



PARKS AND TRAILS COMMISSION

Monday, December 09, 2024 at 4:00 PM

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chair Scott Jacobson
Vice Chair Dana Lathrope
Commissioner Jerry Belcher
Commissioner Howard Blumenthal
Commissioner Nicholas Hellmich
Commissioner Reid Herman
Commissioner Lynne Pettit

MEMBERS ABSENT

Commissioner Paul Barlow
Commissioner Jacob Woodruff

STAFF PRESENT

Brandon Sundeen, City Councilor
Buck Tupper, Facilities Maintenance Supervisor
Sheri Ingram, Public Works Office Assistant
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
John Walsh, City Administrator
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner

OTHERS

Lucas Green

CALL TO ORDER - 4:01 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve Minutes of November 18, 2024

Motion made by Commissioner Blumenthal, Seconded by Commissioner Hellmich to approve the minutes of November 18, 2024.

Voting Yea: Chair Jacobson, Vice Chair Lathrope, Commissioner Belcher, Commissioner Blumenthal, Commissioner Hellmich, Commissioner Herman, Commissioner Pettit.

TOPICS FROM THE FLOOR: From attendees not otherwise of the agenda

NEW BUSINESS

2. Waterfront Update - John Walsh

Dimsho showed the newest drone image timelapse of the Waterfront Project from the beginning of April to the final flight a couple weeks ago and she pointed out the newest changes along the waterfront. They have spent about 63% of the budget. It may not look like that but most of it was utilities that aren't seen. AES's contract runs through April so she is hoping the park will open in the spring.

Belcher asked when Plymouth Street will open and Blumenthal wondered the same about the Nob Hill stairs. Walsh said he would have to check with the contractor. They won't be open until construction is complete for safety. Jacobson asked if Public Works can repair the stairs and Tupper said not until construction is done. Blumenthal said the handrail needs to be moved to one side or the other. The stairs are only four feet wide so having two feet wide on each side of the rail can make it difficult.

Lathrope asked if there was a plan for gazebo and Dimsho said the full stage was removed because it was deemed a safety hazard. They have had conversations with Peak about fixing the power and planning for a new stage in the future but the City has no funding. We have a blank slate for a temporary stage.

Walsh said it was intentional between the Riverwalk and street project to tie in old and new with basalt features. They are imbedded in the bank and on columns and the seat walls in the intersections. Dimsho said they can walk down to the boat ramp and see it. Lathrope asked if the bricks in the cement are going to be basalt and Dimsho doesn't know if they are actual basalt but they chose the dark color to mimic basalt.

3. Public Communication for Milton Creek Reserve - Crystal King

Jacobson said they are looking for guidance on community outreach for this project. Crystal is not briefed on the project so needs more guidance on the project and needs to know specifically what they are looking for.

Some options for outreach were discussed and it was decided to wait until after the Council decided whether or not to set aside the property for this project. Then they could have some kind of open house with some clearly defined questions. They will get better feedback from the public if they have a narrower scope of what they want.

4. Pedestrian Safety and Grant Opportunities - Howard Blumenthal

Blumenthal said a few years ago, City got a grant for pedestrian safety regarding crosswalks. He was wondering if there is availability for more of those grants for education. He has had several instances where he has almost gotten run over while in a crosswalk and it's scary to have people disregard them. John doesn't know that they need a grant for some of that as far as a safety campaign or promotion.

OLD BUSINESS

5. Roles & Responsibilities - Update Bylaws - Dana Lathrope

Lathrope wanted to go over the Bylaws, specifically roles and responsibilities. There are a few things they've been doing that aren't clearly defined, especially with regards to being stewards of individual parks. Each of them agreed to take a certain amount of ownership over different parks and provide presentations on them which they haven't been doing lately. She feels it's an appropriate time to clarify that and revisit a few things in the Bylaws. The Bylaws were updated March 2023 with regards to changing the name.

