

CITY OF OREGON CITY
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
City Hall Commission Chambers
Thursday, October 17th, 2024 at 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Steve Williams called meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

INTRODUCTIONS

Members: Joyce Gifford, Ken Worcester, Tim Wuest, Tim Lainhart, Steve Williams, Erin McClellan (remote), Emily Lisborg (arrived late), Joey Knauf

Staff: Tom Kissinger, Deputy Director/Interim Parks and Recreation Director; Kori Buth, Administrative Assistant

PUBLIC COMMENT

N/A

GENERAL BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes – August 22nd, 2024

Cemetery Fees Update

Tom referenced the Cemetery tour that was done in the Spring to discuss the operations and services of the facility. One of the challenges we face is that our fees have not been updated in quite some time. The Cemetery is currently subsidized at about 50% and, since that tour, we have had two internal meetings with City staff to discuss policy options and we have started to create a new price list that covers three options. 1) Full Cost Recovery, bringing Cemetery to true enterprise fund. This would require large price increases. We also recognize that there is scenic and historic value in the sections that aren't currently active so we also created a 2) 25% fee increase to make up the difference in the 20 years that it's been since fees were updates. 3) 75% Cost Recovery/25% subsidy. Next steps are that this topic will be brought forward in further detail at the January 2025 PRAC meeting to hopefully come to a recommendation that can be relayed to City Commission.

Tim Lainhart hopes that PRAC has a chance to see the current costs and then the costs of the three options above for simple comparison reference, and possibly even the costs from surrounding areas so that we use that as a guide to provide that recommendation.

Erin McClellan asked if a sliding income scale is offered for Cemetery services. Tom stated that it is not something in place currently but thinks it's a great thing to look into. In looking at surrounding comparables, he

doesn't believe that is something that is offered anywhere nearby, but will look into Metro procedures.

Ken Worcester asked if there is any guidance from the budget committees or Commission on how other funds (water, sewer, storm, etc) operate.

Tom stated that they have talked to finance about how that operate, but haven't received feedback specific to the Cemetery. It would be a big lift to get to 100% enterprise fund and potentially make us not as competitive due to the costs we would need to charge so quickly. Tom believes there to be a certain level of subsidy that makes sense due to the historical aspect, but is eager to figure out the appropriate subsidy percentage. Ken suggested a staggered fee increase to make it more palatable. Tom mentioned that is what discussed to slowly increase over a five-year time span.

Joey Knauf also had the idea of a step increase, as well as looking at comparables to see if they have annual increases.

Tom stated that when the increase amount has been decided, a resolution will be presented to City Commission that will include annual increases, similar to how other fees (ex: water) are assessed.

Steve Williams mentioned that, in his experience, decision makers might prefer to review costs every three years, as an annual increase can pose a challenge. Steve knows the difficulty the conversation faces because it is a sensitive topic, but believes it is important to bring up and move forward.

Tom mentioned that, as they have been looking at the big picture and thinking about Cost Recovery, there is also a fairness element to it.

Tim Wuest asked if the Cemetery was competitive.

Tom stated that there are areas we are competitive and some areas that we are well below the standard.

Tim asked what that looked like, if we are 5% below standard or 50%.

Tom said that we will bring the further details forward in January and we'll be able to review those details and see that some of the area where we are below standard are in services that have been marked up considerable by vendors. The services that also require staff time are where we are well below market. We don't charge a set-up fee that our staff arranges prior to a service, while most cemeteries charge a fee for that staff time.

Steve Williams asked what the committee's task in January will be.

Tom responded that there will be a full presentation and ask PRAC for a recommendation to present to City Commission.

Tim Wuest asked if we have compared the man-powered services among publicly owned cemeteries versus privately owned.

Tom confirmed that, overall, we are below what other public cemeteries are charging.

Memorial and Bench Policy Collaboration

Tom mentioned that one of the things the department wishes to do is involve and engage PRAC more around the topic of policies, especially those directly affect the public. The City/department does not have a current policy for memorial or dedicated benches. In the past, these requests are received on an ad hoc basis and is considered by the Parks and Cemetery Manager and escalated to the Director as needed. We would like to work with the Committee to develop a consistent policy that makes sense for Oregon City, considering historic value and maintenance. One idea is to create a sub-committee that would research the policies nationwide, statewide and locally to draft a policy to bring forward to staff for review before advancing to Commission.

Tim Lainhart asked if there was a resource online or something that Tom could send out regarding the park naming policy so that we had a format reference of what has been established previously. He has plenty of personal experience in developing policies at the state level.

Tom replied that he would send that along, as well as some resources from his former agency.

