



MINUTES FOR REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

PARK COMMISSION

April 8, 2026

Council Chamber, 1175 E Main – 6:00 PM

Commissioners Present: Weiner, Bachman, Gardiner, Landt, Adams

Staff Present: Acting Director Dials, Senior Division Manager Mettler, Executive Assistant Mero

Absent: None

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Bachman called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM
- II. **ROLL CALL** – Commissioners Adams, Bachman, Gardiner, Landt, Weiner present
- III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** –
 1. Park Commission Regular Business Meeting March 11, 2026
Chair Bachman asked for unanimous consent for the approval of the minutes. No objections. Minutes approved by unanimous consent.
- IV. **ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA** – None
- V. **PUBLIC FORUM** – None
- VI. **CONSENT AGENDA** – None
- VII. **BUSINESS**
 1. **Hunter Park Tennis Courts Project** – Acting Director Dials

SUMMARY – In 2024, the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department (APRD) secured a matching grant from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) to rehabilitate the Hunter Park Tennis Courts. The approved grant scope includes the rehabilitation of eight tennis courts, including one multi-use court designated for bike polo and futsal. Because any deviation from this scope requires a public process and a formal amendment submission to OPRD, staff are seeking a final decision from the Park Commission (PC).

At the April 1, 2026, study session staff presented three options. The PC directed staff to bring these options to the April 8, 2026, regular meeting for discussion and action.

The three options are:

Option	Description	Key Features
Option 1	No Change	Maintain original grant submittal: 8 tennis courts . Court #5 remains multi-use (bike polo/futsal).
Option 2	Limited Expansion of Pickleball	8 Tennis Courts (1 shared) . Court #5 dual-lined for 4 pickleball courts. Includes removable nets for courts #5-8.
Option 3	Significant Expansion of Pickleball	8 Tennis Courts (2-4 shared) . Courts #5-8 dual-lined for up to 16 pickleball courts. All back courts utilize removable nets.

Proposed Management & Shared Use Plan: If dual striping is implemented, staff recommend the following operational guidelines:

- **Reservations:** Non-net programs (futsal and bike polo) must be reserved through the APRD office; signage will indicate reserved times. This operational plan is currently in place.
- **Priority Play:** Outside of reservations, play is first-come, first-served.
- **Seasonal Exceptions:** During High School Tennis Season from March to early June (3 PM to 6 PM) and during permitted tournaments, all eight courts will be reserved exclusively for tennis.

Over the past month, the PC heard from around 150 tennis and pickleball players by email and in person who are passionate about their sports. Some of the common themes heard are:

- Keep tennis and pickleball separate. Keep Hunter Park for tennis only.
- Keep pickleball in Lithia Park.
- Convert some courts in Hunter Park to shared use with dual lines for pickleball and tennis.

With financial resources stretched and no current plans for adding courts to the parks system staff recommends Option #2, a limited expansion of Pickleball at the Hunter Park tennis courts.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – Parks Capital Improvement Project and workplan

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – This project is approved for grant funding through OPRD. \$720,000 (60%) grant, \$480,000(40%) from Parks CIP, for \$1,200,000 total project cost. These proposed amendments to add pickleball lines would have little impact on the approved budget. \$800-\$1000 per court additional cost.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(S) – Move to approve Option #1, #2 or #3

ATTACHMENTS – N/A

PREPARED BY Rachel Dials, Acting Director

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	Option 1	No Change	Maintain original grant submittal: 8 tennis courts. Court #5 remains multi-use (bike polo/futsal).
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Hunter Park Tennis Courts Project

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PUBLIC COMMENTS

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

With financial resources stretched and no current plans for adding courts to the parks system staff recommends Option #2, a limited expansion of Pickleball at the Hunter Park tennis courts.



POTENTIAL MOTION

Move to approve Option #1, #2 or #3



Questions/Discussion

- If #2 is selected would there be two removable nets? A: We would likely have removable nets on all four back courts. That is possible with all options at a small cost.
- Might there be remaining CIP funds left over if the bid is lower than the estimate?
- Option #2 has only one dual lined court (#5)? A: Yes.
- Can removable nets be added to option #1? A: Yes.

