirty (30) days after written notice from the City.
 - 3.1.1 The City agrees to provide Employee a reasonable opportunity to cure all substantive criticisms, complaints, and suggestions with respect to Employee's performance of their duties and services pursuant to this Agreement.
- 3.2. Violation of Law, Policy, or Malfeasance: The City may terminate the Employee's employment for the violation of any criminal law, core employment policy, or for malfeasance outside the scope of their employment.

3.2.1 The term "core employment policy" refers to the fundamental principles and guidelines that regulate employee conduct, reflecting the organization's core values and culture. These policies encompass principles such as respect, honesty, integrity, teamwork, and professionalism.

3.2.2 The term "malfeasance" refers to the intentional or deliberate commission of an illegal or wrongful act, and includes misappropriation, dishonesty, breach of trust, insubordination, neglect of duty, failure to perform duties in a manner that is consistent with applicable law, or committing any violation of City policies or standards that the City deems a serious violation; or engaging in other acts or omissions demonstrating a disregard for the interests of the City.

3.3 Severance Agreement. In the event Employee is dismissed by the City, with the consent of the Commission, during the term of this Agreement, and Employee is not being dismissed for any reason set forth in subsection 3.2, the City agrees to offer Employee a severance agreement and 90-day notice. Such severance agreement shall not be unreasonably withheld. The amount of the severance pay to be offered to Employee in the severance agreement shall be equal the number of months Employee has been employed up to a maximum of six (6) months times the Employee's base salary at the time of dismissal.

3.4 If the Employee resigns or accepts another position within the city organization, the Employee forfeits their right under the terms for severance pay herein unless the Parties mutually agree otherwise.

4. COMPENSATION

4.1. Base Salary: Employee shall receive a salary equivalent to Step 7 City Director salary schedule. The City agrees to annually increase the monthly salary and/or other benefits of the Director of Parks & Recreation in the same percentage as may be accorded to other Management and Confidential Employees of the City.

4.2. Car Allowance: The Employee shall receive a monthly car allowance of \$350.

4.3. Additional Benefits: In addition to the base salary and car allowance, the Employee shall be entitled to:

4.3.1 Administrative Leave: Employee is entitled to 40 hours of Administrative Leave in July of each year.

4.3.2 Vacation Accrual: Employee shall accrue vacation leave at a rate of 5 hours per month.

4.3.3 Professional Development: The City shall provide support for professional organizational memberships and financial support for Employee to travel to professional organizations relating to the Parks and

Recreation Department Head position, in representation of the City of Ashland.

4.3.4 Deferred compensation: The City shall provide a deferred compensation match of \$50 per month.

5. HEALTH INSURANCE

Employee will receive a front-loaded bank equal to 6 months of accrued vacation time and 6 months of accrued sick time. In the event the employee leaves employment prior to working the full 6 months, any vacation time taken will be owed back to the City and paid in the form of a payroll deduction from the final check. The Employee's vacation accrual rate will be adjusted so that the Employee accrues vacation at the same rate as other City Department Heads. Employee shall be entitled to the same health benefit package available to any other City Department Head. Except as modified by this Agreement, Employee shall be entitled to receive the same fringe benefits (including HRA-VEBA), holidays, and working conditions as all other current full-time, regular employees working in the Ashland Parks & Recreation Department, including any subsequent amendments thereto.

6. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

With the assistance of the Human Resources Department, the Commission shall review and evaluate the performance of the employee at least once annually. The Employee shall receive a written copy of the performance evaluation and be provided with an adequate opportunity to discuss details and recommendations of the evaluation. At that time, the Commission may arrange for additional opportunities to have assigned members of the Commission to meet with the Employee to discuss compliance with evaluation recommendations.

7. PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY AND BONDING

The City agrees that, to the maximum extent permitted by law, it shall defend, hold harmless, and indemnify the Employee from and against any costs, expenses, demands, claims, suits, actions, or awards incurred in connection with or arising out of an alleged act or omission occurring in the performance of the Employee's duties in their official capacity, provided the incident arose while the Employee was acting within the scope of their duties.

8. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

This Agreement constitutes the entire understanding between the parties with respect to the Employee's employment during the specified term and supersedes all prior agreements, representations, and understandings, whether written or oral.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement as of the date first above written.

CITY OF ASHLAND

EMPLOYEE

Sabrina Cotta

06/06/2024

By: Sabrina Cotta,
Interim City Manager

Date

Rocky Houston

Rocky Houston (Jun 6, 2024 13:17 PDT)

06/06/2024

Name:

Date

By: Jim Bachman,
On behalf of APRC

Date

Can 3

Approved as to form,
Carmel Zahran, Assistant City Attorney
6.28.24

Parks Director Employment Agreement

Final Audit Report

2024-06-06

Created:	2024-06-06
By:	Molly Taylor (molly.taylor@ashland.or.us)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAA6luzgc__bk_yh3aCzm_0WF14CZgOeZav

"Parks Director Employment Agreement" History

-  Document created by Molly Taylor (molly.taylor@ashland.or.us)
2024-06-06 - 3:58:15 PM GMT
-  Document emailed to Rocky Houston (rockylhouston@gmail.com) for signature
2024-06-06 - 3:58:19 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by Rocky Houston (rockylhouston@gmail.com)
2024-06-06 - 8:16:52 PM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Rocky Houston (rockylhouston@gmail.com)
Signature Date: 2024-06-06 - 8:17:20 PM GMT - Time Source: server
-  Document emailed to Sabrina Cotta (sabrina.cotta@ashland.or.us) for signature
2024-06-06 - 8:17:22 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by Sabrina Cotta (sabrina.cotta@ashland.or.us)
2024-06-06 - 9:09:48 PM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Sabrina Cotta (sabrina.cotta@ashland.or.us)
Signature Date: 2024-06-06 - 9:09:57 PM GMT - Time Source: server
-  Agreement completed.
2024-06-06 - 9:09:57 PM GMT



ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

340 S PIONEER STREET • ASHLAND, OREGON 97520

COMMISSIONERS:

Rick Landt

Jim Bachman

Justin Adams

Jim Lewis

Stefani Seffinger



541.488.5340

AshlandParksandRec.org

parksinfo@ashland.or.us

STAFF MEMORANDUM

TO: Ashland Parks and Recreation Commissioners

FROM: Rachel Dials, APRC Acting Director

DATE: July 10, 2024

SUBJECT: City of Ashland New Website Update (Information)

Situation

After a competitive sealed bid proposal process, on August 15th, 2023, the City Council approved a contract with CivicPlus LLC for website development. Over the last several months the city has worked to transition the website to the new platform with a focus on ease of use and cleaning up the website to essential information. This transition includes Civic Clerk; a new agenda management module to be utilized by all commissions and committees.

City Communications Officer Dorinda Cottle and I will give an overview of the new website focusing on Parks and Recreation website functions.

ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

340 S PIONEER STREET • ASHLAND, OREGON 97520

COMMISSIONERS:

Rick Landt

Jim Bachman

Justin Adams

Jim Lewis

Stefani Seffinger



541.488.5340

AshlandParksandRec.org

parksinfo@ashland.or.us

STAFF MEMORANDUM

TO: Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Rachel Dials, APRC Acting Director

DATE: July 10, 2024

SUBJECT: David's Chair Route in Lithia Park (Information)

Situation

At the Study Session on June 5th, 2024 staff presented information on the Davids Chair program (<https://davidschair.org/>) that the City and Parks will be implementing later this year. At the meeting Commissioners asked staff to bring back information regarding routes in Lithia Park where the track chair could operate.

The goal of the Davids Chair program is to allow someone with mobility issues to get to areas in the park that they otherwise would not have access to.

Recently staff did some testing on the Lithia Park trails and will present a draft map that the City of Ashland GIS department has been assisting with. The draft map is still in process and will be presented at the meeting.

Staff will be seeking feedback from the Commissioners.

		Information	Action	Lead Staff / Commissioner or Entity Responsible
7/10	Parks Commission Business Meeting Council Chambers 6:00 PM			
	Appointment of Parks and Recreation Director (Action)		X	Commissioner Bachman
	Update on New Website (Information)	X		Communications Officer Cottle
	David's Chair Route in Lithia Park (Information)	X		Acting Director Deputy Dials
8/7	Parks Commission Study Session (Zoom) 6:00 PM			
8/14	Parks Commission Business Meeting Council Chambers 6:00 PM			
	Envision Bear Creek Presentation by Alta Planning + Design (Information)	X		APRC Director
	Review Policy on Advisory Committees and Management Advisory Committees (possible action)		X	APRC Director
9/4	Parks Commission Study Session (Zoom) 6:00 PM			
	Update on Pickleball Use (Information)			Acting Director Dials
	APRC Advisory and Management Advisory Committees			
7/8/2024	Ashland Senior Advisory Committee - (Ashland Senior Center 3:30 PM)			Senior Services Superintendent Mettler
7/18/2024	Recreation Division Advisory Committee - (Lithia Cabin 4:00 PM)			Acting Director Dials
9/6/2024	Ashland Trails Advisory Committee - (Lithia Cabin 9:00 AM)			APRC Director
TBD	Ashland Japanese Garden MAC - (Lithia Cabin 2:00pm)			APRC Director
TBD	Bee City USA MAC			Acting Director Dials
TBD	Current Parks, Conservation, and Maintenance MAC			Parks Superintendent Caldwell
	Council Business / Budget Meetings/Commissions			
7/9/2024	Planning Comission Public Hearing on Annexation of East Main Street Park Land Into the City of Ashland (Council Chambers 7:00 PM)			Brandon Goldman
8/13/2024	Planning Commission Findings on Annexation of East Main Street Park Land Into the City of Ashland			Brandon Goldman
9/17/2024	Council First Reading East Main Park Annexation			Brandon Goldman/APRC Director
10/1/2024	Council Second Reading East Main Park Annexation			Brandon Goldman/APRC Director
	Ongoing APRC Priority Projects and Work			
	East Main Park (GOAL #3 East Main Park)			
	Daniel Meyer Pool (GOAL #2 Improve Public Aquatics)			
	Ice Rink Chiller Replacement			
	Salmon Safe Certification			
	Lithia ADA Parking			Parks Superintendent Caldwell
	Bandshell Improvements (GOAL #9 Support opportunities for events)			
July	Presentation to Selection Panel: OPRD Grant Applications Rehabilitate Hunter Park Tennis Courts			
July	Presentation to Selection Panel: OPRD Grant Applications (GOAL #3 East Main Park)			
	System Development Charges			
June/July	Summer Events (GOAL #9 Support opportunities for events)			Acting Director Dials
May	Lithia Bridge Inspections			Parks Superintendent Caldwell
July	City Website Update			Acting Director Dials
June	RFP for Butler Perozzi Restoration			Parks Superintendent Caldwell
Ongoing	Hiring			
	Annual Reports			
	Ashland Parks Foundation Annual Report (November)			APF President
	Standard Memorial Report (Program on Hold)			
	Advisory Committee & Management Advisory Committee reports (December)			
	Volunteers in Parks Report (February)			Volunteer and Event Coordinator Shelton