

**CITY OF CORVALLIS  
MINUTES OF THE PARKS, NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATION  
ADVISORY BOARD  
APRIL 16, 2015**

Attendance

Lynda Wolfenbarger, Vice-Chair  
Tatiana Dierwechter  
Simone Frei  
Deb Rose  
Anthony Stumbo

Staff

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

Absent/Excused

Ralph Alig  
Phillip Hays  
Jon Soule  
Marc Vomocil  
Joel Hirsch, City Council Liaison  
Kevin Bogotin, 509-J District Liaison

Guests

Stewart Wershow  
Kent Daniels

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

	Agenda Item	Summary of Recommendations
III.	Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 19, 2015	March 19, 2015 minutes approved as corrected.
IV.	Visitors' Propositions	
V.	Nigel Rose Weber Memorial Play Structure Proposal	Motion passed to recommend the Council include the Nigel Rose Weber memorial project in the 15-16 CIP, funded through donations.
VI.	Master Plan Recommendations for Natural Areas	
VII.	PNARAB Accomplishments for Sunset Review	Board members were asked to send Director Emery any additions to the draft list of PNARAB accomplishments for her report prior to the board's sunset review in June.
VIII.	Goals Review	
IX.	Board Member Reports	
X.	Staff Reports	
XI.	Council Liaison Report	
XII.	Adjournment	The next regular meeting will be held May 21, 2015 at 6:30 p.m., at the Downtown Fire station meeting room.

**CONTENT OF DISCUSSION**

**I. CALL TO ORDER.**

Vice-Chair Lynda Wolfenbarger called the meeting of the Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Board to order at 6:30 p.m.

**II. INTRODUCTIONS.**

**III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: MARCH 19, 2015**

Lynda Wolfenbarger asked that the word “related” be deleted in the fourth sentence in the third paragraph on page 8. Anthony Stumbo moved and Deb Rose seconded to approve the March 19, 2015 minutes as corrected; motion passed.

**IV. VISITORS’ PROPOSITIONS.**

Kent Daniels highlighted a submitted draft written letter from himself, Courtney Cloyd, and other neighbors regarding funding for parks, natural areas and trails. He stated that parks maintenance and other issues were too large for existing staff levels to handle. He asked if reducing the Parks budget correspondingly reduced SDC funds; Director Emery explained that there was no connection; that SDC calculations are related to the type of development. Daniels noted that while the letter was mostly from the Central Park Neighborhood Association, the same types of problems existed in all other parks. He said Central Park had a lot of weeds and trash, and it didn’t look good.

Courtney Cloyd emphasized that the criticism was not related to the quality of staff; it is a funding problem, and without more funding, nothing more can be done. It is currently not a City priority. He stated that maintenance was better only ten or even five years ago; he sought to rally community support for increased funding. He suggested that a quarter of the City’s projected budget windfall be earmarked for an endowed fund for special projects and beautification.

Daniels said he was a member of Friends of Parks and Recreation, and was puzzled that there wasn’t money for things like replacement of playground equipment and surfaces as they need to be replaced; we shouldn’t have to do special levies or a special fundraiser. He stated that he was a long-time Parks supporter, but wouldn’t support another levy until this issue has been dealt with. The last special levy supported the Senior Center and the pool, but not trails and natural areas, which a larger proportion of the community has indicated in surveys that it supports more strongly.

Daniels highlighted Andrea Hatch’s letter regarding Washington Park, which largely lacks improvements such as play equipment, picnic benches, benches, and a walking trail. Many residents are unaware of the historic Gaylord House nearby, which lacks a historic sign; and Washington School also lacks a historic sign. Daniels asked for the board’s support, saying that the group of advocates was on the agenda of the Human Services Committee this week, and sought a discussion with the HSC. The highest priority now has to be preserving what we already have, rather than taking on new initiatives.

Dierwechter asked what the next opportunity was for messaging the case for investing in current resources. Daniels replied that there are really great things in the vision of the current Comp Plan, but that hasn’t translated to budget decisions. That should change the next time around, but that won’t be changed for 5-7 years, and issues must be addressed sooner. He said that there are ways to come up with money more quickly, citing the example of utilities fees, which were implemented very quickly by a Council decision. Emery said that at the Budget Commission on

Tuesday, the City Manager recommended the \$1.1 million windfall be used partly to fund a deferred maintenance project at the Aquatic Center (for \$84,000) and funding the match money needed for the Franklin Square Park playground equipment (\$65,000). Daniels agreed that more of that should be done, and that more Budget Commission meetings (not just one) should be open to citizens stating where funds should be spent.

