

**CITY OF CORVALLIS**  
**MINUTES OF THE PARKS, NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATION BOARD**  
**MARCH 15, 2012**

Attendance

Betty Griffiths, Chair  
 Lynda Wolfenbarger, Vice-Chair  
 Jon Soule  
 Kent Daniels  
 Marc Vomocil  
 Kevin Bogatin, 509-J District Liaison

Staff

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

Visitors

Dave Eckert  
 Hester Coucke

Absent/Excused

Randy Willard  
 Elizabeth Westland  
 Phil Hays  
 Joel Hirsch, Council Liaison

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

Agenda Item	Information Only	Held for Further Review	Recommendations
II. Introductions	X		
III. Approval of Minutes	X		
IV. Visitor Propositions	X		
V. Naming Process for Central Park Plaza			Motion passed that PNARB recommend that the plaza between the Arts Center and Central Park be named the Arts Center Plaza.
VI. Executive Session			
VII. Adjournment	X		The next (joint) Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Board meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m., April 11, 2012 at the Walnut Community Room, Fire Station #5, 4950 NW Fair Oaks Drive, off Walnut Blvd.

**CONTENT OF DISCUSSION**

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Betty Griffiths called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.
- II. INTRODUCTIONS.** None.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**  
 Lynda Wolfenbarger moved to pass the February 16, 2012 minutes as presented; Jon Soule seconded; motion passed.
- IV. VISITORS' PROPOSITIONS.**  
**David Eckert** highlighted an ongoing project. In 2008, staff from the City Public Works Department, the Benton County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Mary's Peak chapter of the Sierra Club, and several others started conducting urban stream tours. Their purpose is to build public awareness of

urban streams, and to gain and retrieve information. The tours started in 2008 with 70-80 people touring Dixon Creek, followed in successive years by tours of Oak Creek, Dunawi Creek, and Newton Creek. The streams have been explored from their source to their mouths, which is unusual. They do stream testing and various experts give talks. There will be four tours this year. The first is on the afternoon of April 1, to the sources of Jackson Creek and Frazier Creek at Chip Ross and Dimple Hill, respectively. There will be a general tour on the afternoon of May 19. One tour will use the City trolley along five stations: Crescent Valley, Chintimini Wildlife Center, Owens Farm, Jackson-Frazier Creek, and Village Green; as well as a bike tour. There will be interpretive talks at each station. The third is a horseback tour on June 23 of the headwaters of Jackson and Frazier Creeks, and lastly a boat tour down the Willamette, looking at where the streams emerge. The tour next year will be of Dixon Creek once again; the tours are in conjunction with City Public Works. He invited parks and Recreation to join, if it wishes.

Kent Daniels asked Eckert to highlight the arboretum project at several schools. Eckert said all project funding is by NGO's. The plantings include native trees, shrubs and understories, along with interpretive signs and research projects.

**Hester Coucke** stated she works for the Arts Center, and is a member of the Madison Avenue Task Force (MATF). She said the plaza was formerly called the Arts Center Plaza. She said MATF suggested several names. Her personal suggestion was to keep it the Arts Center Plaza; it fits its purpose, retains the connection, it is clear where it is, and the plaza is already commonly known as such.

#### **V. NAMING PROCESS FOR CENTRAL PARK PLAZA.**

Griffiths highlighted the attachment in the board packet. Planner Jackie Rochefort distributed a list of proposed names that just came in. She said the dedication would be at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, May 6, at the Spring Garden Festival, most likely on the steps of the Art Center. The plaza was first dedicated by MATF in 1979; it never had a formal name; it has had various names over the years, but nothing official. It was called the Arts Center Plaza during a failed grant application; for a more recent application, the State told her the area could not be associated with a building, and requested it be called the Central Park Plaza for the purposes of the grant. The department did so, and was subsequently awarded funds to make a safe plaza.

