



PARKS AND TRAILS COMMISSION

Monday, August 9, 2021 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

PRESENT

Chair Carmin Dunn
Vice Chair John Brewington
Commissioner Brandon Sundeen
Commissioner Jacob Woodruff
Commissioner Jerry Belcher

STAFF PRESENT

Shanna Duggan
Lisa Scholl

OTHERS PRESENT

Pat Jewett

ABSENT

Commissioner Howard Blumenthal
Commissioner Elisa Mann
Commissioner Lynne Pettit
Commissioner Paul Barlow

CALL TO ORDER - 4:04 P.M.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve Minutes of July 12, 2021

Motion made by Vice Chair Brewington, Seconded by Commissioner Sundeen to approve the Minutes of July 12, 2021.

Voting Yea: Chair Dunn, Vice Chair Brewington, Commissioner Belcher, Commissioner Sundeen, Commissioner Woodruff

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

COUNCILOR'S REPORT

NEW BUSINESS

2. Botanical Garden Update/Report

Belcher said the Botanical Gardens is a nature park and he read the definition of a nature park. He has found little four-toed salamanders down there which are rare in this area. He thinks it is a unique area because it is an old quarry. It is 3.2 acres so it is on the small side. We currently have 9.8 acres of nature parks and it is recommended we have 15.9 acres more. He doesn't know if that includes Dalton Lake Nature Preserve. He read from the old Master Plan on how well people thought it was maintained and how satisfied they were with the park. They had a cleanup in May and had about 25 people and a

lot of them were from the neighborhood. It went really well and they are planning on another one in October. They basically cleaned up garbage and widened trails. A few people brought weed eaters to do that. Emily from the Scappoose Bay Watershed took a group and cleaned ivy. They were there 2.5 hours and they cleaned off quite a big section. They are killing poison oak next to the trails but leaving the rest because Emily says it is good habitat for wildlife and a lot of birds eat the berries. In October, they are going to work on cleaning out invasive plants.

There are basically two parts to the park. The lower part is wetlands with a nice trail that runs through it. There is a trail that goes up a cliff part that is steep and it goes up to a plateau where there are a lot of large rocks left from the quarry. He thinks there should be a kiosk with a map at every park. The day they had the cleanup, he hung around and was stacking stuff and a couple showed up from Portland and they told him they walk there and he asked if they would like a map and gave them one. It would be nice to have a kiosk with maps and maybe some history on it with pictures. He mentioned he'd like to have a history of the Italian immigrants who did the work and the Native Americans and if they did an Urban Trail, he'd like to see a kiosk at the top of the cliff with that included on it. It overlooks St. Helens and what he was told is called Indian Rock, which could be wrong.

Sundeen said he went there for the first time last summer. He drove by it slowly and wondered if it was the right place because there's not good parking there. It took him a while to figure out that was the trail so a nice sign with a map would be nice. Dunn said naming is inconsistent because there is a sign there that says Columbia Nature Trail that sits back and a Columbia Botanical Garden sign and a plaque in a rock that calls it something else. We had talked about renaming and the signs need to be consistent. Belcher said he has talked to people and they think the words Botanical Garden are not appropriate. People have different expectations when they show up for that so it would be better if they think they are going to a nature park. He said they should talk to the adjoining property owner and see if they can dump a load of ¼" gravel the trails up above. It would be very difficult to do that from Belton Rd.

Pat Jewett said back in March, she was trying to design a five kilometer walk route at the Botanical Garden and Belton Rd. At that time, the water was lapping over the edge and she couldn't use that loop. She didn't know if that trail is covered in water certain times of the year and wondered if there could be a boardwalk on that part of the trail to raise it above the waterline. Dunn said they have talked about that before. Belcher pointed out another section on his map that he thinks is submerged a lot of the time also. Brewington said we should add that to the Master Plan.

Sundeen said he thinks the most important thing to highlight on the history would be the quarry operations. There was a lot of Native American activity in St. Helens but none that he knows of in that specific location. He doesn't think there was so much Italian involvement either. The quarry was really big around the turn of the century in the 1890s – 1900s and most of the Italians that were coming to St. Helens at the time were working on the railroads and logging. A lot of the quarrying was done by Scottish, English and Irish immigrants. There were several Italians later who did a lot of the rockwork around town. A lot of the rock houses were built by one Italian in particular but at that particular location, he doesn't think there was a lot of Italian activity. He thinks the quarry was really big around 1904 and was called the Sisters Quarry but he doesn't know why it was called that. Belcher said one of the names he was thinking of was The Old Quarry but if it had a name like the Sisters Quarry Nature Park or something that has nature park in it and that relates to the quarry is what he would like to see. Sundeen said he can do some more research but right around the time the quarry was big, those pavers Belcher was talking about were being taken to Portland and other places for their streets and he likes the idea of incorporating that into a kiosk.

