

CITY OF CORVALLIS
MINUTES OF THE PARKS, NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATION BOARD
APRIL 18, 2013

Attendance

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

Staff

Karen Emery, Director
 Steve DeGhetto, Assistant Director
 Jude Geist, Parks Operations Supervisor
 Jackie Rochefort, Park Planner
 Terry Nix, Recorder

Absent/Excused

Carolyn Ashton

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Agenda Item	Information Only	Held for Further Review	Recommendations
Introductions	X		
Approval of Minutes	X		
Visitors' Propositions	X		
SAGE Garden Update	X		
Avery Park Community Garden Relocation Proposal			Motion passed to approve relocation of Avery Community Garden conceptually and to leave it to staff to determine the exact location and size.
Contracting Out Parks and Recreation Services			Motion passed to approve a letter to the City Council on this issue with modifications suggested during discussion.
Levy Renewal Discussion			Motion passed that the Board express support for two distinct measures – one for the library/parks and recreation and another for public safety
Board/Liaison Reports	X		
Staff Reports	X		
Adjournment			The next Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Board meeting is scheduled for May 16, 2013, 6:30 p.m., at the Downtown Fire Station, 400 NW Harrison Boulevard.

CONTENT OF DISCUSSION

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

II. INTRODUCTIONS

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 21, 2013

MOTION: Linda Wolfenbarger moved to approve the March 21 minutes as presented. Phillip Hays seconded the motion and it passed.

IV. VISITORS' PROPOSITIONS: None.

V. SAGE GARDEN UPDATE

Assistant Director Steve DeGhetto introduced Jen Brown, Director of the Edible Corvallis Initiative, a Corvallis Environmental Center (CEC) program. He said an update on activities at the Starker Arts Garden for Education (SAGE) and the Dunawi Creek Community Garden is included in meeting packets.

Jen Brown said there are three community gardens – Avery Park Community Garden, Dunawi Creek Community Garden, and the Starker Arts Garden for Education (SAGE). The Dunawi Creek garden serves about 100 families. The adjacent SAGE is run differently than traditional community gardens in that the work is done by volunteers and all of the food is donated to relief agencies in Corvallis. The SAGE is primarily supported through donations and has been growing over the last five years. This year about 6,744 pounds of food was donated to eight hunger relief agencies.

DeGhetto said the City has applied for a grant that would facilitate the SAGE teaching one of the Parks and Recreation Department's youth activities. Even if the grant is not received, he hopes to find a way to go forward with the plan which would give kids an opportunity to get physical activity and good food.

Brown said the SAGE is a good example of partnership between the City, a nonprofit, and local businesses. The City provides the land and water; the CEC provides maintenance, programming and staffing; volunteers do the work; and local businesses make donations.

Marc Vomocil asked what Brown would choose to do differently if there were additional resources. Brown said that she would like to have an outdoor classroom to allow for year-round classes and cooking demonstrations. Planner Jackie Rochefort noted that the project is included in the City's Capital Improvement Program with an unidentified funding source.

VI. AVERY PARK COMMUNITY GARDEN RELOCATION PROPOSAL

DeGhetto drew attention to the written staff report. He said the Avery Park Community Garden is located in a floodplain and in an isolated area that is not visible from the road. In its current location, the garden is subjected to seasonal flooding and is not accessible for gardening until May or June of each year. The location has limited accessibility and issues with pilfering and security. The CEC would like to work with the City to move the garden to a more suitable site within Avery Park. The site east of the Thompson Shelter and west of the Fire Side picnic area has been determined as the area that would best match the vision of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan and the needs of the community garden. The proposed garden footprint would be 100 feet x 50 feet for a total of 5,000 sq feet of garden space.

Brown said advantages to the proposed site include increased ADA access and the move would be a great way to highlight and celebrate the Community Garden Master Plan. She said the CEC will have a group of volunteers doing service in the community for a month toward the end of May and it would be great to use that service to get the new garden started. She said there is a demand for garden plots in Avery Park but some people are not comfortable going down to the current site.

Hays noted that the grassy area between the shelters might be a good place for pickup softball games, etc. He asked if consideration was given to siting the garden at the turnaround at the end of the road. DeGhetto said that was considered but shading and lack of morning sunlight created challenges with that site. Staff has not observed the proposed site being used much for recreation.

Kevin Bogatin asked if there is irrigation available. DeGhetto said there is water service adjacent that can be tapped into.

Joshua Baur asked if staff projects a change in water consumption. DeGhetto said there is no water consumption there now so there will be an increase.

Baur asked if consideration was given to potential conflicts with kids running around in the area of the garden. Director Emery said there is the potential that there would be fencing around the garden to address that issue.

Griffiths asked if consideration was given to angling the garden so it is not so close to the smaller shelter. DeGhetto said the garden is about 150 feet from the shelter. Parks Operations Supervisor Jude Geist added that the drawing shows an area that is about double the size of the proposed garden area.