She highlighted the naming criteria in the packet. She said the board's naming recommendation would go to the Council's second April meeting. She highlighted proposed names from various sources. They included Meisy Plaza (named for Ruth "Meisy" Howland); the more formal Ruth Howland; McVicar Plaza (for the OSU President involved in MATF and an advocate for the "gown to town" idea); Esther Henderson (an early PRAB member and arts and parks advocate); Rene Moye Plaza (former Parks and Rec director); Mario Pastega Plaza (she noted that while his contributions to the community were great, they were not as large to Parks and Recreation or the Arts Center); Marion Gathercoal (founder of the Arts Center); and Piazza daVinci (denoting beauty and creativity). She solicited any additional names.

Daniels said one of the suggested names could simply be placed in front of the "Arts Center Plaza" title. Emery commented that longer names tend to be more difficult to manage. Rochefort related that there is a (Jim) Howland Plaza on the Riverfront; Ruth Howland's name could be a connection between the two. Also, there is a red oak planted in honor of the two in recognition to their contributions to the arts. Griffiths favored retaining Arts Center Plaza; if not that, the person should have a strong connection to the Arts Center or the Plaza. She said Pastega made many contributions but not to the Plaza. Wolfenbarger favored Arts Center Plaza. Rochefort expressed concern that going back to the Arts Center Plaza name could appear underhanded to the State.

Griffiths said Arts Center Plaza was not on the list; Rochefort said it wasn't submitted. Emery noted that Central Park was purchased at the same time that the Arts Center Building was purchased.

**Vomocil moved that PNARB recommend that the plaza between the Arts Center and Central Park be named the Arts Center Plaza; Wolfenbarger seconded; motion passed.**

Griffiths said it lies between the Arts Center and Central Park, and it is closely associated with the Arts Center. The other names are not closely associated with Parks and Recreation. Vomocil said the Arts Center name associates it closely to a physical location, which is part of the naming criteria. Daniels noted there is a fountain in Central Park that was named after someone, but it has been long forgotten.

Vomocil said it has been referred to Arts Center Plaza longer than anything else, and was recommended by the Arts Center. Rochefort related that there is a historic sign that honors Gathercoal. Rochefort related that the plaza now has federal 4f protection, thus reserving its use for a plaza in perpetuity, unless it is traded for an almost identical piece of land. She added that staff did not do that for the tax lot under the Arts Center, allowing additional renovation and changes to the building.

## **VI. STAFF REPORTS.**

Planner Rochefort related that the Civic Beautification and Urban Forestry Advisory Commission (CBUF) put together a work party recently and planted Japanese maples and rocks in the Arts Center Plaza.

Emery related staff completed a random survey sent out to 4,000 residents related to the Master Plan update; there is also a non-random web survey. While the two surveys are identical, the results will be kept separate in order to be statistically valid.

A new sponsorship program was started to improve cost recovery targets. The seasonal Park staff returns tomorrow (they ordinarily return on March 1, starting later was part of budget cost reductions). The Senior Center recruited for a half-time Recreation Coordinator; Chelsea Chytka was hired. The department is partnering with the school district on a bicycle safety course, funded through grants.

Assistant Director Steve DeGhetto is attending National Parks and Recreation Revenue School this week; he is returning with lots of good ideas on how to improve financial stability. The Senior Center is closed for maintenance March 26-30. She and Rochefort met with proponents of constructing a bike pump track. They also met with proponents of building a space for bicycle and unicycle polo; they currently use a basketball court and a tennis court. Emery added that polo courts need bumpers and may well be able to be incorporated in a joint facility for other use.

Aquatic Center Supervisor James Mellein related that staff were getting the last applications for the Benton County Foundation grant, which funds inclusion swimming lessons and Youth Volunteer Corps. He said the cost recovery model has begun to be implemented. Some of the prices have gone up and some of the programs have gone away; however, there have only been minimal complaints. The Family Assistance Scholarships program has helped some of those families concerned with prices. There will be an Activity Guide summer supplement this year, for the first time; the guides have begun generating some advertising dollars. There will be a complete package for sponsorships; businesses can put up banners at some softball fields; they can do marketing on the score sign at Osborn Aquatic Center; and there are opportunities for business sponsorships.

