

**TUMWATER PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING  
OCTOBER 16, 2024 Page 1**

**CONVENE:** 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Chair Erin Carrier and Commissioners Mike Culley, Shane Harrington, Joe Munro, and Charlie Schneider.

Excused Absence: Commissioners Amy Hargrove and Joel Hecker.

Staff: Parks and Recreation Director Chuck Denney, Golf Operations Manager Tyler Trimble, and Volunteer Coordinator Brianna Feller.

**CHANGES TO AGENDA:** A discussion was added on community center design stakeholders.

**APPROVAL OF  
MINUTES PARKS &  
RECREATION  
COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES:  
APRIL 17, 2024:**

**MOTION:** **Commissioner Culley moved, seconded by Commissioner Schneider, to approve the minutes of April 17, 2024 as published. Motion carried unanimously.**

**APPROVAL OF  
PARKS &  
RECREATION  
COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES:  
SEPTEMBER 18, 2024:**

**MOTION:** **Commissioner Harrington moved, seconded by Commissioner Schneider, to approve the minutes of September 18, 2024 as published. Motion carried unanimously.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** **Debbie Boos** said she recently learned of the plan to add a pickleball court at the new Trails End Park. She asked the Commission to consider the adverse effects of the court to the neighborhood as pickleball court noise is well documented. The surrounding quiet neighborhoods will be subject to an unwanted and noisy Operations and Maintenance Facility (O&M) in addition to the pickleball court. Numerous documents address the issues associated pickleball court noise. She asked whether the City has considered other options and whether it is possible to reconsider the proposal by including other alternatives such as pollinator gardens or plantings. The park will also be near a large parking lot. A pickleball court would attract players who live outside of Tumwater. The Trails End Park is designated as a neighborhood park serving local neighborhoods.

**TUMWATER PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING**  
**OCTOBER 16, 2024 Page 2**

Attracting more people from outside the area would only increase parking congestion. She cited information stating how pickleball noise can be a problem for neighborhoods because it can be loud, unpredictable, and disruptive. The sound of a pickleball hitting the paddle can be as high as 85 decibels. By comparison, a tennis ball is 40 decibels. She is a pickleball player and has nothing against the sport other than the court would be in the wrong location. The fast-paced nature of the game involves players who are constantly exchanging balls emitting a mid-frequency sound as they contact with the paddle. The noise generated is part of the sound spectrum of most sensitivity to humans. The constant popping sound can be grating and annoying. Pickleball noise is known to cause neighborhood quarrels, lawsuits, 911 calls, court closures, sleepless nights, anxiety, and psychological distress. Much documentation is available on issues caused by pickleball courts. The neighborhood will also have to contend with the noise generated from the new O&M facility. She asked that the neighborhood be afforded a break because neighbors do not need a pickleball court in the new neighborhood park. Director Denney has indicated that pickleball courts at two other City parks have not created any issues; however, it does not need to be included in the new park. The neighborhood is requesting the Commission consider another alternative.

Chair Carrier said the Commission considered the designation of the park as a neighborhood park and intentionally did not include more than one pickleball court because the Commission did not want to draw visitors from outside the area. The intent was to provide a court for local residents. Her mother is an avid pickleball player and frequently plays on the courts at Rainier Vista Park. Parks with only one court are not used as frequently as they cannot accommodate large groups of players. She asked Director Denney about the status of the design process for the park.

Director Denney advised that the master plan for the park has been approved. Construction is not scheduled until 2026 through 2027. It is possible to review the plans at that time as the design of the park was based on a balance of both active and passive recreation. He acknowledged that pickleball courts can create problems in terms of the sound frequency emitted from the ball as it hits the paddle. Lawsuits have been filed nationwide against cities that have included pickleball courts in parks. When the City is ready to move forward with construction, more information will become available on the outcome of some of the lawsuits. The US Pickleball Association is considering a different type of ball that generates a different noise.

Ms. Boos noted the availability of numerous pickleball courts located throughout the region. Neighbors will have to contend with noise generated by truck backup alarms at the new O&M facility as well.

**TUMWATER PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING  
OCTOBER 16, 2024 Page 3**

Commissioner Culley added that during outreach sessions to the neighborhood for the new park, Commissioners queried neighbors living around the park as to amenities they wanted included in the park. Many neighbors voted on a variety of amenities. The park is scheduled to be developed in phases, affording an opportunity to reconsider changes to the master plan for the park. He suggested the neighborhood could also consider initiating a petition opposing the placement of a pickleball court for submittal to the Commission.