Public Forum

- Carlyle Stout, Ashland: Previous tennis player pickleball convert. Strongly feels Hunter courts should be for tennis only. Strongly recommends option #1.
- George Morgan, didn't state: Played pickleball for seven years nationally and internationally. The only time there's problems is when there aren't enough courts. Predicted High School competitive pickleball will occur within one to two year. Would like to see two or three pickleball courts at Hunter. Removable nets are not necessary. Dual lined courts are workable.
- Ron Owen, Ashland: Speaking as the president of the Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club (see his letter at end of minutes).
- Russell Feingold, Ashland: Pickleball is growing. Amazing to play in Lithia. Expansion of just one court in Hunter would be great.
- Rick Vann, Ashland: Here on behalf of the new Ashland Pickleball 501C3 in progress. Need more courts. People love pickleball. Needs of the tennis community are just as important. Supports option #2 with striping only for pickleball.
- Esther Brun, didn't state: She and her son play pickleball daily. A certified instructor. Invited Commissioners for a free lesson. Supports option#2 and Lithia Park courts remaining all for pickleball.
- Vanston Shaw, Ashland: Supports both sports. Supports Option #2 dual striping of one court at Hunter. Previously a commissioner when it was decided to have pickleball only in Lithia. Need at least seven tennis courts at Hunter.
- Denise Daehler, Ashland: Need pickleball courts on the south side of town. Need expansion of pickleball courts. It will help draw visitors who play pickleball when they travel. Sad about conflict between user groups. Would like to grow the two sports together.
- Ricky Riedl, Ashland: Speaking on behalf of bike polo. Very grateful for being able to use court five. Lines on courts don't affect bike polo however removable nets are needed. Would love to have removable nets on two courts so the bike polo club is able to host larger tournaments.

Questions/Discussion:

- Would like to hear from the Commissioners (Landt)(Gardiner) who were on the commission when the previous decision/promise was made to keep pickleball in Lithia and tennis at Hunter.
- Landt: There was conflict between user groups when both sports were played at the Lithia courts. Seemed like the right decision to remove the tennis courts in Lithia and leave Hunter park courts all tennis.
- Gardiner: Agreed with Landt's statement. The decision made was to have the same number of pickleball and tennis courts. The only tennis courts removed by Parks and Rec were the two in Lithia Park. The other tennis courts were removed by the School District and SOU.

- The tennis courts at Hunter might be better used when they are improved. We won't know that until we try. No doubt that we need more pickleball courts. Not possible in Lithia, not desirable at Hunter. Recommends working with the School District to make use of one of their properties as they now have pickleball in their curriculum. Should commit to adding eight pickleball courts within the next three years.

Motion: Move to approve option #1 with no lines on court #5.

- Motion died for lack of a second.

Motion: Move to approve option #1 with the addition that courts 5 – 8 have removeable nets.

- Gardiner: Would like to make a point to get more pickleball courts into the Park and Rec's Capital Improvement Plan. Need to identify locations.
- Adams: Important to go with option #1 because we promised under a previous Commission that Hunter would be for tennis. Agrees that creating more pickleball courts needs to be a priority of the Commission. Likes the idea of working with partners to build more pickleball courts.

Motion: Gardiner

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>		

- Commissioner Landt asked to make a motion to direct staff to look for locations for future pickleball.

Motion: I move to direct staff to expediently look for property where a pickleball court could be placed and to look at how funding for that could be procured.

- Value in having expanding pickleball capacity in the City on the record.
- Support for the expansion of pickleball with careful consideration of location and the potential impact on other users and community members.
- Should the expansion of pickleball be formally in the CIP? A: The motion leaves it for staff to determine.

Motion: Landt

Second: Bachman

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>		

VIII. ACTING DIRECTORS REPORT – Acting Director Dials

- East Main Park – closer to finalizing bid packet with public works hope to put it out by end of April. The bid will be out for three or four weeks.
- Ice Rink permit approved by Planning Department. Working on a date to install the cabling.
- Bike Swap is on April 18 from 12 – 2:00 PM at the Grove
- Digital PlayGuide will be out next week on Monday.
- Busiest time for maintenance, testing/repairing irrigation, mowing has started.

Are we considering drought conditions? A: Yes

- We are working with a concessionaire to run the restaurant at Oak Knoll. Aiming for a May opening. The concessionaire would rent the kitchen area for a monthly fee. RFP and contract going through Legal.

Reflecting on the proposed permanent ice rink cover, will we still need the temporary ice rink cover with the additional cabling support for the coming season? A: Yes at least through the next year and likely longer.

- Interviewing for seasonal maintenance staff tomorrow. Internal movement of some Parks staff.
- Park Tech 1 starting at the end of April in the forestry/trails division.
- Thea Doyon, the new Rec Coordinator, started this week.

IX. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

a. Liaison Report

Gardiner:

- Oak Knoll golf course is in great shape. Recommends playing golf now.
- Park Walk Medallion follow up: City feedback says it needs to go through the PAAC for approval. Hopes to bring it back to the Commission soon.

X. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

1. Joint meeting with City Council May 5, Council Chamber 6:00 PM
 2. Park Commission Business Meeting May 13, Council Chamber 6:00 PM
 3. Park Commission Study Session June 3, Council Chamber 6:00 PM
 4. Park Commission Business Meeting June 10, Council Chamber 6:00 PM
- Bachman mentioned the strategic planning meeting Saturday April 18, from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM. The meeting might be held at the Siskiyou room in Com Dev.
 - Dials mentioned the TAC meeting scheduled for May 20 at the Grove 4:15 PM.

