

# Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

## Meeting minutes

January 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 6:00 pm  
Mt. Hood Room – City Hall

### CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting was called to order on Thursday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 at 6:07 PM. The meeting took place at City Hall Mt. Hood Room in Oregon City, OR. Roll call was taken and the following members were present: Karen Buehrig, Ken Worcester, Tim Lainhart, Erin McClellan (arrived late), Tim Wuest, Kevin Cayson, and Emily Lisborg (attended via Zoom).

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mike Mitchell provided public comment on the Liberty Plaza plans below.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Interview Meeting, and December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Regular Meeting were presented for approval. No discussion was recorded regarding these minutes.

### GENERAL BUSINESS

#### **New Member Welcome & Chair/Vice Chair Appointment**

The committee welcomed new members, Karen Buehrig and Kevin Cayson, who both introduced themselves and provided a bit of background on joining PRAC.

The committee then proceeded with Chair and Vice Chair appointments. Current Chair Tim Lainhart explained he was willing to serve a second year as Chair. Ken Worcester was also nominated for the Chair position. For Vice Chair, both Erin McClellan and Ken Worcester were nominated.

Before voting, candidates provided brief introductions about themselves. Tim Lainhart described his four years on the committee, his work with the state government at Camp Withycombe in Clackamas, and his background working with various Parks and Recreation departments across the state. He mentioned having two young children, ages 5 and 8, and his desire to shape Oregon City for their future.

Ken shared his seven years as an Oregon City resident, his 40-year career as Parks and Recreation Director for West Linn, and his experience in park development, noting they built over 20 parks during his tenure.

Erin described her second full year on PRAC, her background working with Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District in communications and marketing, her current work with the American Heart Association and Providence Health Insurance, and her commitment to ensuring parks are preserved for future generations.

After discussion, the committee held a vote:

For Chair position:

- Tim Lainhart received 5 votes
- Ken Worcester received 2 votes

For Vice Chair position:

- Erin McClellan received 4 votes
- Ken Worcester received 3 votes

Tim Lainhart was appointed Chair and Erin McClellan was appointed Vice Chair for the 2026 term.

### **Courthouse Liberty Plaza Development**

Seth Henderson from Level Development Northwest and Kurt Lango from Lango Hansen landscape architecture presented a concept for Liberty Plaza development. Scott Archer provided context, explaining that the County had sold the old courthouse downtown, with Level Development Northwest acquiring the property. The agreement includes giving Liberty Plaza to the City to operate as a park or downtown open space.

Seth Henderson explained that instead of simply turning over Liberty Plaza to the City in its current condition, his company is proposing to make improvements to the plaza in exchange for credits on future parks System Development Charges (SDCs) that would otherwise be paid for their development project.

Kurt Lango presented the concept design for Liberty Plaza, which would serve as downtown Oregon City's "living room." The proposed plan includes:

- A larger, covered stage with ADA accessibility
- Built-in electrical service (eliminating the need for generators)
- Various seating options designed for conversation and community gathering
- Space for events and programming
- Stormwater treatment facilities
- Strategic placement of historic elements salvaged from the courthouse
- Designated areas for tents during events
- A designated location for the holiday Christmas tree

Seth Henderson noted they would be investing approximately \$700,000-\$1,000,000 in improvements, some of which would be offset by SDC credits, with additional funding sought through grants. He emphasized that Liberty Plaza is the primary gathering place downtown and is used for every major downtown event.

Committee members expressed general support for the concept, with several noting it would be a significant improvement over the current plaza. Questions were raised about maintenance responsibilities, stormwater management, and what activities might be incorporated to draw more daily use.

Scott Archer explained that any agreement would need city commission approval, and that only a portion of the improvements would be eligible for SDC credits based on what adds new capacity. He noted that while using SDC credits for this project might slightly delay other projects in the capital improvement plan, the impact would be minimal.

City Commissioner Mike Mitchell spoke during public comment, expressing support for the project and suggesting consideration of accessible power in multiple locations, improved lighting, and potential amphitheater-style seating along the law center wall.

The committee provided general consensus to continue exploring the proposal, with a request for more information about how it would affect the Capital Improvement Plan and SDC budget at a future meeting.

### **Movies in the Park Line-up Approval**

Melissa Sebastian, Aquatics and Recreation Manager, presented the recommended movies for the 2026 Movies in the Park series. The public had voted on their top choices, with separate voting for PG and PG-13 categories. The selected movies included "The Princess Bride" and other family-friendly options.

Melissa explained that the movies would rotate between four locations: Wesley Lynn Park, Hillendale Park, Chapin Park, and the End of the Oregon Trail. Locations were chosen based on factors such as storage for equipment, wind conditions, and lighting.