Erin McClellan asked if we have accepted donations from someone that wants a memorial bench or is there any precedence for establishing a fee. Tom commented on what a great question that is and stated that we haven't charged fees in the past because of the ad hoc nature. Tom gave an example of a family in the 1990's paying to place a memorial, but no policy or fee schedule in place for the maintenance and life of that memorial. We would also like to tie in some bench and memorial standards for consistency purposes.

Erin replied that she was interested in the sub-committee or PRAC, as a whole since the group is not large, taking on the exciting idea of this.

Ken Worcester asked about a standardized bench size and design, as well as allowable placement of such memorials (park or trail).

Joyce asked about a memorial bench recently placed at Old Canemah Park. She recalls the Parks Foundation collecting money, as a non-profit, to purchase bench.

Tom responding saying that another thing to explore is how to interact with non-profits in the standardization.

Joyce recalls the Old Canemah bench including plans provided by the City.

Ken Worcester suggested having the Parks Foundation develop the policy and manage all memorials, keeping the City out of it.

Tom has seen that work really well in other agencies, where the Foundation takes over the management of that, and it can strengthen the relationship between the foundation and the City.

Steve Williams mentioned that the topic title also includes memorials and gave examples of what he has seen be memorialized in his experience and asked if we were talking broader than just benches.

Tom confirmed that we are also wanting to look at more than just benches. Sometimes we will take into account the person being memorialized and come up with what is appropriate.

Ken Worcester mentioned that trees are also often used as a memorial. Steve mentioned that there are a number of considerations to account for in moving forward once we implement this practice.

Joey Knauf mentioned that we may want to consider looking into the policies of benches and memorials in the upcoming Hwy 99 Enhancement Project so that we have a streamlined design or standard in place.

Tim Lainhart asked what date we will revisit this topic.

Tom responded, saying that he envisions us working on this throughout the winter and revisiting it over a series of meetings. Ideally we would look into presenting this to City Commission in the Spring or Summer.

Pollinator Garden Planting Party

Rock wall is nearly finished at the Pool pollinator garden site and plants were picked up today from the Xerxes Society. Plants need to be in the ground by November 30th and we wanted to offer PRAC an opportunity to set that planting date. It would then be opened up to the public for support.

Ken Worcester asked how much staff support we anticipate in regards to tools and time, and if there will be an organized landscaping plan in place. Tom confirmed that staff will be involved and that we have been working with Hannah Schmidt to bring tools. Two staff will be on site to help define where plants should go.

Ken proposed November 9th or 16th.

Erin McClellan pointed out that the Singer Creek Community clean-up was already happening on November 9th.

Joyce Gifford proposed November 23rd and that seemed to work well for those planning to attend.

Tom mentioned that he would discuss that date with Hannah tomorrow and confirm with PRAC shortly. We will use November 16th as a back-up.

December PRAC Candidate Interview Details

Kori Buth spoke on the process of PRAC interviews and stated that the window for accepting PRAC applications closes on November 27th. She would then need about a week and a half to connect with applicants and arrange interview time slots. Kori suggested that PRAC come up with an interview date and shared that last year those interviews happened the second week of December, which that seemed to work well with holiday schedules. Not all PRAC members have to be in attendance, as a

quorum is not required because the mayor is who makes member appointments with PRAC's recommendation.

Tim Lainhart suggested December 12th and Kori confirmed that interviews happen in the City Hall Chambers.

Erin McClellan asked how many candidates we normally have applying for PRAC.

Kori responded, saying that last year there were about 8 candidates and two positions. This year we have three positions available, with an additional youth-only seat. The City Recorder's office is who received the initial applications and sends them along to Kori. Kori reviews the eligibility in regards to neighborhood affiliation and connects with candidates. There have been no applications submitted yet.

Joey Knauf asked if his seat had to be taken by a resident outside of the city limits.

Kori confirmed that it does not.

Joyce Gifford asked whose terms are ending and if they are able to reapply. Steve, Ken, and Joey's terms are all expiring but they would be able to reapply if they chose.

Ken asked the status of our November PRAC meeting.

Kori confirmed that we will not have a November PRAC meeting.

PRAC members confirmed that December 12th would work. Kori will be sending further details and confirmation within the next couple weeks.

Ken encourages all who are able to participate to do so.

Kori is going to look at the interview questions that we asked last year and is open to new question ideas that make sense to ask.

Steve reiterated that everything is run through the Mayor and Kori confirmed that it is only a recommendation from PRAC.

MEMBER REPORTS

Tim Wuest volunteered for the Waterboard Park ivy pull event and they got quite a bit done with about a dozen volunteers. He was very impressed with the JROTC and the organization of the event.

