

# MEETING AGENDA

Corvallis Parks & Recreation Department  
1310 SW Avery Park Drive - Corvallis, OR 97333

**Meeting Description:** Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Board **Location:** Downtown Fire Station  
**Date:** January 16, 2014 **Time:** 6:30 p.m. 400 NW Harrison Blvd

Members and Staff -	
1. Betty Griffiths, Chair	10. Deb Rose
2. Lynda Wolfenbarger, Vice-Chair	11. Jon Soulé
3. Ralph Alig	12. Marc Vomocil
4. Joshua Baur	13. Joel Hirsch, Council Liaison
5. Kevin Bogatin, 509-J District Liaison	14. Karen Emery, Director
6. Tatiana Dierwechter	15. Jude Geist, Parks Operations Supervisor
7. Phillip Hays	16. Steve DeGhetto, Assistant Director
8. Ed MacMullan	17. Jackie Rochefort, Park Planner
9. Michael Mayes	
<b>Items To Be Discussed</b>	
1	Call to Order
2	Introductions
3	Approval of Minutes – November 21, December 5
4	Visitors' Propositions
5	Marys River Boardwalk Project – Rochefort
6	Sunnyside School House Update – Rochefort
7	Marketing Goal Report – Dierwechter
8	Alternative Funding Goal Report - Rose
9	General Review of Goals- Griffiths
10	
11	
<b>Pending Items -</b>	
1	Alternative toilets / vault
2	Dogs off leash areas at Willamette Park and Herbert Farm Natural Area
3	Impact of Parking Permits at Senior Center
4	
<b>Materials Mailed -</b>	
1	Agenda
2	PNARB Draft Minutes – Nov. 21, Dec. 5
3	Director's Highlights
4	Goals
5	G-T article, "Squirrel back on the job"

**Next PNARB Meeting is February 20, 2014**

# DRAFT

## CITY OF CORVALLIS MINUTES OF THE PARKS, NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATION BOARD NOVEMBER 21, 2013

### Attendance

Betty Griffiths, Chair  
Lynda Wolfenbarger, Vice-Chair  
Joshua Baur  
Jon Soule  
Ed MacMullan  
Deb Rose  
Ralph Alig  
Phil Hays  
Marc Vomocil  
Kevin Bogotin, 509-J District Liaison  
Tatiana Dierwechter  
Michael Mayes  
Kevin Bogotin, 509-J District Liaison

### Staff

Karen Emery, Director  
Steve DeGhetto, Assistant Director  
Jude Geist, Park Operations Supervisor  
Jackie Rochefort, Park Planner  
James Mellein, Aquatic Supervisor  
Mark Lindgren, Recorder

### Guests

Ron Simons  
Michael Robinson  
Bob Beschta

### Absent/Excused

Joel Hirsch, City Council Liaison

### SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

	Agenda Item	Summary of Recommendations
III.	Approval of October 21, 2013 Meeting Minutes	Approved as presented. Motion Passed.
IV.	Visitors' Propositions	
V.	Donation of Land- Campus Crest	Motion passed to recommend to the Council to accept the property as proposed by Campus Crest and agreed upon by City staff; staff will work with Campus Crest to better define the boundaries; and it could be more or less than the proposed 15 acres.
VI.	Senior Center Gold Pass	Motion passed to discontinue the Gold Pass whenever operationally possible.
VII.	Linn County & Corvallis Primary Code Differences	Information only.
VIII.	Orleans Natural Area / TDML	Information only.
IX.	Budget	Information only.

X.	Staff Updates	Information only.
XI.	Commissioner & Liaison Updates	Information only.
XII.	Goals Reports	Information only.
XIII.	Adjournment	A special budget work session will be held December 5, 2013 at 6:00 p.m., at the conference room in the Avery Park Admin building. The December 19 meeting was cancelled.

**CONTENT OF DISCUSSION**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Betty Griffiths called the regular meeting of the Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Board to order at 6:31 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 21, 2013 MEETING MINUTES**

Marc Vomocil noted that in the Call to Order section on page 2, the meeting start time was mistakenly listed as 5:30 p.m; it actually started at 6:30, as usual. Phil Hays moved to approve the October 21, 2013 minutes as corrected; Deb Rose seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**IV. VISITORS' PROPOSITIONS.**

Bob Beschta highlighted an annual fall issue: the closing of restrooms after October 31. He said he and his family walked every day. He noted that homeless people in the Shawala Park area didn't have anywhere to dispose human waste in winter, creating a likely health and human safety and sanitation problem. He summed up that this was a big deal for the many active Corvallis residents during winter months and asked the department to do what it could.

Griffiths asked if there was a public restroom at Avery Park Admin office building; Steven DeGhetto replied that there wasn't. Griffiths agreed it was a problem, but there have even been some summer closures due to lack of funding. Hays asked about the winter closures; Director Emery replied that she'd spoken with Beschta recently, and subsequently asked Parks Supervisor Jude Geist to assess the operational cost of leaving them open in order to help the board have that discussion. Geist added that daily site visits in winter represent the largest cost, at a time when there are a reduced number of staffers. He said the daily visits, requiring about a half hour, would cost about \$30 a day per restroom, and that travel time must be added to that.

Emery highlighted winterization issues. Geist added that Port-A-Potties were cheaper to maintain. DeGhetto stated that keeping permanent restrooms open had two downsides- they don't all have internal heat and that can cause expensive freezing damage; and there have sometimes been homeless people locking themselves inside, using them as a camping spot. Calling the police department in order to get in, in such cases, takes a lot of staff time each time.

**V. DONATION OF LAND – CAMPUS CREST.**

Planner Rochefort highlighted a potential offer of a natural area land donation adjacent to the existing Witham Hill Natural Area. The potential donors are developers currently in an active land use application for Campus Crest Housing, which has already gone to the Planning Commission and will go to the City Council on December 2. This issue is separate from the land use action, and she asked that there be no discussion of the land use application.

She introduced a representative of Campus Crest Housing, Ron Simons, and attorney Michael Robinson. She said Campus Crest proposed donating just over 13 acres of upland oak natural area adjacent and south of the Witham Oaks Natural Area. A Natural Resource assessment was done in July 2012 and produced a vegetation inventory for the site.

She said that since the staff report was written, outlining three options for a donation, there was currently only one option: the second bullet point- clearing the invasive species understory. There would be no exchange of funding or SDC credits.

She highlighted the packet table regarding annual City maintenance costs for minimal maintenance (rough mowing and pest management); creation of an earthen trail; and trail maintenance. It assumes a volunteer component for trails. The Director sought the board's advice to the City Council.

