

**CITY OF CORVALLIS  
MINUTES OF THE PARKS, NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATION BOARD  
MARCH 20, 2008**

Attendance

Mary Buckman  
Paul Hohenlohe  
Dennis Iverson  
Randy Keller, Vice-Chair  
Noel Mingo, 509-J District Rep.  
Margie Powell

Staff

Karen Emery, Acting Director  
Jackie Rochefort, Park Planner  
Mark Lindgren, Recorder

Visitors

Tim Flowerday, Majestic Theater Exec. Dir.  
Louise Marquering, 1640 NW Woodland

Absent/Excused

Kent Daniels, Chair  
Charles Fisher  
Betty Griffiths, GLT Liaison  
John Locker  
Denise Nervik  
Tracy Noel  
Stewart Wershow, Council Liaison

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

Agenda Item	Information Only	Held for Further Review	Recommendations
II. Introductions	X		
III. Approval of Minutes	X		
IV. Visitors' Propositions	X		
V. Staff Reports	X		
VI. Board Member/City Council Liaison Reports	X		
VII. Majestic Theater Annual Report	X		
VIII. Board Retreat Review	X		
IX. Adjournment	X		The next Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Board meeting is 6:30 p.m., April 17, 2008 at the Downtown Fire Station.

**CONTENT OF DISCUSSION**

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Vice-Chair Randy Keller called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

- II. INTRODUCTIONS.** Acting Director Karen Emery introduced Jen DeVries, a former Board member who has returned to Corvallis; Emery stated she expects her to be appointed back to the Board by Mayor Tomlinson at the April City Council meeting.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.** Due to lack of a quorum, the February 21, 2008 minutes could not be approved.
- IV. VISITORS' PROPOSITIONS.** Louise Marquering, 1640 NW Woodland, asked about progress on developing open space management plans. Her specific concern was when poison oak will be removed in order to be able to bring in volunteers to remove other invasive plant species. Emery replied that the Parks Operations Management Plan is currently in its final draft; it should be finalized within several weeks and come to the Board in May. It addresses eradicating poison oak. Marquering noted that the Witham Hill Natural Area would be an ideal area to plant Kincaid's Lupin and Willamette Daisy.

Planner Jackie Rochefort related that while the initial effort was to develop management plans specific to each open space area, it was found that there are sets of issues common to all open space areas and it was felt that it would take too long to develop a plan for each area. It was decided to develop a management plan that would address common issues such as how to release oaks, deal with invasive species, etc.

Mary Buckman asked how the Department prioritizes dealing with poison in Witham Hill versus another area. Rochefort responded that the Board will add prioritization after development of the plan. Rochefort highlighted the Ivy Broom League, which works with the Department's Volunteer Coordinator to target removal of these species in parks and open spaces.

Marquering asked how to form a Friends of Witham Hill Natural Area group. Emery replied that there isn't a formal template. The Department has several groups that have characteristics of a friends group such as the Rose Society; there is also the Friends of Softball, a Senior Center Advisory Board, the Benton County Skateboarding Alliance and a group that serves as Friends of the Osborn Aquatic Center. All focus on a facility or interest and have structure and governing board; some are formal non-profits. Keller highlighted Public Works Department's Adopt a Path program.

- V. STAFF REPORTS.** Emery reported that John Locker, representing the Senior Center on the board, has resigned; the Center is recommending a replacement appointment. She highlighted the March 31<sup>st</sup> Town Hall on Community Sustainability; a recent Gazette-Times front page article on the Youth Basketball Program; and the just-published Spring/Summer Activity Guide.

She highlighted the co-sponsorship of the Storytelling Festival held in February at the library. The Senior Center is finishing a free tax aid program. About 12,000 participated last month in lap swimming, exercise classes and drop in recreation at Osborn Aquatic Center.

The FY 08-09 budget and recruitment for a Parks Operations Specialist was completed. Eight seasonal employees have begun work. Parks Operations is working with ODOT to remove a homeless camp.

