

CITY OF CORVALLIS
MINUTES OF THE PARKS, NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATION BOARD
DECEMBER 16, 2010

Attendance

Mary Buckman, Chair
 Lynda Wolfenbarger, Vice-Chair
 Kent Daniels
 Alejandra Gonzalez
 Charles Fisher

Absent/Excused

Jen de-Vries
 Randy Willard
 Randy Keller
 Nick Todorovich
 Betty Griffiths, Greenbelt Land Trust
 Greg Lecuyer, 509-J District Rep.
 Joel Hirsch, Council Liaison

Staff

Karen Emery, Director
 Dave Phillips, Parks Operations Supervisor
 Steve DeGhetto, Assistant Director
 David Neighbor, Parks & Administration
 Supervisor
 Mark Lindgren, Recorder

Visitors

Dean Codo
 Stewart Wershow
 Mayor Tomlinson

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. Thank you!- Mayor Tomlinson	X		
VI. Hwy. 34 Project- ODOT	X		
VII. Community Gardens Master Plan Update			
VIII. Mayor Berg Memorial Naming.			Motion passed that the board recommend that the City Council consider naming the area where the fountain is located at Riverfront Park "Helen Berg Plaza" (or whatever form of the name the family prefers).
IX. Feasibility Study for Parks and Recreation District			Motion passed that the board recommend that the City Council consider Parks and Recreation conduct a feasibility study for a Parks and Recreation District.
X. Goals Update	X		
XI. Staff Reports	X		
XII. Subcommittee Updates	X		
XIII. Board Member/City Council Liaison Reports	X		
XIV. Adjournment	X		The next regular Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Board meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m., January 20, 2010 at the Downtown Fire Station Main Meeting Room.

CONTENT OF DISCUSSION

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Mary Buckman called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.
- II. INTRODUCTIONS.** Director Emery introduced Phil Hays, who had recently been appointed to the board and will start serving in January.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.** It was noted there was a wayward “Emery” at the end of the fifth paragraph on packet page 9. Daniels moved and Fisher seconded to accept the November 18, 2010 minutes as corrected; motion passed. Daniels noted that he hated softball field advertisement signs in all venues. Wolfenbarger moved and Daniels seconded to approve the October 21, 2010 as presented; motion passed.
- IV. VISITORS’ PROPOSITIONS.** Dean Codo, following up his previous presentation regarding an incident involving an off-leash dog and an officer subsequently threatening to cite him for sleeping in a park, related that Officer Bryant had apologized. In addition, the Police Chief apologized and emphasized that what Codo had been doing in no way violated ordinances, and that he’d straightened out some confusion regarding the sleeping in parks ordinance within the department. The ordinance mostly relates to tents. Codo said that he’d had a satisfactory resolution and submitted a cartoon. He said that the impact of unwanted dogs jumping on him had kept him from using parks.

Buckman said Codo was bringing up an issue that was likely impacting a number of other fragile walkers, including seniors. Codo suggested having one day a year when no dogs were allowed in any parks. Buckman said that in January a PNARB subcommittee would start work on the dogs off leash issue. She highlighted the previous month’s minutes regarding a staff presentation on the sleeping in parks ordinance; like many laws, proper enforcement also depends on police interpretation.

Stewart Wershow said that there were many issues on the Council’s plate; he suggested the board write a letter asking the issue be considered as a new Council Goal. Daniels noted that there was a lot of land in the area where dogs are allowed compared to other areas in the state; he said the board should look at increasing the number of no-dog parks. Buckman suggested a letter to the new Council to raise the profile of the issue. Wershow said one of the possible items in the budget (though not recommended to implement) was a loss in the Police Department of the Animal Control Officer position. Police will enforce the no dogs in school areas ordinance, as it is a safety issue, but don’t have the resources to patrol dogs off leash.

Fisher expressed concern that the letter would not contain anything other than what had already been discussed and added that one day a year of no dogs in any park was not enough. He suggested asking for something specific, such as not cutting the Animal Control officer hours. He noted it was less an issue this time of year, since there were fewer non-dog users during rainy weather, so there was some time to address the issue. Buckman said she would draft a short note and distribute it for review in order to put issue on the Council’s radar; members concurred.

