



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Monday, May 6, 2022, at 4:00 PM

DRAFT MINUTES

PRESENT

Chair Lynne Pettit
Vice Chair Brandon Sundeen
Commissioner Howard Blumenthal
Commissioner Jacob Woodruff
Commissioner Jerry Belcher
Commissioner Dana Lathrope
Commissioner Paul Barlow
Commissioner Carmin Dunn

STAFF PRESENT

Shanna Duggan Parks and Rec Manager
Sheri Ingram Public Works Office Assistant
Councilor President Doug Morten
Erin Bird Parks and Rec Admin Assistant
John Walsh City Administrator
Tory Shelby Parks Field Supervisor

OTHERS PRESENT

Emily Martin Scappoose Bay Watershed
Steve Toschi

CALL TO ORDER

4:12 P.M.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approve Minutes of April 11, 2022

Motion made by Commissioner Blumenthal, Seconded by Commissioner Dunn to approve minutes from Monday, April 11th, 2022.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Dunn, Commissioner Belcher, Commissioner Blumenthal, Commissioner Woodruff, Vice Chair Pettit, Commissioner Barlow, Commissioner Sundeen, Commissioner Lathrope

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

Toschi asked about the proposed Urban Trail, Pettit said that is next in New Business.

Toschi stated his home address and he said that he uses the parks often and he has hiked the mapped out Urban Trail; he opposes to the cable fence that was put in, he feels there is not a need for it, there are plenty of parks without cable fences and many other areas that people could fall off of without fences and people should just watch where they are going, he has never heard of any people falling, he doesn't think it'll solve anything there are no studies and this was posted for personal reasons. People will climb over the fence which is a safety issue because of the fence, this will cause

future lawsuits because the fence will contribute to the problem. He mentioned the commission's positive feedback about the view and the fence will not be appropriate to the perfect view. there should be a fence with masonry work.

Martin mentioned there was a volunteer event at McCormick Park on May 7th, they focused on the pull back of red shining diuranium, it is an invasive weed in the area. She is trying to go around and figure out how to successfully treat these weeds. She said it was nice to see Blumenthal and others at the work party and see it get cleaned up.

Puerkenson gave a history of the area. They bought the property they live on in 1969 and there were two trails, one on the fir tree side, the brush was so thick you could not see the river and the kids could go down and play in the sand and more people started using the old trail. He used to work on the trail, twice the city has covered it and he's gone through and trimming and cleaning the trail up so people can access the trail. The only work since has been the steps that were put in. He mentioned the grass not being mowed very often in the area. Most everything from the compost pile has blackberries grown over it, it's on city property and nothing gets done with it. He got permission from the city to clean up the brush, volunteers chipped into the \$3000 project.

Dana stated his home address, he said he is for public access and would like a handrail to put in on the trail itself. Regards to the fence, it belongs on a freeway not in a park. He strongly recommends designing a fence that looks better.

STAFF REPORT

Duggan said:

- Saturday May 14th is the last day for soccer. There has been a variety of weather going on this spring.
- There was a directors' conference Friday May 6th, they talked about the houseless population, for not camping in public spaces, they will plan to meet with them.
- Adult softball is starting soon there are twelve teams total, six is in in recreation: six in competitive.
- Drag for parks, they have been using a fence.
- There have been kiosk installations.
- There is a new google app that collects information about COVID, the nation is at an all-time high the park usage is at 35% and Oregon is up to 50%.
- The reservation system is coming along, it is now asked sign waivers with rules including to pack it in, pack it out.
- Park staff is now coming in earlier before the crowds. It is exciting to have a team that cares about pushing forward.
- Shelby is available for questions.

COUNCILOR'S REPORT

Morten said:

- Welcome Shelby, he says he will be great for the Parks department.
- Citizen's Day will be in McCormick Park, this is the commission's showcase on June 25th. There was a great representation last year and it'd be great this year as well. There will be food handlers coming in to cook the food.
- It was an insightful presentation on the urban trail. It was heard from interested parties, about the fence, it might be offensive to the public, it was to the mayor as well and it comes off as a block, but it needs to be a safety barrier. It sounds like citizens would like to be more involved

with things like that. Zaher walked the area and agrees that there should be a fence. Morten said that he prefers the word safety barrier. Lathrop said it was good to talk about how to keep it less intrusive. The costs for a two-mile trail will need to be minimal. There may be some grants that will help. Belcher said there are falls there in the park, since being cleared up, it is probably noticed to be a 40 ft drop and that is very dangerous, and something needs to be done to accompany the park.

- Budget meeting, please come if any is interested in the parks, there are five minutes to say what is needed to say, that meeting is this Thursday. Other departments are asking for a lot, they have extreme needs. The library needs things as well and feels slighted. He backed off on capital improvements. It is time to think about the years ahead, there will be a lot of sacrifices for the parks this coming year. Woodruff said that fields need improvement and that the fields are currently shot. They currently use the High School field, it is muddy from the rain, they are practicing on the football field, you've had eight games on the road because none of them were good for the fields.

