

**CITY OF CORVALLIS
MINUTES OF THE PARKS, NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD
October 15, 2015**

Present

Lynda Wolfenbarger, Chair
Ralph Alig
Tatiana Dierwechter
Phillip Hays
Janice Rosenberg
Jon Soule
Anthony Stumbo
Richard Sumner

Absent/Excused

Greg Alpert
Simone Frei
Marc Vomocil

Staff

Karen Emery, Director
Jude Geist, Parks Operations Supervisor
Jackie Rochefort, Park Planner
Dan Hendrickson, Corvallis PD
Trevor Anderson, Corvallis PD
Terry Nix, Recorder

Guests

Stewart Wershow
Dave Eckert
Paul Farrell
Audrey Hatch
John Gabriel

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION.

| | Agenda Item | Summary of Recommendations |
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| III. | Approval of Minutes – July 16, 2015 | Approved as presented. |
| IV. | Visitor' Propositions | Motion passed that, in response to community comments regarding the sale of Washington Park, PNARB strongly supports Res. 94-13 that no park shall be sold. |
| V. | Illegal Camping | |
| VI. | Bald Hill Carbon Action Plan | |
| VII. | Municipal Code 50.01 – Alcohol in Parks | Motion passed to recommend that the distinction between designated and non-designated parks be removed from the alcohol permitting ordinance. Motion passed to recommend continuing the policy of not requiring liability insurance for rentals where alcohol is being consumed but not sold, and to recommend that the rental contract be amended to highlight the waiver and strongly recommend that renters purchase liability insurance. |
| VIII. | Betty Griffiths Memorial Bench | |
| IX. | Board Member Reports | |

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| X. | Staff Reports | |
| XI. | Council Liaison Report | |

CONTENT OF DISCUSSION

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lynda Wolfenbarger called the meeting of the Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation Advisory Board to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Corvallis Downtown Fire Station Meeting Room, 400 NW Harrison Blvd.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JULY 16, 2015

Phillip Hays moved to approve the July 16 minutes as presented. Anthony Stumbo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

IV. VISITORS' PROPOSITIONS

Stewart Wershow, President of Garfield Park Neighborhood Association, apologized for not attending the July meeting as he could have told the Board at that time that neighbors have been negatively impacted by the bike polo group and would probably not look kindly on having bicycle polo setups at the Linus Pauling tennis courts.

Dave Eckert said there have been numerous attempts in the City's history at park takings including Shawala Point where the City and a hotel operator attempted to put a hotel, the natural area across the river from downtown that Public Works was interested in using as part of a wastewater facility, and Washington Park where it was proposed to use part of the park for the Benton Center expansion. When these projects were brought out to the public, there were firestorms and they never happened. Now to the present, LBCC gave a presentation in a closed session to a leadership team consisting of the Mayor, Council President, Council Vice President, and City Manager, which included additional discussion about the use of Washington Park in relation to the Benton Center expansion. Eckert cited City Council Res. 94-13, which states that City Parks shall not be sold and which mentions specific parks including Washington Park. He said the process of selling parkland runs counter to existing government policy and any potential sale of Washington Park should not be discussed, period. Also in City resolution, park functions are described and they do not include activities that fulfill the legal obligations of an outside entity. Regarding the issue of closed government meetings, he doesn't think it's appropriate for two Councilors and the Mayor to hear a proposal about a park in a closed session, and he hopes that someone will look into that. He said many of our parks are in water hazard and high liquefaction areas which should also be considered, even if we were to change the policies. He feels that LBCC pulled a "bait and switch" by saying they wouldn't ask for the use of the park, getting their referendum passed, and then coming back with a proposal to use parkland for parking.

Paul Farrell said he lives three houses from the Benton Center. Two years ago when LBCC discussed putting parking in the area of Washington Park, he was opposed. Since then, however, the citizens passed a bond to enlarge the Benton Center in a way that will need 200 parking spaces while that property will hold 80 spaces at most, leaving 120 cars with no place to park. This is a growing

problem all over Corvallis – building without providing adequate infrastructure. While he is opposed in general to the idea of building on parks, in this situation, something has to give.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Farrell said there was a neighborhood meeting with the LBCC Bond Manager to discuss options. There were about 14 or 15 neighbors in attendance. The only options presented were to put parking in Washington Park or to reduce the number of parking spaces to 80 for a building design that requires 200, and one can imagine the impact of the latter on the surrounding neighborhood.

