

MINUTES FOR REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING
ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

June 12, 2024

Council Chambers – 6:00 PM

1175 E Main St

Present: Commissioners Bachman (Chair), Landt (Vice Chair), Adams, Lewis

Staff: Interim Director Eldridge, Deputy Director Dials, Parks Superintendent Caldwell, Senior Services

Superintendent Mettler, Sr. Administrative Analyst Terry, Executive Assistant Mero, Director of Public Works Fleury

Absent: Commissioner Seffinger

I. CALL TO ORDER

Bachman called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. APRC March 13, 2024, Business Meeting

On page six, Landt asked to correct his mention of Hunter Park to North Mountain Park.

Motion: Landt/Adams m/s Approve the minutes as corrected.

Vote: Bachman yes, Lewis yes, Landt yes, Adams yes. Motion passes.

III. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

- Bachman added item VIIIb. Director's Search Update

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

- Roy Sutton of Ashland: A regular jogger/walker on Lithia Park's main pathway. Requests that when next woodchips are spread, the spreaders throw the large pieces off the path.
- Cat Gould of Ashland: She spends much time tending the Ashland Pond area. She asked Parks to place signs requesting leashing of dogs, or place barriers to protect nesting zones, and to adhere to City ordinances and stop clearing native vegetation within 50 feet of riparian zones. She also asked Parks to adhere to federal laws protecting migratory birds during breeding season and stop work in nesting areas from March through mid-July.
- Ron Owen of Ashland: Spoke to the need for more pickleball courts in Ashland (See attached letter and list of supportive members from Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club).
- Cori Frank of Ashland: Thanked Parks for letting people know they teach free one-hour pickleball lessons on Wednesdays and for opening the bathrooms early in the morning.
- Vanston Shaw of Ashland: He plays tennis and pickleball. He supports building more pickleball courts in Ashland. He spoke in favor of striping courts for either pickleball or tennis, not both.
- Gayle Patton of Ashland: Spoke to the reduction of number of tennis courts in Ashland. Very much in favor of more pickleball courts. Asks that courts be striped for tennis or pickleball, not both.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Acknowledgement of ASAC Minutes January 8, 2024

b. Acknowledgement of ASAC Minutes March 11, 2024

c. RDAC New Member Approval

d. Approval of Public Arts Advisory Committee (PAAC) Crosswalk Selection Committee Members

Landt asked that 'approval' be changed to 'acknowledgement' for items Va. and Vb.

Motion: Bachman moved that they approve the consent agenda by unanimous consent.

Vote: Unanimous consent given. Motion passes.

VI. DIRECTORS REPORT Interim Director Eldridge [presentation](#)

- Hiring: Continuing our search for a golf course manager and an administrative assistant for the Rec Division. Very close to being fully staffed.
- Staff Spring Celebration: This quarterly event was held May 30 at North Mountain Park. Included softball, conversation, BBQ, and staff appreciation gifts to thank everyone for their hard work.
- Daniel Meyer Pool and Garfield Splash Pad: Both open for the season (until Labor Day). The splash pad has a 5,000-gallon holding tank with a filtration system, so the water is not wasted. We have staff who monitor and take samples of the water regularly to make sure it is clean and safe.
- Rogue World Music Festival: Drew over 7,000 people during the weekend. First event to have a beer garden in Lithia since the alcohol in parks ordinance was passed. Sales were ~\$3K. The planned bike valet service fell through, but we intend to offer that service in the future.
- Upcoming Events: Bonsai Day at the Japanese Garden June 22, 10 AM – 2 PM; Summer Sounds concert series brought by the Ashland Folk Collective, June 17 and July 29, 6 PM – 9 PM
- Butler-Peruzzi Fountain Update: Moving forward with Architectural Resources Group (ARG). They are currently developing a scope of work, and a contract is being written.
- Pioneer Hall and Community Center Update: A \$1.7 million contract was awarded to Outlier construction for the remodel(s) which will include structural and cosmetic updates to both buildings. Work will begin in July or August. In the past, Parks has managed these properties.
- Daniel Meyer Pool Update: After various delays, contract has been amended and signed by consultants Robertson-Sherwood. It represents the new scope of work provided by the Commissioners. The City-wide facilities assessment results will inform whether the bathhouse needs to be repaired or rebuilt. Robertson-Sherwood have given us a twelve-week work plan to achieve the new scope of work.