Ron Simons said he'd worked on the Campus Crest project for two years. The developers were aware of the sensitive vegetation aspect of the site and its importance to the City. He said the site was 94.5 acres, and will only develop about 24.5 acres of it, and sought to put the remainder in third party hands. He noted there have been citizen attempts to purchase the entirety of the property to accomplish much the same thing. He said the developers had met with staff regarding the donation (actually closer to 15 acres) and identified budget concerns. He said the proposal was to only donate the area that the City had the highest interest in, and figure out stewardship of the remaining property later. The project would treat the understory to get it to a point that the City would find palatable before it accepted stewardship. The proposal is conditional on the land use application of the property being accepted; the developers do not yet own the property, and must complete the process.

He said the developers were asked by City planners to approach Oregon State University about obtaining an easement for a trail through the Dairy property. Were the Campus Crest property to be developed, there's an extensive system of trails that could go through the property. However, at this point they haven't gotten a positive response from OSU, nor a final answer.

Vomocil asked about the proposed treatment to eliminate understory invasive species; Simon replied it probably involved grubbing, mowing, spraying and anything necessary, but not including removal of firs or larch trees. Robinson highlighted Jack Altman's memo attached to his letter, which describes the proposed clearing of the understory and

non-natives and removing slash piles. It will take extensive work, but developers would commit to that.

Rocheft emphasized that if it came to the City with the understory cleared, the City would then have to stay on top of that. Hays said one of the invasive species there was False Brome; Vomocil related that repeated Fall Roundup applications had effectively cleared it at Starker Forests. Robinson said developers would work cooperatively with the City on how to clear.

Hays asked about the value of the property; Simons said it included significant habitat, which probably could not be developed, so it was hard to estimate the value. He estimated that the property would cost developers \$30,000 an acre as a whole (about \$450,000 total).

Griffiths said there had been previous discussions with OSU; Simons related they'd approached the Facilities department, including David Dodson. He said there was OSU concern with anything potentially interfering with the dairy operations. The trail proposal was to be located on the east of the dairy field.

Josh Baur asked the nature of the proposed development; Simons replied the proposal was for 24.5 acres containing a multifamily project of 296 units primarily marketed to students. Baur asked what would happen to Area #4 on Exhibit #1 showing an upland open space area of 19.2 acres to remain private. Simons replied the original approach was for the City to take that as a donation; ultimately, developers would prefer to only own the one developed area and place the rest (Areas #1, #4, and various components of Areas #3 and #2) in third party hands. He related there was no interest by the City in the wetlands.

Emery related that it was not uncommon to have donations of land proposed, and the department must balance need (as identified in the Master Plan), connectivity, the actual resource, and what the department can reasonably handle from a maintenance and operations perspective. She said managing the wetland would be difficult with the current level of staff and budget, and the very steep slopes to the east of the Circle Boulevard extension would be disconnected and difficult for the public to use.

Josh Baur asked how the department would manage the land; Rocheft said that with the understory cleared, that would have to continue to be maintained and that there is interest in oak release. Emery related that a management plan for the property would be needed, requiring public and board input.

Ralph Alig asked about connectivity; Rocheft replied it would be an extension of the existing 33-acre Witham Hill Natural Area. The steep area is in Area #2B and 2A. Simon said neighbors have indicated they want those areas.

Griffiths asked if access to Area #1 would be off Circle Boulevard; Geist replied that it would probably be through the existing property, not via Circle. Rocheft said that a

management plan would determine appropriate access and egress and a trail system. Baur asked if development was contingent on OSU; Simon replied that only the trail extension was contingent on OSU.

Hays said the boundary of parcel #1 was not a neat straight line; there might someday be an issue of marking the boundary of the park. It would be simpler to include Area #4 as well; he asked what was undesirable about #4. Robinson said the map was based on Jack Altman's assessment of the best forested upland area; but Mr. Hay's point was good, and that a property line adjustment would be done, which would include a survey to mark a recognizable boundary.

Griffiths asked who might take Area #4. Simon replied it would make sense to clean up Area #4 at the same time as #1. He said the Friends of Witham Oaks had been interested in buying the entire property. It is hoped that once the property was purchased, that a citizens group that would take on long-term stewardship of the property. The developers could keep it, but the property and the community would be better served by third property ownership. Griffiths, speaking for herself, related that the Greenbelt Land Trust had assessed the Witham Oaks property and found that it didn't meet its priorities. She asked whether developers were aware of the prior developers (Pahlisch Homes) offer, which offered a five-year management of the property. Simon replied that the understory clearing process would require an extended period of time.

Vomocil noted that Area #4 was adjacent to #1; Emery said the map provided was unclear, and that the property in question may include a piece of #4. Vomocil said he'd like the City to own all of the upland. Rochefort said the City had looked at a larger piece in the previous development proposal, which came with five-years of vegetation management. The developers drew the map; staff could do a more in-depth analysis of what the department could take on if directed by staff. Emery offered to have staff to look at the full acreage desired. She clarified that the submitted map was for vegetation analysis, and if directed, staff could bring a clearer map.

Rochefort said the City would not accept any kind of burden associated with a donation, such as required street development; Mr. Simon concurred. Simon said the previous proposed donation was roughly the same. The development required establishing where significant vegetation existed, resulting in creation of the map in question.

Griffiths asked if there was a proposed timeframe from the board; Simon said it would be best before the December 2, 2013 City Council meeting, but not necessary. Vomocil said the other 19 acres would also be very desirable. Geist said some maintenance and some liability was involved. A grassland area would require twice annual mowing for weed abatement and fire control. Also, hazard trees must be managed in forested areas. The creation of trails could be done when there was available funding.

Griffiths said that a better map would be helpful. Hays asked what the suggested motion was; Griffiths replied that it would be a recommendation to the Council to accept the donation of the land with any conditions or stipulations that the board sought. Griffith

said that even without the trail, it would cost \$3,800 a year that was not in the budget. Right now the department is scrambling to find the funds to help move and maintain the historic Sunnyside schoolhouse, and is in a critical budget situation.

Hays said that despite likely budget reductions, he hated to reject the acquisition, and that \$3,800 was not that much. Griffiths noted that that added up over time. Baur asked what would happen with the land if the City didn't accept it; Simon replied that the developers would actively look for third parties as soon as possible. Baur asked about alternatives, asking if it could be put into trust. Rochefort said the area was highly protected sensitive vegetation, and developers were proposing leaving it in that natural state. The issue comes down to public access and whether the board feels it should be open to the public, but that must be weighed against the cost of even minimal maintenance of the site. Perhaps a period of assurance of site maintenance would help. Emery added that any additional spending on the site would require a management plan, and that is not being contemplated at this time. Geist clarified that the top line maintenance figure was \$2,500; the higher figure included the additional cost of building trails.