**PARKS AND  
RECREATION  
COMMISSION  
BUDGET:**

Director Denney advised of the balance remaining from the Commission's budget. At the last meeting, the Commission approved expenditures totaling \$36,800 for parks and recreation activities and items.

Commissioner Munro asked about any potential resale value or donation opportunities for the screen. Director Denney described the condition of the screen held together with Gorilla tape. The department considered donating the screen to a smaller parks department. Staff plans to discuss options with the City of Tenino for reusing the screen.

Commissioner Culley inquired as to whether the department pursued competitive bidding for the screen as \$18,000 is a significant amount of the budget. Director Denney advised that the market is limited with two companies offering screens. The original screen cost \$18,000 12 years ago. Staff selected a different type of screen that can withstand winds up to 35 MPH with the current screen only withstanding winds up to 7 MPH. During the National Recreation & Park Association conference, event special offers are featured. Staff is working to secure special pricing for the purchase of the new screen. The old screen dimension was 18' x 24'. He supports purchasing a 24' x 24' screen with staff preferring a smaller screen because of the difficulty of setup and removal.

Director Denney reported the Commission's remaining budget is \$3,200. The Commission has the option of reconsidering items deferred at the last meeting or identifying new items. One new item is a park trailer added by the new Parks Manager. The department's park trailer was purchased in 2008. Staff recently discovered a bent axle. At this time, the department lacks the funds to replace the trailer.

Commissioner Culley inquired about any potential needs for the Old Town Center. Director Denney advised that the department is not investing in the building because the building will be vacated in the next several years.

Director Denney identified unfunded purchase options for consideration:

- Gate Improvements @ Golf Course - \$4,700
- Picnic Tables (4) – \$2,800
- Soccer Goals @ Pioneer Park (2) - \$7,800

**TUMWATER PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING  
OCTOBER 16, 2024 Page 4**

- Shade Table @ Historical Park - \$6,200 each
- Trail Benches at Tumwater Hill Park (2) - \$1,600
- Parks Trailer - \$5,343

Commissioners discussed funding options.

**MOTION:**

**Commissioner Schneider moved, seconded by Commissioner Harrington, to purchase four trail benches for Tumwater Hill Park. Motion carried unanimously.**

**TUMWATER  
VALLEY GOLF  
COURSE UPDATE:**

Golf Operations Manager Trimble provided an update on the Tumwater Valley Golf Course.

The City purchased the golf course in 1995. The course offers championship tees, 9 and 18 holes of golf, multiple tee boxes, accommodates skill levels for all ages, covered and uncovered driving ranges, and features multiple special events.

Improvements in 2023 and 2024 included the lease of 60 new GPS-enabled golf carts. Planned improvements include rebuilding the junior tee in the driving range behind the cart barn, renovation of the bunkers, improving the range, and maintaining and improving existing assets.

Management changes occurred in 2023/2024 with Manager Dave Nickerson retiring. The core staff includes the Operations Manager, Operations Supervisor, and Operations Coordinator. The golf course employs 14 inside seasonal employees during the summer months and 15 external services employees. Maintenance is supported by 12 seasonal employees. The course relies heavily on high school and college students and the retired community when students are attending school.

The City collaborated with the LOTT Clean Water Alliance in early 2000s to provide the course with reclaimed water for irrigation. Last year, the course suffered a pump failure. The City replaced the pumps with variable pumps to reduce pressure through controlled flows through the pipes.

Events hosted at the golf course included:

- 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Junior Open Tournament with 104 junior golfers in April 2024
- O Bee Junior Open
- WIAA High School State Championships
- TOGETHER!
- Several high school district tournaments
- Washington Junior Golf Association events
- Tumwater Chamber Golf Tournament
- 2 Mid-Washington Senior events

**TUMWATER PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING  
OCTOBER 16, 2024 Page 5**

- July 4<sup>th</sup> Tumwater Family Festival & Nisqually Red Wind Casino Fireworks Show
- Screen on the Green Outdoor Movie Series
- 2024 Tumwater Artesian Brewfest

For the ninth consecutive year, the golf course continues to offer First Tee Junior golf. This year, 375 young golfers played with an average of 300 youths served annually. The Valley Golf Academy manages a large portion of golf instruction overseen by Operations Supervisor Russ Olsen. He manages the Special Olympics, Big Brothers Big Sisters, local charter school PE classes, and Tumwater and Olympia Parks classes in the summer and in the fall. The golf course hosts the PGA Junior League. Most of the participants are from the First Tee program. The League hosted 40 youths. The golf course committed to another four years of hosting the WIAA State Golf Tournament hosting approximately 100 youths over three events. Last year, the golf course launched the South Puget Sound Community College Program for men and women golfers. Golf Superintendent Thompson was instrumental in starting the first Green Program of STEM classes for Tumwater School District students.

