

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

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

Absent: None

I. CALL TO ORDER

Landt called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

APRC Study Session – August 2, 2023

Landt asked for the August 2nd minutes to be changed as follows:

- Change the title from Regular Business Meeting to Regular Study Session.
- Item V: Remove the last sentence from the second-to-last paragraph because it doesn't fit and is unnecessary: (i.e., "This is a small project with community support.")
- Item V: Reverse the last paragraph and second-to-last paragraph, so it makes better sense to the public and future readers.

Motion: Bachman moved to approve the minutes with the changes as recommended. Seconded by Adams.

Vote: The vote was all yes.

III. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

None

V. CONSENT

- a) Commissioner Committee Assignments

Motion: Adams moved to approve the committee assignments outlined in the consent agenda. Seconded by Lewis.

Vote: The vote was all yes.

VI. INTERIM DIRECTORS REPORT

Eldridge presented the APCR Interim Director's report.

Landt noted it was Eldridge's first Director's Report. Commissioners welcomed her. Eldridge thanked staff for their help over her first three weeks.

- Administration
 - Hiring: Moving forward on several hiring decisions including Park Superintendent and an Executive Assistant.
- Senior Services
 - Vaccines: A Covid and flu vaccination clinic is scheduled for October 12 and 27.
- Recreation
 - Daniel Meyer Pool has closed for the season and the pool liner replacement project is due to begin.
 - Oak Knoll Golf Course greens look amazing and fall maintenance will begin next week by aerating the greens.

- Irrigation
 - TID will be shut off on September 15, and City water will be used for Lithia and North Mountain Park. Municipal water will also be used for critical spots where needed, but we will mostly rely on rain for the rest of the season. (Landt asked if municipal water would be used to water the Golf Course if it gets too dry. Eldridge answered yes.)

Lewis asked if commissioners would be involved in hiring the Executive Assistant. Eldridge noted that Landt was on the hiring team for the Park Superintendent, and a team has not yet been formed to hire the Executive Assistant, but they would welcome to be part of that team.

VII. BUSINESS

a) CIP Discussion

Eldridge presented a memo and spreadsheet from the packet:

- On March 1, 2023, Commissioners adopted the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) Budget for the 23/25 Biennium.
- Since the adoption, Parks has had the opportunity to acquire some properties, as well as make some project changes that will require Parks to look at the allocations within the CIP Budget for projects.
- Eldridge emphasized that this would not change the total amount of the CIP Budget, and confirmed with Finance that the reallocation is within the purview of APRC Commissioners if the total CIP Budget remains the same, it is within the Commission's authority to determine how those monies are spent.
- CIP is funded from the 25% of food and beverage taxes Parks receives.

Eldridge detailed the proposed changes to the CIP:

- Three properties have been approved by both the APRC Commissioners and City Council, all of which have been identified as key trail connectivity, as well as incredibly important areas—particularly the Liberty Street property—for land management and fire risk reduction.
- The prices of each of those properties are listed on the presented memo, as follows:
 - Palen Property \$150,628
 - Tuttle Property \$125,000
 - Liberty Street Property \$486,525
- Within the adopted CIP budget \$384,878 was allocated for the purchase of real estate, which will not be enough to cover those three properties. There is a need to increase the real estate acquisitions line item to \$786,058.
- Other changes in CIP from the last biennium:
 - a. There is a project overage of \$325,000 for the Ashland Japanese Garden renovation. This was due to several factors, mostly related to the global pandemic. There were price escalations, shipping prices were quite high, supply chain issues, and materials expenses like wood and labor were very high. There were communication issues with the designer and an accounting error that led to unexpected expenses and project overages. As a result, Parks is looking at adding another \$325,000 to the Japanese Garden project to close it out from the last fiscal year.
 - b. APRC knew that the opportunity to purchase the above properties was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and that it was going to cause some tough choices. Staff, in conjunction with Chair Landt, came up with the following options for Commissioners to consider reallocating CIP Funds.
 - Reducing \$100,000 out of the \$150,000 budgeted for the All-Parks Master Plan.
 - Reducing Oak Knoll Golf Course by \$150,000.
 - Reducing Facilities projects by \$100,000.
 - Remove \$150,000 for the Ashland Creek Park basketball court
 - Reduce Capital Outlay/Trails by \$276,182
- Eldridge added that the budgeted amounts for the Daniel Meyer Pool and East Main Park projects were not changed, as they are considered a priority and have a lot of community support. Adams questioned whether Pool funds could be reallocated (other than the liner project) Eldridge and Dials clarified the long-standing commitment to the Pool, including a previous ad hoc committee with citizen input, and a resulting report including design, etc. Landt clarified that the budget for the biennium for Capital Improvement Projects is \$16 million, but only \$8 million of that has been raised, with the other \$8 million being a placeholder. Potential projects, such as the pool project in this biennium, need to be budgeted in advance because the project can only move forward if it is in the CIP. This does make the budget look bigger than the actual money on hand.