Landt: Asked who was meant by 'APRC' in #1 of the scope of work, "Work with APRC to decide energy sources and pool type."

Eldridge: Commissioners, not Staff.

Landt: Of the items in the scope of work, would like for #1 to be considered last.

- East Main Park Update: The plot line adjustment with Jackson County is complete for the one acre adjacent to the park that the City purchased from a private homeowner. It is now dedicated park land. Submitted the application for annexation to Ashland's Planning Dept., which has reviewed it and the site review, deeming them complete. Next it will go before the Planning Commission twice and if advanced it will go before the City Council in September. This is approximately when we will learn if we receive the \$1M LGGP grant for building the Pump Track and related facilities.

VII. BUSINESS

a. Herbicide Use on City-Contracted Lands (Action) Interim Director Eldridge [presentation](#)

Asking for a modification to the APRC IPM Policy to have it apply only to Parks-managed lands. Clarified herbicide use would only apply to City-owned medians and parking lots, not Plaza planters or flower boxes.

Fleury: Looked at the MOU for contracts and would follow the City's code. (9.28) PW would follow lowest use of herbicide. Safety is paramount to PW/Transportation side to protect staff and vehicles/drivers.

Motion: Lewis/Adams m/s.

Commissioners discussed/agreed with the importance of Staff safety.

Vote: Landt yes, Adams yes, Bachman yes, Lewis yes. Motion passes.

b. Public Art in Ashland Parks Review Process (Action) Interim Director Eldridge [presentation](#)

At the March 6, 2024 APRC Special meeting, Commissioners asked staff to work across departments and committees to formulate a process for identifying locations and approving selections for public art in City parks. The primary decision-making bodies are the APRC, the Public Arts Advisory Committee, and the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee.

Motion: Lewis/Landt m/s.

Vote: Adams yes, Bachman yes, Landt yes, Lewis yes. Motion passes

c. Final Review and Approval of Lithia Park Master Plan (LPMP) (Action) Commissioner Landt

Landt: LPMP was created by consultants in 2019. A draft was presented to Commissioners who decided changes were needed. With COVID and other priorities like the Japanese Garden, over several terms, eight Commissioners chose to delay the process of making the changes.

Landt and the subcommittee have developed addenda to the draft LPMP (included in the packet).

Adams: Has significant concerns and would like to see many changes. Some of the addenda is unnecessary and repeated in the draft. Would like more time and work on the LPMP before voting.

Lewis: How can we accommodate Adams concerns and move this motion along?

Bachman suggested options, bifurcating the motion, tabling it until next meeting, etc.

Adams would like to make a motion to table the LPMP until the next meeting.

Motion: Adams/Lewis m/s.

Commissioners discussed the motion.

Vote: Bachman, Lewis, Adams yes. Landt no. Motion passes.

d. Third Quarter Financial Update (Information) Interim Director Eldridge [presentation](#)

Eldridge presented information from the third quarter of fiscal year 2024, January 1 – March 31 (see packet for details/graphics).

e. Fiscal Year 2024 Accomplishments (Information) Interim Director Eldridge [presentation](#)

Eldridge enumerated APRC staff fiscal year 2024 accomplishments towards the Commissioner's 23-25 biennium goals. See presentation for full report and meeting packet for the biennium goals.

As this meeting was the last for Interim Director Eldridge, she took a minute to thank the dedicated, passionate, and hard-working staff of Ashland Parks and Recreation for their tireless service to the community. She didn't get it when she was a Commissioner, but she gets it now. She looks forward to seeing staff in the parks and on the trails and saying thank you for making our community one of the most beautiful in the entire country.