NEW BUSINESS

2. Belcher said he handed out maps awhile back and said the urban trail started three years ago with a subcommittee and then as the parks and trails commission; the trail connects four parks and the riverwalk. The subcommittee's opinion is that this will be one of the best trails around, when you get to each park you can explore the parks as well as downtown, then there's a chance to grab a bite or a drink. This would be a great asset to St. Helens, the fence along the street there. It is referred to the urban trail, the whys are it would make St. Helens a great place regionally, people come and visit and would be able to access the trail, he would like a kiosk, they can see where everything in business wise. there are priorities are safety fence on the top of the cliff. the mayor is against it, have a black cable fence, black would not be as visible. logo that could be posted along the trail is on this page. there is a horizontal painted marker. Lathrop, Dunn, Belcher Blumenthal was on the sub-committee. They walked the urban trail, found the markers, found two cross walks. Some people ask about expensiveness, the most expensive would be the fence. A stencil can be made and painted along the trail. Dunn said Duggan mentioned PW looked at the urban trail and considered where the markers would be put, we come back and tell them where the markers could go, the map link on the agenda has the trail route and another layer with the markers where they could go, the key ones are the vertical markers. Lathrop said it'd be a single pole, 3ft high, band of color or a small part of stencil to mark and each location is marked consistently and non-intrusive. Belcher said he'd like there to be arrows on top of the markers showing where to go. they would be painted, Dunn said they found good spots for them. they found and noted a possible pedestrian lane. Dunn said this is their suggestions, what they see as a perfect trail, she would like PW to see their suggestion moving forward. There are different colors that mark different things such as miles, crossing, etc. Dunn said you can do the map on google maps and walk along where it says on there. Belcher said to have a sign on where it crosses the St. Helens St tells them where to go. Pettit mentioned black on the fencing, she went to a fencing company, your eye tends to look past the black. Sundeen said they cannot hear well, Ingram said there is some technical difficulties. Dunn clarified this is their ideas, it is up to public works. Duggan said she has come to the commission asking for more details on putting this in action, they will be working with the engineers, public works, commission, before the trail enacts, it is nice to have a plan especially as we write for grants, and we will talk about funding. Toschi said he uses that trail

all up and down, the handrail is a good idea. The railroad ties are perfect and durable. Duggan said that she will follow up with Zaher with the next steps. This will be process and will take some time. Duggan said to the public they that they can email her with questions and concerns.

4. Botanical Gardens Report with Belcher

He said:

- The park is located on Belton Rd across from the Elks Lodge. You can walk down the first part to the wetlands, and you can continue to the old quarry. This is a nature park like Nob Hill Nature Park, Nature parks don't have many amenities.
- The gardens were constructed on an old Rock Quarry with mossy boulders. There is a lot of poison ivy. Martin thought about spraying it to get rid of it, but poison ivy is a good habitat for some wildlife; we are unable to get rid of it due to that.
- Level of service, basically the state says there should be 52 acres, there is only ten acres of the two nature parks, but if you add Dalton Lake, there is a lot of nature area there. The public rated the Botanical Gardens to the bottom. People don't go there a lot. Only twelve percent of the public have visited the park. Nine percent of people said it is well maintained. There is only thirty percent satisfaction to the amenities.
- Improvements needed are the removal of invasive plants, ivy, holly, and blackberries.
- There is a sign that says Columbia Nature Park, he would like to see a kiosk there, with some history and info about poison ivy.
- The upper trail needs to be graveled.
- Park cleanup will be June 4th from 10-12 P.M. holly, blackberries, and ivy.

5. Red Shining Geranium taking over parks.

Blumenthal has noticed that the Red Shinning Geranium has made it ways into the parks. Both sides of the trail coming from 3rd street, it displaced the native plants. It is about 1 ft high; it goes up the streets and spreads more seeds. There is not a good way to remove this, you can pull it, you could torch it, he wants to let everyone know it is showing up all over the place. Stay on the trails in the parks, people and animals can spread it with their feet after stepping on it. Pettit asked about how to stop it, do not throw it in compost, it may spread the seeds, allow it to go to the landfill. Martin said if they are going to investigate kiosks at all parks, brushing of the plants, shoes can make a difference on how the seeds are spread, wipe off shoes before going to park, the kiosk can educate people on how it's all spread, she would like to encourage this in the future.

6. Bench Donations

Duggan introduced Jerry Allen, she said this is her first process with bench donations. Allen said his wife and he moved into St. Helens in 1985, she sadly passed from cancer a year ago, his daughter and granddaughter live here currently. Hayden their child is number six in boxing in the US. He and his wife brought up their family in St Helen's, he wanted to think of a good way to remember her, their kids used to go to a church on 18th street and would go to McCormick Park. Duggan continued, the best spot for the bench would be the walking trails or the dog park. Duggan said she would like to have the bench in by Aug 11th. Duggan will send the bench designs to Allen; he would like one that lasts a long time.

Motion made by Commissioner Woodruff, Seconded by Commissioner Dunn recommend the bench in the park to council.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Dunn, Commissioner Belcher, Commissioner Blumenthal, Commissioner Woodruff, Vice Chair Pettit, Commissioner Barlow, Commissioner Sundeen, Commissioner Lathrope

Pettit said the bench will have a spot for her plaque. Duggan said she will investigate inventory and let Allen know.