MacMullan asked when the estimated \$2,500 in maintenance fees would affect the budget; Simon related that if the development project was approved, the project would likely come on line in fall 2016, with construction beginning in late 2014 or spring of 2015. Maintenance and cleanup of the area would not be completed before the project construction was completed; the earliest time that the property would be in shape to turn over would be in fall of 2016.

Griffiths suggested the board might want to consider some acceptance of the property contingent on minimal funds for maintenance as outlined by staff and better definition of boundary lines of areas #1 and #4, and that could mean more property, not less. Kevin Bogatin suggested stating that there was no money to spend on it until the next biennium; Griffiths noted that the developers were not proposing turning it over before 2016.

**Vomocil moved to recommend the Council to accept the property as proposed by Campus Crest and agreed upon by City staff; Soule seconded. Griffiths added a friendly amendment that staff would work with Campus Crest to better define the boundaries; Vomocil added that that could be more or less than the proposed 15 acres. Motion passed unanimously.**

Vomocil said it was valuable and that the City should own it. Soule said it would be three years until there would be a cost, it was contiguous to existing City land and that it was a risk worth taking. Dierwechter asked if CIP funds could be redirected to maintenance; Emery replied that CIP is for capital projects and that staff would address the new budget process tonight, noting that there will be a set amount of dollars to spend, and staff and the board can decide how they are spent.

Hays noted the most recent survey of Corvallis residents found that the greatest need of facilities that need to be added, expanded or improved was pedestrian bikepaths and trails; the second highest response was for open space and conservation land. This

proposal falls under that category. Vomocil concurred, adding that there were good opportunities for trails on the fifteen acres. He noted that there may not be funding for trails for some years, but that this opportunity was a jewel, adding that the adjoining Witham Hill Natural Area was fantastic. Hays said the presented map was of the botanical survey, not of property boundaries.

#### **VI. SENIOR CENTER GOLD PASS**

Director Emery said at the previous meeting, Senior Center Supervisor Sharon Bogdanovic had proposed eliminating the Gold Pass Program, which was causing great dissatisfaction among center users. She highlighted customer and volunteer testimony in the packet and sought the board's direction. Griffiths noted that those who'd purchased the passes would get either a direct refund; or preferably, a credit for classes.

**Hays moved to discontinue the Gold Pass; Vomocil seconded.** Wolfenbarger asked if they decide to raise class fees, whether it would have to go to the Council; Emery replied that the Council reviews the methodology annually, so as long as it stays within the methodology, then the Council does not have to review a fee change. Griffiths asked for a time frame. **Emery asked to add the phrase "whenever operationally possible"; that was agreeable to Hays and Vomocil; motion passed unanimously.**

#### **VII. LINN COUNTY & CORVALLIS PRIMARY CODE DIFFERENCES.**

Rocheffort related the board had previously requested information on riparian setbacks in Linn County and the City of Corvallis. In Linn County it is 50'; this applies to EFU, Farm/Forest, and Forest/Conservation zones. The City of Corvallis setbacks vary, based on the number of acres within a drainage basin, and on natural features levels of protection. Within the Willamette River or Marys River, it is always 120'.

She clarified that the Willamette Greenway is a state attempt to provide protection to the Willamette River, and the Greenway boundary encompasses all Park and Industrial lands, and varies tremendously. For example, all of Willamette Park is within the Greenway, as far back as about 900', while sections of Riverfront Park are as narrow as 200'. The Greenway uses a different metric and has a different evaluation process.

#### **VIII. ORLEANS NATURAL AREA / TMDL.**

Griffiths highlighted the letter from Public Works Director Mary Steckel to the Urban Services Committee, relating that the TMDL process was on hold and probably would not come back for a number of years.

#### **IX. BUDGET.**

Director Emery highlighted accompanying packet materials, including the Vision Statement, the Mission Statement, and values defined in the Cost Recovery methodology and the Master Plan. She said the board had also discussed filters to use in budget discussions and in reallocating funds. Staff said some filters could include cost recovery for each program (available in December); participation levels; social equity reasons to

maintain a program (e.g, promoting active, healthy living, or serving an underserved population). She highlighted the community survey results from last year (such as prioritizing trails, conservation and natural areas) and the aspect of whether something is required or mandated by a law or easement or other entity.

James Mellein outlined how we got to where we are, highlighting the 62-page Cost Recovery document, finding that half the current board participated in creating Cost Recovery Methodology. He explained that prior to Cost Recovery, fees were established by age: Council policy required recovering roughly 35-50% of the direct cost of youth programs; adult programs 90-100%, and senior programs 50-90%.

He highlighted a packet handout outlining the process by which the Cost Recovery methodology was established. A GreenPlay consultant helped set up an extensive public process that developed ten steps of a cost recovery methodology on how to establish fees. He said the fees related to whether services and programs offered reflected an individual versus community benefit. The public ranked 35 categories of service through public process and placed them in one of five tiers of a cost recovery pyramid. The lowest, Level 1, was for services and programs that offered mostly community benefit, including parks (which offer benefits to all and raise property values). Level 2 includes supervised park facilities, such as the Senior Center and the Aquatic Center; and classes, such as life safety, swimming lessons, CPR and first aid. Level 3 includes Beginner classes, health services, wellness services; and tournaments and leagues. Level 4 includes Advanced and Intermediate programs, and social clubs. Level 5 includes mostly individual benefits, such as concessions vending, pro shop, private lessons, rentals for private or commercial use (ie, birthday parties, or facilities rented by a business) and trips.

Mellein outlined how the community ranked the 35 categories of service. In 2011, the public recommended 0% cost recovery for Level 1; ie, for a park: there's no way to cost recover the entrance of a park. As an example of Level 2, for the Osborn Aquatic Center, which had 30% cost recovery in 2010, the public set a minimum cost recovery of 45%. Under Level 3, rentals of facilities to non-profits or non-governmental groups hit 141%, and minimum cost recovery target was 90%; camps and afterschool programs were hitting 30%, and the public asked for a minimum of 90%. The public asked for a minimum target of 100% for Level 4. For Level 5, the minimum target is 200% cost recovery.

Griffiths asked if the target percentage was for each individual program, or all taken together within a level; Emery replied that staff counts each one and has a target. When measuring success, all programs within a tier are counted collectively. Bogatin asked if there was a way to move a program to a different tier; Emery replied that that was not an option without Council approval, since the public had already decided where to place services on the cost recovery pyramid. Griffiths said that it reflected the publicly expressed values. DeGhetto noted that if there was a program that doesn't make the target but has community support, or serves an underserved population, staff can seek a sponsor or other alternative revenue to make up the difference.