VIII. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

a. Commissioner Liaison Report

- Commissioner Seffinger is stepping down from the Public Arts Advisory Committee. Bachman will take on that liaison role until the end of the year.

b. Director Hiring Update

Bachman: Leslie Eldridge is returning to SOU to continue her teaching career. We went through an exhaustive process to identify a director. Received 19 applications, nine of which qualified on paper. Through Executive Sessions, selected six for Zoom interviews then three for in-person interviews. Received notice that the contingent offer had been accepted the morning after the agenda for this meeting had been published. The new Director Rocky Houston will start in mid-July. He has extensive Parks experience in Oregon and southern Washington.

IX. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- ASAC Meeting July 8, in Person at the Senior Center, 3:30 PM
- APRC Business Meeting July 10, in Person at Council Chambers 6:00 PM
- RDAC Meeting July 25, in Person at Lithia Cabin, 4:00 PM

X. ADJOURNMENT

Bachman adjourned the business meeting into Executive Session at 7:58

Respectfully Submitted
Nancy A. Mero Executive Assistant



Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club

Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club
900 Strawberry Lane
Ashland, Oregon 97520

June 9, 2024

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

Subject: Ashland Pickleball Open Letter

The Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club (AOPC) was organized to perpetuate the growth and advancement of pickleball in Ashland, Oregon. Our Club is made up of more than 150 members who have an interest in pickleball and want to see the sport flourish. We work closely with the Ashland Parks Foundation (APF) relative to pickleball donations and activity funding.

Our members are most concerned about the number of publicly available pickleball courts in Ashland. The sport is growing quickly, and late Spring, Summer and early Fall are times when the available courts are very popular and can get overcrowded. This overcrowding leads to frustration and dissatisfaction within the pickleball community.

Point 1: Currently there are 8 permanent courts in Lithia Park, and we believe that Ashland needs to provide at least 8 more collocated courts. Restrooms, drinking fountains, and parking are needed to facilitate participant enjoyment.

Point 2: Members of the Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club are asking the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission to actively develop a plan for adding 8 additional pickleball courts in Ashland and then to execute the plan by late Summer 2024.

Point 3: The Ashland Oregon Pickleball Club can help support the funding requirements for lines, nets and a lockbox.

Please see the attachment with the signatures of club members who support this request.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication to the incredible park system which is the crown jewel in Southern Oregon.