*Motion: To approve the recommended movies for the 2026 Movies in the Park program.*

*Moved by: Ken Worcester Seconded by: Kevin Cayson Result: Approved unanimously*

### **February Joint meeting w/ NRC**

Tom provided information about the upcoming February 26<sup>th</sup> joint meeting with the Natural Resources Committee, which will take place at the Robert Libke building (police department). The meeting will cover three main topics:

**Bee City USA:** Tom explained that becoming a Bee City USA is a City Commission goal. Staff will share a draft plan showing current practices, future needs, and requirements from the Xerxes Society. The draft will be sent to committee members in advance.

**Tree City/Tree Canopy Assessment:** The planning department will provide an update on the Tree City USA program and discuss the Commission goal of conducting a tree canopy assessment. Tom explained the City doesn't currently have comprehensive data on its tree canopy and is working to compile existing data and seek funding for a more complete assessment. Emily noted that having documented tree inventory would be important for securing federal funding to address issues like the Emerald Ash Borer.

**Metro Community Choice Program Presentation:** This will be the largest portion of the meeting. Tom explained that Metro's unique grant program solicits project ideas directly from the community rather than through government agencies. There are approximately 18 projects in Oregon City that have made it through various voting phases, including playground improvements, natural area improvements, and pollinator gardens. Metro staff will present concepts based on community feedback.

The meeting will begin with a regular format and then transition to a more interactive workshop where committee members can speak with landscape architects, Metro staff, and community members about the various projects.

### **Project Updates**

**Pool/EOT Planning:** Scott reported on the pool and End of Oregon Trail (EOT) planning process. He noted the Oregon City pool is celebrating its 60th anniversary on Saturday and that the facility is showing its age. The EOT interpreter center is 30 years old and also needs assessment. A consultant selection committee, which included Erin representing PRAC,

reviewed five proposals and made a recommendation. Contract negotiations are underway with the selected consultant, with plans to bring the contract to the City Commission in February.

Clackamette Park Plans: Tom reported that after completing planning processes for Clackamette Park, they are now shifting to design and construction phases. Recent flooding has damaged the boat ramp, highlighting the need for improvements. AKS Engineering and Forestry has been engaged to conduct surveys, arborist work, and geotechnical studies. They will develop feasibility-level designs for the park, including a new boat ramp location.

Wesley Lynn Dog Park: Tom presented plans for a new fenced dog park at Wesley Lynn Park on the Leland Avenue side. The design includes:

- A 1.65-acre large dog area (larger than Tyrone S. Woods Park's dog area)
- A 0.23-acre small/timid dog area
- Covered seating and benches
- Dog agility courses
- Trash cans and pet waste dispensers
- Three entrance/exit points based on community feedback
- Stormwater improvements to address drainage issues
- Restoration planting between the fenced area and wetlands

The project will be primarily funded through Metro local share funds, with some elements like the dog agility course and separation fence requiring alternative funding. The agreement will go to the City Commission in February, with construction planned for Summer 2026.

Chapin Park Playground: Tom presented two concept designs for replacing the aging Chapin Park playground:

- Farm-themed option:
  - Large two-story barn structure
  - Themed swing set with irrigation design
  - Chicken and pig climbers
  - Synthetic turf safety surfacing
  - Water theme elements
- Nature-themed option:
  - Log climber elements similar to TSW Park
  - Various wooden structures made of black locust for durability
  - Animal features including a snail and whale
  - Log cabin feature
  - Fully fenced with gateway entrance

Both designs would relocate the playground from its current location, which often floods, to a drier area. The farm theme would expand the play area to approximately 9,800 square feet, while the nature theme would be about 11,000 square feet.

Committee members expressed concerns about the nature play theme, noting that similar features at Tyrone S. Woods Park aren't particularly popular with children. Several members

mentioned that shade should be a priority due to the intense summer heat at Chapin Park. Staff will gather community feedback through neighborhood association meetings in Spring 2026.

#### MEMBER REPORTS

Tim Wuest inquired about the status of Youth Sports and if the program plans to be eliminated from schools, does the City plan to step in and help coordinate those activities? Scott Archer isn't certain about the validity of that scenario, but he has had conversations with the school district about the City's stance of being involved. He considers it an opportunity to explore.

Erin McClellan really appreciated being a part of the selection committee for the Contractor of the Pool/EOT development projects and gave kudos to the team.

Tim Lainhart gave a shout out to the Pool staff and Parks crew.

#### NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING - FEBRUARY 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026

The next meeting will be held jointly with the Natural Resources Committee on February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at the Robert Libke Safety building.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned about 8:20 pm.