

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

Attendance

Betty Griffiths, Chair
 Lynda Wolfenbarger, Vice-Chair
 Marc Vomocil
 Ed MacMullan
 Deb Rose
 Tatiana Dierwechter
 Jon Soule
 Nick Castellano
 Joshua Baur
 Joel Hirsch, City Council Liaison

Staff

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

Visitors

Absent/Excused

Phil Hays
 Carolyn Ashton
 Kevin Bogatin, 509-J District Liaison

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Agenda Item	Information Only	Held for Further Review	Recommendations
II. Introductions	X		
III. Approval of Minutes- October 18, 2012	X		
IV. Visitor Propositions	X		
V. Cost Recovery Review	X		
VI. Herbert Natural Area Update	X		
VII. Mary's River Natural Area Boardwalk	X		
VIII. December Meeting	X		
IX. Staff Reports	X		
X. Board & Liaison Reports	X		
XI. Adjournment	X		The next Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Board meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m., January 17, 2013 at the Downtown Fire Station, 400 NW Harrison Blvd.

CONTENT OF DISCUSSION

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Vice-Chair Lynda Wolfenbarger called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS.

Director Karen Emery introduced new Park Operations Specialist Jude Geist, who started on November 1, 2012; and new board member Joshua Baur.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES- October 18, 2012.

Wolfenbarger noted that Randy Willard, mistakenly listed as attending, was no longer on the board; MacMullan added that he too was not present. Vomocil noted that the first sentence in the second paragraph on page 4 should be changed to “..the conversation hasn’t gone that *far*”. Marc Vomocil moved and Jon Soule seconded to approve the October 18, 2012 minutes as corrected; motion passed.

IV. VISITOR PROPOSITIONS. None.**V. COST RECOVERY REVIEW.**

Assistant Director Steve DeGhetto highlighted the memo on an update on the cost recovery methodology. He said the memo’s table shows the starting point of figures collected before the methodology was implemented, with the figures covering the period from FY10-11 to FY12-13. He pointed out the five cost recovery pyramid tiers, noting the lowest tier, Tier 1, showed cost recovery of 0% so far in FY12-13, since that was the goal that had been established. He estimated that the final figure would be 4.5-5%, cautioning that it was not tracked.

He highlighted the table showing trending for revenues, expenditures, and participation. He reported there was no cost recovery figure for FY 2011-2012, since the ActiveNet computer registration system, which collects revenue-side data, was being transitioned. He said the significant increase in participation reflects inclusion of data from the Osborn Aquatic Center.

DeGhetto reported that family assistance utilization was 15% in FY10-11. He said that previous policy required participants pay about half the cost; however, some families couldn’t afford that. Because of that concern, the threshold for lowest-income participants changed to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and the requirement to pay 50% was dropped, and then the utilization figure climbed to 22% in FY11-12 (with 42% in this quarter so far).

James Mellein explained that previously, the 50% portion that Parks and Rec paid was treated as lost revenue. However, the new ActiveNet software allowed real dollars to be put into those programs. The new cost recovery model requires recovering the true costs from the programs. Real dollars are set aside in an account, where, if a family assistance client was awarded at the 50% level, they pay 50% and the other 50% of the program comes out of an expense line item, and so 100% of the revenue goes to the program that it was designed for. If the client is awarded at the 100% level, then the expense for the entire program would go into the revenue for that program, so you can see the true cost recovery for that. This allows fundraising for that family assistance expense item, such as with the upcoming Turkey Trot event.

Vomocil asked about the 42% utilization figure listed for FY12-13; Mellein replied that that was the utilization rate of existing dollars to date. DeGhetto said that not all the dollars may be spent; staff are monitoring it. There is a limit for how much each family assistance recipient can get; typically, about two programs per person. He noted the funds won’t get rolled over to the next year; remaining funds go back to the General Fund. Tatiana Dierwechter noted that as the program becomes better known, there would likely be more utilization. DeGhetto said the department seeks to create a sense that the participant becomes a client and program user.

Castellano asked if the program tracked individual's utilization; DeGhetto replied that that was part of the registration process. He said the program sought to be as simple as possible; the department works with the school district and the County Health Department to verify eligibility. In the past, there have been language and documentation issues. Deb Rose said that transportation could be an issue; DeGhetto agreed, saying that the department recognizes that, and that some programming occurs in schools, which helps address that. The program is good for one year. DeGhetto said the department encourages participants to use their scholarships; Director Emery added that eligibility income levels and funding amounts are under ongoing review and staff may bring proposed changes to the board based on what they find.

Joshua Baur asked whether people have to fill out their information every year, discouraging them by having to repeatedly fill out paperwork; DeGhetto replied that the information is kept on file. Vomocil asked how many families participated in the family assistance scholarship program; DeGhetto replied that he would come back with that information. The Senior Citizen Foundation of Benton County provides assistance for seniors. He said some people that are awarded scholarships don't utilize them; some incentives need to be developed. The numbers will be analyzed at the end of the year; they may poll participants. Mellein said the rate reflects the numbers that registered for some Parks and Rec program. DeGhetto noted that family assistance only covers activities, not any hard products. Vomocil noted that some users may only want to sign up for one program worth \$50, and not want to tap the remainder of available programming.