Soule said a program with a high expense but higher revenue subsidizes everything else; however, having a hard cap on expense makes it difficult. Emery related that the Finance Director stated that an alternative was to produce more revenue than expenses to change the expense limit, and that the Finance Department was committed to making that work; however, the methodology was still being determined. Emery added that the Finance Department recognized that Parks and Recreation Department was different from other departments and that there were opportunities for different ventures; Finance was committed to help find ways to increase the expense limit in order to accommodate greater revenues.

Vomocil said that the expense limits should be based on net, not gross; for example, if it costs \$100 to produce a program, and there are \$50 in participant fees, then the City is only out \$50, not \$100. Emery stated that the expense limit was a five-year average of what the department had expended; Vomocil said that that should be net, including the payments for services that have been received. Soule and Griffiths also expressed concern about how that was calculated.

Hays asked said you have to know what your cost is; there are a lot of things that are hard to include in personnel costs to a program. Mellein replied that staff costs were reflected in the pyramid at the level that they are identified in the category of service as designed. For example, the Aquatic Center lifeguard costs were at the supervised park facility level; the staffing as required to simply open the pool. Hays asked if there would be a breakdown of the cost of all programs; Emery replied that at the December meeting, staff were proposing presenting operating costs of the Aquatic Center, the Senior Center, Urban Forestry program for right-of-way trees; Recreation programs; the Administration Division; and the Parks Division; with total costs and revenues for each area. DeGhetto will present figures for categories of service, such as Youth Recreation and Adult Recreation.

Hays asked if staff would provide costs and revenues for all 31 categories. DeGhetto said staff would do so. He noted that apart from the Aquatic Center and the Senior Center, other categories were not “supervised”. Hays said he felt the board could best provide guidelines but not micromanage. Programs will have to be cut, and we’ll have to look at what the public has said it wants.

Emery said staff will present one number for significant categories, as well as how the current \$6.1 million budget will be spent this year. Next year the hard expense limit is \$5,872,320; staff will work with the board on how to spend \$334,220 less than this year’s budget. Staff will present issues for the board to consider in order to clarify the decisions that must be made. A certain amount of money is spent each year on CIP, vehicle reserves, family assistance, and special projects (she noted that deferred maintenance has costs). Emery highlighted the upcoming December 5 board work session.

DeGhetto outlined the Family Assistance Program, restructured in 2011. He said during the Cost Recovery methodology process, the Council asked that no one be excluded from services. Following the Healthy Kids Healthy Communities initiative, there was an

examination of the Family Assistance scholarship program. Co-payments and eligibility issues were found to be a problem for some, and many participants found the paperwork too complicated and gave up.

Staff ended up changing the eligibility to mirror existing assistance programs, such as free and reduced price lunches, the WIC program, and the SNAP program, all of which operate within Federal Poverty guidelines. Previously, eligibility had been at 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and there were 380 participants; there are now 1,076. Eligibility was adjusted upward to 150% of the FPL with verification services from the school district and the Health Department, and participation started to grow.

A big part of the mission was to get people involved in programs where they previously couldn't afford it or didn't even know that they could afford it. Some Family Assistance participants are now paying customers, now they know a program exists; it got them through the door. There has been a steady increase in enrollment and utilization.

Last year, \$134,000 of the budget was used for the Family Assistance Program; some of it supported through property taxes and some through fundraising. However, currently only \$73,550 has been budgeted for it, so there is a gap. DeGhetto said it possibly could be made up through revenue generation and donations. Staff has to present cost controls to present to the board regarding funding the program. The board could recommend continued funding to the Council to fund it. Positive family assistance utilization shows up as revenue and gives the ability to ask to use it for further expenditures.

He highlighted his November 1, 2013 memo, with its table showing the utilization rate, which has doubled from 34% to 63%, tripling the number of people served. He cautioned that it may not be stable in its current form. Award amounts could be limited; or limit eligibility to residents only (currently it is open to everyone). To do so could split up families, and it difficult to designate where homeless students live. Another possible cost control is limiting the award amount, currently at \$150 per individual, but \$117 is the average utilization. The price structure may not allow them to use remaining few dollars, and that aspect may need to be refined.

He recommended discontinuing the 50% co-pay for participants under the 151-200% FPL; it is a lot of staff work involved, and instead, there could be a director review on an individual basis, or we could look at pushing it to the 185% of the FPL which would likely pick up the roughly 15 currently uncovered individuals. He cautioned that families were very different, with many configurations (some are blended, for example). Emery said staff would seek a board recommendation in December or January.

Griffiths asked if there were a number of out of city users; DeGhetto said it was a difficult number to get accurately; Emery warned that it may only be a ball-park figure. DeGhetto said some users were from Linn and Benton Counties, Philomath, etc. Emery said the presentation on relationships with the Majestic and the Arts Center would be given at the next meeting.

Jude Geist highlighted the Special Project Budget that related to Facilities. He distributed the current Special Projects list for FY14-15, the year the board would be asked to review. They include the Majestic Theater and maintaining the Art Center, Admin Building; the Parks Operational Buildings, all shelters, restrooms, the Senior Center, Osborn Aquatic Center, and community rooms. At the next meeting, staff will present all projects. Some costs are annual, some are every other year (such as HVAC cleaning), and vary in size. The FY13-14 has a budget of \$32,000 for Special Facilities, but \$40,000 or \$50,000 could be easily used to maintain facilities, since deferred maintenance costs are increasing every year. He highlighted the green highlighted special projects that should be done this year, but for which there is not funding to do so. The category is one place to find cuts, but there are real costs for doing so.

The Aquatic Center Special Projects alone was \$28,000 for FY13-14; the total average has been around \$75,000. There are costs to maintain 28 pumps and filters to keep the complex pool infrastructure running. The minimum is \$68,000 for next fiscal year, not including anything in a fund for building maintenance of large items that might come up in future years. There is a reserve for purchasing equipment, but when we buy equipment, we pay back the reserve; otherwise, it will start to go into the negative, since now, there won't be any interest earned from the reserves, which previously had been the primary way the reserve maintained its balance. A vehicle and a mower will have to be replaced next year, and we've typically put in about \$75,000 annually.

In discussion on scheduling further board budget discussion, There was consensus on a special work session meeting December 5 (6-8 pm. at the Avery Park Admin Building), cancelling the Dec. 19 meeting and continuing the work at the January meeting, perhaps without the cost recovery aspect.

**X. STAFF UPDATES**

Mellein highlighted the upcoming Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving morning; there will be an early bird discount for registering early. Geist said next Wednesday is Forester Merja's last official day of work after a thirty-year career; there will be a search for her replacement.

