



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Monday, July 11, 2022 at 4:00 PM

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Commissioner Jerry Belcher
Commissioner Howard Blumenthal
Commissioner Jacob Woodruff
Chair Lynne Pettit
Vice Chair Brandon Sundeen
Commissioner Dana Lathrope
Commissioner Scott Jacobson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Commissioner Carmin Dunn
Commissioner Paul Barlow

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Councilor Patrick Birkle

STAFF PRESENT

Shanna Duggan, Parks & Recreation Manager
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner/Community Development Project Manager
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder

OTHERS

Jim Davis
Steve Toschi
Emily Martin

CALL TO ORDER – 4 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Blumenthal and seconded by Commissioner Jacobson to approve the June 13, 2022, Parks & Recreation Commission minutes. **Vote:** Yea: Commissioner Belcher, Commissioner Blumenthal, Commissioner Woodruff, Chair Pettit, Vice Chair Sundeen, Commissioner Lathrope, Commissioner Jacobson

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

- ◆ Steve Toschi. He is opposed to Locke/Dillard Street Vacation. It's not in the best interest of the public. It's taking public land away and giving it to a developer. It was meant to be a path to the river and has incredible views of the river. The path was supposed to be paid for by Wayne Weigandt but was never done because of the steepness. The City never acted on it. It's a nice place for people to overlook the river. These areas are extremely important to access the river, which is important to the community. There has been a lack of activity by the City, which could have been an influence of Mr. Locke in the past. He urges the Parks & Recreation Commission to preserve these areas for the citizens. We cannot have too many parks in the city. He is glad to see they are looking at this. He asks them to reject the proposal and itemize all the public detriments.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Street Vacation Discussion- Dimsho (20 min)

Associate Planner Dimsho reviewed the Street Vacation application. There are some trails and recreational components affected by the Street Vacation.

- Explanation of what a Street Vacation is
- Planning Commission did not recommend approval
- Reviewed the eligibility for a Street Vacation
- Applicant is required to obtain signatures from two-thirds of affected property owners. They received 72.3%.
- Need all signatures from abutting property owners. There are four applicants, and they all signed.
- Public hearing is August 3, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.
- Council must determine three things:
 - Has the consent of the property owners been obtained?
 - Whether the notice was proper?
 - Is it in the public interest?

Dimsho talked about the three streets involved. The Parks & Trails Master Plan includes a public trail that runs from the end of Columbia Blvd. northward along N. River Street. The Commission recommended updating that trail in safety and appearance, as well as a viewing area. They don't know exactly how much area will be needed for the improvements. Staff recommends not doing anything on Columbia Blvd. or N. River Street until that is done. It is not in the public's interest to remove what is existing. Dimsho pointed out the area on N. 1st Street that would serve well for a trail. Staff does not recommend giving that right-of-way away either. They do have a small area they recommend approving for a Street Vacation at the corner of Columbia Blvd. and S. River Street. Staff does not think it should be vacated for the same reason as this Commission.

Blumenthal talked about the need for disability access.

Belcher pointed out a house on 1st and asked about utilities. Dimsho pointed out utilities. Did not recommend that area.

Belcher said the urban trail will run through that area. There will be a crosswalk to access the overview. The City should not vacate for stated reasons. This is public interest. It will make the City a better place. He really wants to see an overlook in that area.

Blumenthal pointed out the narrowing of the streets. Dimsho agreed that you lose all control when the right-of-way is vacated.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Blumenthal and seconded by Commissioner Woodruff to recommend Council follow the Planning Commission's recommendation to deny the entire Street Vacation. **Vote:** Yea: Commissioner Belcher, Commissioner Blumenthal, Commissioner Woodruff, Chair Pettit, Vice Chair Sundeen, Commissioner Lathrope, Commissioner Jacobson

2. Guest visitor- Jim Davis- Sundeen (10 Min)

Sundeen introduced Jim Davis. He was the Parks Supervisor from 1972 -1998. He reviewed projects Jim spearheaded including: the first Parks Department building, the first park shelters, Godfrey Park, McCormick Park, planted numerous roses, as well as many other endeavors. Thanked him and presented him with a certificate of appreciation for his dedication and commitment that we still benefit from.

