

**CITY OF CORVALLIS  
MINUTES OF THE PARKS, NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATION BOARD  
MAY 17, 2012**

Attendance

Betty Griffiths, Chair  
Lynda Wolfenbarger, Vice Chair  
Carolyn Ashton  
Nick Castellano  
Kent Daniels  
Phil Hays  
Jon Soule  
Marc Vomocil  
Joel Hirsch, Council Liaison (arrived 7:15)

Staff

Karen Emery, Director  
Steve DeGhetto, Assistant Director  
Jackie Rochefort, Planner  
Terry Nix, Recorder

Visitors

Megha Shyam  
Marna Claywoman  
Jill Kanterman  
Megan Patton-Lopez

Absent/Excused

Kevin Bogatin, 509-J District Liaison  
Randy Willard

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

Agenda Item	Information Only	Held for Further Review	Recommendations
Introductions	X		
Approval of Minutes	X		The March 15, 2012 minutes were approved as corrected.
Visitors' Propositions	X		
MLK Commission Kiosk Proposal	X		Motion passed to approve the proposal to design and construct an informational kiosk in Martin Luther King Jr. Park at the preferred location (Option A).
Community Garden Master Plan Draft	X		
Adjournment - 8:26 p.m.	X		The next Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Board meeting is scheduled for June 21, 2012, 6:30 p.m., at the Downtown Fire Station Main Meeting Room.

**CONTENT OF DISCUSSION**

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Betty Griffiths called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**II. INTRODUCTIONS**

The Board welcomed new members Carolyn Ashton and Nick Castellano.

Kent Daniels commented that this is his last PNARB meeting; he will be out of town next month and, after nine years on the Board, he will term out in June.

### **III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

March 15, 2012

Lynda Wolfenbarger noted her first name is misspelled under Item III.

**MOTION:** Daniels moved to approve the March 15, 2012 minutes as corrected. Jon Soule seconded the motion and it **passed**.

Marc Vomocil questioned the accuracy of Director Emery's comment that Central Park was purchased at the same time as the Arts Center Building, as reflected on Page 3 of the minutes. Director Emery said she believes that is true; she will double check.

Emery said the minutes of the April 11, 2012 joint meeting of the PNARB, Benton County Natural Areas and Parks Board, and Greenbelt Trust Board are included in packets for information; no action is needed. Phil Hayes said he has provided a suggested change to staff.

### **IV. VISITORS' PROPOSITIONS: None.**

### **V. MLK COMMISSION KIOSK PROPOSAL**

Planner Rochefort said the Commission for Martin Luther King, Jr. has a goal to honor Dr. King by educating and sharing his message with the community. The Commission approached staff with a request to design and construct an informational kiosk in Martin Luther King Jr. Park. Staff has been working with the group to come up with a design that would be suitable for the park and for the information they want to share. There are two locations under consideration. Option A, the preferred option, is on the left side of the main park entrance from Walnut Boulevard, adjacent to the boulders. Option B is on the west side of the pathway leading from the parking lot to the barn and playground. Option A is centrally located at the junction of several pathways; it is in a shaded area on a relatively flat hard surface; it is a highly visible and accessible location; and staff is fairly confident it could be located outside of any natural features. Option B would require visitors to negotiate a hill so it does not entirely provide access for all, and it is in an open grassy area which poses a potential conflict with mowing operations.

Planner Rochefort reviewed the proposed design details. The structure would not exceed 120 sq. ft. so there would be no need for a building permit. Roofing would be metal and would match the color of the barn roof. The kiosk would have three panels – a 6'x4' center panel would be used to showcase mural art celebrating the life and vision of Dr. King, and two 4'x4' side panels would be used for community information sharing. If the budget allows, the side panels would have locking plexiglass case. The kiosk would be designed to have display panels on both sides but the back side may be completed in a

later phase depending on funding. The ground surface would be either concrete or pavers. Benches would be installed just beneath the side panels if budget allows. The Commission has set aside \$9,000 for the project which must be spent before the end of this fiscal year. If approved, staff will work with a contractor to come up with the best design for the location. Staff recommends approval of the project as presented with the location described in Option A.

**Megha Shyam**, Chair of the Commission for Martin Luther King, Jr., reviewed efforts of the Commission to educate and share the message of Dr. King. The Commission helps plan events that celebrate Dr. King's birthday each January and holds an essay contest for high school students each fall. This would help with the education process. The kiosk would provide a place to post essays and display murals by students. He circulated a drawing of the proposed structure.