7.

Duggan said she would like to introduce Tory Shelby; he has been a great help with the parks part of the department. Duggan said there are now three staff and Tory over at parks. Duggan presented in the budget meeting, she said to refer to the packet and it says how much parks and recreation is being used, there are 926 program registrations, how many reservations have been done, the playground has pulled many people in, they adjusted park staff hours because people have been coming more often. The age demographic shows they cater to the younger age groups. Duggan will highlight that we have eleven sports fields, four retention ponds. Parks covers grounds keeping, the Boise property, the police station, and the library. Park rentals include the Rec Center and Community Center. They have had about 52 people volunteering, she mentioned how Lathrop has been so helpful with the soccer season. The recreation side is funded through our fees, that is what the extra fees are for. There have been 126 afterschool programs, and 401 total programs. They have \$226,000 in grants total. The Community Center houses the art guilds meeting, they will be doing the art show at the Community Center Saturday May 14th. There will be a kiosk put up at McCormick Park which was donated from the Lions Club. We partner with many people and organizations. Marketing and social media is done by Parks and Recreation with some help from King from communications. They will be doing pictures of things deteriorating in the parks and would like to post ways to fix it, we will need a parks maintenance plan. They would like to start a Adopt a Park program. Shelby and Duggan went to a directors' conference, people from all around there and were happy with what has been done here in St. Helens. The new playground at McCormick will be getting benches soon, the grass needs to be less swampy, a drinking fountain will also be at the playground. Pickleball net will be available at the library for check out. There will need to be a vandalism preventative plan because Campbell is getting hit hard for vandalism. The bathrooms are closed a lot, they had to clean a bunch of racial slurs. There is a porta potty there currently for softball. Duggan said that vandalism impacts the entire day. Shelby said the last checks are at four, the vandalism happens late at night because there is softball until eight in the evening. Blumenthal said if it is seen that there is vandalism, please call it in to the non-emergency hotline. Belcher asked if the police come through, Duggan said the night shift comes through often. Belcher and Blumenthal asked about an information sessions or newspapers that can go to the kids. Duggan mentioned that maybe the neighbors around can report and notice this more. Lathrop mentioned how to be involved, she has explored and researched ideas. Morten said the cameras have stopped the vandalism here in downtown. Sand island nipped it in the bud, they were able to discover who was vandalizing things there due to cameras. Duggan said cameras they could get cameras at Campbell; it turns on a light and tells people to leave the park, it runs about \$5000. Dunn said that \$5000 is probably the same price as fixing the vandalism constantly.

8. Who will be doing the annual report to council on June 1st.

Duggan said that Pettit and Sundeen will report this to Payne two weeks prior to June 1st. Pettit said if it takes longer, you can move it, please reach out if you need support.

OLD BUSINESS

9. Park Field Trips

Pettit mentioned how Blumenthal suggested field trips to the parks haven't happened in a long time. Blumenthal would like to arrange the barge to take the Commissioners over to sand island. They can fit nine people on the vessel so they can do two trips. Morten suggested it gets done in the summer. He said to take note of the public part and the private part, it would benefit to go and see. Woodruff suggested once a month to take a park field trip. Duggan said they can investigate these plans. Pettit said to start by finding a date for a Dalton Lake field trip. Pettit said she will send out an email, they can plan online. Duggan asked about if this is being publicly announced, otherwise, no voting or meeting material, take notes to discuss later.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

10. Parks Assigned to Commissioners

Sundeen would like to propose a work party for the Veterans Plaza. The Veterans memorial of all places should be cleaned and kept nice. Dunn asked about how much work is needed, Sundeen said with a good group size it would take two hours. Pettit said that she would like to volunteer. Morten said that the times prior to the park becoming a plaza, the garden club took that area on including the area where the McCormick sign is. The landscape has changed with time, the efforts changed a bit once the volcano erupted. Morten offered calling Stan, they currently take care of Walnut Park. Pettit said she is part of the Garden Club, she will bring it up and she said she will volunteer, Dunn said she can also volunteer.

Blumenthal said they received a grant for Nob Hill Nature Park for \$6,000.

Pettit brought up the decision for the new commissioner. There is Jacobson and Carlson, but then another person came up interested; they are currently on another board. Pettit asked if the Commissioners would like to have them apply and interviewed. Dunn feels since they already interviewed Jacobson and Carlson, they should go with who has been chosen. The commissioners all agreed that they've already interviewed and made the selection.

Motion made by Commissioner Blumenthal and seconded by Commissioner Woodruff to recommend Scott to council for the Parks and Recreation Commission Open Spot.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Dunn, Commissioner Belcher, Commissioner Blumenthal, Commissioner Woodruff, Chair Pettit, Commissioner Barlow, Vice Chair Sundeen, Commissioner Lathrope

Dunn reminded of park clean up on the 4th at 9 AM-11PM and she will be reporting her park in the next meeting.

Duggan said to submit agenda items to give a time frame so if something else is coming up in the meeting, it will help to keep on track.

ADJOURNMENT- 6:09 P.M.