XI. ADJOURNMENT – Chair Bachman adjourned the meeting at 7:03

Respectfully submitted by Nancy A. Mero, Executive Assistant

Written Public Testimony

Public Comment

Use this form to submit public comment for City Council meetings. This form must be submitted by **10 a.m.** the day of the meeting to be on the record.

If you wish to speak to the Council in person at a meeting, you must fill out a Speaker Request form available on-site. Do not use this form.

Full Name	ANDREA GOOD
Meeting Date	April 8, 2026
Email Address	
Are you a City of Ashland resident?	No
Indicate if you want to provide written testimony, or if you want to speak via Zoom.	Written
Which agenda item would you like to address?	Hunter Park Tennis & Pickleball Court Rehabilitation Project
Comments (Leave this section blank if you are requesting to speak electronically.)	<p>Dear Commissioners,</p> <p>As you vote on the future of court infrastructure in Ashland, I urge the Commission to address the root cause of the current conflict: Acoustic Frequency. We are currently debating a \$1.2 million real estate solution to a physics problem. Moving courts does not eliminate a nuisance; it simply relocates a "high-frequency pop" to a different group of residents.</p> <p>The Science: Frequency vs. Decibels The reason the Lithia Park noise feels like "torture" to neighbors is not just the volume (decibels), but the pitch (frequency). Standard pickleball hits register at approximately 1,000–1,200 Hz.</p> <p>Humans are biologically wired to find this specific high-pitched</p>

range intrusive. A decibel meter might show the sound is "legal," but to the human ear, it is a "piercing" sound rather than a "background" sound. Moving this sound 500 yards to Hunter Park does not change its piercing nature.

The "Third Way": Technical Vibration Management

The industry has already solved this via the USA Pickleball (USAP) "Quiet Category." Rather than expensive construction, I propose a \$5,000 Pilot Program for Lithia Park:

Mandate "Quiet Category" Gear: Require paddles and balls that shift the sound from a 1,200 Hz "crack" to a 600 Hz "thud."

Loaner Program: The City should provide high-quality quiet gear for free use. This removes the cost barrier for players and immediately restores the peace for neighbors and walkers.

Proven Equipment for Mitigation:

OWL Sport Silent Storm: USAP Gold Certified to reduce the acoustic "spike" by 50%.

The OWL CX: Uses a 16mm thick core to soak up high-frequency vibrations before they become airborne noise.

DigiPro 3.0 Quiet Ball: A TPE-based ball that eliminates the sharp plastic-on-plastic percussion.

Conclusion: It is fiscally irresponsible to spend over \$1 million of taxpayer funds on relocation before attempting a \$5,000 equipment mandate. Cities like Laguna Beach have already proven that changing the equipment is the most effective way to protect the "spirituality" of public parks.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Good, Ashland Outskirt Resident

Upload a file or image

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Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club

Ashland Oregon
Pickleball Club
900 Strawberry
Lane
Ashland, Oregon
97520

April 6, 2026

Ashland Parks and
Recreation Commission
1195 East Main Street
Ashland, Oregon 97520

Subject: Pickleball Club Position Letter

The Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club (AOPC) and its 400+ members actively promote pickleball in Ashland. The current discussion about pickleball venues in Ashland has generated significant interest in the pickleball community. The resurfacing of courts at Hunter Park gives us the opportunity to clearly state the Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club position on the pickleball usage of Hunter Park courts.

1. The Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club endorses and supports the pickleball stripping of four (4) regulation pickleball courts in what is now known as Court #5 at Hunter Park with no striping for tennis courts.
2. The Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club understands that the high school tennis team needs six (6) tennis courts to hold sanctioned tennis matches without dual striping.
3. The Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club understands that the Ashland Parks Foundation (APF) maintains a pickleball fund that the pickleball community has contributed to over the years and those funds could be used to stripe the four (4) pickleball courts, provide portable nets and install a lock box for those nets.
4. The Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club recognizes that four (4) additional pickleball courts at Hunter Park would significantly resolve the overcrowding at Lithia Park and that this solution could be realized in a relatively short period of time.

5. By striping the four (4) pickleball courts with no tennis striping, the issues associated with dual striping and usage disagreements are abated (2 tennis singles players versus 16 pickleball doubles players).
6. By striping four (4) pickleball courts at Hunter Park - Southern Oregon University, Ashland High School, Walker Elementary School, the Ashland Senior Center, and the local residents would have ready access to a quality pickleball venue.

The Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club appreciates the ongoing opportunity to work with the Commission and its staff. Sincerely,

Rona
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Owe
n
Club
Chair
perso
n