- V. THANK YOU!- MAYOR TOMLINSON.** Chair Buckman thanked the mayor for his many years of service. Mayor Tomlinson said he was saying goodbye to boards and commissions; the new mayor takes office on January 1, 2011. He said the board represented the face of the community and thanked board members for their service. He praised the quality of staff and said it is a great community to represent. The city has budget challenges that will have to address how to fund services; some of these,

including Parks and Recreation and the library, are key to Corvallis' quality of life. He related that the rest of the state thinks Corvallis is doing great things, including its downtown and the riverfront.

VI. HIGHWAY 34 PROJECT- OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

Emery introduced Jerry Wolcott of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to describe the Highway 34 project. He said the project was intended to reduce traffic congestion in downtown Corvallis. He said that ODOT's mission was to provide safe efficient transportation system, balancing the needs of a number of different user groups. The congestion ranges from downtown Corvallis to Peoria Road. He displayed an aerial view of the site, including adjacent Parks and Recreation lands.

He related that a recent traffic study focused on eleven intersections downtown and the bypass intersection. It looked at eight different scenarios over time, with different possible bridge configurations. He summarized that surprisingly, the study found that replacing the Van Buren Bridge or adding a northern bypass bridge alone would not solve the problem. He noted that a north bypass bridge was probably part of the long-term solution, but that would cost \$200 million in today's money and probably wouldn't be built within the next twenty years.

A possible mid-term solution involves slip lanes and south and north frontage roads along Highway 34. It dovetails with the long-planned Roche-Wolcott project, which is designed to improve safety from the bypass road to Peoria Road, and would cost \$6 million. It is fully funded and will be built next summer.

He said that in the traffic study, all the scenarios failed at the existing signalized bypass intersection, so this is what needs to be fixed. The South Bypass to Grove Lane project is scheduled to be constructed in 2013. It adds a slip lane and a south frontage road to Grove Lane (used by Knife River). It provides access to a park and improves the multi-use bike-pedestrian connections.

He said the long-term plan for Alan Berg Park includes a number of facilities and uses, but could not be accessed until the south bypass project is constructed. He related he'd discussed the project with Director Emery; the project will not impact the recreation part of the park and won't have a significant impact on the park. The directional interchange project in the longer-term may impact the Flomatcher Building. To clarify matters like this, ODOT intends to develop the DAP footprint of the 2013 South Bypass project to present to the board to help work together cooperatively. He noted that the Trysting Tree golf course had been developed to take a future north bypass into account.

He said if the board supported the project, ODOT was requesting a letter of support for the project from the Parks Director. He related that ODOT would return in a year with the DAP footprint and collect board and public input on the plans (DAP stands for Design Acceptance Phase).

Daniels noted that the existing master plan for the Alan Berg Park needs to be reviewed, since it was developed so long ago; it could change significantly. He added that the Public Works department is considering a project to reduce river water temperatures; one plan is to have water flow through golf course to a created Alan Berg Park wetland. One of the options for the golf course would be an additional water hazard that would submerge the planned bike path. He related that he was a member of a subcommittee with the Greenbelt Land Trust and the County; it met last week and discussed (among other issues) the Willamette Reach section between south Corvallis and North Albany, to try to coordinate Public Work's work with other projects to enhance and improve riparian projects along the river; that could impact the land in question here. The process could result in funding opportunities for the Alan Berg Park site. He noted that it was likely that the Knife River Corp. would likely leave the site in roughly fifteen years when the gravel is mined out there; the company will be required to rehabilitate the site and he advocated working with the company in the process.

Daniels suggested ODOT place a barrier between the south of Highway 34 and the parallel bike-ped path just a few feet away; there is currently no separation and using the path can be frightening. Emery related that she'd discussed the project with ODOT and Director Steve Rogers of Public Works. She related that Parks would begin work on updating the Alan Berg Park master plan in late spring. Fisher highlighted the difficulty in Knife River trucks making an east turn onto Highway 34; additional traffic from homes and park users also needed to be taken into consideration; Wolcott replied that extending a frontage road all the way to Peoria Road would require buying Wildish property, impacting a couple resources and building an expensive bridge. Fisher noted that making better public use of the park (such as for sports fields) would increase traffic. Daniels suggested requiring drivers go to Peoria Road in order to turn around; Buckman concurred. Wolcott said that a future phase, which would extend the north frontage road, was not funded or scheduled yet. Buckman noted that use of the park would be a big traffic impact.

