



MINUTES FOR SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING

PARK COMMISSION

October 1, 2025

Council Chamber, 1175 E Main – 6:00 PM

Commissioners Present: Gardiner, Weiner, Bachman (Chair), Adams, and Landt (Vice Chair) joined electronically via Zoom at approximately 6:10 PM.

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

Absent: None

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Bachman called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM
- II. **ROLL CALL** – Commissioners Gardiner, Weiner, Bachman, and Adams present.
- III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 1. Park Commission Study Session September 3, 2025
 2. Park Commission Regular Business Meeting September 10, 2025

Chair Bachman asked for unanimous consent to approve the minutes. No objections. Unanimous consent granted by Gardiner, Bachman, Adams, and Weiner. Minutes approved.

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

V. **PUBLIC FORUM** – None

VI. **CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Trails Advisory Committee Bylaws

Motion: I move to approve the consent agenda.

Motion: Weiner

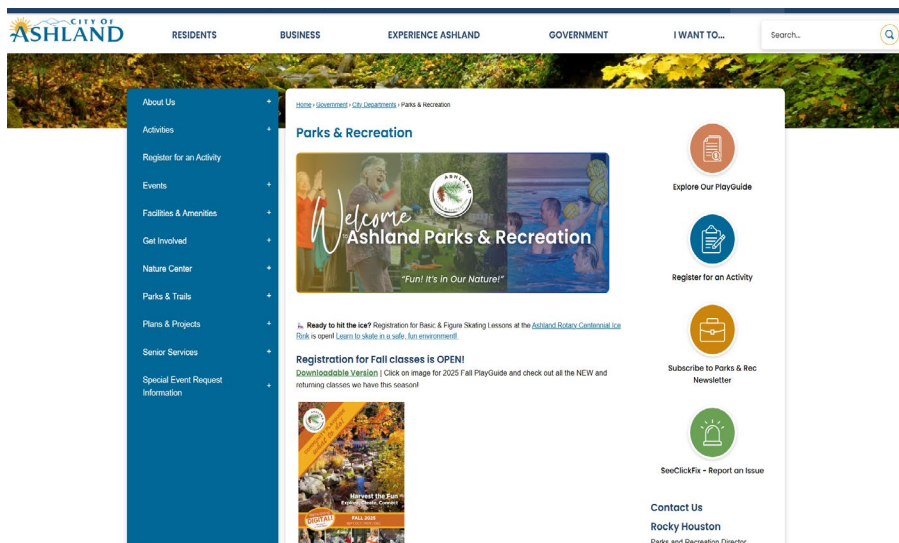
Second: Adams

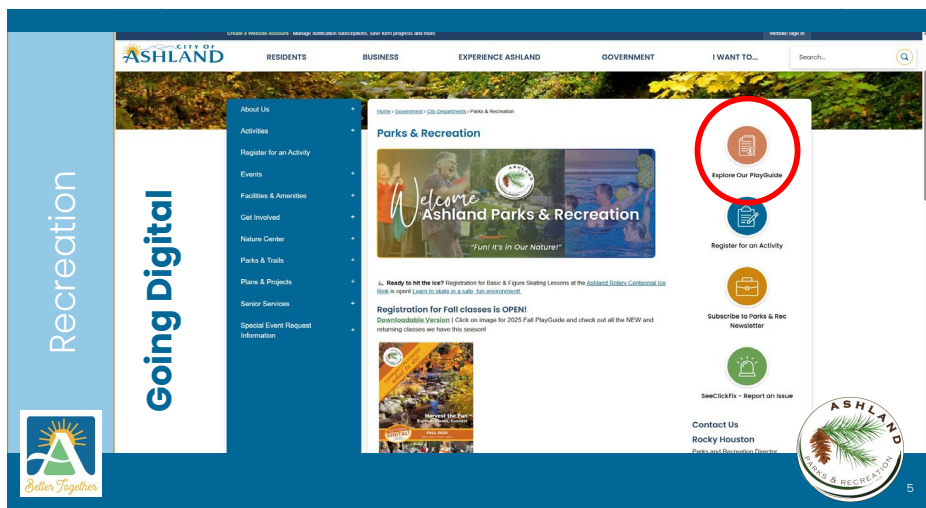
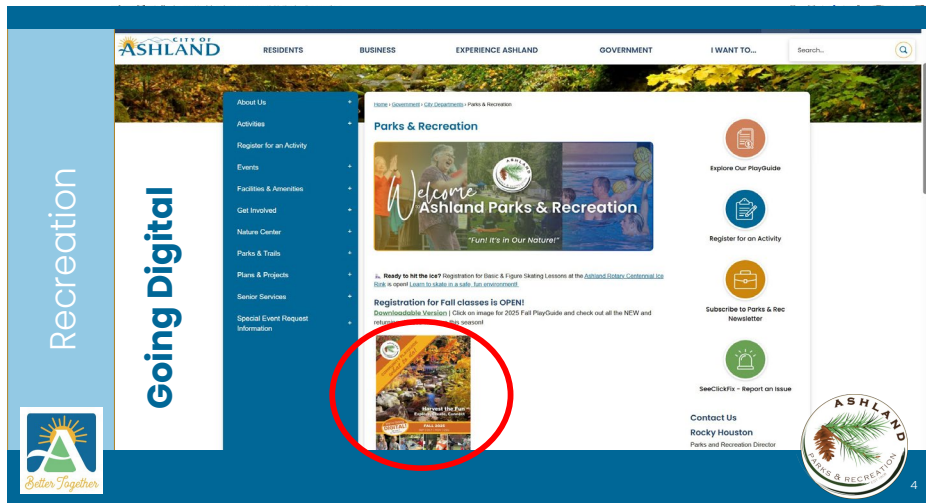
Vote:

