

MINUTES FOR REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
December 6, 2023
Council Chambers – 6 p.m.
1175 E Main St

Present: Commissioners Landt (Chair), Bachman (Vice Chair), Adams, Lewis, Seffinger; Interim Director Eldridge, Deputy Director Dials, Senior Service Superintendent Glatt, Analyst Kiewel, Executive Assistant Mero

Absent: None

I. CALL TO ORDER

Landt called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

APRC Study Session – November 1, 2023

Motion: Adams moved to correct the date on the agenda from October 4, 2023, to November 1, 2023. Seconded by Lewis.

Vote: The vote was all yes.

Landt informed the meeting that the Approval of Official Parks and Open Space Map was being changed from Action to Information. The Commissioners did not have the chance to discuss it in a Study Session.

III. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

None

V. CONSENT AGENDA

Advisory Committee Minutes for Acknowledgement

Motion: Bachman moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Adams.

Vote: The vote was all yes.

Alcohol Use in Parks Policy Updated Language

Motion: Bachman moved to pull Alcohol Use in Parks Policy Updated Language from Consent Agenda and move to Business as it needs additional discussion. Adams seconded.

Eldridge related changes the Council asked to be made to the Alcohol Use in Parks Policy Updated Language.

1. Potential for adding preferred sites where alcohol could be served.
2. If security is required how would that decision be made.

Motion: Bachman moved to approve the updated language to the Alcohol Use in Parks Policy. Seconded by Adams.

Vote: The vote was all yes.

VI. AWARDS PRESENTATION

Eldridge announced four recipients of Statewide annual awards.

1. Kathy McNeal received the Oregon Recreation of Parks Association (ORPA) award for her volunteer efforts. She logged over 700 volunteer hours for the Ashland Senior Center.
2. Isleen Glatt received ORPA's Section for Older Adult Resources (SOAR) award for outstanding management staff. This award is given to just one individual annually.
3. Anne Bellegia received the AARP Andrus Award for Community Service. A prestigious volunteer award given annually to one individual per state. Anne donated her \$2,000.00 award to the Ashland Parks Foundation Senior Services fund.
4. Rogue World Music Festival received ORPA's Private Sector Partner Award. A video narrated by Anna Beyer, the Executive Director of Rogue World Music, was shown highlighting the achievements of the nonprofit organization.

VII. DIRECTORS REPORT

Interim Director Eldrige reported on the following items.

Administration

- Three legislative initiatives moving through the legislative process.
 1. Alcohol in Parks Ordinance
 2. Park Hours Ordinance
 3. Parks and Open Space Map
- New employees: Kevin Caldwell, Parks Superintendent and Nancy Mero, Executive Assistant.
- Tara Kiewel was announced as APRC's Employee of the Year at the all-staff holiday luncheon.

Recreation

- Ashland Rotary Centennial Ice Rink is open with a First Frost Community event scheduled for December 16 at 4 PM
- Golf Course closed for maintenance for December and Tuesdays in January. Working on Management Contract
- Nature Center open to the public Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 to 1:00 PM. Added a day.
- New recreation registration software Smart Rec is coming January 3, 2024. It is more user friendly than Activenet and has more capabilities.
- Playguide coming out in early January.

Senior Services

- Holiday Party on Friday December 22, from 2:00 – 3:30 PM.
- Ashland Fire Firefighters local 1269 provided (and served!) pie and seasonal beverages at the Senior Center on November 20.
- Superintendent Isleen Glatt is retiring January 5, 2024. Natalie Mettler is assuming the Interim Superintendent role.

Other News

- Daniel Meyer pool liner replacement project is complete! The pool is closed to the public in the winter. However, it is leased by Rogue Valley Masters, Phoenix High School, and Ashland High School.
- Francheska Snyder of NIWA Method spent last week doing highly skilled pruning in the Japanese Garden during which APRC staff received valuable training.
- The mountain bike trail reroute is complete! The reroute directed the trail through legal easements rather than through private property. The trail has been named Mimsy.
- A Memorial bench honoring Taliesin Myrddin Namakai-Meche has been installed between two redwood trees just south of the Japanese garden in Lithia Park.

VIII. BUSINESS

a) First Quarter 2024 Financial Update (Information)

The first quarter report of fiscal year 24 runs from July 1, 2023 to September 30, 2023. Significant budget changes this biennium:

- The APRC operations budget is now included in the City General Fund. (GF)
- The Recreation Admin budget has been removed and added to the administrative budget.
- Parks Ops includes all facilities and maintenance expenses for all divisions.
- Temporary employees are now included in the professional services expenses of M&S for each division.
- Recreation Programs, Nature Center, Senior Services, and Golf recreation only include recreation programming costs.
- Revenue categories have been streamlined.
- The Parks Equipment Fund was dissolved into the City's GF.
- System Development Charges (SDC) for Parks were separated out into an individual fund.
- Central Service fees removed from the budget (internal COA fees for Legal, HR, GIS, etc.)