Tim Lainhart gave a shoutout to the pool facility and staff. He recently attended two birthday parties at the pool and appreciated the organized chaos.

Ken Worcester understands that the PRAC City Commission report is coming up in November. He pointed out that last years report was more of a department list of accomplishments and less about what PRAC has been involved in, so he is struggling a little bit because he doesn't feel that PRAC is involved in enough to report on if the report were to change focus. He appreciated the future agenda items because they are topics that PRAC can sink their teeth in. He knows that fees discussion are coming up and more talk of the SDC Methodology updates,

but included in that Methodology is a capital improvement program that PRAC has never seen, so he finds it hard to go out and talk knowledgeably about anything involving the new master plan, CIP, funding, etc. Ken suggests coming up with a few more projects that PRAC can be in the midst of so that he has more to speak on in the future. Ken stated that our comp plan has to go through a periodic review and the new master plan is incorporated in that but before that happens Ken would love to see some better park design standards, so that people know what to expect in a park. Those are the kinds of things that should be in a comprehensive plan. Another area is the CIP and being offered to help prioritize projects, based on what PRAC knows of what is logical and has likely funding sources. You may have a 20-year master plan but can only forecast, economically, what is available and possible within 3-5 years. Those types of things would be helpful and exciting to be part of. Staff are always in the parks, but it is the residents and park visitors that are looking at them in a different way. Steve Williams will be out of town for the City Commission presentation and clarified that Ken is wanting to take on the approach of presenting projects and tasks that PRAC is wanting more involvement in for the upcoming year. That would make the annual report more personal to PRAC.

Tim Wuest would like to see what kind of direction the department plans to go with the swimming pool. Other PRAC members pointed out that the direction needs to come from Commission, now the department Director. Tim mentioned that each of the new candidates is speaking on the future of the pool facility. Erin McClellan shared the sentiment that she would like to see PRAC become more active in the coming year and have some areas of interest that they can help guide.

Ken suggests we begin with Cemetery Fees, Design Standards, Memorial/Bench Policy, 5-year CIP, continued pool discussions and ways to implement the master plan, as well as addressing what might be lacking.

Tom will compile some of these ideas and send to PRAC for review before City Commission in November.

Joyce asked for the date of the City Commission presentation.

Tom confirmed it will November 20th.

Erin asked if it will only be Ken who attends or if others should attend as well.

Ken said it would be great to have as many members in attendance as possible.

Erin McClellan asked if Kori would send out the calendar reminder for that meeting.

Joyce Gifford wanted to address the poison oak at Park Place Park and stated that she was out at a state park recently, mixed in with ivy. She wondered if we are noticing poison oak seen during our ivy pulls. She stated that the state park had wonderful signage, including pictures of what to watch for. She wanted to find out what is being done at Park Place, if we have signage and if we plan on spraying.

Tom responded saying that we have already done a spot spray and the goal is through the fall and winter to do a more mechanical removal when the ground softens up. There is signage posted and the trail is closed. During the construction of the trail, we recommended that the group stay aware and cautious.

Joyce asked if Park Place is the only park we are having trouble with poison oak. Tom stated that poison oak is native to Oregon. He is aware of some at Waterboard Park.

Ken asked if we are not spraying because poison oak is a native plant and do we have an overall policy in addressing this, especially since dogs or children could get off the trail. He would like to see a fairly aggressive tactic in keeping it at a distance from the trails.

Tom stated that we don't have any other identified areas of concern (some of his voice is not distinguishable).

Steve Williams recalled the October 9th joint meeting with the NRC Committee. One of the agenda items discussed was the McLoughlin Blvd Enhancement Project update. There is a paragraph in each agenda packet that was discussed about the recommendations were needed to be made to the consultant regarding the vegetation associated with the overhang. He wanted to see if there were any concerns or issues in having this go forward to the consultant. We are still in the very early phases of the large project.

Tim Wuest mentioned it was too early to make any judgement calls on that. The second part of the joint NRC meeting addressed the tree canopy policy and provided a draft of a letter for PRAC to review and decide if they want to be involved in a joint submission to Commission.

Joyce mentioned that the topics of the letter were great, but the letter needs to be shortened and condensed.

Erin McClellan was talking to Samantha Wolf and mentioned that there are structuring ways to cut that letter down. She asked if they could send it electronically, but Joyce mentioned that it was attached to the agenda. Erin hopes for a word document so that edits and tracking can be made.

Ken mentioned that this is another item that we can add to our presentation list for City Commission that PRAC wishes to be involved in.

Tim Wuest asked about the status of the Director position.

Tom confirmed that no decision have been made and two candidates are being considered.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING – December 12th, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting ended about 7:30 p.m.

