



**CITY OF SWEET HOME
PARKS & TREE COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

August 20, 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.

Meeting Information

The City of Sweet Home is streaming the meeting via the Microsoft Teams platform and asks the public to consider this option. There will be opportunity for public input via the live stream. To view the meeting live, online visit <http://live.sweethomeor.gov>. If you don't have access to the internet you can call in to 971-203-2871, and enter the meeting ID to be logged in to the call. Meeting ID: #278 852 022 483

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 AM

Roll Call of Park and Tree Committee Members:

PRESENT:

Member Scott Swanson
Member Matthew Bechtel
Vice Chair Lena Tucker (acting as presiding officer)
Member Nancy Patton
Member Debra Northern
City Councilor Aaron Hegge

ABSENT:

Chairman Wally Shreves

STAFF:

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

GUESTS:

Chairwoman Candice Snyder, Beautification Committee

Time Reports

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.

Vice Chair Tucker updated the Committee that she turned in their Time Reports from the Health Fair to Manager Clegg. Member Northern advised that she typically emails her Time Reports directly to Manager Clegg; in response, Vice Chair Tucker reminded all Members just to make sure any additional project time logs are submitted to Manager Clegg, in an effort to ensure accurate recording of volunteer hours.

Meeting Minutes

a) 2025-07-16 Park & Tree Committee Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve July 16, 2025, Meeting Minutes as amended was made by Member Patton. Member Bechtel seconded the motion.

Voting Yea: Member Swanson, Member Bechtel, Vice Chair Tucker, Member Patton, Member Northern

Voting Nay: None

Absent: Chairman Shreves (excused, due to prior notice to Manager Clegg)

Abstaining: Member Jones (due to previous meeting date occurring prior to Member's appointment to the Committee)

Public Comment: No public comments were offered.

Beautification Committee Update:

Beautification Committee Chairwoman Snyder provided an update on recent Beautification efforts, including information regarding recent volunteer turnout for weeding being lower than usual – due to various personal commitments and health issues. The Beautification Committee made upcoming plans to pull petunias on September 23rd, to prepare for the transition into fall and winter. Volunteers are considering scheduling a final weeding event on September 2nd, which aligns better with members' availability, despite coinciding with the first day of school. In October, the Beautification Committee plans to plant tulip bulbs, with the budget confirmed to cover the purchase. There was discussion regarding tulip bulbs possibly being distributed as giveaways at the upcoming Harvest Festival. The Beautification Committee agreed to continue the red, white, and blue theme for flower displays next year, though the blue will require alternative flowers to the petunias, which do not typically bloom blue. Chairwoman Snyder also reported that Clover Park will require additional planting and soil work, to help mitigate the steep slope and drainage issues; indicating that this area is dangerous for volunteers and needs new shrubs. Conversely, Shea Point Park was reported as thriving, with no significant weed problems. However, Highway 228 area needs improvement; possibly replacing petunias with perennials and adding shrubs, if the budget allows. Four benches were donated by Patty Holk and are available for installation, with potential sites including Fourth and Oak Terrace. The Beautification Committee also discussed the status of the Alice Grom memorial bench, and winter decorating plans for pots on Long Street or Main Street. A volunteer coordinator will be assigned for the Harvest Festival booth to avoid coordination issues seen previously. The need for more volunteers was emphasized, especially for spring planting events, which are labor-intensive.

Old Business

Ivy Removal: Member Northern reported on the North Side Park assessment for ivy removal, identifying approximately 15 trees requiring trimming and ivy clearing. Member Northern further indicated that some of the trees are located near the riverbank and trail edges, making the area a candidate for an ivy removal event. The Committee agreed to schedule the event in the cooler fall months, with a decision to be finalized at the September meeting.

Sankey Park Phase III: Member Clegg updated the Committee; indicating progression with the Request for Proposal (RFP) for trail system development, with assistance from Public Works Engineering Technician II, Blake Patterson, who is familiar with the process. A significant milestone was achieved with City Council approval of a special procurement allowing the separation of bandstand construction from the trail bidding process. The Timber Framers Guild, known for their community-based timber framing projects, has been engaged to design and build the bandstand. An architect has volunteered, pro bono, to assist with design development, which staff will review before finalizing contracts. Construction is anticipated to begin next spring, due to the guild's project schedule. The committee discussed timing for public announcements, deciding to wait until contracts are signed and detailed plans are in place. The Timber Framers Guild will guide community involvement, volunteer coordination, and donation efforts to support the project, which is expected to meet match funding requirements through in-kind contributions such as donated architectural services and discounted labor. The Committee acknowledged the challenge of securing monetary match funding, and the importance of transparent communication about funding needs and project status to the public.

Health Fair Wrap Up: Members Patton and Bechtel shared reflections on the recent Health Fair, noting the positive reception of the maps featured on the City Parks brochure distributed to attendees. The brochures were reported as serving as both an informational tool, and a potential metric for outreach efforts, with the idea proposed by Vice Chair Tucker, to pre-count brochures before distribution, to quantify engagement levels. Member Patton reported the Health Fair attracted visitors from outside the local area, including neighboring towns; highlighting regional interest in Sweet Home's parks and recreational opportunities. Vice Chair Tucker added that one person mentioned that they lived in Lebanon, and preferred coming to Sweet Home, for Sankey Park. Member Patton also shared that an individual who stopped by the booth was interested in park rentals, so Members directed them to reach out to Manager Clegg. Members reported that the event featured kid-friendly giveaways such as pencils, pencil sharpeners, rulers, and water bottle carabiners, aligning well with back-to-school timing. Efforts to create original activity sheets and contests for children were discussed by Member Patton and Vice Chair Tucker, in an effort to enhance future outreach. Members indicate that the transition of the event indoors, due to rain, was handled smoothly – ensuring continuity. A brief mention was made by Member Patton, regarding a clothing giveaway group, whose donation distribution suffered due to the venue change, resulting in leftover items at the end of the event. However, Members agreed that, overall, the Health Fair was a successful and positive community engagement opportunity, with gratitude expressed for volunteers and contributors.

