

MINUTES FOR SPECIAL MEETING
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

March 6, 2024

Council Chambers – 6 PM

1175 E Main St

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

Absent: None

I. CALL TO ORDER

Bachman called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. APRC Rescheduled Business Meeting – January 17, 2024

Bachman asked for unanimous consent. All approved with no corrections.

III. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

Changed the order of Business items VIb. and VIc.

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

None

V. CONSENT AGENDA

None

VI. BUSINESS

a. **Request for Exception to APRC Lithia Park Bandshell Noise Policy of 8:00 PM (Action) Deputy**

Director Dials

Dials: Welcomed Ashland Folk Collective (AFC) board member Joan Campbell and local business owner Eric Herron.

Dials: Asking for approval of exceptions to the APRC Lithia Park Bandshell Noise Policy (Policy) for two Monday evening live music concerts from 6:00 – 9:00 PM. Partnering with local businesses to bring family friendly shows to the Butler Bandshell. Dates to be determined, one in June and one in July. This item meets Goal #9. Received many comments from citizens wanting more events in the parks, specifically at the Bandshell.

Campbell: Excited to partner with APRC to bring more live music to the community. Monday night concerts would not interfere with OSF's play schedule since they are "dark" on Mondays. Folk variety music with plugged-in acoustic instruments. Shows will have a hard stop time of 8:50 PM. Decibel max will be 93. Will inform/invite the community near the Bandshell of their events.

Herron: A member of the business group helping to produce the concerts. Have raised \$10,000 so far for the free concerts. Noted it can be pretty warm in the summer. Want to take advantage of the cooler evenings. Plan to have a few food trucks – won't allow them to run noisy generators. Still light out until ~8:30 PM in June and July.

Dials: Summarized; the first ask is the raised noise level, the second is an exception to the 8:00 PM Policy.

Questions/Discussion

Landt: Stated there was nothing in the packet about the exception for the increased decibel ask.

Dials: Noted they would be measuring the decibel level from Granite St., not the Bandshell.

Landt: Are they just asking for what is in the Staff Memo?

Dials: Correct.

Seffinger: Decibel level of music should be the same as for pickleball.

Bachman: Confirmation that the decibel level will be measured at the Bandshell is sufficient to waylay his concerns.

Adams: In support, great next step. Will be an opportunity for selling beer and wine in addition to food.

Lewis: Have there been noise complaints over Bandshell events?

Dials: Yes, but many years ago. Not in approximately the past five years.

Landt: Doubts the music from the AFC concerts will be louder than the City Band performances. On short notice, still not willing to involve noise level in the motion.

Motion: Landt moved to approve the two exceptions for the AFC concerts in Lithia Park Butler bandshell with amplified music beginning at 6:00 and ending no later than 9:00 PM on two Monday evenings in June and July 2024. Adams seconded the motion.

Vote: All Yes.

b. Marking Ashland Places MAP II Project (Action) Ken Engelund Public Arts Advisory Committee

Engelund: Material for the Marking Ashland Places II project (MAP II) is in the packet. The Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC) and Public Arts Advisory Committee (PAAC) are recommending that the next Marking Ashland Places historic district be the downtown district and the next hub site location be at the entrance to Lithia Park in the space identified in the packet photo. The recommended location will be marked with a descriptive marker and spoke historic markers. Will follow all the protocol for the historic district and the protocol (selection committee, research, photo protocols, etc.) that was used in Golden Connections installation. It will be built with reviews assessments by APRC, HPAC, PAAC, and the City Council. Also in the packet are pages from the April 2021 City Council meeting and the agenda for Marking Ashland Places. The key information was also sent by email to Eldridge who shared it with the Commissioners. In the email, Engelund responded to Commissioner questions.

Questions/Discussion

Seffinger: She is the Commissioner Liaison to PAAC and has personally contributed public art. In the process of selecting a site, PAAC considered a number of locations. Lithia Park location good for exposure. Selection/location process will be vetted all along the way. Will be a Commissioner on the selection committee.

