

CITY OF OREGON CITY
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
City Hall Commission Chambers
Thursday, August 22nd, 2024 at 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Timothy Lainhart called meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

INTRODUCTIONS

Members: Joyce Gifford, Ken Worcester, Tim Wuest, Steve Williams (remote), Erin McClellan (remote), Emily Lisborg

Staff: Tom Kissinger, Deputy Director/Interim Parks and Recreation Director; Kori Buth, Administrative Assistant; Brandon Watt, Interim Parks and Cemetery Manager; Melissa Sebastian, Aquatics and Recreation Manager

PUBLIC COMMENT

PRESENTATIONS

City-wide Volunteer Opportunities – Hannah Schmidt

Tim Lainhart gave appreciation for work with the Oregon City Ivy League and the work they are doing there. He asked how PRAC can support Hannah's efforts and spread the word about opportunities? Hannah mentioned that making connections with community organizations would be helpful and emphasized the importance of getting youth involved in these coordinated events. Also, for PRAC to participate in those events. Joyce Gifford asked Hannah if she is also involved with the Citizen Involvement Council in gathering volunteers from different neighborhoods? Hannah is the City liaison for the CIC so makes connections with different community areas often.

Kori Buth relayed an email from Erin McClellan stating that she is impressed by Hannah's efforts and supportive of the work that she has done in the short time she's been here.

Steve Williams mentioned that the ROTC program at Oregon City High School is always looking for volunteer opportunities to get involved in. Hannah responded and said that she has reached out to one of the leaders of the program and hasn't been successful in reaching him via email so asked Steve if he had a different way to get Hannah in touch with that group. He will see what he can do.

Erin McClellan asked Hannah if she has connected with local businesses regarding volunteerism or if there is interest there? Hannah confirmed that she is very interested in collaborating more with local businesses.

When Hannah first started, she was connected to a hair-cutting establishment and presented the Ivy League to them, but there was little

interest shown. Hannah believes many companies find it harder to commit to Saturday events and hopes that we can organize more workday events in hopes of expanding interest. Erin is going to put Hannah in contact with someone on the Oregon City Business Chamber as well as local gym owners.

Tim Lainhart followed that up saying he is happy to connect Hannah to the Boy Scout council, as well as the National Guard ROTC.

Emily Lisborg echoed what Erin mentioned with Hannah doing so much in a short amount of time. When Emily began volunteering years ago, it was hard to find consolidated volunteer information, so she thinks that is very important and it's appreciated. She mentioned the horticulture program at the Environmental Learning Center at Clackamas Community College and their concern for invasive plants and is happy to put Hannah in touch with that program if there is interest.

Hannah mentioned that she is aware that there is a youth seat on PRAC that is currently vacant and if we are interested in recruiting for that position, she is happy to help in that.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes – April 26th, 2024

Tim Wuest motioned, Joyce Gifford seconded

Roll call unanimously passed motion

Transition Plan and 6-month PRAC Agenda Discussion

Tom Kissinger began by sharing our staffing plan and the transition with Brandon Watt as the interim Parks and Cemetery Manager during recruitment process. There were 21 applicants for the Parks and Cemetery Manager role and interviews for that position will begin soon.

The Parks and Recreation Director job has been posted to NeoGov, ORPA, and NRPA websites. Position closes on September 15th and there are about 36 applicants thus far. Alex Rains, the Assistant City Manager, is leading that recruitment process. Alex Rains is filling the role of Director when it comes to policy and administrator guidance for the department.

Tom Kissinger is filling the Director role in the day-to-day operational responsibilities. Tom is also overseeing department-wide projects, facilitating PRAC and attending Commission meetings. The roles of the division managers haven't changed.

Tom also shared the 6-month PRAC Agenda that was created for the transition period of establishing a new Director. Because multiple staff members will be at the ORPA Conference during the normal date for our October PRAC meeting, it was decided that we will meet on Thursday, October 17th instead. October may be a busy month for PRAC agenda topics, including Cemetery Fees update, Memorial Bench and Plaque Policy, and District-wide Behavior Policy (expanded on by Melissa

Sebastian), the WESGNA update, and holiday programming updates. Tom asked if anyone had anything they would like to see added and Steve Williams asked if there would be any October updates for the Clackamette Park Boat Ramp. Tom mentioned that we are in the process of contracting with an archaeologist and may be able to provide an update at the October PRAC meeting. Tim Wuest asked if the Clackamette Park Master Plan has been completed. Tom confirmed that it has been completed and we are currently working on the zone change for the RV Park. Tim also asked if we knew what kind of playground would be implemented in the park. Tom mentioned that we are not quite to the design portion of the plan. Currently, the focus is the rezoning of the RV Park while simultaneously doing boat ramp work to clear up some space and allow the current location of the RV Park time to “heal” before beginning the design phase.