Stewart Wershow concurred with Daniels and Cloyd. He said the Council had a goal of a sustainable budget and so was looking at deferred maintenance, and so recommendations to the Council should identify funding parks as a higher priority. He added that \$15,000 was also earmarked for safety issues at Lilly and Washington Parks (fall materials). Geist explained that fall materials are placed under play equipment; however, the hog fuel often used in the past no longer meets ADA or playground safety inspection requirements, so Parks is transitioning to other materials, such as certified wood fiber.

#### **V. NIGEL ROSE WEBER MEMORIAL PLAY STRUCTURE PROPOSAL.**

Planner Jackie Rochefort related that former Planning Commissioner Trish Weber and Dr. Rose lost their young son a year ago to illness, and approached the department seeking a memorial play structure to honor their son. After discussion, it was thought that the Shawala Point (South Riverfront) area could be the most appropriate site. Rochefort noted that master planning has long been needed for that area, but even if there was funding, it is a long process, taking up to a year, and Ms. Weber is anxious to get the project in place.

She related that Ms. Weber has been working with the Lummi Tribe and the Grande Ronde Confederated Tribes to develop a design that has spiritual meaning. The draft design, in the packet, resembles a sacred Native American bowl, to be made of a composite concrete material (like the "Dragon Bones" in Avery Park) to serve as a climbing structure and surrounded by a fall material, along with benches and planters placed in the shape of a traditional Kalapuya canoe.

Staff weighed placing a play structure before development of a full Master Plan; staff felt that it was a relatively small piece, and the Confederated Tribes were an important stakeholder in the initial planning for Shawala Point, and their participation in the design meets the value and mission of the department. Staff met with police to help determine the best location given social problems in the area and felt the proposed site was a good fit and would not interfere with a successful Master Plan process after the fact.

She noted that the Ron Nesko playground, also proposed for the area, has also been in the adopted CIP for several years, awaiting funds and completion of a Master Plan. Staff felt that a Ron Nesko play structure, rather than a playground area, could honor Ron Nesko appropriately even ahead of the Master Plan. The family of Nigel Rose Weber will raise 100% of the roughly \$50,000 in estimated needed funding. The family proposed partnering with the department in an opening celebration on August 4, 2015, with Confederated Tribes arriving in traditional canoes. She highlighted supporting materials in the packet, including her staff report, a letter from Ms. Weber, an illustration of the proposed structure, and an aerial photo of the area.

Emery clarified that this is a proposed plan, not an adopted plan, and staff were seeking a recommendation for the City Council to include the project in the CIP; it would be up to the CIP to determine whether it goes forward or not. Rochefort explained that proposed adoption would put it in the CIP for the coming fiscal year so that it could be constructed in July. She added that much pre-planning would be needed (staff have met with Planning and Development Services),

since the site is in the Willamette River Greenway and in the floodplain, and staff must determine whether it was allowed outright, or whether it would have to go through a planning process. However, it appears that it will all work out.

Anthony Stumbo said he'd submitted the Ron Nesko proposal many years ago, and appreciated the plan. Dierwechter felt it was great way to celebrate diversity. Rose asked why staff felt there would be no issue with the site in regard to the Master Plan; Rochefort replied that most interest was further out to the point; however, this footprint is quite small (745 square feet), it on the edge of the already built path, and wouldn't have any negative impact on future plans.

Rose moved to recommend the Council include the Nigel Rose Weber memorial project in the 15-16 CIP, funded through donations; Dierwechter seconded; motion passed unanimously.

#### **VI. MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATURAL AREAS.**

Director Emery related that Vanessa Blackstone had presented to the board twice previously seeking the board's support of preserving natural area, as described in her handout. The Master Plan didn't address specific properties to purchase, though there are guidelines for a memorial trust for the area (view lots, sloping hills, south facing), and some property in the north Corvallis area may meet those criteria. The boards of PNARAB, Benton County Natural Areas and Parks, and Greenbelt Land Trust are meeting jointly next month, and this could be an opportunity to discuss the issue; the board concurred.

Vanessa Blackstone said the area proposed for development in north Corvallis contained 182 acres containing significant vegetation, riparian or wetland natural resources (in comparison, Chip Ross is 126 acres). When The Hub application for development there was recently withdrawn, owners stated they were willing to consider selling at least part of the land for use as green space. Funds from some area landowners and grant funding could be available, possibly involving the Greenbelt Land Trust, so it would not be a drain on the City.

#### **VII. PNARAB ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR SUNSET REVIEW.**

Director Emery highlighted the two pages of draft board accomplishments over the last four years in the board packet. **Emery asked board members to let her know if they would like to add anything else to the list or modify it for her report prior to the board's review in June.**

#### **VIII. GOALS REVIEW.**

In discussion on goals, Director Emery noted that there were currently two board vacancies that the mayor was working on filling. The Master Plan was adopted at the last Council meeting, and will be dedicated to former board chair Betty Griffiths (as the board previously voted). Wolfenbarger suggested revisiting goals when the new members were on board.