Landt: Believes two motions are needed for the two different asks. One is the medallion plaque; the other is an art piece in Lithia park. Good to provide an opportunity to include the community in the process.

Motion: Landt - Whereas Lithia park is considered by many community members to be the crown jewel of our community, and whereas many community members have strong feelings about changes in Lithia park, I move to direct APRC staff to work with City staff and PAAC to develop a robust community involvement plan that allows time for contemplation and feedback to Commissioners before decisions made related to location and form of art installation. Further, that a clear depiction that models the final art piece is available early in the community involvement process. Seconded by Lewis.

Questions/Discussion

Landt: This art project is different from other projects. Public meeting process isn't enough. Need to get the community involved. PAAC members, the City, and APRC staff can decide how to accomplish this. Need a clear idea of what we are talking about and a clear sense of community reaction to the proposed art.

Lewis: Been a member of the plaques/memorials subcommittee and served 14 years on the Historic Commission. Was involved in the process of getting the five medallions in the Railroad district. They are much visited. Have more to do with history than with art. Would like to make an exception for Lithia Park because we have made so many exceptions for plaques and memorials.

Landt explained to Lewis that the memorial plaque is excluded from Landt's current motion. This motion is about the art work proposed to be located at the entrance to Lithia park.

Seffinger: Noted Landt's proposed process is not the usual process for public art approval. She doesn't feel it is necessary. PAAC will recommend a sculpture that is reflective of Lithia Park. There will be plenty of opportunity and time for public input. Much work has already been devoted to the project and there needs to be some trust.

Adams: No comment.

Landt: Not far off the typical process. Commissioners selected the location for the sculpture in Ashland Creek park. They also were able to view all options before the art piece was chosen. Lithia is special and unique as the City's crown jewel. We must give the public time for their input.

Adams: Supports public art in general. Agrees Lithia is special. The proposed site is a central and sacred place.

Believes extra time planning on the front end is very important.

Bachman: Supports moving down the cautious route.

Seffinger: Not clear on what is being asked of PAAC.

Engelund: Not sure either. PAAC also wants public support and input. Requires having a proposed site to present to the public.

Bachman: Ended discussion, asked to resume vote.

Vote: Adams, Bachman, Lewis, Landt Yes. Seffinger No.

Motion passes.

Bachman: Now we have the second part which is the plaque. Asked Landt if he has a motion.

Motion: Landt: I move to approve the installation of the Marking Ashland Places hub plaque at grade within existing sidewalk at the entrance to Lithia Park or adjacent to sidewalk surrounded by at grade concrete to minimize maintenance. Adams seconded.

Vote: All Yes.

Discussion

Landt: Placing a plaque above grade makes it difficult to do landscaping maintenance.

Adams: Lives in the Railroad District. He and his children enjoy reading the plaques.

Seffinger: The plaque should reflect the sculpture in some way.

Landt: If the Commissioners approve the plaque, it can be installed at any time. No expiration date on the approval.

Lewis: Lithia is wonderful, but it isn't a holy place, it's a park. Shouldn't hold it in too high a place. There's art all over Ashland. PAAC has brought much great art to the City.

Engelund asked if the minutes of the meeting have to be approved before a motion becomes effective.

Bachman: No

c. Public Arts Advisory Committee (PAAC) Crosswalk Art Project (Action) Ken Engelund PAAC

[Pictures \(concept only\)](#)

Engelund: At PAAC's January meeting a project to put public art in the crosswalk was recommended and adopted, and subsequently approved by HPAC. Proposed location is the crosswalk from the Plaza to the entrance of Lithia Park. Packet includes examples of proposed location and sidewalk art. These are only samples of what could be because it's a process with a selection committee. Since the crosswalk is in the footprint of the Lithia Park area, it is requested that APRC Commissioners consider and approve the crosswalk project and participate in the process with the selection committee.