DeGhetto noted that there was a big septic drain field at north side of the Flomatcher Building. Daniels noted that part of the Flomatcher building was used for set construction by the Majestic Theater; he expressed concern that these users in cars would get backed up behind gravel trucks; Wolcott replied that traffic counts should capture this kind of use. Fisher added that eliminating the Peoria Road traffic light would get rid of traffic pulses that create gaps that currently allow people to turn west onto the highway; Buckman concurred. Daniels asked how bicyclists and pedestrians would get across the new lane near the bridge; Wolcott replied he had worked with the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC); they will look at ways to minimize the impact. Fisher related that that stretch of Highway 34 was very popular for cyclists heading to Peoria Road; the planned changes will be challenging for them. Buckman said the plan seemed to increase access to the park, which has long been desired.

VII. COMMUNITY GARDENS MASTER PLAN UPDATE.

Assistant Director Steve DeGhetto distributed a copy of the draft plan outline. He introduced Megan Patton-Lopez, the Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities Initiative coordinator. He said that developing the master plan was one of the board's goals, with Daniels and Griffiths the board point people on the project.

Patton-Lopez said the handout gave background on the project, which seeks to improve access to physical activity and healthy foods. The plan will reinforce existing resources. There are already community gardens at Starker Arts Park and Avery Park. Community gardens provide opportunities to be physically active, access to fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as a sense of community. The project aims to protect existing community gardens and establish new community gardens on City land, as important community resources. The plan objectives include clarifying the process of starting them, looking at safety and environmental considerations, looking at a definition of community gardens and models of gardens in the U.S., and benefits of community gardens. She highlighted the need for public involvement in the plan, including community workshop meetings starting February 15, stakeholders and PNARB representatives. Additional information must be gathered regarding best practices in garden management. She highlighted the proposed timeframe over the next twelve months.

Gonzalez volunteered to help. DeGhetto said the intent was that it be a multigenerational effort. Buckman asked what we can tell people asking about community gardens; DeGhetto said most details should be worked through by May. Gardens could go forward on a special use basis. Emery related that a community garden was recently installed at Peanut Park on a special use basis. The downside to not waiting for the plan to be finished and creating more gardens on a special use basis is putting a bigger burden on the user group, including paying all expenses, such as insurance. DeGhetto said there could be temporary agreements that may need to be renegotiated when the Plan is completed. Fisher asked

whether it would include a template that a church group could use; DeGhetto replied that there would be a workbook element that includes what to consider in how to implement different visions of a community garden. He said that community gardens are contingent on complying with the Land Development Code. The plan seeks to set the example and help people be successful.

Buckman asked about the three public meetings proposed; DeGhetto said staff would run it by the board and could trim it down if needed. DeGhetto said staff sought advice about the make up of the stakeholder committee. Daniels suggested contacting organizations including Ten Rivers; the First Alternative Co-op; and Oregon Tilth.

Patton-Lopez related they were solicited by the Northwest Health Foundation regarding impacts to health; staff decided to look at urban agriculture projects. She said community gardens were a small part of urban agriculture. There has been a lot of encouragement from state organizations. DeGhetto said that Robert Wood Johnson Foundation will send staff to Washington, DC to talk to the congressional delegation regarding the issues. The plan will only be a recommendation to put the policy before the City Council. Daniels asked about animals in urban areas; DeGhetto replied that there was an ordinance against some animals in public parks.

- VIII. MAYOR BERG MEMORIAL NAMING.** Parks and Administration Supervisor David Neighbor said the September City Council meeting charged PNARB to seek input in regards to renaming of a public facility, land or street in honor of former Mayor Helen Berg. He highlighted the Council's Naming Proposal criteria, established in Council policy. There were public solicitations highlighted in a Nov. 14 Gazette-Times article, the city website and public announcements in the December 1st and 4th G-T. He highlighted suggestions in the packet and a late arrival naming the proposed landscaped pedestrian walkway on Madison between 9th and 11th Streets (it is a Public Works project). He said staff sought a board recommendation to the City Council regarding naming and highlighted proposals on page 13.