<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>		

VII. DIRECTORS REPORT – Director Houston

Houston focused his report on the Playguide going digital/how to access it online.





Recreation

Going Digital



Special Events for Families

REISHUN JAPANESE GARDEN

Otsukimi Event

Join us for a Japanese Festival featuring the autumn moon. Featuring the garden illuminated at dusk, along with tea service, a bento ceremony demonstration and other family friendly activities.

Sunday | October 5

Come experience the Japanese Garden in its shining colors this Fall. Open 7 days a week.

Summer Hours
Late May - Oct 1 | 10am to 5pm
Winter Hours
November - April | 10am to 5pm

Please scan code or visit AshlandParksandRec.org for more information.

RETURN OF THE SALMON FAMILY FIELD DAY

Come join us to celebrate the return of the salmon to Bear Creek! Hands-on learning stations, live close studies of salmon life cycles, environmental education, pollinators, and water quality.

FREE SATURDAY 10AM-2PM OCT 18

North Mountain Park | 630 N. Mountain Ave

Ashland Parks and Recreation 2022 Fall PlayGuide | 641.688.6240 | The Grove at 1105 E Main St

Youth Programs Up to 18

For full program descriptions and to register, scan code or visit AshlandParksandRec.org/Youth. Registration is required for all programs, unless otherwise indicated.

ADAPTED PROGRAMS

All Abilities Gaming Social - FREE

Join us for an evening of fun where participants of all abilities can connect, bond, and play in a safe, supportive environment. Games include board games, card games, and more. With a focus on social skills and teamwork, this program is designed to help youth build confidence and make friends.

Fast track to bring your own games and consider to share. Refreshments are provided. Please notify staff of allergies in your online registration.

Activities are supported by our experienced community partners from Autism Society of Oregon and Bridge Community.

Autism Society

ART & CULTURE

Fun with Face Painting - \$35 (small pre-reg)

Learn about your nose, shoulders, stomach, and feet and how to use them. We will use your face to create a masterpiece on a table. Students will leave the class with a basic understanding of painting with watercolor paints, and will be encouraged to use their creativity.

Sixtyfour Discovery Circus - \$20

Spent a full day exploring, exploring, and learning. Join us for a day of discovery, learning, and fun. We will be exploring around the park and your own self-expression.

Register Today!
AshlandParksandRec.org

ART & CULTURE

I Can Play Guitar and Ukulele! - \$50 (4 classes)

Whether you are a beginner or looking to improve your skills, this program is for you. We will be learning the basics of guitar and ukulele, and you will be able to play along with us. This program is designed to help youth build confidence and make friends.

ART & CULTURE

Nature, Arts & Language for Little - \$20 (small pre-reg)

Whether you are a beginner or looking to improve your skills, this program is for you. We will be learning the basics of nature, arts, and language, and you will be able to play along with us. This program is designed to help youth build confidence and make friends.