Tim Wuest was reviewing the April minutes and mentioned that Tom had provided an update on the Hillendale Pickleball courts and asked if an agreement was finalized and how things were moving forward. Tom confirmed that an MOU is being established and the club is reviewing the terms of that agreement, and the MOU is in the club’s ‘court’. Tim asked about seeing a copy of that MOU and what kind of fee structure we had come up with. Tom stated that the fee terms continue to be negotiated but the fee being discussed is \$150 per month.

We will have no PRAC meeting in November, and December will be our committee member interviews. Joey Knauf, Ken Worcester, and Steve Williams all have terms that expire on December 31st and they would need to re-apply. In January, we plan to provide an update to the Park Place Metro Enhancement project, discuss the 6(f) Process for Jon Storm Park, and review holiday programming. A couple other topics that will be discussed where appropriate is the SDC Methodology update and a joint NRC/PRAC meeting to talk over the need for a city forester program and our tree canopy. Tim Lainhart asked when that meeting would take place and Tom believes that NRC is hopeful that can happen soon. Emily Lisborg, who is also on NRC, provided some context and let the group know that NRC meets on Wednesday’s and thinks meeting in the next couple months is ideal so we can have the conversations prior to the next budget cycle. The City Forester position is something that NRC has been talking about for years and would potentially save the City money, since it is work they currently contract out for. Steve Williams asked if a sub-committee of PRAC members would work for attendance, if not all were able to join. Kori Buth will confirm those regulations through the City Recorder’s office. Tom Kissinger asked if there were any other topics that people would be interested in discussing over the next six months and Emily Lisborg asked for an update on the Wesley Linn Dog Park habitat

project that was proposed a few months back. Tom stated that we have met with the Gaffney Lane Neighborhood Association and received mixed feedback from them on the design preference and we are now working with Lango Hensen on a couple options for design so that those ideas can be brought back to PRAC and the community to move forward with an option. We can then start obtaining cost estimates for the restoration component in regard to the Metro Local Share grant opportunity.

Tim Wuest asked about future park development and land acquisition and asked if those ideas could be shared with PRAC. Tom mentioned that many of those future projects will be addressed during the upcoming SDC Methodology conversations.

Kori Buth circled back and confirmed that it is Joey Knauf, Ken Worcester, and Steve Williams whose committee terms are expiring December 31, 2024. Emily Lisborg asked if we had received any applications thus far for the available seats coming up, but Kori confirmed that no applications have been received and doesn't believe that the application window has even been opened yet, it should be available October-November. Erin McClellan asked if Kori could send that application link when it comes available.

PRAC Annual Report Discussion

The annual report highlights some of the department projects that have began or been completed over the year, but we would like to be able to include PRAC's accomplishments, as well, and work together to create a report that showcases the importance and appreciation of the committee itself. One of the ways we'd like to partner is with the upcoming Pool pollinator garden, where we will get hands in the dirt together planting and creating that space. Another idea to recognize are the work on the Parks Master Plan. Steve Williams also mentioned that himself and Ken Worcester were directly involved in some of the Parks budget discussions for our current biennium. Emily Lisborg mentioned how impressed she is with the increase of swim instructor ratings as well as the number of aquatics staff. Melissa Sebastian stated the staff retention was great this year and wanted to give recognition to Michael Janszen, who has put in an immense amount of work to obtain her water safety instructor certification, as well as training new swim instructors. Tim Lainhart gave a shoutout to all staff at the swimming pool, as both of his children have attended swim lessons and camps and have really enjoyed it. Tom Kissinger mentioned that PRAC is able to review the annual report and provide feedback at any time on what they would like to see added. Emily Lisborg asked about the Pool expenses and the increase of the cost recovery line item with more swim lessons. She is curious if that is due to more maintenance at the facility. Melissa confirmed that expenses at the pool have significantly increased, including the chemical needed to

balance the water chemistry tripling in price. Our revenue hasn't increased enough to recover those raised expenses.

Steve Williams asked when PRAC needs to make the annual presentation to City Commission. Tom stated that it typically happens in October and that it may happen in the week of our normal PRAC meeting, but we will discuss what works best.

Summer Season Updates

Melissa began by talking about our Concerts in the Parks series. Taylor Miller sent Melissa a write-up and wanted to give a shout out to Melissa and Cecily, but Melissa said that Taylor deserves the recognition for the wonderful job he did and the work and ownership he put into these events. He has incredible ideas and is very creative so we are excited to see how our events are impacted by that. Overall, we had a very successful season and were able to bring in about 75% cost recovery for the concert series from vendor fees, sponsorships, and split the bucks dollars. In the next budget cycle, we expect that the ask will be higher to continue to bring in the popular bands that the community enjoys so much. One of our new partnerships this year was with SoulFlags Art Community Center, who created a wonderful backdrop for the stage. We are also excited to continue the conversations regarding a 4th of July event going forward, and we plan to begin preparing for next year in the next month or two.