**Marna Claywoman** said she is excited about the project. She thinks the kiosk would enhance the park and she sees it as an opportunity for citizens and visitors to experience Dr. King's dream in this community which has celebrated him for many years. It would also provide an opportunity for youth to participate, not only with the display cases for essays and murals, but also in continuing to recognize Dr. King's dream. She supports Option A for the location because it has trees for shade and it is more accessible.

Emery asked about the concept for the mural. Claywoman said the Commission has done some research and there are some local artists who are willing to work with youth on a mural. She recognizes that weather would take a toll over time but she is not too concerned about vandalism. She thinks the mural would withstand a number of years and would then need to be replaced. Emery said the mural may need to be reviewed by the Public Arts Selection Commission (PASC). Shyam noted that he previously served on the PASC; he has a good understanding of that process and doesn't think it would be too difficult.

In response to an inquiry from Vomocil, Claywoman said that the Commission anticipates that all sides of the kiosk would eventually be in use; they will start with the most visible side and see how far the funds go.

**Jill Kanterman** said she has been a member of the Commission for Martin Luther King, Jr. since December. It has been wonderful working with them and she is excited about this project in particular. She feels that Option A would be the best location because most people use that path and because it is the best for accessibility. Option B is up on the hill and it is a bit of a trek; she wants the kiosk to be accessible to everyone. She asked that the Board approve the request with the preferred location.

Griffiths asked if the kiosk will be accessible by wheelchairs. Rochefort said yes; the parking lot itself is compacted gravel but cars would be able to drive right up to the kiosk. Emery added that when the structure is engineered, they will consider the ability for wheelchairs to get inside kiosk.

Vomocil said he would encourage the use of materials that are most resistant to vandalism and that can most easily be repaired. Brief discussion followed and Rochefort noted that staff will work with the contractor to select appropriate materials and the best positioning of the kiosk.

**MOTION:** Hays moved to approve the proposal to design and construct an informational kiosk in Martin Luther King Jr. Park at the preferred location (Option A). Soule seconded the motion and it **passed**.

## **VI. COMMUNITY GARDEN MASTER PLAN DRAFT**

Assistant Director Steve DeGhetto introduced Megan Patton-Lopez, who is working for both Benton County and the City of Corvallis on this project. He said that, in 2010, the Benton County Health Department, in collaboration with the City Parks and Recreation Department and other community partners, was awarded a \$360,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to improve opportunities for physical activity and access to affordable healthy foods for children and families in South Corvallis and surrounding rural areas of Benton County. The decision was made to undertake a process related to community gardens; the process involved meetings with a stakeholder group and community forums.

DeGhetto reviewed the Community Garden Master Plan Draft, included in packets. He reviewed the Vision for Community Gardens on Public Land, the Goals and Objectives, the Definitions and Benefits of Community Gardens, and Recommended Sites for Community Gardens on City Park Land. He noted that it would be necessary to deal with site specific issues in any of the parks, and that there would be a process for people to suggest other locations.

Patton-Lopez reviewed the Methodology, which included five meetings of a Planning Advisory Committee made up of 14 residents representing different stakeholder groups, three community forums, key informant interviews, best practices review, a field survey of community gardens, and a residents' interest survey. She said there are currently four gardens in three City parks: Starker Arts Park, Avery Park, and Peanut Park. Of the four gardens, none have raised beds or paths that meet ADA accessibility standards. All four gardens are clustered in one area. There are other community gardens in the City, including church gardens and the West Side Community Garden.

DeGhetto reviewed the Structure of the City Community Garden Program, noting that all community garden proposals would be evaluated by Parks and Recreation staff to ensure that they do not impact the scenic or recreational values of the park and that they are constructed with materials that meet the design and maintenance considerations of the Department. Donations may be considered on a case-by-case basis; non-designated monetary donations would be used to meet current community garden needs as recommended by the Department Director. The City would own and manage the gardens and would provide oversight of the program, land/space in specified parks, insurance for rental and share gardens with a signed waiver, construction of the garden, planning

assistance, water, irrigation, tool shed and locks, and garden-based programming with fees.