Daniels said there were a number of proposals; one was to rename "Alan Berg Park" to "Alan and Helen Berg Park"; however, the park plan there is likely to be revisited soon. He related a long, unpleasant discussion regarding naming Riverfront Park. Emery read Betty Griffith's proposal to name the Riverfront Plaza where the fountain is, or just the fountain itself after Helen Berg. Fisher agreed, noting it was appropriate to connect her with Riverfront Park, as she was mayor during a difficult time in the park's development. Emery said it is currently called Riverfront Plaza; one proposal is to rename it "Helen Berg Plaza". Phillips said there were a half dozen plaques at Howland Plaza; that naming process went smoothly. Emery said the renaming of the fountain plaza would involve changing the sign and materials; Daniels expressed support for the renaming of the site. Fisher said separating out a section in Riverfront Park to honor her seemed appropriate. Buckman advocated "Helen Berg Plaza" not just "Helen Berg Fountain"; Wolfenbarger concurred. Neighbor highlighted the naming process on page 21 of the packet.

Fisher moved the board recommend that the City Council consider naming the area where the fountain is located at Riverfront Park "Helen Berg Plaza" (or whatever form of the name her family prefers); Daniels seconded; motion passed unanimously.

- IX. FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A PARKS AND RECREATION DISTRICT.** Director Emery noted that the proposal was discussed at the previous meeting. She, Griffiths and Albany Parks and Recreation Director Ed Hodney met with the Director of the Willamalane Parks and Recreation District regarding the pros and cons of forming such a district. She related that she and the City Manager thought the next step was to have PNARB make a recommendation to the City Council to do a feasibility study before there is further discussion. She said she sought direction on whether staff ought

to go forward on a feasibility study; also, the board could ask that investigating it be made a Council Goal (the deadline for submitting that is January 7).

Fisher said he felt that having it be a Council goal was putting the cart before the horse; Emery replied that the feasibility study helps understand what such a district means in order to have a conversation about it. Having it as a Council Goal directs staff to work on the study; it also says that the Council supports investigating it, not that they believe that it is a good or bad idea. Daniels noted that the idea had long been considered and that he supported investigating it. He expressed concern that budget reductions could result in having no senior center, no aquatic center, and a part-time library, which is unacceptable, so it is important to investigate this. He said there were many issues and options involved; for example, he advocated having a separate elected governing body, not part of the City. Emery noted that Willamalane, Bend and Tualatin had Parks and Recreation Districts. Emery estimated the study would cost about \$10,000.

Daniels moved that the board recommend that the City Council consider Parks and Recreation conduct a feasibility study for a Parks and Recreation District; Wolfenbarger seconded; motion passed.

Daniels said that one option should be considering combining the city and county parks. Buckman highlighted that the last paragraph on page 7 of the previous minutes of the packet highlighted a list that Griffiths said a study should address. Emery said the board could look at the scope; there are good templates out there. Fisher advocated checking with how Parks and Recreation Districts felt about them. He had the sense that they made them far more political, changing from a staff-organized, board-approved operation to city politics. Daniels added that another option is to have County Commissioners be the governing body of the district.

Buckman asked about whether to make it a Council goal; she felt a study didn't rise to goal level. Emery said it would be necessary to have the Council's buy-in to do the study; Buckman said that just passing this motion does the same thing. DeGhetto related that the Budget Commission had suggested looking at a district. Wolfenbarger said she wasn't comfortable with a Council goal, but the study was a reasonable step; Fisher concurred. Emery clarified that Council Goals changed every year; last year, two Council goals included establishing an Arts and Culture Commission and working with the CPRC & D on wetland restoration projects. Emery said if it is a Council goal, then it's in her work plan. Buckman said it didn't feel like there was enough support to make it a Council goal. Daniels said the board should table the item. Buckman suggested members talk to various representatives and express that the board feels it is important, that it has been on the back burner for a long time, and it is time to either take it off the burner or move forward with it.

X. GOALS UPDATE. Discussion postponed.

XI. STAFF REPORTS. Director Emery related that Planner Rochefort and Administrative Specialist, Chrissy Bevens were writing a grant to renovate the Shooting Star trail; it would be helpful to have a letter of support from the board. Buckman said that it was in the CIP and so the board has already supported it. Buckman said she heard board consensus for a letter in support of the project.