**XI. GOALS REPORTS.**

Griffiths related that the Funding Committee met and will present a report in January. The marketing committee should report then, too. The board will review goals at its January meeting.

**XII. COMMISSIONER & LIAISON REPORTS.** None.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

# DRAFT

## CITY OF CORVALLIS MINUTES OF THE PARKS, NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATION BOARD DECEMBER 5, 2013

### Attendance

Betty Griffiths, Chair  
Lynda Wolfenbarger, Vice-Chair  
Joshua Baur  
Jon Soule  
Ed MacMullan  
Deb Rose  
Ralph Alig  
Phil Hays  
Marc Vomocil  
Tatiana Dierwechter  
Michael Mayes

### Staff

Karen Emery, Director  
Steve DeGhetto, Assistant Director  
Jude Geist, Parks Operations Supervisor  
James Mellein, Aquatic Supervisor  
Sharon Bogdanovic, Senior Center Supervisor  
Deb Curtis, Recreation Coordinator  
Mark Lindgren, Recorder

### Guests

### Absent/Excused

Joel Hirsch, City Council Liaison  
Kevin Bogotin, 509-J District Liaison

## **CONTENT OF DISCUSSION**

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Betty Griffiths called the special meeting of the Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Board to order at 6:09 p.m. at the Avery Park Admin Building conference room. Director Emery highlighted handouts.

### **II. BUDGET DISCUSSION.**

Director Emery highlighted the December 5, 2013 memo. The fixed expenditure budget for FY14-15 is \$5,872,320. This includes all Parks and Recreation operational costs, increases to health insurance, benefits, step increases, etc; Capital Improvement Projects (CIP); maintenance projects (termed "Special Projects"; these are non-CIP); Americans With Disability Act (ADA) projects; contributions to the vehicle and facility reserve funds; the Family Assistance Program; and the City's contribution to The Arts Center.

She said if there were no changes to the Operational Budget, Operational Costs in item #1 would be \$5,718,450, leaving a balance of only \$153,870 for items #2-8. Staff recommended that all FY14-15 CIP projects be funded through non-property tax sources; she highlighted the handout outlining CIP projects. The projects included the Marys River Natural Area boardwalk; Arnold Park playground; acquisition of land; Senior Center improvements; Aquatic Center climbing wall; Owens Farm barn renovation; MLK Jr. (Walnut) barn renovation; and Harding Neighborhood play structure. Staff recommended deferring projects requiring use of property taxes, including Willamette Park improvements; skate park lighting; Maple Grove picnic shelter rehabilitation; Franklin Park play structure; Starker Arts picnic shelter; Central Park playground improvements; Avery Park restroom improvements; and Porter Park playground improvements.

Phil Hays noted that many projects listed indicate they required grants or donations, and asked if the funds were in hand or whether the projects could be done if the money could be found from those sources. Emery replied the Marys River Natural Area boardwalk FEMA funding was secured, and the Friends of Parks and Recreation were seeking an additional \$60,000 to complete it, with about \$4,500 in hand so far. Arnold Park grant and donation (\$25,000) funding has been secured and is complete. There was a donation of about \$750,000 for capital improvements at the Senior Center; staff anticipate planning this year and submitting a grant the following year.

Emery stated that staff needs to apply for grants for the Aquatic Center, Owen's Farm, and MLK, Jr. Park. Regarding the Harding Neighborhood Park, the Master Plan previously determined that the area needs a park, and a property owner has offered to make a land donation for it, though it is not clear this will happen. She summarized that staff recommended tackling the top eight projects on the list and deferring the bottom eight.

She said the department contributes annually to a vehicle reserve fund, which includes trucks, tractors, trailers and any rolling stock. There is a vehicle replacement plan, supported by the reserve fund. Staff are recommending *not* contributing or spending from the vehicle reserve in FY14-15. Geist explained that the 15-20 year plan was simply being shifted by a year. MacMullan asked if this would simply shift the problem into future years; Emery replied that it wasn't clear. She said that contingency funds could be tapped.

Geist related that two vehicles had been planned for replacement in FY14-15, and the delay in doing so simply represented an inconvenience. Griffiths asked about sharing equipment with Benton County, or doing more of that; Emery replied that the department already shared with the County. Geist added that department trucks were running every day in summer; it shares specialty equipment, like bucket trucks. We're expanding those agreements, including with OSU's Department of Forestry, to share small equipment.

Ralph Alig asked about the City Council policy on adequate reserves, with flexibility within that on shifting expenses. Emery replied the Council has a small contingency fund for *unexpected* events. Griffiths asked if there was a policy on reserves; Emery said there was, and that this proposal fell within that. Josh Baur suggested contacting the OSU Motor Pool; Emery said we occasionally rent OSU vans for recreation programs, but it is generally less expensive to own and maintain equipment that is heavily used.

Emery said there was a facility reserve specifically for the Aquatic Center; we are now planning a building reserve for all buildings in the future and making regular contributions to help with special projects and deferred maintenance. Staff decided not to contribute to the Aquatic Center reserve until FY15-16 (this is for major maintenance).

Emery highlighted staff recommendations on other items not funded within operational expenses, reducing overall non-operational expense by \$108,730. Staff recommended funding of increased personnel expenses (such as health insurance increases, benefits, and step increases) at about \$30,000; deferred maintenance projects (Special Projects) at about \$45,600; ADA projects at \$20,000; the contribution to The Arts Center at \$42,000; and funding the Family Assistance Program at \$125,000. These levels of funding in those categories would meet the target fixed expense budget.

Griffiths asked how the fixed expenditure budget was derived and how it would be set in the future. Mellein replied that it looks five years out; it will only increase slightly over the next

years, at the assessed value that the County believes that property taxes will increase by. It is a balanced budget for five years out across the entire city (increasing at about 2% a year). Emery added that the costs are likely to be higher than that 2% increase. One expense variable is the AFSCME union contract, now under negotiation; however, the department also has opportunities to increase revenues. She explained that the expenditure limit was based on average expenses over the last five years. She said budget cuts over the last five years have reduced the budget, and staff worked very hard while two open supervisor position vacancies were not filled specifically to save property tax funds. While at the time that seemed to make sense to save \$225,000 that way, it affected the budget limit five-year average spending assumptions.

Griffiths asked if any more property tax funds were likely to be lost in the future; Emery said Finance has stated that revenue raised within a department will stay within the department as dedicated revenue. Dierwechter asked about possibilities over the next few years of leveraging new kinds of funding, including partnerships or grants. Emery cautioned that programs with extra revenue typically cost additional staff time and we'll come up with ways to different ways to manage that.