Jim shared some pictures with the Commission from his time working at the City.

3. St Helens Boise Park/Survey – Pettit (10 min.)

Pettit visited the Boise Park. It is beautiful. It is a wetland mitigation area. She is going to talk to Dimsho more about the survey marker locations. It hasn't been used for many years and is very overgrown. It would be wonderful for families to visit there. She would like to discuss designating it as a woodland preserve.

Blumenthal said there is a lot of poison oak there.

Belcher agreed it is a very pretty area.

Pettit was first told about the area by Councilor Birkle.

Councilor Birkle agreed that it is a potential jewel for the City. It's important to review it with the St. Helens Industrial Park Plan. There is an intent to maintain at least a 50 foot trail along the creek. He would be happy to visit the site with anyone.

Blumenthal talked about the discussion about an RV Park in that area in the past. Councilor Birkle said that has been discussed but no final decisions were made. Blumenthal talked about the advantages of a walking trail there.

4. Urban Trail Budget- Belcher (15 min)

Belcher reviewed the proposed budget. A copy is included in the packet. He would like to ask Council to request City staff create a budget based on this proposal. There is potential grant funds for this project, but they need a plan and budget. It will connect five parks and draw people to the area.

Belcher talked about the needs for directional signage, safety improvements, and communication. Woodruff suggested that signage include mileage markers for people to know distances. Jacobson asked about shortcuts. Belcher responded that the regulars would know and that eventually they would like a map with a scannable code.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Belcher and seconded Commissioner Lathrope to recommend City Council direct City staff to create a budget for the Urban Trail based on the proposal. **Vote:** Yea: Commissioner Belcher, Commissioner Blumenthal, Commissioner Woodruff, Chair Pettit, Vice Chair Sundeen, Commissioner Lathrope, Commissioner Jacobson

5. Overgrown Walking Path on Old Portland Rd- Blumenthal (10 min)

Blumenthal reviewed the area of the overgrown walking path on Old Portland Road, between S. 4th Street and S. 7th Street. He would like to see the City improve maintenance in the area.

Blumenthal mentioned that the bicycle pathway near Walmart that is overgrown. He would like to see improved maintenance or signage if the bicycle lane is closed.

Pettit pointed out that people use the bike lane from Gable Road to Highway 30 as a turn lane. Blumenthal said the lanes need to be repainted.

Duggan will follow-up on the walking path with staff.

6. Park Update: Campbell Park – Lathrope (10 min.)

Lathrope reviewed a Campbell Park update. A copy is included with the packet.

- Amenities
- Use
- Maintenance
- Observations
- Accessibility
- History
- Potential
- Vandalism and possible solutions
- Recommendations

Sundeen asked if there is a plan to replace the tables in Campbell Park. Duggan responded that tables are replaced every new budget year. Columbia View Park will be next and then Campbell Park.

Lathrope asked about the covered areas. Is there a plan to add water and electricity. Duggan explained that they have been doing some updates to that park. They have discussed moving the playground to the front to increase safety and then put a dog park in the back. They don't want to spend a lot of money in that area until they know what they're doing for sure. They haven't had Work Crew consistently to help with parks cleanup.

Belcher asked if Campbell Park receives more vandalism and why. Duggan said they do have more vandalism. She thinks it's because it's accessible from all sides and in the middle of a community with areas to hide. They have discussed removing some of the outbuildings that are used to hide. A challenge to putting cameras in the area is the lack of WIFI.

Pettit complimented Park Supervisor Tory Shelby on the video. They do a lot. Duggan agreed. They're a small group but get a lot done. Some projects are on hold due to rainfall.