- Adams questioned whether capital outlay funding for Trails was prioritized. Landt stated that money for trails improvement was utilized for once-in-a-lifetime land acquisitions that would ultimately preserve trails. Landt and Eldridge confirmed that there are no “shovel-ready” trails improvement projects. Eldridge also confirmed that money in the CIP can be reallocated again anytime during the biennium, and that there is also money for Trails within the Operations Budget. Lewis noted that with the economy improving, incoming revenue from the Food & Beverage tax might offset budget deficits.

Eldridge and Commissioners agreed that further consideration is needed and deferred the motion to a later date. Staff will confer with individual Commissioners on their preferences and bring this item back to the next Commission meeting.

b) Commissioner Seat #1 Selection Process

Bachman summarized the Voting Protocol outlined in the packet to fill APRC Position #1 Vacancy necessitated by the resignation of former Parks Director Black and subsequent appointment of Interim Director Eldridge, which opened a seat on the Commission.

Motion: Bachman moved that the voting protocol described above be adopted to select which candidate will fill APRC Position #1, with the following change. This sentence will be added to paragraph number four. “If the vote remains inconclusive, a motion to extend the voting for one or more rounds will be allowed to arrive at a majority of first place votes.” The result of this election will be immediately reported to the Ashland City Manager and Mayor for Council action prior to expiration of the mandated 60-day period. Seconded by Adams.

Discussion: Bachman noted the similarities of the Voting Protocol to Rank Choice Voting, which is designed for a bigger electorate than four people, so accommodations were made to have an orderly way to reduce the number of people in the vote. Adams thanked Bachman for his time and effort in crafting the process and noted that all seven candidates were wonderful.

Vote: The vote was all yes.

c) Commissioner Seat #1 Selection

Ballots were distributed to Commissioners; Eldridge reminded them to put their name on the top, and rank candidates first, second, and third, so the public can see the ballots. Dials collected the ballots, and Eldridge and Kiewel recorded the votes.

Landt noted that the Commission received public comments from Regina Ayers, and Joanne Hager. He thanked them for their participation.

A result was reached on the first-round ballot. Stefani Seffinger was chosen.

Landt asked for a motion for the record, in addition to the agreed-upon voting process.

Motion: Adams moved to approve Stefani Seffinger as the new Parks Commissioner, Position #1. Seconded by Bachman.

Discussion: Adams said Seffinger was an excellent candidate, she has experience with Parks and is a long-time champion of Parks as well as having experience on City Council. Bachman agreed and noted that Seffinger had a lot of experience coming back to the Commission, and the Council experience is even more valuable. Landt welcomed Steph Seffinger to the Board of Commissioners.

Vote: The vote was all yes.

d) Lookahead Review (Direction to Staff)

Due to a technical oversight, the Lookahead was unavailable. Landt asked Staff to send a current Lookahead to Commissioners and to let staff know of any changes requested.

VIII. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

None.

IX. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- a) Ashland Senior Advisory Committee—September 11, 2023
 - In Person-Ashland Senior Center—3:30 p.m.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Judy Plapinger

Temporary Office Assistant