Audrey Hatch asked that the City keep Washington Park as parkland even as the Benton Center searches for options to expand appropriately onsite. It is her personal view that our open spaces and natural areas have intrinsic value within the community and to our ecology. Speaking as a member of the advisory committee to the Benton Center expansion project, she has seen that our community has larger parking issues, that there is a benefit to the Benton Center expanding at its current site, and that there is value to the working relationship with LBCC. As a neighbor, she feels we are hearing the same options heard a year ago and it is her opinion that to proceed further we need multiple viable, realistic options that really look at traffic flow, egress, and parking long-term. She has not yet seen a plan that seems viable and she thinks that multiple options should be considered before going back to square one.

Jon Soule asked the expansion plans have been finalized. Hatch said she doesn't believe they have been finalized but options have been drafted. Soule asked if a parking structure was considered. Hatch said she believes they negated the idea of having a multiple story parking structure. Soule said this was a known issue and he is curious as to why a realistic solution wasn't found before this went forward on the ballot.

In response to inquiries from the Board, Director Karen Emery noted that the Board previously passed a motion advising the City Council to not sell parkland, specifically Washington Park.

Hays said Corvallis has a Comprehensive Plan that calls for having neighborhood parks within walking distance of homes, which is difficult in older areas like this. His question to the City Council is, if they are going to sell or reduce Washington Park, where do they propose to create a park in that neighborhood where there is no land available? He said the City Council has been ignoring the Park Board and that irritates him. Citizen advisory boards are made up of people knowledgeable about specific areas of City operations and they are supposed to advise the City Council. He cited City Council Resolution 94-13 which states that City parkland cannot be sold.

Motion: Hays moved that PNARB ask the City Council to reaffirm Corvallis City Council Res. 94-13. Specifically, the City Council is asked to reaffirm that City parkland and natural areas cannot be sold. Soule seconded the motion.

Richard Sumner said that by asking the City Council to reaffirm the resolution, the discussion could go any number of ways. He likes the resolution and he is hesitant to reopen it. He noted there is no actual proposal to respond to and he is concerned about responding formally to hearsay. He wondered if there was another way of communicating the concern to the City Council.

Brief discussion followed regarding previous discussion and action on the issue, the message the Board wishes to communicate, and potential motion language.

Hays withdrew the motion on the table.

Motion: Hays moved that in response to community comments regarding the sale of Washington Park, PNARB strongly supports Res. 94-13 that no park shall be sold. Sumner seconded the motion and it passed 6-1, with Stumbo voting no.

V. ILLEGAL CAMPING – CAPTAIN HENDRICKSON

Captain Dan Hendrickson introduced Officer Trevor Anderson, one of three Community Livability Officers (CLO) who worked on a Tactical Action Plan (TAP) that began on August 1 and ended on October 1 in response to citizen complaints, officers' observations, and observations from City staff regarding criminal behavior in City parks and the downtown area. Parks included in the TAP were Shawala Point, Central Park, the Skate Park, Pioneer Park, Riverfront Park and the BMX Track. State laws and city ordinances violated include illegal camping, harassment, assault, littering, drug use, open containers of alcohol, smoking, human waste, criminal mischief, and aggressive panhandling.