Pettit said there is a lock on the water at Walnut Tree Park and she is unable to water the flowers. Duggan will check with Shelby on that.

Duggan added that they have added more parking, benches, and a kiosk. It would be great to get an action plan for the playground.

Lathrope likes the idea of a community garden for the neighborhood to take ownership of the projects there.

7. McCormick Japanese Gardens- (5 Min) Sundeen

Sundeen talked about the Garden area being overgrown. It will be a big project to tear out and revitalize. He suggests creating a Friends Group for the Japanese Gardens and Veterans Memorial combined. There are other parks that have a Japanese Garden to seek advice such as Longview or Portland. Hugo Tori has replied and said they would like to help.

Jacobson suggested they identify what needs to stay before the work party. Sundeen agreed. A first could be removing the blackberries.

OLD BUSINESS

8. Commissioner's Tour of Sand Island –Blumenthal

Blumenthal said he contacted the person with the shuttle about accessing Sand Island. They need to pick a date and time. A weekday at 4 p.m. would be best.

Thursday, August 4, 4 p.m., tentatively

STAFF REPORT

Duggan reported:

- Thanked the Commission for all the work they do. Their work does not go unnoticed.
- Received \$150,000 from the State of Oregon for enrichments programs, have hired staff, and holding summer camps.
- Coordinating adult softball Tuesday and Wednesday nights
- Summer Basketball Program, 90 kids signed up so far
- Benches installed at McCormick Park
- Benches installed at Campbell Park
- Benches will be installed at Nob Hill Park
- Staff helped at Citizens Day

- Kiosks installed
- Prepped Columbia View Park for 4th of July
- Movie Nights will begin soon at Columbia View Park
- Received \$15,000 grant from NW ESD Early Learning
- Contacted by Blazers yesterday. They will be here in September with a basketball court
- Multiple partnerships with community organizations
- Erin's last day at the City is tomorrow. Send interested people her way.
- Parks & Recreation month
- There will be a grant with Parks & Recreation coming in the fall that may be able to be used for the urban trail
- It slows down for them a little bit in the fall and winter. They'll be looking at high value projects that need to be done now

Pettit asked if they could look for grants themselves. Duggan will verify that. They need to make sure the grant is worth the resources that it will take for staff.

Belcher asked where Recreation Basketball takes place. Duggan said it is at the middle school. They don't pay to rent the facility, but they have to do all the setup and cleanup.

Pettit asked how the Recreation Center building is being used. Duggan said it's used for sports, tween and teen nights, summer camps, etc. Pettit suggested they partner with School District to get volunteers working in the parks. Duggan agreed. They do offer a teen volunteer service camp each year. She is also working with a counselor at the high school that helps students get credits for volunteering. She developed a Councilor in Training Program this year to help with camps. It was a soft launch this year and she plans to expand it next year. She would love to see a program to adopt park areas for a short time.

Lathrope talked about community support for Campbell Park. Duggan said if it's done directly for the City, there is a donation form.

COUNCILOR'S REPORT

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Blumenthal reported:

- Civic Pride Park is underdeveloped. That would be a great location for a community garden.
- Need to keep an eye out for widow maker trees
- Nob Hill Nature Park. Caroline tallied 72 hours just for the two of them in the last six months. Spring work party was 59 hours. Native plants need supplemental water.

Jacobson talked about open spaces available at the community garden.

Lathrope asked if anyone had any concerns about moving forward on a mural project.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Lathrope and seconded by Commissioner Belcher to move forward on investigating murals for the concession stand and bathroom buildings at Campbell Park. **Vote:** Yea: Commissioner Belcher, Commissioner Blumenthal, Commissioner Woodruff, Chair Pettit, Vice Chair Sundeen, Commissioner Lathrope, Commissioner Jacobson

ADJOURNMENT – 6:23 p.m.