Questions/Discussion

Adams: Is the crosswalk art proposal for just one crosswalk?

Engelund: Yes

Seffinger: The crosswalk is not part of the park. Commissioners should not be asked. Safety of crosswalk should be addressed by Public Works. (PW)

Engelund: Understands the footprint of Lithia Park includes the proposed crosswalk. Project originated with PW. The project is viewed as an idea for traffic calming and an opportunity to exemplify Park history.

Seffinger: Has received comments questioning the safety.

Engelund: Much research done all over the world has shown that putting art/decorations in streets does calm traffic.

Bachman: Did Scott Fleury suggest you come speak to us?

Engelund: Conversations with Fleury led to the sidewalk art idea.

Dials: Though the proposed location is not under management by APRC staff, we felt it was important that the Commissioners and staff maintain a high level of participation in the process. This led to Fleury's recommendation that the project be brought before the Commissioners. The sidewalk pictures in the packet are concept only. What is legally required will be determined by PW.

Landt: Agrees that APRC should be involved in the process. There is a receptive audience that cares about first impressions at the entrance to Lithia park.

Adams: Thinks the proposed motion is appropriate to staff's level of jurisdiction.

Motion: Adams moved to approve the concept for a public art crosswalk with the following conditions: That the Commission require an APRC staff member and/or Commissioner be on the design selection committee and that the final design be brought before the Commission for final approval. Landt seconded.

Adams: Appreciates that the project was brought before the Commission. Feels that the correct level of jurisdiction is "approval of a concept." Has seen similar art in other cities – gets him to slow down and look. He has a small degree of familiarity with the research that claims street art can actually increase safety.

Landt: Though he seconded the motion, he finds the "and/or" part is not clear. Offered an amendment on the conditions portion of the motion.

Amended Motion: That the Commission require an APRC staff member and Commissioner be on the design selection committee and that the final design be brought before the Commission for final approval.

Bachman asked for a second. Following discussion, Lewis seconded.

Vote: Bachman, Lewis, Landt Yes. Seffinger, Adams No.

Amended motion passes.

Questions/Discussion

Adams: Doesn't find the amendment necessary. Would be satisfied with either a staff member or a Commissioner on the committee, or both if there's interest.

Landt: But who decides?

Adams: Doesn't anticipate an argument. Can be a conversation. And/or implies there can be two people.

Bachman: Asked for a second.

Lewis: Seconded.

Questions/Discussion

Seffinger: Most important is PW and Transportation making sure the design is safe. Doesn't think APRC should be involved in the decision.

Lewis: Winburn way has been in limbo for many years. Public Works' involvement with the street is inconsistent. There is subjectivity when it comes to art. Feels comfortable that APRC will be involved in the result. Amended motion gives APRC enough control.

Bachman: Whether or not APRC approves, PW will present the idea to the City Council. It will get a thorough safety review.

Bachman returned to the original concept motion with passed amendment.

Motion: Bachman moved to approve the concept for a public art crosswalk with the following conditions: That the Commission require an APRC staff member and Commissioner be on the design selection committee and that the final design be brought before the Commission for final approval. Landt seconded.

Vote: All Yes. Motion passes.

Questions/Discussion

Seffinger: Asked to make an amendment: PW and Transportation will assure the safety of the design.

Bachman: Not sure that we could do that because APRC doesn't direct PW. We could ask them.

Seffinger: As a Parks Commissioner, doesn't want to be responsible for saying the design is safe.

Dials: Understands everything will go through PW for approval. PW will be involved in the process.

Bachman: If approached by citizens concerned about the safety of the crosswalk project, he would refer them to PW.

Eldridge: There are guidelines for sidewalk safety. PW will assure those requirements are met. The pictures of sidewalk art in the packet are concept only.

d. Calle Guanajuato Lease Agreement (Action) Deputy Director Dials [Presentation](#)

Dials: Time for APRC to review and approve the applicants for the space on the Calle Guanajuato (Calle). There are eight applicants wanting to lease space - seven restaurants and the Lithia Artisan's Market (LAM). In 2023, Commissioners approved a fee schedule for the Calle that included a three year fee increase schedule.