Anderson said the three CLO are tasked with addressing chronic criminal behavior that directly impacts community livability. They act as liaisons with community groups, business associations and community members in different sections of the City to look for creative long term solutions for chronic issues. He reviewed tasks and objectives contained within the subject TAP and ways in which they were addressed. In an effort to increase police presence within Downtown Corvallis and riverfront parks, patrol staff devoted 96 hours of unobligated time to these areas and the CLO utilized bike patrols and foot patrols to increase contact between police and community members for an additional 94 hours of patrol time for the period. To address the objective of obtaining compliance with city and state laws through educational contact, officers gave 225 warnings for criminal behavior, providing education on behavior expectations and consequences for criminal behavior and documented those appropriately. Officers then utilized progressive levels of enforcement for repeat offenders where warnings did not work. Officers cited 47 individuals and arrested 17 individuals for various issues. As part of the TAP, the officers also met with 33 local businesses, created a crime prevention educational presentation, and completed seven presentations to community groups. All of the tasks and goals of the TAP were accomplished and he thinks there has been a tremendous impact on the area with a large decrease in criminal activity and an increase in citizens using the area.

Sumner asked if the people contacted during the TAP were more local people or people from outside the area. Anderson said he doesn't have hard numbers but from his experience, he feels there is an uptick in people coming in from outside Corvallis, and many of those were educational contacts with people who weren't aware of local ordinances. There is also an aspect of chronic offenders; the TAP gave the ability to trespass chronic offenders from City parks for a period of time and this proved to be an incredible tool in keeping them from reoffending.

Janice Rosenberg asked if the trespassed repeat offenders left the community or moved to other areas of town. Anderson said he thinks it is some of both of those things. The CLO are continuing to problem solve with downtown businesses outside of the TAP area about issues they are having.

Ralph Alig asked if consideration is given to what other communities are doing to address these issues. Anderson said absolutely, these problems are not unique to Corvallis and he strongly believes in not reinventing the wheel. He is certified in Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), and much of that involves reaching out to other communities to see what success they have

had. He will be attending a national conference in Portland next week that focuses on agencies coming together to discuss where they have found successes.

Tatiana Dierwechter said she was involved in the process which created funding for the CLO program and she thinks that came out of the community's passion and commitment around prevention and outreach and innovation in solving problems. She is encouraged that the Corvallis Police Department seems to be partnering with efforts in our community that are looking for strategies to reduce homelessness based on practices that are happening all around the country. She is concerned about law enforcement intervention that criminalizes homelessness. She wants to go on record that enforcement and livability in our parks is critical but it's an expensive short-term solution if we aren't also looking at long-term strategies to address homelessness in our community.

Hendrickson said that many of the chronic offenders in parks are not homeless. He said he is a standing member one of the teams of the Homeless Oversight Committee and the department is integrated and involved with all the support agencies in taking a comprehensive look at these issues.

Sumner asked if there is a role for citizen volunteers where it's more a matter of presence. Anderson said the officers have been in touch with Parks and Recreation staff about the potential of developing a citizen volunteer program similar to those that have been used successfully in other communities. Parks Operations Supervisor Jude Geist noted that the volunteer coordinator does not have additional capacity and that staffing level is one issue that would need to be considered. Sumner suggested that "how to grow a volunteer program" could be added to the Board's goals.

Hays asked how much the Parks Department spends cleaning up parks. Geist said he doesn't have that number but he can report about clean-up efforts in the last two weeks. At Berg Park, activities to clean up illegal camp sites took 57 staff hours, during which they found 16 stripped bike frames, 15 propane tanks, and 7,400 pounds of debris. At Orleans Park, staff cleaned up 24 camp sites and 6,500 pounds of debris utilizing 87 staff hours. Emery noted that the department doesn't budget for cleaning illegal camps and this work requires that other staff work be deferred.

Hays said that, ideally, the CLO effort will reduce the clean up expense, allowing that money to be used in other ways.

Dierwechter said it's crucial to recognize that this is a bigger issue which these short term expensive solutions will not solve it in the long term. She encouraged partnering across sectors to look at issues like affordable housing and mental health using a more comprehensive approach.

Stumbo said he appreciates the work of the CLO Team and would like to see it continue.

