

**CITY OF CORVALLIS
MINUTES OF THE PARKS, NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATION BOARD
MAY 16, 2013**

Attendance

Betty Griffiths, Chair
Lynda Wolfenbarger, Vice Chair
Joshua Baur
Tatiana Dierwechter
Phillip Hays
Deb Rose
Joel Hirsch, Council Liaison

Staff

Karen Emery, Director
Jackie Rochefort, Park Planner
Terry Nix, Recorder

Absent/Excused

Carolyn Ashton
Kevin Bogatin
Nick Castellano
Ed MacMullan
Jon Soule
Mark Vomocil

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Agenda Item	Information Only	Held for Further Review	Recommendations
Introductions	X		
Approval of Minutes	X		
Visitors' Propositions	X		
FY 13-14 Budget & Levy Update	X		
Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update – Trails Section	X		
Review of Goals and Board Member Assignments	X		
Board/Liaison Reports	X		
Staff Reports	X		
Adjournment			The next Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Board meeting is scheduled for June 20, 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 – April 18, 2013

MOTION: Phillip Hays moved to approve the April 18 minutes as presented. Lynda Wolfenbarger seconded the motion and it passed.

IV. VISITORS' PROPOSITIONS: None.

V. FY 13-14 BUDGET & LEVY UPDATE

Director Karen Emery said that the FY 13-14 proposed budget has been recommended by the Budget Commission and will be reviewed by the City Council in June. She said that reductions taken by the Parks & Recreation Department since FY 09-10 include a 15% reduction in staff including two supervisors, deferred park maintenance and facility maintenance, one year of staff furloughs, no cost of living increases, vacancies held open, elimination of all staff training that was not mandated, no contributions to vehicle reserves for two years, and reduced hours at the aquatic center.

Emery said that staff used the 2012 Parks and Recreation public opinion survey to help guide where the department should focus resources for the coming year. The survey results rated as very important parks, natural areas, trails, the aquatic center, athletic fields, and park shelters. The community wanted implementation of the planned park and trails projects, more positive activities for youth, and land acquisition. This year, given the survey results and available resources, the department proposed to eliminate a management assistant position that had been vacant for one year with duties already distributed to other staff. Aquatic Center Manager James Mellein picked up duties related to the budget which amounted to about 180 to 200 hours of extra work; he was willing to do so because of growth opportunities. Assistant Director Steve DeGhetto picked up supervision of administrative staff management of administrative operations. The department did increase the Park Planner position from .5 FTE to .75 FTE due to the community wanting staff to complete projects outlined in our plans; that position was reduced from full time two years ago. The department will also reduce seasonal staffing and delay bringing parks up to summer conditions by two weeks (weatherization, mowing, cleaning, opening restrooms, etc.). The department made a commitment to increase revenue at the aquatic center to avoid additional cuts.

Griffiths said that letters from this Board regarding the local option levy and cost savings directives were included in the agenda packet for the May 22 Council work session on the budget and levy. She appreciates everybody's work on those letters. She noted that the bulk of cuts in the recommended budget were from the Library and Parks &

Recreation departments. The other departments took what she would consider minor cuts in travel and training.

Joshua Baur asked if the Parks and Recreation survey asked questions that would indicate the public perception of where cuts would be warranted. Emery said the survey was asking about priorities for the master plan and only included a couple of budget related questions. A majority of those responding said they would support a continuance of the property tax levy to support the aquatic center and senior center and would accept a small increase to support the two facilities.

In response to an inquiry from the Chair, Councilor Hirsch said it is his recollection that the Budget Commission appointed members were invited to participate in the Council work session. He said that he will argue for three levies – a renewal of the levy for parks and the library, a levy for public safety, and a third “Cadillac” plan that would give citizens the opportunity to restore services that have been cut.

VI. PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN UPDATE – TRAILS SECTION

Planner Jackie Rochefort said staff has been working with a stakeholders committee on a draft trails plan and an open house was held last week. She distributed information presented at the open house, a map of the Existing Trails Network, a map of the Proposed Trails System with Natural Features, and follow-up emails from Tony Howell and Patricia Benner. She said that we are very fortunate to have an exceptional stakeholder committee and the open house included good conversations by community members, staff from different City departments, OSU, and Greenbelt Land Trust. The trails plan will become a chapter in the Parks & Recreation master plan. The Board will hear a presentation of the entire master plan from the consultants in July.

