



CITY OF SWEET HOME PARKS & TREE COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 21, 2025, 8:30 AM

3225 Main Street, Sweet Home, OR 97386

WIFI Passcode: guestwifi

PLEASE silence all cell phones – Anyone who wishes to speak, please sign in.

Mission Statement

The City of Sweet Home will work to build an economically strong community with an efficient and effective local government that will provide infrastructure and essential services to the citizens we serve. As efficient stewards of the valuable assets available, we will be responsive to the community while planning and preparing for the future.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 AM

Roll Call of Park and Tree Committee Members:

PRESENT:

Member Scott Swanson
Member Matthew Bechtel
Vice Chair Lena Tucker
Chairman Wally Shreves
Member Bob Dalton
Member Nancy Patton
Member Debra Northern *(joined via Zoom at 9:00 am)*

STAFF:

Angela Clegg, Planning & Building Manager
Greg Springman, Public Works Director
Sean Hegge, Crew Lead: Facilities and Parks
Amber Steinborn, Planning & Building Permit Tech
Adam Leisinger, Special Projects Manager

GUESTS:

Candy Snyder, Beautification Committee

Meeting Rules of Order

Meeting procedures were reinforced, emphasizing the importance of order, adherence to the agenda, and careful language regarding procurement processes to comply with governmental rules. Humor was welcomed in moderation, and members were reminded about the committee's defined powers and duties outlined in Chapter 2.10 under City Committees. Active participation in events is encouraged, but must complement the committee's formal duties. Chairman Shreves and Members expressed openness to collaboration with other City departments and community groups, to enhance project outcomes and public participation.

Time Reports

Chairman Shreves reported that hard copies of Time Reports were completed at the Arbor Day event and reiterated to Members that any additional Time Reports should be emailed to Manager Clegg.

The location of the meeting is accessible to the disabled. If you have a disability that requires accommodation, advanced notice is requested by notifying the City Manager's Office at 541-367-8969.

Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve April 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes was made by Member Swanson. Vice Chair Tucker seconded the motion.

Voting Yea: Member Swanson, Member Matthew, Vice Chair Tucker, Chairman Shreves, Member Dalton, Member Patton.

Voting Nay: None

Absent: Member Northern

Public Comment.

None

Old Business

Beautification Committee Update:

Chairwoman Snyder of the Beautification Committee reported Members successfully planted 1,200 petunias & additional plants in city medians and entryways over several days in May. Approximately 20 volunteers participated, with several newcomers joining, highlighting strong community involvement. Chairwoman Snyder advised total expenditures were approximately \$6,000, with plants being sourced locally from Bauman's Farms. Successes with media coverage – secured through local newspaper (The New Era) featuring an article on native plants and Arbor Day activities – was also reprised. Additionally, Chairman Snyder shared that brochures promoting the committee's work were distributed at City Hall and the Chamber of Commerce.

Arbor Day Wrap Up:

Members concurred that the event went very well with positive feedback, effective collaboration with Public Works, and significant community participation, especially children. Chairman Shreves summarized that approximately 144 hot dogs were served, contributing to the event's popularity at modest cost. Manager Clegg reported that Pacific Power donated four gift certificates, valued at \$500 each, which the Committee will use for future tree purchases and consider creative ways to distribute remaining funds through community incentives or raffles. Member Patton suggested sending traditional 'thank-you' cards to key contributors, including Pacific Power and Jamboree organizers. Manager Clegg noted that emails had been sent out to participants following the event, but verified that cards had not been sent. Chairman Shreves confirmed that Committee Members are permitted to send 'thank-you' cards & plans are underway for Members to get them sent out.

Sankey Park Phase III Update:

Manager Clegg updated that progress continues, despite some challenges with grant procurement and project packaging. The City is working with the Timber Framers Guild, known for community-built structures, to coordinate construction of the bandstand and trail simultaneously. Legal and procurement hurdles related to bidding the project as one combined contract are being addressed in consultation with additional City staff and Legal experts. Manager Clegg advised that the goal is to maintain community involvement reminiscent of an "Amish barn raising" style build, combining professional oversight with volunteer efforts.

Weddle Bridge Update:

Manager Clegg informed Members that the bridge is being considered for relisting as a historic resource on the National Register for Historic Places, which would allow access to additional funding opportunities while enforcing protection guidelines. Additionally, an extensive application process is in place with deadlines in July and November. The State Historic Preservation Office is optimistic about the relisting. Furthermore, City Council has increased the budget for bridge repairs for the upcoming fiscal year, however, a qualified structural engineer is still needed to assess load capacity and guide repair work. Member Dalton conveyed continued investigation for potential resources, including retired engineers and Oregon's Bridge Preservation Group, aiming to build contacts and secure expertise. Staff Hegge reported a recent increase in vandalism and graffiti on the bridge, especially with warmer weather and school vacations. Collaboration with local police has resulted in some enforcement, and Members discussed potential deterrents such as signage and community vigilance.

New Business

Cut the Gut:

Members deliberated whether the Committee should formally participate in the upcoming car show & Chamber event, "Cut the Gut". Members raised concerns regarding misalignment between the event and the Committee's core mission, focusing on Parks & Trees. Members also indicated that the Sankey Park turnaround is unsuitable for hosting a booth. Logistical and budgetary concerns were also raised and included the need to provide 'swag' for the event and organize a booth without City funding, since it is a Chamber event. Member Patton contested, denoting the opportunity for public outreach and brochure distribution, citing previous successes. Chairman Shreves called for a formal roll call vote, to adjudicate on official Committee participation in the "Cut the Gut" event –

Voting Yea: Member Patton, and Member Northern.

Voting Nay: Member Swanson, Member Bechtel, Vice Chair Tucker, Chairman Shreves, Member Dalton.