Buckman asked about the item in Emery's report on administrative staff attending a workshop on Verbal Tactics. Emery responded that the workshop, hosted by Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation, covered ways to minimize aggressive behaviors through words. There are techniques to help staff work with difficult or upset customers, defuse negativity and help decide when to call for help.

Planner Jackie Rochefort related that the Department has been working with the Avery Rose Society to prepare a grant application for Phase II improvements to the Avery Rose Garden; the 50% matching grant, due April 4<sup>th</sup>, would fund additional pavers, build arbors and kiosks and perhaps parking lots. The Society contributed \$42,000 in funds and volunteer labor equivalents.

Work on Phase I pavers installation is continuing, with excavation complete and gravel laid down; the goal is to complete paving Phase I paths by the Society's June annual rose show and meeting. She is preparing bid documents to construct Townsend shelter in Avery Park; work will soon commence on updating lighting in Avery Park picnic shelters.

She will make a presentation on the recently constructed Sunset Park boardwalk trail at an upcoming ORPA trails workshop. As consultant estimates to do planning work towards getting a Greenway Permit for Willamette Park were higher than expected (due in part to an increased number of requested improvements), City Council will be asked in early April for additional funds. She noted staff is tracking development at Evanite, the Habitat for Humanity project (adjacent to Forest Dell Park); and Seavy Meadows.

**VI. BOARD MEMBER/CITY COUNCIL LIAISON REPORTS.** Margie Powell announced a Benton County Parks public hearing at Coho Community House on April 9<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m., regarding the Crystal Lake Cemetery, managed by the County. She noted that with the new housing, there are concerns that the cemetery is becoming a dog off-leash area.

Dennis Iverson highlighted the March 14<sup>th</sup> Portland City Club presentation on what could be done to improve parks. Emery added that Portland Parks and Recreation is bringing in a series of national speakers for the next six months; topics include sustainability.

Noel Mingo related that the School District Facility Advisory Committee met today and made a motion in support of partnering to find additional funds for installing high-efficiency boilers at Osborn Aquatic Center. The Wildcat Park Advisory Group is finishing overseeing installation of a drinking fountain and landscaping; there will probably be a formal dedication within several months.

**VII. MAJESTIC THEATER ANNUAL REPORT.** Majestic Theater Executive Director Tim Flowerday used a PowerPoint presentation for the theater's annual report. He highlighted recent painting of the lobby; merchants helped underwrite the costs. He related that the Majestic Board decided to hire an Executive Director this year (himself) after several years without one; there are plans to hire a full time Development Director, as well, by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Following review, job descriptions have been re-worked to improve efficiency.

Flowerday highlighted the focus on developing the capacity of the theater, both in potential for future growth and in serving the public. Grants have been applied for in regards to an educational program expansion, including taking instructors to rural schools; and equipment and building upgrades (improved sound equipment will be installed next week). He anticipated receiving \$50,000 to \$75,000 in grants income this year. Typically about \$2,000 to \$5,000 in grant funds have received per year in recent years, mostly from the Benton County Foundation.

One grant request is for help in beginning a \$575,000-plus capital campaign, which would include funding a replacement for the temporary fly system that controls curtains and lights; it is awkward and unsafe to service; it has been in place for over thirty years. Stage wings added in the 1960's that blocked the view of part of the proscenium arch over the stage have been removed and upcoming

painting will restore the original art deco design. A large movie screen has been installed and cult movies are being shown once a month.

Other improvements that would be funded by the capital campaign include relocating the balcony tech booth, thereby recapturing 60-80 great seats in the balcony; removing the central staircase in the green room to create storage below and showers above; relocating the existing box office; upgrading the fly system; and replacing deteriorated stage flooring. Seismic upgrades are scheduled for 2009.

Flowerday said the goals of the Majestic Theater Management Productions (MTM) include producing two theatrical shows per year; producing monthly music shows; and showing camp and cult movies. These are intended to reduce the number of “dark days” on the stage and the need for subsidies from the City by raising additional funds.

