

**CITY OF CORVALLIS  
MINUTES OF THE PARKS, NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATION  
ADVISORY BOARD  
November 19, 2015**

<p><b><u>Present</u></b>          Lynda Wolfenbarger, Chair          Greg Alpert          Ralph Alig          Tatiana Dierwechter          Simone Frei          Phillip Hays          Janice Rosenberg          Anthony Stumbo          Richard Sumner          Marc Vomocil</p> <p><b><u>Absent/Excused</u></b>          Jon Soule</p>	<p><b><u>Staff</u></b>          Karen Emery, Director          Jude Geist, Parks Operations Supervisor          Steve McGettigan, Parks Operations Supervisor          Jackie Rochefort, Park Planner          Jon Pywell, Urban Forester          Terry Nix, Recorder</p> <p><b><u>Guests</u></b>          Dean Codo          Nance Kiesling          Arlene Merems          Jan Weir</p>
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**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION.**

	Agenda Item	Summary of Recommendations
III.	Approval of Minutes – October 15, 2015	Approved as presented
IV.	Visitor’ Propositions	
V.	Parks and Recreation Youth Parks Corps	
VI.	Parks and Recreation Urban Forestry Program	
VII.	Sustainable Budget Task Force	
VIII.	April Stools Day	
IX.	Martin Luther King, Jr. Park Grant	
X.	Board Member Reports	
XI.	Staff Reports	
XII.	Council Liaison Report	

## **CONTENT OF DISCUSSION**

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Lynda Wolfenbarger called the meeting of the Parks, Natural Areas and Recreation 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 – OCTOBER 15, 2015**

Phillip Hays moved to approve the October 15 minutes as presented. Richard Sumner seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

### **IV. VISITORS' PROPOSITIONS**

**Dean Codo** said the process to address the issue of accessibility in the parks for people with disabilities started with the first dog subcommittee, then the first secret subcommittee, then the second subcommittee, then the second secret subcommittee that produced the Co-existing with Dogs brochure. He wondered why the process is taking so long and why nothing has been done to provide access to the parks for people with disabilities. He submitted a brochure by Access Benton County representing Persons with Disabilities in Benton County, and he asked that the Parks Department reach out and ask this group or people with disabilities why they don't use the parks, instead of asking a group of dog owners that seem to have taken over the parks. He submitted and reviewed "Guidelines for Dogs and their People" which was put out by the OSU College of Forestry to remind dog owners of their responsibilities.

**Arlene Merems** said she was on the Dog Subcommittee and she would like to respond to Ralph Alig's e-mail in meeting packets reporting on issues at Bald Hill. She said Alig indicated there was a relatively high number of off-leash dogs and a significant number of retractable leashes, causing discomfort for a number of people. She is a frequent Bald Hill user and she doesn't know where these concerns are coming from. Especially on the paved trail, she sees more people using leashes than in the past. Alig's e-mail mentioned volunteer monitors at MLK Park and that raised a concern for her in that the Dog Subcommittee was presented with a charter that they rejected because they felt it was biased and unnecessary, and that charter proposed this volunteer monitoring concept. Her concern is that volunteer monitors would likely be dog-averse. She referred to an OSU College of Forestry Study from 2009 which included interviews with 1,000 users of McDonald Forest, and she reviewed results from that study which she felt would be useful to the City and PNARAB.

Alig said he is at Bald Hill twice a day and he has seen Merems only once, at which time her dog was off leash on the paved path and approached his dog. He said he is a dog owner and he is not dog-averse. Merems responded that she has been committed to keeping her dog on-leash when she is at the Bald Hill paved trail and parking lot, and this one instance occurred just as she was coming off the dog path. Alig explained that the information in his e-mail came from four frequent users of Bald Hill whose best estimates were that 50% of dogs on the paved path are off-leash. He has also had three dog bite incidents at Bald Hill reported to him in the past few months, and he felt this was important information for Parks staff to have.

Parks and Recreation Director Emery clarified that the Department hasn't adopted a volunteer monitor program.

Richard Sumner said it would be helpful to have good information such as that gathered by OSU at McDonald Forest. Merems reviewed her conversations with Dr. Craig Limburg from OSU Cascades Forestry who has spearheaded a university based approach to this issue in other areas, and she feels that OSU could be engaged to develop an unbiased approach and creative solutions.