DeGhetto said a Benton County Foundation grant funded some day camp lunches outside the Title I schools. He said the program process was dynamic in terms of how best to serve those who cannot afford programs. Mellein said the initial numbers show that the program, adopted in January 2012, was meeting objectives through cost recovery, increasing revenue, and decreasing expenditures. Mellein explained that the first line was only a first quarter comparison for all three years; the second line is total expenditures for first quarters; while the third line is the actual annual.

Vomocil asked about the pyramid goals; Mellein replied that the goal is to keep programs with high cost recovery high; the goal is a *minimum* target to meet. DeGhetto said pricing for tiers 3 to 5 is eventually going up to what the market will bear. The intent was not to scare people away, but rather to ramp prices up over time, not too fast. There is research on what people pay for similar services and department will price services to that level. He cautioned that there are minimum participation levels; when there weren't enough people participating, programs are cancelled to lower overhead. There is a fine line in establishing participation minimums.

Baur asked how participants were counted; Emery replied that it is counted by registration; it is not by each swim lesson, for example. Drop-ins are included. DeGhetto said the goal at the Senior Center was to assign some fee for drop-ins. Osborn has a huge drop-in component, whereas there were fewer drop-ins at the Senior Center.

Griffiths asked about a Level 2 Senior Center fee that some were complaining about in a recent G-T article; Mellein replied that the "supervised park facility" expenses include utilities, direct costs of admin, custodial services, and anything else that is a cost to the center, on the expense side of the sheet. The revenue for the facility is difficult to get, since there is no drop-in experience there, so the Gold Pass system was designed to offset those expenses.

Emery added the cost recovery process looked at possible membership-type approaches for the Senior Center. DeGhetto said the Gold Pass coupon could be used for any program for the *first* year. Wolfenbarger said it gets people used to doing that. DeGhetto said people may discover other benefits

to the Gold Pass over time. Wolfenbarger said scholarships numbers for seniors this year have been high; the Foundation has almost exhausted its available scholarship funds for this year.

Vomocil highlighted cost recovery figures for camps and after-school programs at 37%, asking whether there would be an increase of cost to clientele over time to get to the 90% cost recovery rate. Emery replied that the figures were for FY10-11; Mellein added that the figures were a starting point and were not cost recovery strategies. Emery said staff will bring back a revised pyramid to the board that illustrates the change from FY10-11 to now. She said FY10-11 figures were the beginning benchmark.

Dierwechter said she appreciated the effort to face revenue challenges as well as to ensure that the most vulnerable families still had access to services; many communities have not been able to do that.

VI. HERBERT NATURAL AREA UPDATE.

Director Emery distributed a map of Herbert Natural Area. The site's 221 acres are currently managed as a farm lease in South Corvallis, near the Airport. Two years ago the board adopted the master plan. Currently the first five-year goals are being implemented with the easement with ODFW and working with the Institute for Applied Ecology on stewardship. The Institute is doing a management restoration plan for the riparian zone; during the second year, about 60 acres of leased farmland will be taken out of production for upland prairie restoration. The department is partnering with a number of community groups and the school district to apply for an EPA grant for a two-year outdoor education program there, showing middle-schoolers how to do restoration work on site.

VII. MARY'S RIVER NATURAL AREA BOARDWALK UPDATE.

Park Planner Jackie Rochefort related that the boardwalk, off Brooklane Drive, had been fully ADA accessible and provided controlled access in order to protect resources. It collapsed during last winter's flood and FEMA funds were received to replace the boardwalk to roughly its original condition. Part of the condition is to reuse about 60% of the salvageable materials; the department has to match 25% of funds FEMA provides.

The department would like to do an enhancement to what was originally there, using a different design, and using lower-maintenance and longer-lasting materials. It will pursue an Oregon State Parks Recreational Trails Program (RPT) grant (the same grant used to complete the Shooting Star trail). In this case, unusually, federal funds will be used to match federal funds, with 5% of the funds to come from the community. She said she was conservative in her estimate, and there will be outreach to the community for donations. The FEMA funds may only be spent within an 18-month window, starting from last March. She noted that there was a lot of permitting required in the work; regulatory agencies have been contacted.

An engineer will help to develop a better design. Debris will be removed from flooding areas and stored in order to prevent a violation, following FEMA guidelines. Rochefort said it was constructed of a type of treated wood allowable in wetlands. The understructure will be overbuilt and the top materials will be composite decking. She said FEMA estimated a cost of \$257,000, while she estimated a cost of \$280,000. Rochefort said the G-T will send a photographer soon and include the department's request for funds in the accompanying article. Rochefort stated that part of the match can be in-kind donations. Staff time does not count as in-kind contribution with the State, though it does with FEMA.