Sincerely,

Ronald D. Owen
Club Chairperson
rdowen6264@gmail.com
541-821-0860

A PRC Letter 6/9/24

1/3

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POD

2/3

Name

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Rebecca Jurta

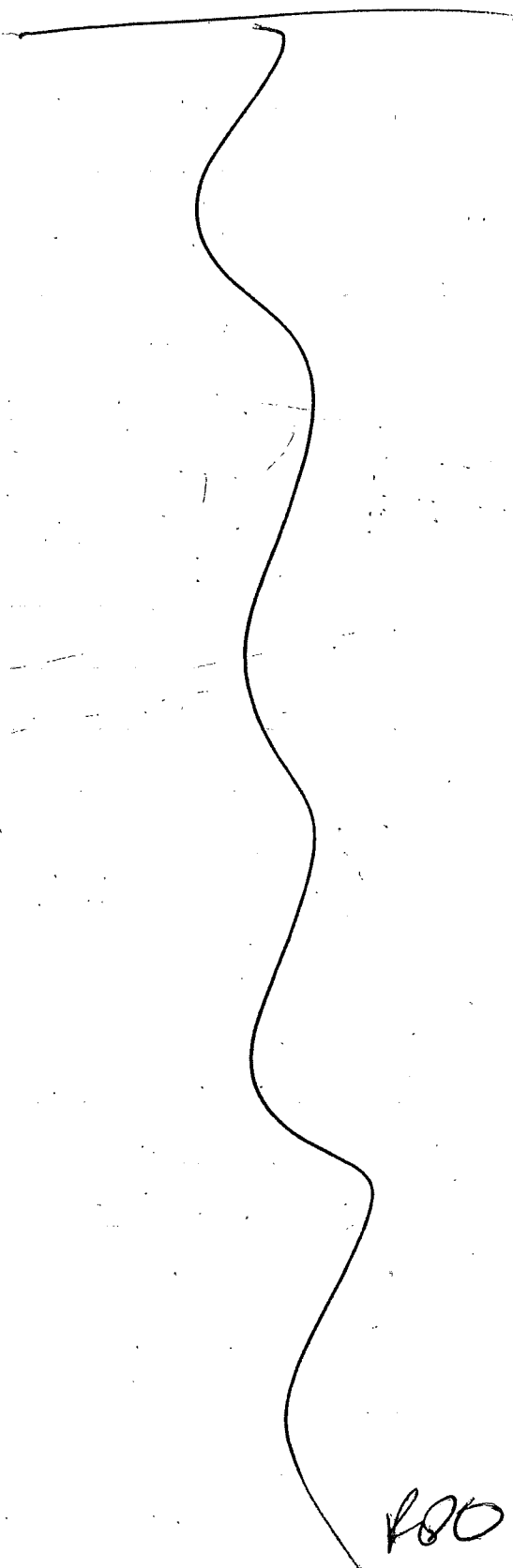
Ron Owen

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POO

APRC letter 6/9/24

3/3

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Thomas Reiter
Joseph Henig
Izzy Scott
see above
h son

Box

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Hi Nancy,

It has come to my attention that the Ashland Parks department is considering increasing the herbicide use to maintain the median on Siskiyou. I urge you and other decision makers to consider biological controls in lieu of increased chemical controls. Might the city consider that a non-lawn based median can not only decrease maintenance costs, increase beauty, and diminish chemicals running into our water supply and lingering in the valley, but also help 'save' pollinator populations those same proposed chemicals destroy? Common herbicides like glyphosate/roundup are banned in other countries and while they are still being debated by the powers that be in the USA, this [chemical has a long half life of up to 300 days or more in water](#), and affects much more than just the weeds it is designed to kill. This has ecological and health effects on both humans and animals, and water systems. This affects you and me, it affects us all -- more than an easy application of herbicide might imply.

There are viable alternatives that employ the power of plants instead of expensive and toxic chemicals. Imagine if Ashland upheld the title of 'bee friendly, pollinator friendly city' by planting native wildflowers and low groundcover on the median. Since adapted to this bioregion already, these plants will require minimal maintenance in comparison to the european-introduced or invasive landscaping plants that are more common. States and municipalities spend millions every year on lawn maintenance on the side of roads and highways, using tax dollars to maintain what is more common than beautiful or functional. Please think how this decision is more than whacking fewer rocks into the air, more than worker safety, but an opportunity to positively impact the local pollinator ecology while simultaneously making the city more beautiful, and setting an admirable precedent for other cities facing similar issues that could follow suit. Instead of creating more problems with herbicides that add no visual appeal and actually decrease local biodiversity (fragile native pollinators fall prey to herbicide from decreased habitat) we can actually improve this predicament with a positive 21st century solution.

Here is a sample project published by DOT's Federal Highway Administration:
<https://highways.dot.gov/public-roads/september-2017/save-bees-and-butterflies>

Thank you,
Kathryn Kavanagh
Ashland Resident

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Dear Nancy Mero,

My wife and I have been enjoying Lithia Park since we moved here in 1999. I recommend either keeping dogs out, or enforcing signs that ask dog-owners to use only the trails marked as "For dogs". Too many dog-owners irresponsibly let dogs off-leash, leading to dog-on-dog conflicts and posing threats to toddlers, young children, families, and elders.

I would also like to keep mountain bikers out of Lithia Park. They ride too fast, make illegal shortcuts, and are a menace to walkers, sitters, or other folks out and about. These cyclists achieve exceedingly high speeds and they are often riding for thrills. Let them instead use the very popular network of mountain-bike trails a very short distance from Lithia Park.