NATURE & GREEN LIVING

Nature, Arts & Language for Little - \$20 (small pre-reg)

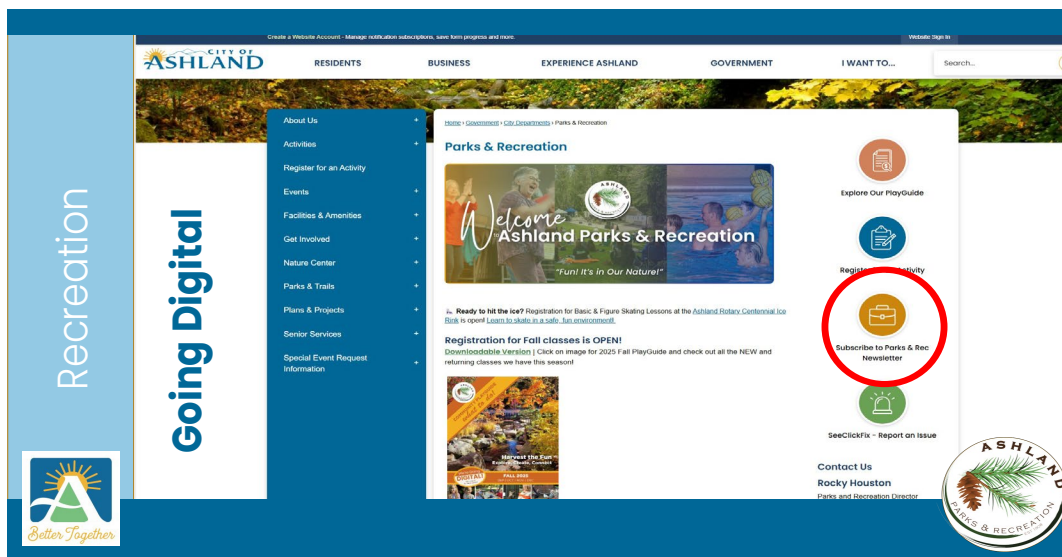
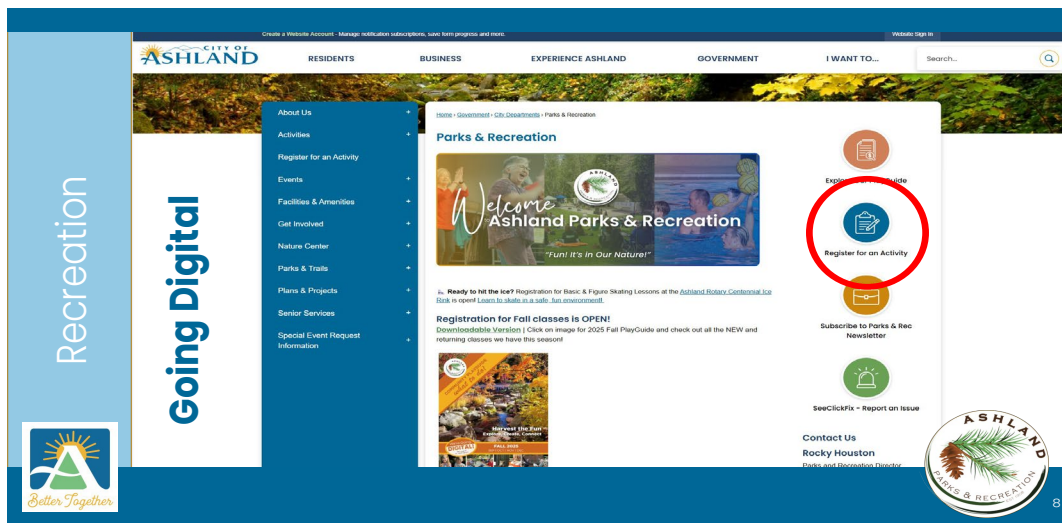
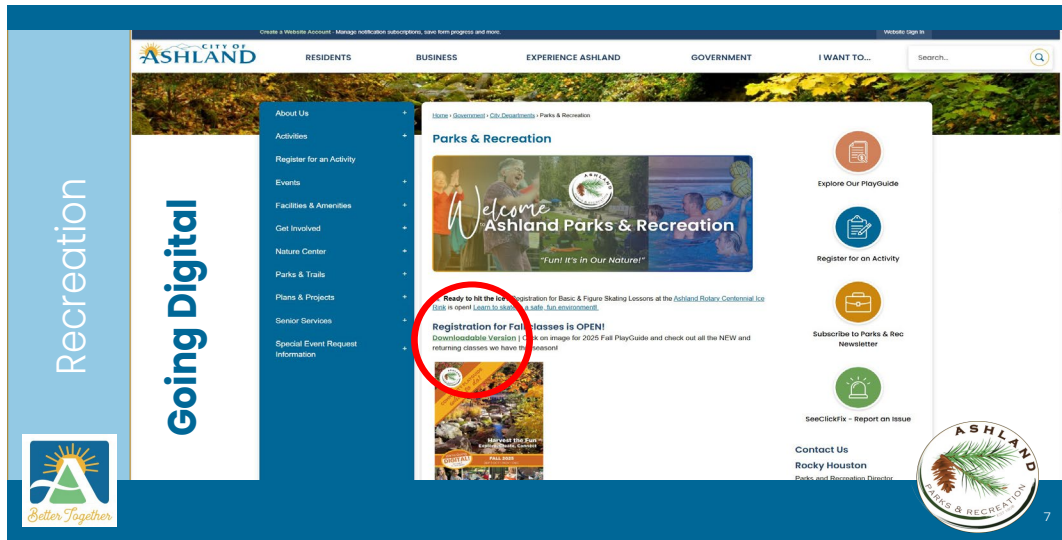
Whether you are a beginner or looking to improve your skills, this program is for you. We will be learning the basics of nature, arts, and language, and you will be able to play along with us. This program is designed to help youth build confidence and make friends.