**Nance Kiesling**, representing W-Dog, the Willamette Dog Owner's Group, said the July PNARAB minutes included discussion about dog issues at the Paddle Oregon event. If W-Dog is notified in advance of major events, she said, they will do extra pickup and make sure the park is welcoming. She said W-Dog had a table inside this year at Osborn Dog Days, and it was great fun. She said the group would like to do a memorial picnic table for Bill Hays, an elderly gentleman who was welcoming to dogs and helped children learn how to deal with dogs on a near-daily basis at Willamette Park. She worked with staff to receive approval and selected a wood table costing \$600 from the Parks and Recreation Memorial Policy on the website; however, it turned out that the least expensive option is actually \$2,058, which is out of their reach. She said they would like to come up with a less expensive option. Kiesling submitted and reviewed an e-mail from Nancy Rohn regarding bark chips that are being dumped that could be used on the trail. She said that a garbage can is badly needed at the Crystal Lake Boat Ramp. She offered to answer any questions about April Stools Day. She submitted and reviewed handouts that the group gives to dog owners: "Off-Leash, But in Bounds," "Current Municipal Codes Regarding Dogs," and "Attention All Dog Owners, Public Safety Alert". She reviewed efforts that have been taken to get dog owners to clean up after their dogs.

**Jan Weir** said she walks at Crystal lake and her concern is that there are a lot of clean outhouses during soccer and baseball seasons at Crystal Lake; however, at this time of year, there are only a few and they are very dirty. She wondered why many of the outhouses are removed seasonally and how decisions are made about how often they are cleaned. Parks Operations Supervisor Jude Geist said most of the outhouses are funded by Little League and others who pay for use of the park. They are generally pumped twice a week during the on-season and once a week during the offseason. The vendor has Corvallis on the route twice a week and it's not cost effective to increase that number. Weir said many people walk in the park year round and there may be a way to get an additional outhouse funded. Staff will follow up with Weir on the issue.

#### **V. PARK AND RECREATION YOUTH PARKS CORPS**

Parks and Recreation Director Karen Emery said that Parks Operations Supervisor Steve McGettigan will give a presentation on the Youth Park Corps (YPC) and he will give a presentation on the Parks Volunteer Program at a future meeting.

McGettigan said the YPC is a summer employment opportunity geared toward youth aged 14 to 16. For the past 10 years, up to 40 youth have been employed on a part-time basis, working two times per week for four weeks. For many, this is their first exposure to a work format. The youth state several reasons for wanting to be involved in the program, including wanting to make money for personal use, develop work skills and experience, develop references, stay active in the summer, and because outdoor work sounds like a fun way to meet these goals. The program includes a formal job interview process with a competitive aspect.

McGettigan said the YPC program provides cost-effective labor for wide range of tasks in public parks. He distributed and reviewed YPC 2015 Project Allocations. Youth are required to show up on time prepared to work. The first day orientation includes dealing with all of the necessary paperwork,

which provides good experience in filling forms properly and all of the details that are part of the jobs process. A good mix of projects provide the youth with varied experience. About two-thirds of the parks will get regular attention from the YPC during the summer months. Examples of recent YPC projects include tree raising at Kendall Farm; kiosk and sign painting at Starker Arts Park; edging at Tunison Park; memorial bench installation; concrete pad construction at the shop; surface trail repair at Timberhill Natural Area; pruning, mulching, weeding; and building a new retaining wall at Avery Park's Rhododendron garden. The YPC effort embraces every program area in Operations.

McGettigan said there is a donation line on utility bills where citizens can contribute to the YPC. These utility donations are coupled with community donations. For FY 13-14 and 14-15, YPC funding was reduced. Staff will be working with regard to fund raising opportunities. He invited Board members' to contact staff with ideas related to funding raising opportunities and potential YPC projects.

In response to inquiries, McGettigan provided additional information about the program and some of the specific projects. The youth are paid minimum wage. A crew consists of five youth and one crew leader. Over the past two summers, there were 20 youth in the program; however, staff hopes to get funding restored so they can get back to previous level of up to 40 youth.

#### **VI. PARKS AND RECREATION URBAN FORESTRY PROGRAM**

Urban Forester John Pywell gave an update on the Corvallis Urban Forestry Program 2015-2016. The Corvallis Urban Forest includes approximately 15,000 trees in parks and streets outside of natural areas. There are over 300 varieties of trees and over 130 species included. An OSU Grad student will be doing a Park Tree Inventory. The tree inventory is currently in about 30 percent Maple and 10 percent Ash; efforts are being made to improve diversity and an updated species list has been published and is available on the website. The Oregon Ash is expected to be affected by an Ash borer that is working its way across the country, and a resiliency plan is being created to deal with that issue. In looking at the count of trees by diameter class, many of the trees are less than 10 inches in diameter. It is important to make sure we are doing what we can to preserve large trees, and this community is very much in favor of that philosophy. The vast majority of trees in the City are in Fair condition or better. Any trees in the inventory that are described as Very Poor are inspected annually and hazards are addressed based on risk.