Tonight, we are asking for the Commissioners to approve the Calle boundary map as well as the LAM's use of the front of Lithia Park. During the pandemic, the artisans needed to socially distance so some of them set up their booths in the front portion of Lithia Park. Maintenance staff has closely monitored the space. There has been minimal damage. Staff approves artists' continued use of the space. They must discontinue use after November 1 or if ½" or more of rain falls three days prior to use. Staff also ask the Commissioners to approve the season of operation and the eight agreements for the Calle.

Bachman: To be clear, there are five separate motions.

Dials: There are four.

General Clarifying Questions

Seffinger: Referenced hearing (tonight) the importance of community members vetting the art proposed to be placed at the entrance to "the gem" (Lithia Park). She has heard from some people they mind artisans setting up their booths in the front of Lithia Park. Do they pay?

Dials: Yes.

Bachman: Have we received complaints?

Dials: Staff has not received complaints about artisans using the front of Lithia park. The area is heavily used on sunny days. Feel the artisans have a positive effect.

Landt: Noted that citizen's feelings about the use of the front of the park is subjective. Asked Rachel to display the proposed Calle Boundary map. Is it the same as the map used prior to the pandemic? Remembers artisans at the Winburn Way entrance to the Calle.

Dials: Noticed a mistake on the Calle Boundary map. A-10 should be artisan space, not restaurant space as depicted on the current map. Apologized. Will amend.

Landt: There are no other changes on the current map besides the one just mentioned?

Dials: Correct.

Lewis: Jurisdiction over sidewalks, parkways, and rights of way is unclear. Is it APRC or PW?

Seffinger: Some feedback is that extending booth area to artists who aren't significantly contributing to businesses actually hurts the galleries. Not helpful to all parts of the community.

Dials: The Calle Boundary motion doesn't need to be changed. On the map, it is clear that A-10 is an artisan spot, the color code just needs to be changed.

Bachman: Good observation. Motion does not need to be changed as long as the color on the map is corrected.

Motion: Adams moved to approve the 2024 Calle Boundary Map (with corrected color) as it appears in the packet.

Landt seconded.

Adams: Loves the vibrant use of the Calle. Likes the aesthetics of the extension of LAM into the front of Lithia. Enjoys eating at restaurants with tables on the Calle. Used to be more artisan booths. They are being replaced by restaurant tables. The Calle is being used. LAM booths have caused minimal and amenable damage. Supports the map as is.

Vote: Lewis, Landt, Adams, Bachman Yes. Seffinger No. Motion passes.

Motion: Adams moved to approve the use of the front of Lithia Park during the regular season of March through November with no use of grass areas after November or if ½" or more of rain falls within a three day period prior to the rental. Lewis seconded.

Landt: Potentially merit going back to pre-pandemic map. It is too late at this point for this season. Would require more time, four or five months in advance of the next rental season.

Seffinger: Inconsistencies in how people view Lithia Park. Would like more public input on what people want for the Park. Understands it is too late to change for the coming season.

Vote: All Yes. Motion passes.

Motion: Adams moved to approve an eight month season March 11 to November 10 2024 and a nine month season March 11 to December 31 2024 and offseason use from Jan 1 2025 to March 9 2025 giving a choice to restaurants and the Lithia Artisan Market to extend the months of the season of operation with a plan in place by November 1 to move equipment, chairs, tables, etc. if a flood threatens. Lewis seconded.

Discussion/Questions

Adams: Likes the seasons as they are outlined. Enjoys seeing people bundled up by the little fires in the tables at SKOUT.

Landt: The Calle previously had a downtime in the winter months when tables, chairs, etc. were put away and staff could do maintenance. How has having tables, chairs, etc. up all year affected the ability to do maintenance?