Thanks for hearing my preferences,

Sincerely,

John Scarborough

Ashland, Oregon

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Dear Nancy Mero,

As an avid user of Lithia Park, I recommend keeping dogs out. The qualities of the Park that stand out are: family friendly, peaceful, safe, quiet, and clean. Too many dog owners are irresponsible and let dogs off leash, leading to dog-and-dog conflicts and posing threats to toddlers, young children, families, elders. Additionally, wherever dogs roam, one finds their excrement left about. Imagine dog poop right where one inadvertently put down a picnic blanket or basket. No thank you!

As a confirmed walker, I also advocate keeping mountain bikers out of Lithia Park. They ride too fast, make illegal shortcuts, and are a menace to walkers, sitters, or other folks out and about. These cyclists achieve exceedingly high speeds and they are often riding for thrills. I don't want to imagine the conflicts between their intentions and other Park users. It is a poor marriage of conflicting desires.

Thank you for listening, and considering the needs of ALL Ashlanders.

Sincerely,

Barbara Schack

Ashland, Oregon

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[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Dear Chairman Bachman and Commission members,

I've reviewed the draft Lithia Park Master Plan related to transportation and Commissioner's Landt's addendum. My comments are focused on those elements.

Foremost, I praise the Commission for their approach and acknowledgment of the crucial role that people riding bicycles, walking and rolling have in relation to parks in general and Lithia Park in particular. It is also notable, in Commissioner Landt's appendix, that one-way car travel is acknowledged. It, uniquely, among all the various traffic calming measures, reduces traffic volumes, a key factor in safety, noise, and creating space for other road users. All factors which should be considered in the alternation of Winburn Way.

Oregon's land use laws require that all bicycle facilities meet the needs of all ages and abilities. This requirement is particularly pertinent in Lithia Park. Imagine how happy we would be if children regularly rode bicycles on Windburn Way.

I have my own favorite design on Windburn above the Bandshell up to the Upper Duck Pond. But Windburn Way should not be designed or reconstructed in isolation to the remainder of the transportation system. It is a part of the transportation system. That is why I recommend that the Commission ask the Public Works Department to explicitly include Windburn Way in the upcoming update of the City's Transportation System Plan. That way, the redesign can be considered for safety and efficiency in light all modes: pedestrian, bicycling, rolling, and autos.

Finally, I disagree with the idea of opening Lithia Park to dog walkers and mountain bikers. It is my experience that both groups, or at least significant numbers thereof, notoriously disregard rules designed to protect other trail users and the environment.

Many bicyclists ride too fast on shared use trails, endangering people walking. Additionally, mountain bikers often create unauthorized trails (even in the city's watershed). E-mountain bicycles, in particular, pose a real risk of injury to pedestrians given their weight and speed. The Park's Department doesn't have the staff to patrol and enforce rules that might limit mountain bike speed. Now is not the time to open Lithia Park to bikes.

In my neighborhood, near Cottle - Phillips Open Space, approximately half of all dog walkers routinely allow their pet off-leash despite Park's Department signs to the contrary and city code prohibiting such behavior. As with the regulation of mountain bikers, Park's has little capacity to enforce rules requiring dogs on leash in Lithia Park. It is much better to retain the existing prohibition.

Thank you,
Gary Shaff

Glenview

Drive is needlessly broad in some sections, encouraging speeding. In other areas

Glenview

is

narrow, increasing the challenge of safe passage for all transportation modes. There is

no designated location for non-motorized traffic. There is no posted speed limit. Recommend measures

enhancing

bicycle and pedestrian safety

and

user experience. Institute traffic calming measures.

Consider one way traffic. Glenview Drive is needlessly broad in some sections, encouraging speeding. In other areas

Glenview

is

narrow, increasing the challenge of safe passage for all transportation modes. There is

no designated location for non-motorized traffic. There is no posted speed limit. Recommend measures

enhancing

bicycle and pedestrian safety

and

user experience. Institute traffic calming measures.

Consider one way traffic.