Vomocil asked if the \$5.8 million fixed expenditure budget was entirely from property taxes; Mellein replied it was not; it is the operating budget expenses, offset by \$5.8 million in revenues from multiple sources, such as fees, charges, donations, grants (\$1.8 million); \$3.3 million in property taxes; and about \$750,000 from the levy.

Emery said the reduction of the operating budget by about \$108,730 would be derived by reorganizing and reducing staffing levels. They will be permanent cuts, to avoid simply kicking the can down the road. Staff sought to find ways that had the least impact on service and staff. Staff discussions will begin in January and will be presented at the January PNARB meeting. Dierwechter asked if board direction on priorities would be reflected and aligned with staff reduction; Emery replied that it would, and cuts would be accomplished in a variety of ways.

Emery reported the Friends of Softball agreed to donate \$10,000 in support of the adult softball program to lessen the need for property tax dollars. Hays asked the number of adult softball participants; DeGhetto replied it was currently about 1,240.

Emery related that over a period of years, there was a small (\$6) per-player charge that went into a Softball Revolving Fund to fund ball field improvements. Eventually, to reduce admin paperwork, there became a single surcharge for each team, and the Friends of Softball advisory board determines how to spend the money; typically on umpires and scorekeepers. DeGhetto added that it also funded renovation projects; staff meet with the players a couple times a year. Griffiths said that that was an example of \$10,000 that would have otherwise come from property taxes. Mayes asked if that type of surcharge had been considered for other sports; Emery said that it was applicable, but that Finance was not supportive of reserves, due to the administrative side of it. She said staff needed to figure ways of taking advantage of the revenue side of the department.

Emery stated that staff sought board direction for further reductions, if staff expenses were higher than the \$30,000 estimated increase. She highlighted the handout on Special Projects (deferred maintenance projects). Geist said that in an average year, there was \$132,000 in identified special projects. There was a 15-year Special Projects Plan, which identifies things like roof replacements, hardware, heating units, and given their lifespan, when they will likely need replacement. They are evaluated ahead of time to verify that that is realistic or see if anything else needs replacement. Items on the list are what were already scheduled for FY14-15. He said they

will be individually assessed, because if the whole list is pushed out wholesale, there could be a major failure.

Griffiths asked about the \$15,000 listed for balcony repair at the Aquatic Center; Mellein explained it is related to concrete microfractures that don't affect safety. Geist said the projects were listed by facility; they are not listed in priority, only alphabetically. Some items can be delayed; others cannot.

Emery highlighted the pink handout on FY14-15 ADA Transition Plan Projects; these are the ADA improvements to the system for the year. The \$45,000 identified for FY14-15 was reduced to \$20,000, based on staff evaluation of public feedback and what makes the biggest impact. Alig asked about the legality of delaying ADA projects; Geist replied that this represents what can be done with current funding and without additional grants; other grants may come forward. Alig said he's seen municipalities affected by lawsuits; Geist said the proposed planned process protects the City, with a three-year transition plan. The listed plan does not list all the needs and deficiencies, just what is contemplated. Alig asked about priorities; Geist replied it is partly complaint-driven, partly high use, and partly efficiency. The "zeroes" on the handout means the issue is being addressed but funded by outside sources. Geist said the plan will show that it is moving in the direction and checking off accomplishments and goals.

Griffiths asked why the Public Works was not funding the curb cuts; Emery replied that if a sidewalk is adjacent to a park, the department is responsible for it. Vomocil said that now that monthly utility fees are paying for sidewalk maintenance, Public Works should be paying for all sidewalks. Emery replied that the department doesn't pay into the fee, but she'll bring up that the board asked the question.

The Arts Center funding was added to the Parks and Recreation budget; it was formerly in a different fund. DeGhetto said the City owns the building. The City has given tax dollars in support of the arts education to the community, and The Arts Center provided arts education, and the department historically has not had to provide that, or to mimic it.

Parks now gives The Arts Center \$42,000 a year, about half of what it once was. The Center has been given "perks" over the years, such as limited use of Central Park and other rental freebies in exchange for programming. The department co-sponsors the free use of The Arts Center Plaza for youth programs, and the Central Park Gazebo one day a year. The department pays about \$8,300 in internal service charges for Public Works to provide maintenance services for the building; there's also another \$8,000 in maintenance and repair a year, costing the City a total of about \$16,000 a year in addition to the \$42,000.

Emery said the board could discuss whether the City should continue to own the building; it has historically owned the building, but it could be given to the non-profit Arts Center, thus reducing the annual maintenance costs (while still paying \$42,000 a year). Soule asked the total fixed expenses for The Arts Center; DeGhetto replied that it varied, but was around \$17,000 on top of the \$42,000 a year, and \$17,000 was probably in the ballpark for the average costs per year. Griffiths asked how The Arts Center felt about a change; Emery sought the board direction. Hays asked if the City would still own the land; Emery replied a change could be structured in various ways, much as the school district did with the Boys and Girls Club, which owns the building. Hays noted that research would be needed to explore legalities of ownership of the land or the building itself. DeGhetto said maintenance and repair could also be negotiated.

Griffiths asked about the contract with The Arts Center non-profit; DeGhetto replied there is an agreement with it. There are things the non-profit does; and the City provides the building, water, sewer, landscaping, structural maintenance, and maintenance.

Dierwechter suggested framing the City's relationship with the role of the arts in general, in terms of its mission and its future, also including the Majestic Theater. DeGhetto replied that the Majestic Theatre Management group was responsible for theatrical and performing arts education programming; in return, the City provides a free building and support of major structural elements. The City also provides workshop space at the Flomatcher Building and in return the department gets comparably valued access to the Majestic Theater dance studio space.

Emery noted that The Arts Center has the strength and ability to own and operate its own building, while the Majestic Theater organization doesn't have that capacity, and had been struggling to survive for several years. Griffiths asked if the Arts and Culture Commission had weighed in on it; Emery replied that it was not an advisory board, but she could ask the commission, if directed. Dierwechter advocated anticipating community pushback if the board recommended implementing a change, saying the arts community was passionate.

Hays noted that The Arts Center building was a listed historic structure, so the historic resources groups would have a say; DeGhetto added that that was true of the Majestic, as well. Hays said The Arts Center building was moved to the site from elsewhere. Dierwechter said that coordinated positive messaging would help. DeGhetto said there have been discussions with arts groups and festivals. DeGhetto said there was \$400,000 donated to the City to maintain the Majestic; interest from that reserve is given to the Majestic Theater (not Majestic Theater Inc) every year.