Belcher said he was told that out in the Kelly Point area, there is a mound of those and he thinks if the Mayor asked the City of Portland if we could have a dump truck load or something like that it would be great for a nice design for a kiosk.

3. Master Plan Idea List Updates

Dunn said she added this based on their last meeting. Staff mentioned it would be helpful to make a list of things we would like to see in the Master Plan so she put it on as a first step but doesn't know if anyone brought any ideas or do they want more time to brainstorm and think through it. We can always move it to the next meeting since a lot of people are absent today. Brewington had a few ideas and one was to make the City property on Ross Road a park and have a softball/baseball complex and perhaps a golf driving range which is already there but he's not sure how it juxtapositioned to do all of that. The other idea he had was to have a park at the end of the property on Millard Road by the creek. Belcher had said he thought about having the lower end of that property as a botanical gardens at one time but that whole area flooded down there in 1996. He thinks it is a good idea for a park.

Sundeen said when Lokken was there, he said they need to look for ball fields they can use because none of ours are appropriate for their needs so he thinks that needs to be a consideration going forward and to make sure it's going to work for everybody. He has talked about this before but he also thinks parking is going to be more of an issue at 6th Street since they are putting in the container houses. There used to be 15-20 people who would park in that space and now it's gone. Belcher mentioned this earlier but he would also like to see a kiosk at every park with information and some kind of history.

Dunn said she would like to see connection points and pathways between parks so when you are at one park, you will know what other parks are nearby and have a clear path to get to that next park which ties in with the Urban Trail. Once we get the main loop of the Urban Trail completed, we can have spin-off loops to the other parks.

Sundeen said he didn't know if it was appropriate for the Master Plan but things to deter vandalism like increased lighting. He knows it is an increasing problem. Dunn mentioned motion lighting in some areas and Brewington mentioned cameras. Dunn said to go off his ballfield comments earlier, they also need to think of the future population of St. Helens and where we will be at in 10 years and what kinds of sports needs there will be. We don't have enough ball fields now so we need to think ahead and plan for the future. Belcher asked what we have and Woodruff said there are two t-ball fields at McCormick and two fields for pitching machines at 6th Street. The juniors have to play on the high school JV field which is not the greatest because they tore down the middle school field. Belcher asked about the fields at Boise and Duggan said the City owns them and softball plays on them and they are little. There are also some at the fairgrounds (majors) and Moose Lodge (minors). That one age group was using the middle school fields but they shortened it so it is not accessible right now but the plan is for the high school to put in four fields but that is going to take a few years. It will also take the City time to build new fields. Brewington said most of the ball fields in this community have been built by volunteers. 6th Street was built by Men's Fast-Pitch Softball. The Boise fields were built by the employees for the Pixie League. 6th Street became too small for the Men's League so they built the fields and concession stand at Campbell Park. He was part of building one of those fields and the two at McCormick Park. Woodruff was a big part of the lighting at the McCormick fields.

Duggan said the Master Plan is going to be done on a bigger scale this time. There will be more community engagement and Parks & Trails engagement. There will be talks about where the funding comes from like if we need to go out for a Parks bond to build something like that. We are really going

to dive deep into the ideas. Signage is something we can get grant funding for. There are a lot of grants that support wayfinding, signage and kiosks that she has been looking into. She is open to ideas they have but they have to make sure they aren't taking away from somebody else. It's too bad with how the middle school all panned out. It was a great location for that age group. Dunn said it would be great to know the distance needed and being able to know what the requirements are for the different groups that are playing. It would be nice to outline the field requirements in the Master Plan because she doesn't know those kinds of details.