Blumenthal said when they came up with Friends groups, they defined and outlined what those were a few years ago pertaining to park stewards with detail so they might want to look at that.

Lathrope read Purpose & Powers and asked if anyone felt they needed to further clarify that section. She feels park assignments and what their responsibilities would be should be added for clarification.

Pettit said the last sentence in Purpose & Powers says they shall have responsibilities, duties & powers as stated in Chapter 2.74 of the Municipal Code. She thinks having assigned parks gives people an interest in making that park better. She feels there should be a point of contact for these parks but anybody can do anything for any park. We need to help because we don't have parks staff and they have to be careful of their asks because of funding. She thinks they should add a statement saying Commissioners accept assignment of certain parks but no language about presentations.

Belcher said his understanding when this was originally started, the only expectation you had was to give a report on each park. That was it, nothing else. He'd like to keep it informal and they can still give reports and anyone can do anything in any park provided Tupper is ok with it. He thinks it's better to keep it informal and give a report at the meetings. He is happy with it that way.

Jacobson thought it was redundant because they give an annual report to the Council and he thinks they should just do it all in one go for the whole thing so they aren't doing it multiple times. Blumenthal said the report to Council is basically a recap and reports for Commission can be a little more detailed and they can have discussions on it.

Lathrope says she's not unhappy with the way things are. She just thinks it would be helpful to have guidance and language in the by-laws as a point of clarity. She thinks they could just add one line to say something like the Commissioner would be the contact person for that park and they would individually be responsible for updating the Commission on that park. She wouldn't change anything they are doing but it would be clear to anyone reading the by-laws. Jacobson asked if she would write it up and send it to everyone and they could discuss it at the next meeting. Pettit thinks they should tell applicants during the interview process that they may be assigned a park.

6. Milton Creek Reserve - Standing Item

Scott sent an updated presentation and they discussed finalizing it for the upcoming Council meeting and who was going to be able to attend and present. He asked Lucas Green to attend and give a short synopsis of his presentation.

Blecher gave a report on the Columbia Botanical Gardens. There are two parts: wetlands on the bottom part and an old rock quarry up above. Numerous trails run through the park. It is not visited very much but he does see people walking in there. There is not much for amenities. He thinks there should be a kiosk with poison oak info and a map of trails. He goes through infrequently and he picks things up and last fall he sprayed poison oak, holly and blackberries.

Motion made to accept the updated presentation by Commissioner Blumenthal, Seconded by Commissioner Belcher.

Voting Yea: Chair Jacobson, Vice Chair Lathrope, Commissioner Belcher, Commissioner Blumenthal, Commissioner Hellmich, Commissioner Herman, Commissioner Pettit

STAFF REPORT

Tupper said thank you to Lions Club for the work they have done on the fitness stations and cleaning up garbage around the park and library – especially the Syrstad family. They have done it a long time and are worried no one else will step in.

Cross-country event at McCormick park went well.

Field 1 at McCormick got leveled and it was a collaboration between Little League and Adult Softball. They are spending good money on them and the fields look good.

They are still trimming trees at Campbell

He talked to Chris Iverson about cliff on urban trail. If we advertise it and don't charge a fee, we land under the Recreational Immunity Doctrine and we also have \$10 million in liability limits so we are covered either way. He does recommend that if we put up a kiosk, we put on kiosk that it is an unimproved trail.

Someone on the County work crew died of an overdose at Campbell Park. The guy that runs the crew didn't have Narcan.

St Helens Youth Football and Little League donate to rebuild snack shack and storage building at 6th Street Park.

COUNCILOR'S REPORT

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Lathrope wanted to clarify the interview process after the training we had last month. Jacobson said they will interview with the whole commission the way they did it before.

Blumenthal thanked Tupper for picking up trash and old tires they collected in Nob Hill recently.

Jacobson thanked Hellmich for his service on the commission.

ADJOURNMENT - 5:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Sheri Ingram, Public Works Office Assistant