Movies the Park wraps up tomorrow night and has been well attended.

The department received funds through the Metro Enhancement grant that allowed up to purchase all of our own equipment for that program, which is a huge cost savings moving forward. Because of rain in the forecast for tomorrow evening, that event is being moved to the Pioneer Community Center. The swimming pool events and programs were better staffed this summer than we have experienced for many years and Melissa is so proud of the teams ability to keep things operating smoothly. Fall registration began yesterday and we have implemented a new policy and giving OC residents priority registration. Overall, summer camps were successful and we have anywhere between 30-80 children per week.

Pickleball family nights were also implemented this summer, headed by RJ Aubert, and gained a lot of traction so we are looking forward to continuing that next year. Ermatinger stayed consistent with their summer events, with educational talks and partnering with Friends of the Ermatinger House. As a department, we were able to represent ourselves at other City-wide events, including the First City Celebration and National Night Out. Tim Lainhart asked about the feedback regarding the resident vs. non-resident swim lesson registration policy. Melissa stated that it was what she expected, with the difficulty to get into swim lessons as it is, she doesn't believe that giving residents priority solves our issue of space and offerings. We will still have plenty of residents that won't secure a spot.

Staff were prepared to answer questions and were given a script for addressing concerns. It should even out as we move forward, as we're not doing anything that most other areas aren't already doing.

Erin McClellan stated that she was able to register her daughter for swim lessons for the first time since moving to Oregon City. We don't want to create an 'us vs. them' mentality, but Erin believes we've done a good job in our communication. Tim Wuest asked if we've ever looked at overflow pools in the city, such as the vacant space at the former Nelsons Nautilus gym. Melinda responded that she wanted the City to purchase that when she heard it was closing. We do not have the funding or staff to make that happen. Tim also mentioned that the Concerts in the Park series was great but noticed there is a lost opportunity in the lack of marketing for Parks and Recreation programs, camps, and events.

Brandon Watt provided an update on Parks summer updates and stated that there were 202 shelter reservations for June through August, 11 large event park rentals, and hosted 9 baseball tournaments at Chapin and Wesley Lynn parks. Cemetery water conservation has been in place during the summer months. We've had many irrigation repairs at multiple parks and looking at our different sites that will need aging hardware addressed. Steve Williams mentioned that we have talked quite a bit about vandalism in our parks and wondered how that concern was this summer. Brandon stated our patrols have cut down on graffiti and vandalism incidents quite a bit. While it still happens, it has certainly subsided. Joyce Gifford mentioned a couple trees in the Cemetery that probably need to be inspected by an arborist and wondering if staff has that on their radar. Brandon mentioned that staff are aware of the concern and there are plans for a canopy analysis in the future. We hope to mark trees so that we have an idea on the condition of our trees and will assess more in spring, when trees are recovering from summer heat. Tom Kissinger also mentioned that we have made operational changes that have allowed staff to better manage sites and mentioned at least five major irrigation leaks at Wesley Lynn and Rivercrest Parks. Emily Lisborg asked if we have specs regarding the amount of water we used this year in comparison to prior years. Brandon doesn't have those numbers but the water division would have those statistics. Emily also asked if our irrigation systems are programmed to not run if it rains and stays below a certain temperature. Brandon mentioned that irrigation systems stay on but are easily controlled by staff and can be manually programmed to reduce water output due to weather conditions. Tom mentioned that Hunter, an irrigation supplier, came out and did a system-wide audit and made recommendations on how we can make changes to automate our system and be able to make changes from one central location. Tom stated that last year the Cemetery alone used a million gallons of water.

Joyce Gifford has heard that there is Poison Oak at Park Place Park. Tom mentioned that a staff member did a spot spray at Park Place yesterday and we plan to do a manual removal once we get a little rain to soften the ground and we then plan to spot spray further to keep the poison oak off the trail. That strategy is informed by the OSU Extension Center guideline.

MEMBER REPORTS

Kori Buth mentioned that we have a new platform for public meeting notices so she will add the member report section to the agenda moving forward.

Joyce Gifford visited the Never Forget Garden presentation by DAR and was bummed to not see more PRAC attendance. The Cemetery looked gorgeous. We had statewide visitors at the event and Joyce was able to share a bit about the Parents of Murdered Children Memorial. Water Environmental Services had their Clack-a-mole ribbon cutting last week and it was fascinating. National Night Out was a great, fun event and dunking the police chief was fun! On September 21st, Atkinson Church, is having their 100th anniversary and the public is invited to celebrate.

Tim Lainhart mentioned the wonderful staff at the summer camps. Concerts in the Park were always fun and it was good to see the city come together. Personal thank you to whoever nominated Tom for Committee Member Volunteer of the Year. Tim has received lots of good feedback stating that Rivercrest Splash Pad had minimal issues this summer. Mentioned that the Parks have looked great all summer.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING – September 26th, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting ended about 7:30 p.m.