VI. BALD HILL CARBON ACTION PLAN

John Gabriel reported on the activities of a small resident group called Trees Eat Carbon (TEC). He said a tree can absorb as much 48 pounds of carbon dioxide per year and can sequester one ton of carbon dioxide by the time it reaches 50 years old. It is estimated that the global number of trees has fallen by 46% since the start of human civilization, with an estimated 3.4 trillion trees being cut down. The idea behind TEC is to benefit Corvallis parks by enhancing them with trees and the habitats they provide. The team used a process to identify public lands and land that isn't loved (the water treatment plant, Orleans Natural Area, the old south town campground), with the idea to enhance those areas by planting trees for carbon sequestration and wildlife habitat. He showed a map

of publically owned lands, noting areas where trees could be planted. The team selected Bald Hill as the area they would like to adopt as the first target for these improvements. They would like to get out there this winter with the City's approval to map where the stream naturally occurs, do some plantings along the edge of the riparian zone to provide a natural coordinator for beaver, otter, etc., and return the farm area to a more natural space.

TEC member Dave Eckert added that the City has essentially adopted maps that approved this as a riparian zone to be protected and yet it is rented out to be tilled and, he assumes, sprayed with harsh herbicides. The plan doesn't seem to match City policy. Geist clarified that the agriculture use agreement is a temporary management strategy that allows for the City to receive some income from the property until it can be restored.

Emery said it is staff's preference to move forward with a management plan for the area of Bald Hill under easement with Greenbelt Land Trust this Winter. It is preferred to complete that before beginning a restoration project of that scope and size. Staff is working with Benton County and the Greenbelt Land Trust on a regional plan because they share property borders.

Alig asked for information about the status and flexibility of the agriculture use agreements. Geist said they are generally three-year agreements with two one-year extensions. The farmers need to know that the lease will be in place before making an investment for that year. He doesn't have the resources to maintain a section of the land and his preference is to keep the agriculture agreements in place for this season or until there is a plan in place.

Park Planner Jackie Rochefort noted that restoration activities are a multi-year process and that being able to sustain a restoration is a very important part of the management effort. She stressed the need for a management plan with a phased approach.

Gabriel said there is an opportunity to have 10 or 12 PhDs from Corvallis volunteer to put that plan together and he thinks it would be a huge cost savings for the City. Emery said staff will be looking to work with a stakeholder group and she expressed appreciation for the team's expertise, interest and time.

Dierwechter left the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

VII. MUNICIPAL CODE 5.01 – ALCOHOL IN PARKS

Emery reviewed the staff memo and said the Board is asked to make recommendations on two issues. First, the City currently has designated parks where alcohol is allowed by permit, as well as a long-standing practice of allowing community members to apply for a permit to have alcohol in non-designated parks. During the policy review, staff questioned if there is a need for two processes given that the permits are almost always approved. She requested input on this issue and brief discussion followed.

Motion: Hays moved to recommend that the distinction between designated and non-designated parks be removed from the alcohol permitting ordinance. Sumner seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Emery said the second issue is that people who aren't selling but want to consume alcohol in a park are not required to have liability insurance. The City's Risk Manager is recommending that we begin

to require that people purchase liability insurance in order to have alcohol for an event, generally a cost of \$75 to \$100. The City already requires those who are selling alcohol to have liability insurance.

In response to inquiries from the Board, Emery affirmed that the change would effectively increase the cost of renting a shelter and that could have an impact on the number of permits issued. There is waiver language in the agreement but the question is whether that would hold up in court. That is the risk identified by the Risk Manager whose job is to move risk away from the City.

In discussion by the Board, comments included that there is no history of a problem and no action brought against the City, that the risk is relatively low, that there is the safeguard of the waiver, and that the requirement could be a financial hardship that discourages people from getting permits. It was noted that the person serving alcohol is the responsible party and it could be more strongly recommended that they obtain the liability insurance for their own protection.

Motion: Soule moved to recommend continuing the policy of not requiring liability insurance for rentals where alcohol is being consumed but not sold, and to recommend that the contract for the rental be amended to highlight the waiver and strongly recommend that renters purchase liability insurance. Rosenberg seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

VIII. BETTY GRIFFITHS MEMORIAL BENCH

Emery drew attention to pictures in packet.

IX. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS – None.

X. STAFF REPORTS – None.

XI. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT – None.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.