Vomocil asked about discontinued programs; Mellein replied that Sitting with Santa and Introduction to Youth Football were discontinued; it did not impact very many children. Staff are keeping a detailed list

of every activity that we are modifying, such as eliminating them, or raising fees. There is an effort to get sponsors to support programs so fees can remain the same. He reported that April Pools Day is April 7; it is a fundraiser with a water safety curriculum focus, with several other groups participating. The Shamrock Run (“The Run to Get Lucky”, 5km and 15km), a fundraiser for the family assistance program, is this Saturday at the Riverfront.

Rochefort related that the CIP Program will be earlier this year; it will be brought to the May meeting. The CIP subcommittee will meet in April, with a representative from CBUF, staff, and a former employee. Soule, and Wolfenbarger volunteered to represent PNARB.

Rochefort related there will be a small project to stabilize the Owens Farm Barn before there is much more damage. The hope is that one day there will be a restoration. She said the roof is currently completely open. Everything in the barn will be removed and stored. Griffiths noted that much of the material in the barn is historical; Rochefort replied that care will be taken, and “No Trespassing” signs will be posted.

Rochefort reported that the annual Sustainability Report is nearly complete. Emery added that it will be posted on the website; it goes to the Council on Monday. Rochefort said Parks and Recreation has done a number of items in the Sustainability Report. The Coronado Park recommendation will go the Council’s executive session on Monday; after the session, they will give staff direction in open session.

## **VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

Griffiths related that she has been appointed to the Neighborhood Planning group of the OSU-City Collaboration Project, which will start meeting soon, in April. She is looking for input regarding that issue. Other groups are Neighborhood Livability, Traffic and Parking, and in six months, a Housing group.

Daniels asked about the next steps for the Mary’s River Natural Area boardwalk; he advocating not rebuilding it. Rochefort reported that she was out there today. The reason it was installed was that it was a condition of development for the Brooklane Estate housing project, which required three access points. The boardwalk was intended to facilitate walking, since the site was so often very wet. When site users did walk, they tended to damage the resource. The boardwalk was not well designed. If we decided to not have a trail system there, one option is to go through a planning process for a major modification to the application. Another option would be to bring in an engineer to analyze the site and help design the best trail system with three access points. She related the department submitted an application to FEMA. Emery said staff have discussed ways to improve the trail system design. She noted that many people, including people with dogs, do not use the boardwalk. Rochefort said there are sections that are partially and fully collapsed. She said staff are evaluating pulling all the decking out.

Daniels asked about the progress of the new Friends of Parks and Recreation group; Emery replied that Griffiths is representing PNARB on the group. They are developing a nonprofit group: Friends of Parks and Recreation. The group has met twice; they have developed a third draft of bylaws and articles of incorporation and are almost done. The purpose is to advocate for and raise funds for Parks and Recreation services in Corvallis. She added that Benton County Natural Areas and Parks is going through the same process. Daniels said the County group asked the Cascade Pacific RCND to give an estimate for providing financial services; Griffiths said that after discussion, there was a decision not to combine the two efforts. The County group intends to raise money for targeted projects such as Beazell Farm and other pieces of property. The City effort will allow targeted donations but will also be seeking general support, as well.

Griffiths said one of the first steps will be to open a bank account; also, the cost to file articles of incorporation and bylaws is about \$200, so some donations will be needed. She said the Benton County Foundation's process might be too restrictive; it gives back 5% of whatever you have. Emery said there was also board discussion that the Oregon Community Foundation may be the best place to manage the investment.

Griffiths reminded the group the next meeting is not a regular meeting, but rather a joint meeting with Greenbelt Land Trust and Benton County Natural Areas and Parks, and will be held at the Walnut Community Room at Walnut Park Fire Station #5, just south of Martin Luther King, Jr. Park.

Rochefort reported that she, Emery and Griffiths will meet to discuss the Trails Plan as part of getting towards the Master Plan.

Griffiths highlighted the May 5-13 Natural Areas Week of Celebration, sponsored by the Sustainability Coalition. She will forward a calendar of many events, including events at Herbert Farm, and Mary's River Natural Area.

**VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION. 7:32 p.m.**

**IX. ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.