Duggan said one of her goals is to meet with all of the sports groups, even the ones that don't play on our fields, and ask them what we are lacking and what they need and what they can bring to the table. Just with the time she has been doing basketball, she sees people will hold spaces even if they aren't using it so they don't lose it so how can we all work together to make sure they all have access. Having different seasons at different times so they aren't overlapping other things will also be a challenge with their indoor sports. With the high school going down, volleyball, basketball and all of that will be using more of the middle school and elementary school. There is a huge opportunity not just for outdoor sports but for indoor sports to use a recreation hall that can support sport-court types of things. Sundeen asked if there were plans for the Boise fields to go away as that is developed and Duggan said from her understanding, there is plans for that area that do not include those softball fields but she doesn't know how long that is and she thinks the idea behind it is there would be another property that would absorb those fields. The plans also don't include the old Rec Center so that is why they looked at the building by the high school so they could help manage the fields on the weekends as well. We will still have the old Rec Center for a while but it won't always be that. The new building will be nice because Scott Stockwell wants us to manage the fields on the weekends to make sure the people who have them reserved are able to play on them and not fighting with other people. We will have a lot more part in what the field stuff looks like.

Belcher said a couple of months ago Zaher, Morten and he walked part of the Urban Trail and one of the things they had talked about before was putting some kind of barrier along the cliff on Wyeth Street. Zaher said there needs to be something there. No one has driven over it in years but it has happened in the past and now it is steeper in one area. The Mayor didn't wasn't a fence there to block the view and Walsh said maybe we could install the cable barriers like they have along freeways. When budgets come up, he'd like to see things like that put in because we can't have an Urban Trail there until we have some kind of barrier. The other thing he'd like to see is where the trail comes out of Godfrey Park and goes to Wyeth Street/2nd Street and he'd like to see some kind of walkway put across there. The trail at Grey Cliffs got improved and there was a lot of work done on the 5th Street Trail and he'd like to see these little pieces still getting done. He talked to Jewett on Saturday about the American Walking Club which she is a member of and they might be willing to put some money into it. The National Parks Service has a section called the River's Trail Conservation Assistance and the City of Hermiston put in with some other small Cities to put in a trail system people could walk or bike on so maybe we could try to get some financial assistance from them.

OLD BUSINESS

Duggan said the McCormick playground is open. We are waiting for benches to come in to put around it. There is also a new zip line that is more accessible than the one we have so when that is ready to be shown, she will bring pictures and hopefully they can find the funding to add it. At the time, it wasn't available. The company was building it but Covid slowed everything down. It would be an additional zip line and has a feature for people in wheelchairs and things like that. Woodruff said he drives by there every day and it is always packed and it's awesome. Duggan said with the layout, there can be 50 kids out there and there is plenty for them all to do.

Duggan said they have also swapped out the picnic tables so the new ones are there which will save so much time with painting and repairing. The trash cans are on backorder. The benches are coming and they have new barbecues coming too. She is looking into some things for vandalism like there are flashing lights that say the park is closed and it will take pictures of people coming in and they have used them in Denver. It does take really nice pictures too. Campbell is a hard one because it is so secluded. The playground can't be seen at night.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Belcher brought up discussion about a donated bench being placed at Nob Hill. He understood from Blumenthal that they wanted to bench to be placed by the kiosk and when we did the Urban Trail, we talked about having it up higher overlooking an area. Blumenthal was concerned if it was put in the higher place that things would get destroyed but Belcher said the concrete could be mixed right there. He thought it was discussed last time but he thought the bench would be better up where there is a nice view looking out rather than down by the kiosk. But he also thinks Camas and things shouldn't be destroyed putting it in there. It should be done in an environmentally friendly way. Duggan said she got an e-mail asking that is be put by the kiosk when it comes so she didn't know there was another area. Belcher said he knows the people who donated it wanted it to be in the overlook. That is what they were told when they were going to donate it and when they found out it was going to be down by the kiosk, they weren't very happy.

Dunn said thank to everyone who was part of Citizen's Day in the Park and also check out the Waterfront Development slides from the special session Council meeting. They are pretty cool. Phase 1 is already funded so they are going to go into more planning and she thinks they should keep up on it.

Duggan said they are doing movie nights in McCormick Park every Friday night so the Commission is welcome to come if you want to talk to people about the parks. The last movie night had 50 -75 people and it's fun. Kiwanis is having a Children's Fair the end of October if you want to have a booth there. Instead of having Trunk or Treat this year, they are looking at doing a Mystery Trail at McCormick where they will have people set up with stations along the trail where kids can trick or treat and would love if they had a booth for that too. She is also getting ready to apply for a big grant for after school programming. She writes things down any time they talk about things she thinks would be good fits for grants.

ADJOURNMENT - 5:03 P.M.