Return of the Salmon - Family Field Day

AshlandParksandRec.org | Instagram or Facebook @AshlandParksandRec | Facebook.com/AshlandParksandRec



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Questions/Discussion:

- Do other communities use an online class registration platform? A: It's mixed. The City has gone to a digital newsletter, and the Department made the decision to do the same in part for budgetary reasons. Rec team is tracking responses. Medford still sends out a guide; other cities are all digital.
- Concern would be that patrons don't know about the change and participant numbers could go down.
- We are going to send a postcard in the Spring as a reminder and employ additional methods for alerting patrons that classes/programs are open for registration. Also sending out a digital newsletter.
- Is the cost mostly printing or postage? A: Both.
- Might consider printing some that people could pick up at the Grove.

VIII. **BUSINESS**

1. Acid Castle Adjacent Parcels – Director Houston

SUMMARY – Proposed consolidation of three (3) properties into Acid Castle Natural Area.

Staff have reviewed the history of the acquisition of these three (3) parcels and cannot identify actions that articulate that these should be stand-alone parks (natural areas). It appears that the intent was to develop a connected open space/natural area for passive recreation (trails), maintain habitat, and manage the City's viewshed.

The park user has no identification or experience change when they move from one parcel to another. The use and identification of the properties is generally referenced by the trail one is using or street access location. Staff's assessment is that the user experience would not change with a consolidation of these parcels under a single name.

Staff have not identified any management differences between these four (4) parcels. New Park rule signs are being planned for key pedestrian access points. A reference to the access point, within a single park naming convention, would be aligned with current identification and reduce signage requirements. Staff's assessment is that there would be no impact to park management with the consolidation of these parcels under a single name.

Staff recommends the consolidation of these three (3) parcels into Acid Castle Natural Area, with a newly defined park boundary.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – PROS Plan (in process)

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – No impact on the adopted operational budget has been identified.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(S)– Staff is seeking input on this proposal to assist in potential future Park Commission actions on this item.

ATTACHMENTS – Park Properties Map, Acid Castle: Proposed New Boundary Map

Questions/Discussion:

- Is there currently ongoing maintenance on all of these properties? A: Yes, primarily fuels reduction.
- Would the consolidation change maintenance needs? A: Will need to check in with Fire/Forestry Department on the number of feet of buffer required.
- No financial impact? A: Correct
- Drawing new circles on maps isn't the most important thing we can do.
- Within the Commission's jurisdiction to make this change.

2. Indoor Facility Use Policy – Deputy Director Dials

SUMMARY – This policy outlines the rules, requirements, and procedures for using indoor physical resources and/or facilities managed by the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department (APRD). Its purpose is to ensure all resources are used in a manner that aligns with the Department's mission and operational needs.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – Policy Framework – 1.01.001

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – N/A

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(S)– For information and feedback only.