DeGhetto reviewed the Operation parts of the draft master plan including Availability and Registration, Liability and Insurance, Human Resources, and Operating Capital Requirements. He then reviewed the Management parts of the plan, which include a part-time Garden Coordinator in Corvallis Parks, Neighborhood Garden Liaisons volunteers, and Best Management Practices for Community Gardens. He reviewed the steps to Create a New Community Garden which include an application process to start a new garden in which the community member or group should consider demonstrated need, location, neighborhood support, and resources; a meeting between the community member or group and the Garden Coordinator to review the process and requirements and discuss preliminary location and design; a meeting with the neighborhood and Park Planner to discuss in detail the location and design of the garden; a community planning meeting; a garden plan completed by the Park Planner with projected start up costs and neighborhood costs defined; and fundraising by the group with construction of the garden to begin after submission of funds. It is recommended that the cost to the neighborhood would be one-third of the startup costs.

Daniels noted that Garfield Park at Hoover School is not included on the list of potential locations. DeGhetto said it was not included because it is on school property. Hirsch noted that there is a large community garden at the church across from Garfield Park.

Daniels said there may be the possibility of doing something at Bald Hill in the distant future. It might also be worth talking to the owners of Owens Farm.

Daniels asked if there would be an allowed species list to help avoid invasive or poisonous plants or plants that are banned by the state. DeGhetto said the point is taken and he will look at working that into the master plan.

Soule asked if consideration had been given to seeking partners or sponsorships. Patton-Lopez said that having this master plan will help in seeking partnerships with other agencies to secure funding and efficiencies. Soule said that private industry might be able to contribute startup materials.

Hays said that he is happy about the fact that the list of potential garden sites does not include Bald Hill or some of the other natural areas. He said wildflowers that people might plant in a garden are extremely invasive. DeGhetto noted that some of this will be addressed as part of the best management practices.

Griffiths said this is a good plan but she feels it is really dry. DeGhetto said the plan is a regulatory, step-by-step process; perhaps some photos or drawings could be added. Griffiths suggested that it might be good to add comments about future opportunities for working with the school district or other community groups. Emery said that comments of that nature could be added, but the master plan is intended to address gardens on City property.

Griffiths suggested that information be added about how the potential sites were chosen so the needs are clear to people who might want to propose a different location. She noted a minor correction on first page – it should refer to the Corvallis Sustainability *Food* Action Team. She suggested that the final plan include a list of the stakeholders group.

Vomocil said the plan is thorough and comprehensive. He said the longevity of volunteer activities could be a problem; he thinks the neighborhood liaisons will be critical in trying to keep volunteers motivated. Patton-Lopez said it is hoped that having the neighborhood groups financially invested by participating in the startup costs will help with motivation.

Griffiths asked what would happen if a community group walks away from a garden. Emery noted that there are waiting lists for the current community gardens. Rochefort said it will be important that the community group remain dynamic with new volunteers coming in. Patton-Lopez said the hope is that having the community group participate in startup costs will reduce the likelihood that a garden would be abandoned. She noted that Eugene and Portland include community gardens in their activity guides; anyone from the neighborhood or across the community can rent available garden space.

Emery said the master plan will be revised to incorporate the suggestions from the Board and stakeholders; it will then come back to the Board.

## **VII. STAFF REPORTS**

Emery distributed an updated PNARB membership contact list.

Emery presented a gift from the Mayor to each Board member in appreciation for their volunteer services.

Emery drew attention to the Director's Highlights and asked if there were any questions; there were none.

Daniels said that he has enjoyed serving on the PNARB but he leaves with some concerns regarding funding and staff levels. As someone who has been involved in this effort for a long time, he is concerned about the ability to even maintain our natural areas; he has talked with staff about how important it will be in the future to maintain those areas. Other than this concern, he thinks we have a great system. Chair Griffiths thanked Daniels for his contributions.

DeGhetto said there will be a backyard garden tour on May 19; admission wristbands are available for pre-purchase. He reviewed upcoming activities at Osborn Aquatic Center, including a Heart of the Valley Triathlon on Memorial Day.

Rochefort said that the dinosaur bones in Avery Park had to be closed due to safety; staff is looking for long-term solutions and may need to bring this issue to Board. She said that

staff is just starting to prepare documents for the Shooting Star Trail and hope to have it under construction this August/September.

Griffiths said the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition is sponsoring another free Housing Tour this Saturday, May 19.

Rocheft advised that the riverfront hotel project was approved by the Planning Commission last night; the hotel is not expected to impact the park other than increased use.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.