Dials: Staff clean the Calle weekly or biweekly year round (blow leaves with an electric blower, etc.). Bi-annually APRC hires a pressure washing company to clean the Calle. Staff do not have issues with tables and chairs on the Calle all year.

Eldridge: Primary reason for using a contractor for pressure washing the Calle is for environmental reasons. Want to protect the creek. Not just a simple pressure washing.

Landt: Thinks winter season should be reevaluated (Not at this point). Nice for people to have full access to the Calle for several months. Suggested restaurants might pay the reduced usage fee in the winter so that they don't have to move and store tables, chairs, etc. Reevaluate for next season.

Seffinger: Remembers it got changed because of the fires. Shakespeare season changed.

Vote: All Yes. Motion passes.

Motion: Landt: Moved to approve the eight requests listed in the staff report for Calle Guanajuato for the 2024 season, not the 2023 season as written in the staff memo. Adams seconded.

Vote: All Yes. Motion passes.

e. Approval of APRC Director Job Description (Action) Commissioner Chair Bachman

[APRC Director Job Description](#)

Bachman: The APRC Director job description has changed a little since the one we approved last July. HR Director Molly Taylor used it as a rough draft, compared it to a couple other similar level City jobs – City Manager and Director of Community Development – to make them consistent. If approved tonight, Taylor will post it tomorrow morning.

Questions/Discussion

Seffinger: The Director job description covers things very well.

Landt: Thanked HR Director for taking the time to be here for questions. Not what he would have written but it is adequate.

Motion: Landt moved to approve the Parks Director position as presented. Seffinger seconded.

Vote: All Yes. Motion passes.

f. Approval of APRC Director Hiring Process (Action) Commissioner Chair Bachman

Recruitment Schedule

Bachman: HR Director Taylor asked Commissioners to approve this item. Bachman asked for a quick process because he wants to settle the question of who is directing Parks as soon as possible. Asked Taylor to get them something that will see the process finished by mid-April. Last date is left blank intentionally.

Questions/Discussion

Adams: What is meant by advertise position? Assumes it will be posted on City website. Is it going anyplace else?

Taylor: Yes, posted on our website which goes through NeoGov which will hit Governmentjobs.com. Open to suggestions for other parks specific organizations to post the job.

Dials: We can post it on the Oregon Recreation and Park and National Parks and Recreation websites.

Motion: Landt moved to approve the parks director recruitment schedule as presented. Adams seconded.

Questions/Discussion:

Adams: Thinks it's a fast, reasonable schedule. Glad to hear the job will be posted places besides the City website.

Vote: All Yes. Motion passes.

VII. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

Bachman: Would like to use this place to discuss items that aren't on the table.

Seffinger: Thinks it is important to talk about the changes that have been made and the changes people want to see made in parks. Named pickleball and the pump track as examples.

Bachman: Change is constant. Need to find a way to regularly poll people. APRC has a biannual retreat to set goals. May want to solicit feedback from the public prior to the next retreat. Would like to see an annual review of how they are doing.

VIII. LOOKAHEAD REVIEW

Dials reviewed the Lookahead.

Seffinger: Would like information on Best Practices for fire safety.

Eldridge: To clarify during his presentation at the March 13 APRC Business meeting you would like Chris Chambers to address best practices for fire safety?

Seffinger: Yes.

IX. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- a. Ashland Senior Advisory Committee March 11 in Person at the Senior Center 3:30 PM
- b. Recreation Division Advisory Committee March 21 in Person at the Litha Cabin 4:00 PM
- c. Joint Study Session with City of Ashland Council April 1 in Council Chambers 5:30 PM
- d. APRC Study Session April 3 Electronic Meeting 6:00 PM
- e. APRC Business Meeting April 10 in Person in Council Chambers 6:00 PM

X. ADJOURNMENT

Bachman adjourned the meeting at 7:45 PM