ATTACHMENTS – Draft Policy 1.03.001 – Indoor Facility Use Policy

Questions/Discussion :

- Clarification requested on insurance requirements. Concern that it could be cost prohibitive for some users.
- Legal confirmed that it is necessary for renter's to have insurance. Otherwise they could be personally liable.
- In the policy does staff have the ability to lower the cost of the insurance?
A: Yes, staff can work with Legal on that.

- Currently do program instructors have to have the same level of insurance? A: Yes.
- Will facilities available for rent be listed in this Policy? A: the specifics will be handled in the procedures for the policy.
- Is it possible that insurance be made available through the City to make it convenient and easy for potential renters? Like with a car rental.
- This is about risk management. It would take Council and Legal to make a change to the City's current requirements for insurance.
- Suggestion to move xi. And xii. under Rental Guidelines to the General Directions.

Direction to Staff: After the suggested edits are made, the policy can go out for public comment.

3. Court Reservation Procedure – Recreation Manager Flora

SUMMARY – The purpose of this procedure is to establish consistency for reserving pickleball and tennis courts through Ashland Parks and Recreation Department (APRD). This procedure ensures fair and equitable access, supports recreational programming, and provides clarity regarding usage, etiquette, cancellations, and enforcement.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – N/A

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – Minimal. Court reservation fees are collected as revenue for APRD.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(S)– Staff are seeking feedback on this draft procedure. Staff will integrate the feedback received. The procedure will be reviewed and signed by the city attorney and the parks director.

ATTACHMENTS – Draft Court Reservation Procedure (see packet)

Questions/Discussion:

- This applies to just some courts? A: Yes, 2 Pickleball courts and 2 tennis courts.
- How will people know that courts are reserved? A: Working that out. Will ask people to have a copy/image of their permit. Will place signage on the courts that are available to rent.
- Procedure is light on details, would like more details.
- Sports teams using the courts have agreements in place with insurance and everything. Like the tennis team – falls outside of this procedure.

- Would like people who teach lessons on public courts to reserve and pay for the use of the courts.
- There will be a calendar online that will show reservations, too. Works as long as there is internet access.
- Minimum one hour maximum two hour per person per day.
- Initially courts will only be available to reserve two days a week within limited hours.
- How far in advance does a reservation have to be made? Can be set in the system. RH thought there would be a 24 hour restriction.
- Question about the policy barring vending in the Park? The violation is if the money is exchanged on the premises. Needs to be verified.
- Enforcement clause question? Does APRD staff have enforcement ability? APD enforces ordinances/writes tickets. Staff can cancel reservations/opt not to work with individuals for violation of procedures.
- Procedure is too light on details. They need to be written down. A: The details could be included but they might have to be updated when things change which would entail bringing it back to Commission. Staff was thinking that there could be a FAQ sheet that would deal with that. Maybe include **that** in the procedure.
- Procedure doesn't have to be voted on by Commission. Can be changed whenever staff wants. Put the details in the Procedure.

Does the Commission want to review the procedure again with the details?

Chair Bachman: that isn't necessary.

4. Workplace Attire Protocol – Director Houston

SUMMARY – Staff developed a set of guidelines for appropriate uniform and work attire. The Department has many workplace attire needs that are dependent on the work being done, OSHA rules, and City policies. The objective of developing this protocol is to ensure that the community can clearly identify Department staff while they are working. The goal is to implement uniform items slowly to ensure existing logo gear can be used through their useful life.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – AMC 2.08.040 C & D and City manager Memo RE: Professional Appearance Expectations at City Council Meetings (1/14/2025)

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – The Department budgets for logo items. This protocol is consistent with the budget.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(S) – Staff is searching comments on the draft protocol prior to adoption, per Policy 1.01.001 – Policy Framework.

ATTACHMENTS – Draft Protocol 2.01.001 – Workplace Attire (see packet)

Questions/Discussion:

- Are the proposed logo items in the budget? A: Yes
- Is there currently a uniform policy? A: No
- Has there been a problem getting people to dress appropriately? A: For the Director, branding and being able to identify staff is important. Not mixing in other brands and logo gear is important.
- Staff won't be able to wear any cap but a Parks logo hat? A: Yes, unless it is PPE.
- IIB. is a question rather than being part of a protocol. Item IVG. doesn't make sense at all. A: RH will look into them.
- How many logo items are needed for ops staff? Five shirts, a jacket, a hat or two? A: Would like ops staff to have six shirts, a lightweight jacket and a heavier jacket. Also looking into raingear.
- Have there been reactions from staff? A: It has been varied. Some rumblings.