Rochefort said that discussions with the stakeholder group and community included constraints associated with the existing trails plan, including that it was adopted prior to the Natural Features Inventory. They also discussed the desire to have an interconnected system and it was felt that the proposed plan should focus on large parcels where there were real opportunities to work with property owners and make the plan a reality. Consideration was given to the need for trail connections from the community to OSU which would require crossing some OSU land. Key points included the desire to distinguish this trails plan from the transportation trails plan because they serve very different purposes; the Parks & Recreation plan looks at not just destination but also experience. It was also desired to have classification and design standards to help guide trails that are built with development. The information packet includes some of the ideas regarding the classifications of regional trails, connector trails, and local trails.

Rochefort highlighted some of the proposed trail routes. With development of student housing in the Witham Hill area and north of Harrison, it will be necessary to be able to get across OSU and connect to Campus Way. OSU Senior Planner David Dodson was at the open house and sent a follow-up email that he would need to talk with OSU Agriculture about the possibility of crossing OSU agricultural fields. The stakeholder

group looked at utility easements as a great opportunity for sharing and the Powerline trail as a good way to get to Chip Ross Park. Staff met with the Timberhill property owners who were open to the idea which they acknowledged would be an amenity to their future plans, but felt the route may need to be moved based on their plan. Another conversation was around the need to look at narrower trails and controlled access in natural resource areas. In summary, Rochefort said the stakeholders group developed a system that is achievable, including a hierarchy of trail types, construction specifications, and sensitivity to natural resources.

Hays noted that there were four trail types discussed, the fourth of which was the park trail. He suggested that the McDonald Forest standards for park trails be adopted; that is a several year effort that we can draw on.

Hays reviewed past discussions with OSU in which they seemed amenable to a trail from MLK Park to the sheep farm. He does not think that OSU would support a connector from the extension of Circle Boulevard to Campus Way as shown on the proposed plan because it would go right by their barn; they preferred to go off the Circle Boulevard extension through Arnold Park and then straight down the east side of their field.

Griffiths said she met with the Campus Crest developers and they are desirous of getting a trail connection that would take people from their development all the way to campus. They said they have met with OSU and felt positive about the ability to do that.

Griffiths agreed with a comment from Patricia Benner that there should be a clearer way to distinguish the different kinds of trails.

Griffiths referred to comments from Tony Howell that a boardwalk is not an appropriate material for regional and connector trails because it is not suitable for all users. Rochefort said that boardwalks would be limited to natural resource areas or other areas where they are really necessary. Griffiths asked if Sunset boardwalk is pedestrian-only. Emery said that has not yet been clarified.

Griffiths referred to testimony from Benner that onsite analysis for specific trail opportunities and issues need to be incorporated into the process when determining the location of a trail, and that this should be a policy in the master plan. Rochefort said that a lot of the trail system gets built with development. The current trails plan had some controversy because it included so many parcels and the City Council made clear in adopting it that the alignments were conceptual. This leads to confusion for the Planning Commission when conditioning projects. It is important to come up with just the right language to provide clarity for the decision makers while understanding that we cannot come up with the exact alignment for every section of trail. Hays said that when one development puts in a trail segment, it commits the next development. One option would be to anchor the ends and then designate an area in which the connections will lie.

Griffiths asked if it would be beneficial to mention Safe Routes to School in the plan. Rochefort said that is a good point; the plan will include information about our partners.

Rochefort asked that Board members contact her with additional questions or suggestions.

Rochefort asked for volunteers for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) subcommittee. The subcommittee will meet the first week of June to consider CIP projects and then make a recommendation to the full Board. Dierwechter, Hays, and Wolfenbarger volunteered.

VII. REVIEW OF GOALS AND BOARD MEMBER ASSIGNMENTS

Griffiths led a review of the updated Board Goals, Objectives and Action Items. She suggested that the Annual Board Activity listed on last year's matrix be included in the update. There was general agreement.