Dierwechter suggested looking at how to align with Council Goals in evaluating board goals, and suggested partnering with other advisory committees and the Council in thinking strategically in how to support the community at a high level. Emery said the Council determined that there will be an annual board report, apart from the sunset review, which will include goals for the next year. The board can refine that in June. The League of Women Voters (LWV) asked for a goal for the department to participate in the Council's climate change goal, and the Planning Commission and Council concurred, so that goal was added to the adopted Master Plan.

**IX. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS.** None.

**X. STAFF REPORTS.**

Director Emery related that department accounting analyst Carol Rathbun is retiring soon, and following that, the position will be configured differently, so the department will be recruiting for a Staff Assistant, to be onboard by June 16. She related that a Friends of Corvallis Parks and Rec fundraiser prepared 1,900 pork and spinach tamales for sale; most have been sold.

Emery related that Planner Rochefort is applying for state match money for Franklin Square play equipment, and Rochefort and Jude Geist will host a JANA neighborhood public meeting for input. She related that it has been a good month for the Majestic Theater- the first quarter generated \$13,000 in increased revenue, and the second quarter should also be positive (though summer is usually quieter).

Rochefort highlighted the April 20 public meeting at Cheldelin Middle School regarding siting the proposed pump track at Village Green Park; the bicycle group Team Dirt is already fundraising for the project. A grant is funding play equipment at Arnold Park; an RFP was accepted and work should begin May 1. She said it appeared likely that there would be state funding for improvements at MLK, Jr. Park; she emphasized the difficulty in finding funding for older playgrounds.

She said the public hearing for the HUB development in north Corvallis was cancelled at the last minute, but that it was likely that it would be rescheduled soon. Another subdivision called The Crest is also proposed near there, located just below the Timberhill Natural Area at the end of 29<sup>th</sup> Street and NW Arrowood Circle; developers met with City staff and must submit a final application and go through a public hearing process. Since it is adjacent to the Timberhill Natural Area, 29<sup>th</sup> Street would have to be extended for that project to occur, and Parks would be responsible for funding associated half-street improvements. Simone Frei asked where funding would come from for those half-street improvements; Emery replied that she consulted with the City Manager, and that staff were preliminarily considering recommending going out for a bond to pay for those street costs, as well as other Park street and parking lot paving and trails maintenance upgrades. A bond would be the only way the department could afford 29<sup>th</sup> Street half-street improvements.

Rochefort related that the application for a hotel on the riverfront was back; there is staff concern about possible impacts to street trees on 1<sup>st</sup> Street. The HEC-RAS model for the Mary's River Natural Area Boardwalk was submitted to Benton County; additional permitting work remains. Emery noted the Shooting Star trail's 30' boardwalk section damaged in the Timberhill Natural Area fire was recently replaced, funded with fire insurance money.

Geist concurred with Daniels and Cloyd's testimony that more staffing was needed for Central Park maintenance. There will be a spring cleanup there in the last two weeks in April (before the Spring Garden Festival) and another in fall (before the Fall Festival). Police are spending more time patrolling the park, and staff have been picking up more litter over the last few months. The park's north entrance has been in the CIP for some time; staff are considering a low-cost interim planter alternative for the long-dormant fountain that currently just collects trash and debris. Kent Daniels said his neighborhood association was doing maintenance around the Arts Center, and recent police attention to the Central Park has made a real difference there.

Geist reported that there will be a Western Regionals Ultimate Frisbee tournament at Crystal Lake in late May on twelve fields there (for the third year), with schools participating from much of the western U.S. The Tree City USA award will be presented to the Council on Monday, during Arbor Week. Also that week there will be a tree planting in Franklin Park area, with CBUF members and JANA Neighborhood Association members. It should help reinvigorate the citywide NeighborWoods tree-planting program, which uses volunteer planters and tree stewards.

James Mellein said the Aquatic Center was training new employees for the summer. The new climbing wall in the pool will have its grand opening on June 12; it will be located on the pool's deep end, be removable, is 18' high, and should keep middle-school age kids engaged. Emery added that a \$25,000 contribution from Toyota helped fund it. Mellein said the Masters Meet Invitational for ages 18-92 brought in many participants over the weekend.

Wolfenbarger said Bell Helmet was seeking online votes in its contest for funding trail building projects around the US, and noted that people could support Team Dirt's Alsea Falls project, listed among projects at the site.

Deb Rose suggested using the Amazon Smile Program to fund projects; Friends of Corvallis Parks and Rec are already registered, so a small part of supporter's purchases through the program can go to the group.

**XI. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT.** None.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.