Emery related that staff were preparing for a presentation to the Budget Commission, including how it is looking at current and future challenges. Staff took the review of the department's code of conduct for patrons of Parks and Recreation facilities and programs to the Human Services Committee. It was significantly rewritten as a result of Council changes to the "begging" policy and significant legal review; it also allows police to enforce code violations in parks through a trespass notice. Staff

discussed improvements to the department website. The first annual report will come out in March or April, it will describe how the department contributes to the community's vitality. She highlighted the Festival of Light; Visits with Santa Claus, and the Senior Center's December 25 holiday dinner. She said about two hundred middle-schoolers did volunteer work at Mary's River Natural Area.

She, Merja, and Philips wrote an ordinance to implement the Sustainability Initiative Fee; it will get its second reading at the Council next week. The fee will be on the utility tax, through Public Works, and is specific to urban forestry. It will fund implementation of the first five years of the Urban Forestry Management Plan, including pruning of small trees, public education of "Right Tree, Right Place", and a hazard tree program. It is about \$90,000 per year and will start April 1 if it is not repealed.

Assistant Director Steve DeGhetto highlighted the January 1 Polar Bear Swim at Osborn Aquatic Center. There will be expanded hours during winter break. He said Santa Visits were still available. About 400 people attended the Festival of Light. Elementary and middle school basketball participation numbers are both up. Adult program participation numbers are about the same, even with significant cost increases. Senior Center yoga programs are full; where there are class waiting lists, they are being expanded. There have been discussions on theatrical and art education; there could be a circus program in conjunction with the Art Center and Majestic Theater and perhaps YVC. Online Activnet registration has been very positive.

David Neighbor agreed that online registration was freeing up staff time. Most 2010 meeting notes and agendas are now archived on the website. Regarding clarification requested by the board on the sleeping in the park ordinance, he related that the Chief of Police asked the City Attorneys, who opined that sleeping in parks was only a violation between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

He said the OSU Game Day Parking parked 3,450 cars this year during six games, at an average of 575 cars per game (up from 3,206 cars last year, at an average of 534 cars per game). Revenue was increased by 50%; from \$22,000 last year to \$38,000 this year. Buckman asked whether that figure was net; Neighbor said staff do spend some time setting up signs; gross revenue was \$51,000; the net was \$38,000. The contractor (Mary's River Lodge) takes care of directing traffic, printing out tickets, and collecting money. The contractor has completed the first of a renewable three-year contract; it is interested in doing it for the two more years. Daniels said one of the proposals related to the project was to fund improving Avery Park roads; Emery replied that the item is in the CIP; however, the parking program funds are not linked to it; those funds are currently designated to go to the bottom line.

David Phillips related that on Mondays following game days, it takes a couple hours for staff to clean up; cleaning up has been easy with a minimal amount of time. The Herbert Farm and Natural Area Management Plan is close to being done; Iris Benson will present to the board in January. Buckman asked for an electronic version of the HFNA management plan. There is a project to look at renovating lights in Central Park, along with structural pruning of trees and shrubs. Daniels asked how it is decided to create or revise master plans; Emery replied that the board prioritizes which master plans to do next. Areas with an imminent need for plans, such as Berg Park or the skatepark area are probably next; Central Park is not on the current list. The Central Park lighting issue is largely related to liability.

Wolfenbarger asked about progress on the graffiti wall; Emery said staff was waiting to hear from ODOT.

Emery related that at the Budget Commission meeting Monday, staff were asked to look at operating impacts if staff were to take one day per month as a furlough day. Staff recommended keeping Senior and Osborn Aquatic Center open for limited service with casual staff only, and closing Administration

office entirely on that day. She said noted that the Senior/community center had a huge impact on generating revenue; everything is on a schedule. Buckman said that one of the points of a furlough day is to help the public understand that you don't get to cut the budget without something going away; Emery replied staff discussed it at length; they felt that the impacts and loss of participation outweighed that message. DeGhetto said closing Otter Beach one day would cut revenue by \$8,000 to \$10,000.

XII. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES. Discussion postponed.

XIII. BOARD MEMBER/CITY COUNCIL LIAISON REPORTS. Daniels related that Majestic Theater was hosting a singing version of A Christmas Carol.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.