Soule cautioned against unanticipated consequences in selling or giving away the buildings, but that renting could work and he would support setting up a formal rental agreement. DeGhetto said the Majestic only cost \$4,000 a year in internal service charges and maintenance and repair.

DeGhetto related that the Corvallis Environmental Center will now start paying rent in January, and the department has allowed them to offset some rent through in-kind services, from \$600 down to about \$360 a month, which is affordable to the group. He said that perhaps the best the City could do is to recoup expense. Hays said that if The Arts Center were charged rent, it could offset the maintenance. DeGhetto opined that the Majestic couldn't shoulder the responsibility of rent at this point.

Griffiths asked about the previous budget; Emery replied that the City's annual contributions to The Arts Center originated through an old levy for The Arts Center many years ago; when that levy ran out, the City Council decided the City should continue paying for it, through Parks and Recreation. DeGhetto explained that the \$42,000 pays for The Arts Center operations. Dierwechter asked for an estimate of a reasonable rent; Soule suggested that it should be \$17,000. Vomocil said the City should continue to own the building and the land; it should never give away property, but try to recoup as much as possible through rent. Emery said staff will come back with various scenarios in February.

Alig suggested looking at the survey results for determining priorities; in that survey, citizens expressed what they were interested in, and arts and crafts programs were near the bottom of the list. While The Arts Center provides tremendous value, the \$17,000 in maintenance could be used for other things during these tough times, when staff is being reduced. We can't be all things to

all people all the time. Griffiths said she was hearing not to jump to a sale, but to ask staff to explore options for reducing the \$17,000 in maintenance costs.

Emery said staff will bring the information back at the February board meeting. Griffiths added that any changes could be phased in. DeGhetto said staff will meet with The Arts Center Executive Director. He related that they felt the building was too small, and recently had considered acquiring the Gazette-Times building; were they successful, the City would have to find other uses for the building.

Emery said this is the first time the \$42,000 has been in this budget; it was *transferred* to it. Hays said there could be support to The Arts Center no matter where it was located. Griffiths commented that it would be difficult to reduce the \$42,000 figure.

Regarding the Family Assistance Program, Emery said the board reviewed it in November. The program awarded \$219,718, expending \$136,310 of that in FY12-13. The program has awarded \$268,000 so far to 1776 people, expending \$71,000. We're on track to expend as much as FY12-13, if not more.

She sought direction on whether to cap family assistance; there is an amount that the department is committed to spend (\$125,000). Staff also recommends discontinuing the 50% co-pay, saying that few people utilize it, and it's just another layer that causes more confusion than benefit. We could also consider limiting assistance to people living outside of Corvallis. She noted that we currently serve people who live outside the City; some people don't know if they live inside the city or not. The department has established the standard that if you're eligible for a free lunch or WIC, you're eligible for assistance. We could also lower award amounts; she highlighted the table in DeGhetto's November 1, 2013 memo; it is currently \$150 per person. The memo table shows the potential impact of a cap on people.

Alig asked if a cap of, say, \$100 would keep people from participating; Emery replied that an individual with no disposable income (apart from food and shelter) would have \$100 for the year to take a swimming lesson, etc. Soule asked how much for the program was fundraised; Mellein replied that about \$21,000 was raised from grants and donations last year.

Hays noted that some recipients used less than was awarded. DeGhetto said that the average utilization was \$117 per person last year. He cautioned that raising program prices would lessen that purchasing power. Mellein said that with the current \$150 award, a child could take three sessions of swimming lessons at five weeks apiece a year. DeGhetto added that that would also allow for two one-week summer camp sessions and a swimming lesson.

Mayes asked if most of the expenditures were at the Aquatic Center; DeGhetto replied that it was roughly \$100,000, with about \$38,000 at other Recreation programs. Vomocil noted that no money is actually given to recipients; only *value*. Emery explained that \$100,000 of real property tax dollars is transferred from the Family Assistance Program to the Aquatic Center for, say, swimming lessons; it is real money.

DeGhetto suggested targeting utilization rather than capping, since that hurts the most. Geist said utilization could be first-come, first-served; and have people sign up early if they really want a program, since once the money is spent, there won't be any more. Emery said another formula apart from first-come, first-served could be used; we could stop awarding earlier when the limit is reached. Soule said the best way to get utilization up is to announce first-come, first-served. Emery said once we hit the cap, we could perhaps take that to the Council as a contingency.

DeGhetto said the idea is to hit budget targets, and people not utilizing the full amount doesn't do that; we want to dial in full use of the dollars. Soule suggested leveraging Corvallis Aquatic Team volunteers.

Hays said capping at \$135 shouldn't make a difference when the average is \$117 per person. Emery noted that the average means that half of all families spend *all* the funds; the other half don't. Alig it was not uncommon for non-profits to use a first-come, first-served basis. Soule preferred to serve more people with less classes, if need be. Emery said with this program, we served 1,100 people that otherwise wouldn't have gotten services. Dierwechter suggested documenting unmet need and telling the story. Vomocil advocated looking at whether there are additional costs; Mellein said in the majority of the time, we *do* have to add an additional instructor, for example. Emery highlighted one class, with 25 students, had 24 on family assistance. Emery said none of us want to turn people away, so we have to look at alternate funding; DeGhetto added that people can get behind that.

Griffiths asked how hard it would be to limit services within the 509J School District; Mellein replied that we'd have to manage two different databases. DeGhetto added that the hardest part is drawing a line, and what message that sends. Dierwechter added that people are mobile, as well.

Deb Rose asked if there was any way to get funds from the County; DeGhetto said presentations have been made to County Commissioners. He added that people getting services came from Benton, Linn and Polk Counties. Griffiths suggested looking at United Way; Dierwechter said United Way was looking at different ways of addressing basic needs.

Wolfenbarger asked if there was monitoring of utilization; DeGhetto replied there was, and we've sent reminders to recipients. Wolfenbarger asked if unused amounts could be given to others; DeGhetto replied that we can do a better job of communicating the message to parents "If you need it, use it, but if you're not, please let someone else use it. You cannot transfer your award to your child's account".

Griffiths encouraged board members to contact Emery with their thoughts and ideas. Vomocil praised staff for identifying priorities and strategies and endorsed them.