Members agreed that individuals could still participate, informally, by volunteering independently with other groups. Park & Tree Committee Brochure distribution at the event was still deemed possible, via Members affiliated with other organizations being present at the event. The Committee also acknowledged the need to understand the process for event applications and budgeting more thoroughly, since the event is organized by the Chamber of Commerce, not the City. Members agreed that clearer communication and advanced-planning, regarding event applications and permissions for future years, are also critical.

Street Tree List:

Members discussed updates to the City's Street Tree List, originally developed in 2015, to guide planting in new subdivisions and city planter strips. Manager Clegg advised that a Landscape Architect working with a local subdivision requested a current tree list, to ensure appropriate species planting. Differentiation between street trees and those suitable for planter strips was suggested due to size and growth considerations. Vice Chair Tucker and Chairman Shreves shared that they have been collaborating on an exhaustive catalog, itemizing all current trees located on City property, which is digitized and includes maps showing planting clusters. Members will continue to update, as trees are planted or removed. The Inventory is separate from the City's Street Tree List. Members agreed that the City's Tree List should be reviewed and updated, as well as cross-referenced with the separate Inventory list (which specifies what is actually planted), to determine what should remain on the City's Tree List & what should be removed. In regard to trees which should be considered for removal from the City's Tree List, Manager Clegg advised that Ash trees may be phased out, due to threats from Emerald Ash Borer infestations, which have been decimating the Ash trees; replacements with native or more resilient species are being considered. Public Works confirmed that Maintenance plans include removal and replacement of several ash trees in Sankey Park, found to be declining.

Round Table Discussions (Committee comments about topics not listed on the agenda)

Conservation and Park Maintenance:

Manager Leisinger shared that he had the opportunity to accompany OSU researchers, who surveyed the endangered Bradshaw Lomatium at Hobart Park. Researchers advised that while Bradshaw Lomatium is federally delisted, it remains protected by strict state laws limiting maintenance and access. Manager Leisinger shared the information he received from OSU researchers with Committee Member, including: Bradshaw Lomatium thrives in disturbance-prone habitats historically managed by prescribed burns, but such burns are limited seasonally, especially during bloom. Alternative methods like specialized mowing and brush clearing are considered. Removing Ash trees threatened by Emerald Ash Borer is planned to restore native white oak savannahs. Further efforts include creating elevated boardwalks and controlled trails to balance public access with preservation, alongside collaboration with the Sweet Home Fire District for integrated fire breaks to support habitat and community safety. Furthermore, Quarry Park poses additional challenges due to numerous protected species, including a possible future-listing of the Western Pond Turtle, requiring careful adherence to expert guidance and regulations to ensure ecological preservation.

Upcoming Events and Planning:

Committee Members discussed ongoing plans for hosting booths at annual community fairs, including the 18th Annual Jim Bean Memorial Safety Fair, and the annual Sweet Home Community Health Fair. Members also discussed the possibility of participating in additional events, such as the Sportsman's Holiday Parade in July, in an effort to increase public visibility of parks and tree programs. Committee Members outlined the following events for Summer and early Fall, with ongoing involvement:

18th Annual Jim Bean Memorial Safety Fair:

SHPD's annual event is scheduled for Saturday, June 21st, 2025, from 9:00am - 12:00 pm. Chairman Shreves provided an update that he has been in communications with the Sweet Home Police Department to confirm Committee's participation at this year's event & verified that the booth site is all set. Members agreed to brainstorm ideas for kid-friendly park/tree-related activities to engage visitors, prior to the Committee's next meeting scheduled on Wednesday, June 18th, 2025. Current proposed ideas included a scavenger hunt focusing on plant identification and nature education; additional ideas included interactive park-themed activities with small prizes or goodie bags. Chairman Shreves asked Members to each brainstorm at least one other idea for an activity & he will follow-up with a reminder via text message, before the next scheduled meeting date.

Bridge Day:

Members discussed the event, which celebrates historic bridges located within the community, and is tentatively planned for July 26th, 2025, pending no scheduling conflicts with other community events planned on the same date, in the same location. Chairman Shreves proposed a 5K run connecting the three local historic bridges, to increase public participation in the event. Member Swanson voiced potential concerns regarding costs for staff time, safety, timing, volunteer management, and other unforeseen possible liabilities that could result from hosting a 5k run. Additionally, Manager Clegg voiced potential concerns with insurance considerations, particularly relating to race events involving public streets. Manager Leisinger noted that recreational immunity would also need to be taken into consideration, as well as any pending changes that may impact the law as it undergoes current changes at the State level. Director Springman also reminded Members that any road closures would have to go through City Council for approvals. Members ultimately decided that the run would be better organized as a non-city event held on the same day, likely prior to the Bridge Day event, to reduce liability and logistical burdens, utilizing traffic control via cones and volunteers, rather than opting for road closures. Additional creative event ideas, including a retro-themed "Bridge Hop" 50s-style sock-hop dance, was suggested by Vice Chair Tucker, and children's activities were also proposed to enhance community connections to the city's landmarks.

Sweet Home Community Health Fair (Held at SHHS):

Vice Chair Tucker and Member Patton verified with Member Dalton that the Health Fair will be held on Saturday, August 16, 2025, with Committee participation (as this is one of the Committee's usual annual events). Member Dalton confirmed that he would be completing the application on behalf of the Committee later in the week, to ensure the Committee's participation.

Harvest Festival:

Manager Clegg reported the event will be held on Saturday, October 4, 2025; vendor applications are opening up at the end of the month and sponsorships are already being secured. Manager Clegg advised that the chili cookoff will not be held again this year, and that the pie bake-off will be the featured competition for this year's event.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:00 AM