Pywell described the new Young Tree Structural Pruning program, the goal of which is to prune 20% of the trees under 10-inches, or about 1500 trees, per year. This has been a full-time effort for 2.5 positions, and they are on schedule to complete the first pruning cycle by December 31. Structural pruning of young trees reduces long term maintenance costs and makes trees safer in the long term.

Pywell reviewed the Neighborwoods Program, the goal of which is "to identify neighborhood associations and other civic groups with active members interested in obtaining training, resources, and support for tree stewardship." This program was restarted after a brief hiatus and staff hopes to expand it. He is optimistic that recent updates to the website and exposure in local media will bring more interest.

Pywell reviewed the Tree for a Fee program, the idea being that the majority of new trees in the last ten years were planted as part of new development, that many of these trees were not planted under ideal circumstances, and that this has resulted in more sidewalk damage and a higher mortality rates than was necessary. Developers often find the tree planting process to be frustrating as it is outside their area of expertise. Under this voluntary program, developers would be able to satisfy their

requirements by paying the City to plant trees, thus ensuring that trees will be properly planted and maintained. The program is currently under review by Parks, Planning, Public Works and Development Services staff. He hopes to have the program in place by Spring of 2016.

The Heritage Tree program is a cooperative program between Benton County and the City of Corvallis. There are currently 77 trees listed. Trees must be notable due to age, size or historical significance. Pywell described several Heritage trees that are in the program. The voluntary program improves awareness of our valuable assets and they are always looking for additional nominations. Pywell reviewed expansions to the website which now includes a lot of good information and links.

#### **VII. SUSTAINABLE BUDGET TASK FORCE**

Emery referred to the City Council goal to have a sustainable budget and the task force assigned to that goal. Part of the charge and process has been to meet with each department director. The Parks and Recreation Department presented its budget, including unmet needs in October. This report is included in meeting packets. The next step with the sustainable budget task force is to begin to brainstorm different ways to raise revenue in the future. They wanted to first hear from the department directors to have a greater understanding of the scope of unmet needs so they could plan out the amount of revenue that would be needed to restore the City to basic service levels.

#### **VIII. APRIL STOOLS DAY**

Information was provided in meeting packets.

#### **IX. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. PARK GRANT**

Park Planner Jackie Rochefort said the City applied to the state about 18 months ago for a grant for improvements at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, including improve the circulation system for accessibility, expanding the playground and make upgrades to the barn. The application was not successful at the time; however, the State later determined they had additional funds and would award for the project. Because the funds were awarded nearly a year into the cycle, the state has agreed to start the two-year clock now. The idea is to connect the playground with the barn, expand the playground, make the barn function better, to improve the south face of the barn so use can expand into the outdoors, and to make the playground more interesting, up-to-date and safe.

Emery added that through the master planning process, MLK Jr. Park was identified as a potential destination park for a one-mile radius. With its regional nature, this is a significant park to West Timberhill, Skyline, Walnut Park, and Suncrest Subdivisions. The park was built in 1974 and the playground hasn't been updated or expanded since, while all of those subdivisions have been developed. In addition to safety improvements and new amenities, staff is looking at expanded playground equipment to serve more people. Brief discussion followed.

#### **X. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS – None.**

#### **XI. STAFF REPORTS**

Emery provided an update on progress at Bald Hill and Crystal Lake Sports Park and collaboration with the Greenbelt Land Trust and Benton County Natural Areas and Parks. The three groups are interested in having similar signage for consistency across jurisdictional lines. Benton County is wrapping up a mapping system which will provide the same maps of the whole area in all of the kiosks. The three organizations are also looking at parking and bicycle parking for the area.

In response to a question from the Board, Emery said the City Attorney was asked to review the proposed brochures and, looking at the risk liability aspect, he encouraged that we not provide information on what to do when encountering a dog that is troublesome. The City Attorney also advised that the City's advisory boards are not allowed to have subcommittees that include non-appointed people; therefore, the City is discontinuing that practice.

**XII. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT** – None.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT** – The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.