The Board reviewed each of the goals as follows:

Goal 1: Advocate to prioritize improvements to existing neighborhood parks, trails and natural areas. Griffiths recalled discussion behind this item which included both the need to prioritize improvements and the need to advocate for those improvements. Emery said would be helpful to have the Board prioritize which trails should be improved first. Griffiths said the neighborhood parks playgrounds should also be prioritized. It was agreed that it would be ideal for a subcommittee to review and prioritize the entire system.

Goal 2: Implement efficiencies between city, county and school district by 2014. Dierwechter noted that she and Kevin Bogatin had suggested getting together with staff and some invited guests from the county and school district to make sure we are not missing potential opportunities. She suggested the goal be reworded to say "Identify and implement efficiencies..." She thinks we could get a lot of traction toward identifying potential efficiencies this year. It was agreed to add OSU and LBCC to the goal.

Goal 3: Develop a plan to increase funding for Parks and Recreation. Griffiths said the Friends of Corvallis Parks and Recreation is awaiting an IRS Letter of Determination. She invited other ideas. Dierwechter said some of this goal ties back to Goal 2 and potential in-kind sharing of resources, shared use agreements, partnering on grants, etc. Rochefort said it helps if people know they can support specific programs or projects. Hays agreed that people will give money for projects they care about; part of this goal may be to prepare and publicize a wish list. Emery summarized that this goal may have many subtexts, including elements of the cost recovery plan, the Friends group, the advocacy piece, and ways to develop and communicate a wish list for services and programs.

Goal 4: Expand public awareness, communication and advocacy for all Parks and Recreation facilities, land and services. The Board agreed to change *services to programs*. Griffiths said this is a marketing piece that will require subcommittee work; the message should include information about the value of parks for livability, safety, and attracting businesses.

Goal 5 - Develop or expand community relationships and partnerships to pursue joint goals. Dierwechter said this is similar to Goal 2. It should be clarified that this goal focuses on nongovernmental relationships.

Goal 6 - Develop and expand access and recreational opportunities such as outdoor education for underserved youth and families. Griffiths said that part of this goal is to create awareness that there are opportunities available. Baur said that this might be a good student project. Dierwechter said this is also about building on the success we have seen with the cost recovery financial assistance program and the partnerships around outreach to underserved children and families. Griffiths suggested that we start work on this goal with a staff overview of what is happening with those types of activities.

Baur said there is a fair amount of research about the benefits of spending time outdoors and some doctors are prescribing that for a variety of ailments; he asked if there is interaction between Parks & Recreation and local healthcare providers. Emery said the department has a relationship with specific doctors and pediatricians who are prescribing parks and recreation services including aquatic center classes. Employees of Good Samaritan Health Services receive money to be used for wellness programs and the department benefits from that program. Dierwechter said that all Medicaid funding is now coming through the coordinated care organization; there is an opportunity to work with decision-makers to fund prevention measures like Parks & Recreation services.

Goal 7 – Develop a Parks and Recreation District by 2015. Griffiths noted that this report has been on hold pending the levy discussion. Rose asked if passage of the levy would remove the desire for a district. Griffiths said she doesn't think it would; the levy would restore a small amount of what has been cut from Parks & Recreation over the years. Emery noted that the Board previously decided to keep this as a goal to communicate that it was important. It was agreed to designate a timeframe of 2014.

Board members present volunteered to work on the goals as follows:

Goal 1: Hays

Goal 2: Dierwechter, Bogatin, Baur

Goal 3: Griffiths, Rose

Goal 4: Wolfenbarger, Baur

Goal 5: Rose

Goal 6: Dierwechter

Emery will make the revisions, add appropriate staff to the interested people column, and send the document to all Board members for further discussion at the next meeting.

VIII. BOARD/COUNCIL REPORTS: There were no further reports.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

Emery distributed a gift from the Mayor as a thank you for serving on this Board. Griffiths said to thank the Mayor on behalf of the Board.

Emery advised that staff will be doing a full assessment tomorrow on the Franklin Park play structure. If it has failed and cannot be corrected, it will be removed quickly and staff will work with the neighborhood on replacement.

Rocheftort reported that someone has been hired to fix the dinosaur bones. Staff is moving quickly on the Rotary Shelter at Willamette Park. There will be a volunteer opportunity to stain timber this Saturday from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. On Monday and Tuesday, the columns will be built using a new technique and unique materials.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.