Manager Trimble shared several financial graphs depicting the percentage of operational costs recovered annually from 1996 to year-to-date 2024 and operations without depreciation. He reviewed a graph reflecting the number of rounds and revenue generated annually from 2018 to the present. Rounds of golf have increased substantially especially in 2020 when rounds increased by 10,000 despite the golf course closure for nearly six weeks because of the pandemic. Attaining over 50,000 rounds is substantial and depends heavily on staff and the course. The golf course continues to increase revenue exceeding \$1 million annually.

Commissioner Culley added that in conjunction with the investments in the golf course beginning in 2017 in new equipment, changes in the organizational structure, signage, and new programs, revenues have continued to increase in addition to the number of rounds.

Manager Trimble responded to questions and explained that a round of golf can be 9 holes or 18 holes. Each one is counted as one round. Each golfer receives a sleeve of balls with each round booked. The golf course has been the top seller of golf balls north of San Francisco for the last four years. The golf course partnership with Acushnet Company, Titleist Golf, and FootJoy ensures the Pro Shop is the first to receive new golf products. Golf balls inscribed with Tumwater Valley Golf Course have been found across the world. Many people from other golf courses across the world often take photos of the ball and send them to the golf course. Pictures received by the course are displayed in the Pro Shop.

**COMMUNITY**

Director Denney reported the first Steering Committee meeting and the

**TUMWATER PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING  
OCTOBER 16, 2024 Page 6**

**CENTER DESIGN  
STAKEHOLDERS:**

public open house on the community center design are scheduled on Monday, October 21, 2024. The open house will be in the cafeteria at Tumwater Middle School. He requested the participation of three Commissioners on the Steering Committee and suggested the Chair should service on the committee as she has previously participated in a similar process. Commissioner Hargrove has indicated she is unable to serve because of scheduling conflicts.

Commissioners Harrington and Schneider conveyed interest in serving. Chair Carrier added that Commissioner Hecker also expressed interest in serving. Director Denney noted that membership on the committee is limited to three Commissioners to avoid establishing a quorum of the Commission during a committee meeting.

Chair Carrier affirmed she would provide a recommendation to staff on the appointment of the remaining two Commissioners after the meeting.

Director Denney noted that the function of Commissioners on the committee is to serve as the advocate for parks and recreation and meeting the needs of the City. Other members of the steering committee include representatives from the YMCA, advocates for a social service center, advocates for seniors, and advocates for youth sports.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Volunteer Coordinator Feller announced the Talking Headstones Tour & Cemetery Dedication at 12:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 19, 2024 at the Union Pioneer Calvary Cemetery. The Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution volunteered 500 hours to clean, restore, and level all 221 headstones in the cemetery. The dedication ceremony will recognize the work of the volunteers and provide an opportunity to learn about the history of the cemetery and those buried in the cemetery. The event will feature 3 minutes of history at 8 different headstones on information about the individual and their historical connection to the City. The event is free and open to the public.

Director Denney reported on improvements to the cemetery over the last several years. A master plan for the cemetery was completed in 1996. Many of the recommendations have not been completed because of the lack of funding. Recent grant funds in addition to some City funds enabled installation of new fencing on three sides of the cemetery. The complicated installation involved tomography, radar, and LiDAR of the ground to locate unmarked graves surrounding the cemetery. To obtain the necessary permits for the project, ground-penetrating radar was necessary to locate all unmarked graves. The master plan includes replacement of the front fence with brick columns and wrought iron (aluminum) fencing, interpretive signage, security lighting, and landscaping between the fence and Littlerock Road.

**TUMWATER PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING  
OCTOBER 16, 2024 Page 7**

Commissioner Culley inquired about the status of the Brewmaster's House. Director Denney advised that all repair work has been completed to replace wallpaper, floors, electrical, lighting, and heating. Commissioner Culley suggested scheduling a visit to the house in November. Director Denney advised that a tour could be scheduled for Commissioners.

Director Denney reported on work scheduled to begin on the Crosby House to replace the roof, gutters, foundation repairs, painting, and new siding at a cost of \$300,000.

**NEXT MEETING  
DATE:**

The next meeting is scheduled on November 20, 2024. Director Denney advised of no meeting topics at this time for the November meeting; however, an update on the status of the 2025-2026 City Budget could be scheduled.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Commissioner Culley moved, seconded by Commissioner Harrington, to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.**

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