Ames Creek Restoration: Director Springman provided an update on the Ames Creek Restoration Project, reporting that the project remains in a holding pattern. Significant brush clearance and mowing have been accomplished, and silage tarps recently received will be laid out across the site by late September to suppress invasive vegetation such as reed canary grass and blackberry briars. The tarps, which are thin sheets secured with stakes, logs, or staples, will remain in place for approximately one year, after which replanting efforts will commence. The spraying of blackberries has already occurred once and will be repeated in the fall to control regrowth. Future planting plans and community volunteer opportunities will be coordinated with the South Santiam Watershed Council, leveraging their expertise in mitigation projects. The restoration is expected to be a multi-year endeavor due to the resilience of invasive species. An area within the project footprint has been identified as having marsh elevation suitable for pedestrian access with potential enhancements such as picnic tables. Connectivity from Sankey Park to this secluded natural space was proposed as a future focus for the Committee, pending progress on the restoration timeline.

Harvest Festival: Manager Clegg provided the Committee with an update, indicating preparations for the Harvest Festival are underway, with advertising running in local newspapers and radio stations. Manager Clegg advised that the chili and pie cookoff contests are open for registrations, though sign-ups for the pie contest remain slow, but are expected to increase as the event approaches. Supplies for the festival will be inventoried and ordered soon, with an opportunity for Committee members to suggest new items or changes. Discussion included the possibility of acquiring a game formerly borrowed from the jamboree through a city auction,

though Manager Clegg indicated that the Sweet Home Public Library also owns the same game & can be borrowed for events moving forward. Manager Clegg shared that adjustments have been made to vendor layouts, to accommodate growing interest; food vendors will now occupy the parking lot, while chili contest activities have been relocated accordingly. Suggestions to provide more shade at the pie booth with larger tents or multiple pop-ups were mentioned by Member Patton, in an effort to enhance comfort for participants and visitors. The Committee remains optimistic about favorable weather, despite past rain during other events. A follow-up meeting before the festival will finalize duties and logistics. Fundraising proceeds from the event will support the Weddle Bridge project, continuing the committee's tradition of contributing to local infrastructure.

New Business

Introduction of new Park & Tree Committee Member: Vice Chair Tucker introduced Melanie Jones, a new member of the Park and Tree Committee, who shared a brief personal background. Member Jones has resided in Sweet Home for 27 years, raising her children locally before they moved out of state. Member Jones shared that her motivation for joining the Committee stems from a deep passion for natural spaces and recreational activities, coupled with a desire to contribute through volunteerism. Member Jones' neighborly connection and well-maintained yard were noted by Member Patton as fitting attributes for her role on the Committee. There was a lighthearted discussion about her potential involvement in both Beautification Committee and Park & Tree Committee activities, reflecting Member Jones' enthusiasm and versatility.

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

Northside, Evergreen, & Sankey Park Tree Update: Vice Chair Tucker discussed the slow-release tree watering bags being utilized on park trees throughout the City, in an effort to aid in moisture conservation during dry spells. Crew Lead Hegge indicated that while most trees appear to be thriving, one dogwood near Sankey Park is struggling, despite irrigation and water bags. Members hypothesized various explanations as to why the dogwood tree would be struggling, including Vice Chair Tucker suggesting the possibility of sun sensitivity, while Director Springman discussed the possibility of underlying soil conditions related to the site's mill history. The Committee expressed hope that the water bags will continue to be effective through the summer heat.

Shea Point: Member Patton raised questions regarding maintenance responsibilities for Shea Point Park, which revealed that while the Committee maintains the area around the "Welcome" sign, Manager Clegg advised that the broader park is under the jurisdiction of Linn County Parks. Director Springman clarified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers owns the property, and that there is a maintenance agreement with Linn County, which designates them as the responsible party for the upkeep and maintaining of the area. Member Patton also voiced concerns about blackberry overgrowth and poison oak on the trails. The Committee discussed plans for communicating with responsible agencies to seek improvements.

Strawberry Park: An update was provided on a community request for an honorary bench at Strawberry Park in memory of Roger Sherman. Costs are being researched, and the donor is willing to fund the bench, with options including green or concrete benches. The committee discussed augmenting the bench with a shade tree in the future, depending on placement. Member Bechtel also discussed a community offer to harvest the apple tree at Strawberry Park, and other fruit trees, through local Gleaner organizations, providing a sustainable way to manage and utilize public fruit trees.

New City Website: Special Projects Manager Leisinger demonstrated the updated city website and explained how Committee Members and the public can sign up for meeting notices via email or text alerts. While a dedicated Park and Tree Committee notification option is not yet available, users can subscribe to general meeting notices to receive updates. The new website, launched about a month ago, is still undergoing bug fixes, and users are encouraged to report issues.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 AM