Baur asked if staff anticipates parking or traffic issues associated with having more gardeners. DeGhetto said that there are about 200 parking spaces topside, that Avery Park is very accessible, and that many gardeners would likely walk and bike to the site.

Tatiana Dierwechter said that there is an opportunity to do community outreach and make the garden very inclusive.

MOTION: Hays moved to approve relocation of Avery Community Garden conceptually and to leave it to staff to determine the exact location and size. Nick Castellano seconded the motion and it passed.

VII. CONTRACTING OUT PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

Jon Soule reviewed a letter that he drafted to the City Council from the Board regarding the issue of contracting out Parks and Recreation services. He said he tried to keep the letter short and on topic and to include points made by Board members at the last meeting. The letter indicates that while the Board is certainly in favor of cost-cutting measures, it feels that the directive to look at contracting out recreation services is not the best use of staff time, particularly since these programs are largely paid for by users and the cost recovery program was just recently implemented.

City Council Liaison Joel Hirsch suggested that the letter include information that the cost recovery model is a nationally recognized effort. Following brief discussion, there was general agreement to add language to the effect that the cost recovery program has been recognized by a number of national organizations and municipalities around the country. Board members suggested additional minor edits.

MOTION: Vomocil moved to approve a letter to the City Council on this issue with modifications suggested during discussion. Wolfenbarger seconded the motion and it passed.

VIII. LEVY RENEWAL DISCUSSION

Griffiths said that the City Council is considering pursuing a public safety levy to reopen Fire Station #5 and add additional police officers. There has been discussion about whether that levy should be rolled into the parks and recreation/library levy renewal. Council has received input, and she agrees with the input, that because the parks and recreation/library levy was so well supported, the two levies should go forward separately. She asked if the Board wants to make a recommendation.

Soule asked if there is a reason that consideration is being given to bundling the two levies. Emery said that Councilor Sorte initially commented that public safety levies can carry other levies; after hearing public testimony, she thinks consideration is being given to keeping the levies separate. Soule said he feels that people need to be able to vote on the issues separately.

Hirsch said that for marketing purposes, he is going to propose that there be three levies – one for public safety, one for parks and library, and one for both. He feels that this gives the voters multiple ways to say yes. Griffiths said she thinks that would be confusing. Hays said he is concerned that having more levies on the ballot would result in people voting against them all. Hirsch said his argument is that the citizens want these services; his idea is that we give them three ways to say yes.

Griffiths said that she has suggested the City do a public survey to see if there is support of a public safety levy before its put on the ballot. She said we know there is support for the parks and recreation/library levy.

Hays questioned whether there would be measures from other jurisdictions on the ballot. Bogatin said there is nothing coming from the School District. Hays said he would check with the Commissioners to see if there is anything planned by the County.

Dierwechter said that this is part of the philosophical discussion about investing resources in prevention rather than enforcement. MacMullan expressed support for keeping the levies separate and allowing the voters to decide.

MOTION: Hays moved that the Board express support for two distinct measures – one for the library/parks and recreation and another for public safety. Soule seconded the motion and it passed.

IX. BOARD/COUNCIL REPORTS

Griffiths distributed a brochure from Friends of Corvallis Parks and Recreation, noting that the nonprofit organization is seeking donations.

X. STAFF REPORTS

Emery said the annual joint meeting of this Board, Benton County, and the Greenbelt Land Trust is usually held each spring. There have been discussions about postponing the meeting to the fall at which time the website will be done, and about possibly holding an outdoor social event. Several Board members expressed support and there were no objections.

Rochefort said we are fortunate to have an outstanding stakeholder group for the Trails Plan which will be part of the updated Master Plan. The stakeholder group has had two meetings and will hold a public meeting in a couple of weeks. She will give a full presentation at the July Board meeting.

Rochefort reported that construction has begun at Coronado Park. She reported that the City did not get the grant for the Marys River Boardwalk but has since applied to the Infrastructure Finance Authority which often provides matching funds for FEMA projects; she will keep the Board updated.

Rochefort gave an update on the Creekside Center project. The applicant has responded to LUBA remand issues and reduced the building footprint. The application still includes a multiuse path but it is no longer tied to MADA credits. The City Council will hold a public hearing on this application on May 20.

Geist said staff has been working with OSU Forestry and community members to develop a habitat restoration plan at Chip Ross Park and adjacent OSU forest land. A grant for \$2,000 has been received from the Soil and Water Conservation District for phase 1 and an application for a grant for phase 2 will be submitted in July.

Emery reported that fundraising is complete for a UV light system in the large pool at Osborn Aquatic Center. The UV system is very important to the community because it allows for less chlorine to be used and improves water and air quality for swimmers. Board member Wolfenbarger, whose mother was a regular user of the pool, was the final contributor.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.