5. Trail Management Protocol – Director Houston

SUMMARY – The Parks and Recreation Department (Department) currently does not have a trail management protocol for trails. There appears to be a body of work (practices) the Department has historically used to manage the trail system. The goal of this protocol is to inform the Department on trail operational guidelines to assist in prioritizing trail maintenance, guidelines for trails to provide consistent and predictable trail experiences, and to ensure our trail system is aligned with the Department's strategic direction, community needs, and Department resources.

The protocol creates the following attributes for each trail to help organize, plan, and manage each trail:

- **Trail type:** natural surface or hard surface
- **Trail class:** five classes based on width and improvement level
- **Managed use:** trail users allowed on the trail
- **Designed use:** trail development level based on use
- **Trail difficulty:** five levels of difficulty based on trail width, surface, grade, and obstacles

The protocol identifies the type of trail plans the Department will use to assist in planning for and developing trails. The last item the trail protocol identifies is the process the Department will go through for new trail development.

Staff prepared the draft protocol and had it reviewed at the 7/15/2025 and 9/22/2025 Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings. TAC was not supportive of the protocol. They communicated that the Department does not need the protocol to manage the Department's trail system. They moved to not be engaged on this matter any further.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – PROS Plan (in process)

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – This will not impact our currently adopted park operations budget. It will inform and assist the Department in planning for future park operations budgets for trails.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(S) – Staff is seeking input on the draft protocol, consistent with Policy 1.01.001 – Policy Framework. Staff will use this input to finalize the protocol.

ATTACHMENTS – Draft 2.02.001 – Trail Management Protocol (see packet)

Questions/Discussion:

- Frustration that the protocol was brought forward to the Commission despite unanimous objection by the TAC. Would make most if not all of the trails in the system out of conformance. Create a lot of work to bring them up to conformance. We have a good system of trails let's keep it and add to it.
- TAC members risk concern is that if the City rates a trail that varies in sections, and someone gets injured they could sue the City for incorrectly rating the trail.
- Advisory committees advice should be included in presentations. Sounds like a large body of work for doing something that we haven't historically needed on trails that Parks hasn't historically maintained.
- Question about why Park Commissioners were included under II. Scope. Reads 'applies to' which is not the appropriate word. A: Will be edited.
- The intent of having an Advisory committee is to take advice. More work needed.
- TAC doesn't want to see this item again. They are not looking to divide our trails into categories.
- Building new trails requires having trail building standards. The place for this is in the Trail Application.
- Not ready to throw the protocol out yet. An omission that the TAC wasn't better represented in the Staff Report. A detail in the protocol, section VB5. Trail Difficulty in the table under Difficult it includes 15% or less and 15% or greater. Needs to be corrected.
- Was the TAC against the entire protocol or just part of it because some of it seems to be applicable for new trails and possibly trail management.

- TAC wouldn't be opposed to some protocol for trail planning and trail development the last two paragraphs in the document.
- When staff brings proposed protocol to the Commission or to TAC for them to say we're going to throw it out is disrespectful of Staff.
- Most concerns are around the trails in the watershed. We are liable for the trails there whether we built them or maintain them. We need to have an understanding of what's there. This is the platform that helps us get there. There are tools/standards out there, forest, BLM, etc. We need to have a standard and we need to know conditions for defense.
- Needs more work. Understands the need for some kind of management tool.
- Application should be integrated with the protocol. Application should come forth from the protocol.
- This would apply to all trails in Ashland? A: Yes

IX. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

a. Liaison Report

1. Gardiner: ASAC – newsletter from Natalie is a good update on the Senior Center.
2. Gardiner: PAAC has a couple of pieces of art and are looking to Parks for locations. Michah Blacklight has found a sponsor, might be moving forward with the sculpture planned to be in Ashland Creek Park.
3. Gardiner: APF strategically moving forward. Putting in lots of hours on Butler-Peruzzi Fountain project.

X. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

1. Ashland Senior Advisory Committee October 13, Senior Center 3:30 PM
2. Recreation Division Advisory Committee October 16, The Grove 4:00 PM
3. Joint Meeting with City Council, October 21, Council Chamber 6:00 PM
4. Park Commission Study Session November 5, Council Chamber 6:00 PM
5. Park Commission Business Meeting November 12, Council Chamber 6:00 PM

XI. ADJOURNMENT – Chair Bachman adjourned the meeting at 7:49 PM

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Mero Executive Assistant