He clarified that Majestic Theater Management manages the facility. Corvallis Community Theater, (CCT) the resident group, uses the facility more than any other group and has the first choice for scheduling. Typically, the stage is tied up for three to four weeks prior to a production. Management is now negotiating with CCT to be able to use the apron in front of the curtain in order to stage productions during these periods and thereby generate more income, so it can continue to offer low rates to CCT.

Flowerday said that the two MTM shows each year will include a traditional British “panto”, like a fractured fairy tale with lots of audience participation, and a show with a non-resident director. *Chicago* is scheduled for next year.

He related that he is seeking to schedule productions by organizations including the Folklore Society, the Corvallis Opera Theater and the University Music School. There are continuing relationships with Santiam Christian School, Corvallis Downtown Association, the City of Corvallis, Corvallis Community Theater, Pacific Tap Dance, Oregon Dance, Willamette Apprentice Ballet, and the Reader’s Theater.

In response to questioning, Flowerday related that he and Majestic Board Members have met several times with representatives with the newly formed Friends of the Whiteside. He related that a public letter was issued that will be presented to the City Council; the Theater’s position is that it supports the Friends work to preserve a historic theater in downtown Corvallis. He stated the Majestic will help the Friends with advice, including on restoring a historic structure; many supporters of the Majestic were participants in helping to preserve the Majestic. He noted that the group also has a fiduciary responsibility to be diligent in continuing to manage the Majestic. Once the Whiteside building is restored, the Majestic would like to work with the Friends of the Whiteside in collaborative agreements and ventures. He observed that the Whiteside is a much larger venue and could serve acts that cannot be served at the Majestic. There is good crossover between the two; both building can operate successfully and it is good for the downtown.

Emery commented that one of the most exciting developments for the City was Mr. Flowerday’s arrival. The MTM made a commitment to wean the facility away from City tax subsidies. She cited progress in just several months in terms of applications for grants and future partnerships and directions. In both the previous and current fiscal years, the City made an obligation to fund the Majestic Theater up to \$50,000, less the endowment fund interest. It's projected there will be a \$31,000 tax subsidy in FY 08-09. Flowerday added that the Majestic is one of the groups that received part of the Loomis bequest; it will be invested to create endowments, which should also help reduce the need for City subsidies. The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) is negotiating with the City Attorney to

see if the OCF could assist in managing the current endowment to get better financial returns. Subsidies have been required, in part, in recent years since those financial returns have been so low. Emery added that the City is unable to invest at higher rates, so it is in the Majestic's best interest to see if the endowment funds can be moved.

Iverson praised the progress the Majestic has made and highlighted the importance of the expanded access and educational program, especially given the impact of cutbacks on school theater programs. Flowerday noted they are discussing using some of the adjacent Peacock's rooms for additional class space; people are now being turned away.

Buckman asked how people putting on productions choose between booking Ashbrook and Majestic facilities. Flowerday replied that each facility has its own niche and uses. Schools use their own facilities for their own programs; Ashbrook has use guidelines, including the rule that users must have an association with the school. He noted the Whiteside is a very different facility; it does not have a fly system, which would cost about \$1 million to \$1.5 million, in addition to other restoration costs needed for complicated theater sets. He said both Corvallis High School and Ashbrook have great theaters; both are well used by schools, since there is a lot of demand for space.

**VIII. BOARD RETREAT REVIEW.** Vice Chair Keller noted that only about half the Board was in attendance, so there couldn't be a very thorough discussion; he suggested that the Board revisit the issue next month. He asked that members consider how their priorities match those that came out in the retreat and ways of achieving them.

Buckman noted that they seemed more like Department goals; she suggested modifying them to better reflect the Board's own work and how its help can be most useful. Emery replied that Board input on goals and objectives will impact staff priorities; the goals and objectives that the Board itself can work on for the next year need to be agreed upon and further refined.

Iverson urged figuring out how to measure progress on priority goals and how to keep things on track. Emery suggested using Chapter V of the Recreation Services Plan as a model; action items there are measurable and are part of staff's work plan. She added that the Board can work on this as a Board or meet as a subcommittee. Iverson suggested assigning homework on goals to each member; Buckman concurred.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.