VIII. DECEMBER MEETING.

Emery queried whether the board wanted to have some social time at her home instead of a regular meeting in December. She noted that there were many new members. There will be goal setting at the January meeting. Griffiths suggested review of previous board goals if there was a December meeting.

IX. STAFF REPORTS.

Emery reported that the February meeting would be scheduled for board goal setting; Joseph Bailey will facilitate.

Regarding the Leadership Corvallis' possible statue of Hans Neukomm in Central Park, she said that she'd relayed the board's concern about it being the first statue in the park system. She said the group felt a sculpture may be more appropriate, and would consider putting out a call for designs, and perhaps just installing bust of Neukomm; she said the group was open to PNARB feedback. Vomocil related that there were several handsome statues in the Spokane park system.

X. BOARD & LIAISON REPORTS.

Griffiths reported that papers were filed for Friends of Corvallis Parks and Rec to become a 501c3 nonprofit corporation; donations are now tax-deductible. Donations may be mailed care of Corvallis Parks and Rec Department, Attention: Karen Emery, at 1310 SW Avery Park Drive, Corvallis, OR 97333. The group's board currently is composed of Jennifer Meisel; Kent Daniels; Phil Hays; Charlie Fisher, and herself, and will expand in January. She related that Meisel agreed to create a flier encouraging people to become ongoing supporters, with non-targeted donations to fill in needs. In January, there will be a website and a brochure, but money is needed for them. She said creation of the group has been a long-term board goal and thanked Phil Hays for his help in the application process.

Griffiths related the City Council voted 5-4 to have staff move ahead with the next step for exploring the feasibility of a parks and rec district, with boundaries the same as the 509J school district, though there was no allocation of more funds for the project. She said that speaking personally, she encouraged members to speak to their councilors. One councilor said the request came from citizens; she countered that the idea actually came from a Council potential strategy for financial stability for the City. It is a way to shift the burden of Parks and Rec funding to another government entity. The program must still remain within the \$10 tax cap for local government, but funds that the City now uses for Parks and Rec could be freed up for other things. She related that the City/OSU Collaborative Livability Group is proposing adding 12 more police officers to the City.

Emery said that there were several boundary alternatives; however, the Council directed only looking at school district boundaries. The County has services within those boundaries. Staff will talk with the County regarding their interest in participating. Hirsch said the Council reasoning for choosing those boundaries was that the Council felt that using staff time cost the City more. Councilors didn't understand that looking at other boundaries wouldn't actually require any more staff time, and felt that if other boundaries were looked at, the Council would not be upset. He said that Councilors Hogg O'Brien, Brown, and Brauner voted against it; Griffiths noted that Penny York was replacing Councilor O'Brien. Liaison Hirsch said much work was being invested in the parks and recreation district proposal to fix funding problems; he expressed concern that many hearts would be broken if it doesn't pass.

Griffiths said she chaired a PNARB subcommittee dealing with dogs. One of its recommendations was for a sign stating "Dogs on Leash Required" at the Oak Creek entrance of Bald Hill Park, where one crosses the Andrew Martin easement. Emery said there was already such a sign there. She related the County board concurred with erecting a sign there and other places. Also, as the trail goes up, getting steeper and narrower about a mile in on the Mulkey trail, the subcommittee recommended prohibiting dogs entirely in order to eliminate conflicts between dogs and people. County staff said they needed to consult the ordinance before they ruled; most County board members favored prohibiting dogs on that section of trail in more natural area; Hirsch disagreed. Emery said there is currently a sign requiring

users dogs to be within voice command. Griffiths concluded that that was the last item on the subcommittee's work plan.

Mellein highlighted the previous Saturday G-T article on National Collegiate Water Polo championships, in which 16 elite teams from all over the country competed at Osborn. Next week, there will be the 9th Annual Turkey Trot, running and walking various lengths to benefit the Family Assistance Program. Over 400 participants are already registered (200 were registered at this time last year).

Rochefort reported there was an anonymous donation to repair the so-called "Dinosaur Bones" in Avery Park; any leftover funds will be used to fix the boardwalk, as per donor request. There was a public hearing by the Historic Resources Commission (HRC) on Tuesday regarding installing light posts at Central Park Plaza; the request was approved by the HRC. The transaction for acquisition was completed at Coronado Park; staff will work with the seller on park improvements.

Shooting Star trail is now open; a sign will acknowledge granting agencies. Griffiths said three times the usual number of users are using the trail now; Rochefort agreed that the increase was remarkable. She has almost completed design of Tunison Park; it will be a mix between manufactured play equipment and logs and rocks, and should be completed in spring.

Emery said Rotary club was fundraising for the Willamette Park Picnic shelter and has already raised \$57,000 of the \$150,000 needed. Rochefort added that the shelter naming recommendation of the board was going to the Council on Monday.

Vomocil praised the new artwork at the Martin Luther King Jr. Park kiosk; he said more was needed. Rochefort said the kiosk was designed to provide a lot of area. DeGhetto said the Public Art Selection Commission (PASC) reviewed the art there. Emery said the MLK Commission plans to post sayings by Martin Luther King Jr. there in the future.

XI. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.