Key Points

- APRC spending is on-track for the first quarter at 25.3 %

- Areas where spending was below target are primarily due to staffing vacancies.
- Budget challenges are primarily in Operations Material and Services. (Facilities and General Maintenance)
- APRC is underfunded in these specific areas:
 - Vandalism/theft repairs/replacements to facilities
 - Seed and fertilizer costs
 - Professional Services
 - Open Space – Forestry and Weed Abatement
 - Training – traditionally low throughout the City
- APRC GF Revenue projections are based on the average of historic actuals, including COVID and times of low staffing. APRC specific revenues for general fund (gf) include grants, maintenance agreements, and charges for services. Budgeted for \$1,000,000.00. Likely to do much better than that.
- APRC CIP BN23/25 Update: At the Nov. 23 meeting Commissioners asked that five particular line items be reduced in equal percentages. The five items are Trails, Ashland Creek Park Basketball/Sports Park, Oak Knoll Golf Course Improvements, All Parks Master Plan, and Daniel Meyer Pool Rebuild. These five line items were each reduced by 46%.

b) Approval of Official Parks and Open Space Map (Information)

A draft of the Official Parks and Open Space Map (Map) is available tonight for commissioner feedback. If approved by the APRC commissioners, it will likely go before the Planning Commission in January or February.

- Information from Eldridge: The Map is part of the City's Comprehensive plan. It is a guide for APRC land acquisition. The first draft was in 1991. It was updated in 2002 and given a "light update" in 2012. In May 2022 APRC formed the parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan Update Subcommittee. Ashland's per capita park land is one of the highest in Oregon. Strategies for the future include protection of significant natural areas, lands on the wildland urban interface critical for fuels management, and trail connectivity.
- The Map is designed to be used in conjunction with the Trails Master Plan (TMP) The TMP identifies critical bike and pedestrian corridors in Ashland. Any property within the boundaries of the Map and TMP is fair game for acquisition. This includes the Central Bike Path which runs through property owned/maintained by the City, Roads, Railways, and Parks.
- Landt commented it would be unimaginable to acquire all the land on the Map designated as the TMP corridors. Rather an area would be designated, and a trail built within that space, using easements and/or purchasing the land.
- Leslie mentioned that 'Trails' had been eliminated from the name of the Map because it does not include any actual trails. Landt made the counter point that in 2002 'Trails' was added to the name of the Map in a public process, not at the staff level, and would like to leave the name as it was. Bachman, Seffinger, Lewis, and Adams agreed.
- Preserving the text box on the Map was also discussed. The current rendition removed the text box with the recommendation of turning it into a technical document to be used in conjunction with the Map. Bachman supports this idea. Landt's preference is to leave the text on the Map itself. Seffinger asked why Planning suggested removing the text. Eldridge responded that 1) it is not a traditional practice on maps and 2) there is a lot of text which would be very tiny and difficult to read on the Map. Commissioners Seffinger and Adams also support having the text preserved as a technical document.
- Public comment: Mike Gardiner mentioned that the purple corridors on the map were important as connectivity guidelines for the City. There is still property potentially available down the Ashland Creek and Bear Creek corridors.

c) 2024 APRC Meeting Schedule (Action)

Landt noted that corrections were needed on the meeting schedule. The dates for the September and October Study Sessions and Business Meetings were incorrect.

Motion: Seffinger moved to approve the 2024 meeting schedule (with corrections). Adams seconded the motion.

Vote: The vote was all yes.

d) Ashland Parks Foundation Annual Report (Information)

Mike Gardiner President of Ashland Parks Foundation Board began his report by talking about money brought in outside of the Parks budget, like grants and donations, that helps to support all that APRC does.

Highlights of 2023:

- Ashland Japanese Garden had a "soft" opening last October. Not yet complete. Already a revenue generator through donation box in the park and donations made to the Foundation earmarked for the Japanese Garden.

- Foundation has been sponsoring Micha Blacklight and the Say Their Names project. The Foundation granted \$60,000.00 to the project to help Micha reach his seed money goal of \$160,000.00. The Foundation will continue to help fund the project.
- Created a small, restricted fund to support the Pickleball Community and enhance the sport in Ashland.
- Kicked off the Butler – Perozzi Restoration Project on July 4, 2023. Formed a steering committee. To date they have received 206 individual donations totaling over \$560,000 towards the campaign goal of \$800,000. An important part of the \$800,000.00 goal is \$200,000 earmarked for maintenance post completion of the restoration.
- Other projects supported by the Foundation include, the kid's climbing cable structure in the Litha Park playground \$10,000.00, the awning for the ice rink, new flooring at the Senior Center \$333,000.00, benches at North Mountain Park \$9,000.00, new fencing at Pickleball courts in Litha Park, and a \$5,000.00 donation to the World Music event.
- The Foundation hired their first employee, an administrative support person.
- The Foundation purchases ads in APRC's yearly Playguide.
- In 2023 the Foundation supported APRC and the city of Ashland with millions of dollars of donations.

Seffinger asked if donations to the Foundation were tax deductible. Gardiner confirmed that APF is a 501C3 nonprofit organization.

e) Lookahead Review (Direction to Staff)

Eldrige asked for feedback on the Lookahead.

- Bachman is glad to see the Daniel Meyer Pool and the golf course management contract on the Lookahead for January.
- Landt asked for clarification on Goal number 1. It is "best management practices".

IX. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

Adams gave a shout out to the volunteers who showed up for the Mimsy trail reroute. Around 50 people turned out including the owner of the property the trail ran through.

X. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- a) Recreation Division Advisory Committee – Thursday December 14, 2023
 - Lithia Park Cabin 4:00 p.m.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Nancy A. Mero
APRC Executive Assistant