**III. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.



Owens Farm

## Director's Highlights

January 2014

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### Administrative Services

- Completed the playground at Tunison Park
- Installed a new stainless steel squirrel in the Arts Center Plaza, funded by Madison Avenue Task Force
- Preparing to move Sunnyside School to Owens Farm

### Parks and Natural Areas Services

- Volunteers provided a record number 8,078 volunteer hours to Parks Operations in 2013. Thank you to all of our dedicated volunteers.
- The 2014 SantaCross race was held in Avery Park providing a family friendly bicycle event for the community in December.
- Most facilities were unaffected by the hard freeze. Parks did need to repair minor water line breaks at one Riverfront restroom and the Berg Industrial Building.
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### Recreation Services

- Refunding the Gold Pass at the Senior Center
- Aquatic Center held the Polar Plunge on January 1<sup>st</sup> with great success
- Working with the Health Department to market the change of vending items that will meet the new food guidelines at the Aquatic Center
- Planning new classes for Spring and Summer

Corvallis Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Board

Updated June 5, 2013

\*=lead person

**Board Goals, Objectives and Action items**

<b>BOARD GOALS</b>				
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Interested People</b>	<b>Status</b>
1. Advocate to prioritize improvements to existing neighborhood parks trails and natural areas	1.1 Board members advocate at through their networks 1.2 Prioritize parks, trails and natural areas to improve	January, 2014	<b>Phil Hayes*</b> Staff: Jude Geist Karen Emery	Use Phil's list of past interested people
2. Implement efficiencies between city, county, OSU, LBCC and school district by 2014; e.g. sharing equipment and personnel	2.1 Invite key players to brainstorm	February, 2014	Tatiana Dierwechter, <b>Joshua Baur*</b> Kevin Bogatin Staff: Jude Geist, Steve DeGhetto & Karen Emery	

BOARD GOALS				
Goal	Action	Time Frame	Interested People	Status
3. Develop a plan to increase funding for Parks and Recreation			<b>Deb Rose,*</b> Betty Griffiths  Staff: James Mellein	Subcommittee is actively meeting. Has ranked funding ideas.
4. Expand public awareness, communication and advocacy for all Parks and Recreation facilities, land and programs.	4.1 Target outreach and develop a marketing program	July 2013	Lynda Wolfenbarger, Joshua Baur, Ed MacMullan, Jon Soule, <b>Tatiana Dierwechter*</b>  Staff: Karen Emery & Steve DeGhetto	Members from the latina community spoke at City Council regarding the value of recreation programs and family assistance (scholarships)
5. Develop or expand community relationships and partnerships to pursue joint goals (non-governmental).	5.1 Review current partnerships 5.2 Brainstorm potential partnerships		Deb Rose <b>Mike Mayes*</b> Staff: Steve DeGhetto & Jude Geist	Staff updated current partnership list Fall 2013

<b>BOARD GOALS</b>				
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Interested People</b>	<b>Status</b>
6. Develop and expand access and recreational opportunities, such as outdoor education, for underserved youth and families	6.1 Staff inform board what is currently done	February, 2014	Tatiana Dierwechter <b>Lynda Wolfenbarger*</b> , Mike Mayes Staff: Steve DeGhetto	

7. Develop a Parks and Recreation District by 2015				
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**ANNUAL BOARD ACTIVITY**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Interested People</b>	<b>Status</b>
1 Support the Capital Improvement Plan	June-July	Dierwechter, staff (Karen & Jackie)	PNARB June
2. Hold annual meeting with County and GLT	August	staff (Karen)	



## New squirrel back on the job at The Arts Center



DECEMBER 05, 2013 7:00 AM • BY JAMES DAY, CORVALLIS GAZETTE-TIMES

The little squirrel is back in the plaza outside The Arts Center.

Actually, it's a new squirrel statue, and in a slightly different spot.

The original bronze squirrel, which had been perched on a bench in the gathering spot between The Arts Center and Central Park, was stolen in April. It depicts a squirrel eating a pine cone and was a favorite with

children for generations.

The replacement, paid for by members of the Madison Avenue Task Force, is stainless steel, and instead of being poised on the bench, it is firmly anchored to a rock in the plaza's landscaped area.

Jackie Rochefort, a planner with the Corvallis Parks and Recreation Department, said it would be much more difficult to take this one.

"It is very well attached (to) a concrete footing ... It is quite beautiful and fits the site really well."

The installation was just in time for the Madison Avenue Task Force's holiday party, which was Tuesday night at The Arts Center.

The new squirrel also is the work of Kings Valley artist Raymond Hunter, who made the original 30 years ago. Hunter also created the ballerina in Central Park and the leather-helmeted football player poised for action at Oregon State University's Reser Stadium.

The squirrel statues repeatedly have been the target of thieves over the years. The bronze model originally was accompanied by a partner, who was depicted running along the back of the bench. But years ago the running squirrel was stolen, returned to the book deposit slot at the Corvallis-Benton County Library, remounted in the plaza ... and then re-stolen.



LEAGUE  
of Oregon  
CITIES

# LOCAL FOCUS

JANUARY 2014

# “Doing More with Less”

2014 State of the Cities  
An LOC Report



# CITY NEWS



## **CORVALLIS – New Picnic Shelter Graces Willamette Park**



Willamette Park is a large park located along the Willamette River in south Corvallis. It features beautiful river views, significant natural areas, river access, open meadows, sports fields and a popular disc golf course. Other features include a play structure, two formal soccer fields and a multi-use path. Several hiking/jogging paths branch off of the multi-use path that parallels the river, ultimately connecting the park to adjacent neighborhoods, the Crystal Lake Sports Complex, and the Willamette Park boat launch.

A very popular feature of Willamette Park is its large picnic shelter, which has been frequently rented for weddings, family reunions and social functions. In June 2000, the shelter burned down due to an act of vandalism. The city was able to collect some insurance money, but this reimbursement was calculated using the structure’s market value at the time of the incident rather than the current cost of replacement. Due to the high cost of capital construction, a temporary structure was built and was in place for more than 10 years.

In 2011, the city’s Parks and Recreation department was approached by an energetic member of a local Rotary Club who wanted to contribute to a significant community project. Recognizing that a new large shelter would benefit the community by providing a beautiful venue for social functions, the department opted to pursue the reconstruction of Willamette Park’s picnic shelter.

The city collaborated with Rotary and the Benton County Foundation to plan, fund and construct the replacement shelter. To raise funds, the Rotary clubs sold personalized pavers for the shelter floor. The Benton County Foundation was responsible for managing all of the project funds, while

Corvallis Parks and Recreation oversaw a community planning process for the design, permitting and construction phases. Several contractors contributed as well, including one who donated significant time and built most of the structure by hand.

The new structure has been named the Rotary Shelter, in honor of the hard work and dedication provided by the Rotary clubs. It was designed to be reminiscent of the national park shelters made popular in the 1930s. The shelter was completed in early October, and was celebrated with a grand opening that included live music and dessert from a local bakery. The project is a perfect illustration of a city bringing several groups together to fulfill a long overdue community need.

*Written by: Jackie Rochefort, park planner, city of Corvallis*

*(continued on next page)*



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