



Parks & Open Space Advisory Board

September 13th, 2023

Members of the Parks & Open Space Advisory Board met this day in regular session at City Hall, Brownsville, Oregon at 7:05 p.m.

Present: Chair Brandie Simon, Lynlee Bischoff, Betsy Ramshur, Pam Solberg, Administrative Assistant Elizabeth Coleman & City Administrator S. Scott McDowell.

Absent: Pat MacDermott, Rick Dominguez, and Joann Neddeau.

Public: Don Lyon.

Presiding: Brandie Simon.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Minutes: May 10th, 2023

Brandie Simon had a typographical correction at the bottom of page 1, Betsy Ramshur moved to approve the May 10th, 2023 Minutes as corrected. Lynlee Bischoff seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Presentations & Action Items

Arbor Day Celebration | Council Proclamation

Administrative Assistant Elizabeth Coleman shared with the Board that she had contacted Mike Nehls about planting a tree in honor of Arbor Day. Nehls has been working with the City for years. Nehls said that during the week works best for him. Coleman then stated that Public Works Superintendent Karl Frink has located a few places in Pioneer Park to plant a tree for this year's celebration. The calendar was reviewed and November 6th & 13th were selected pending Mike Nehls availability. Time and exact location to be determined.

Coleman announced that she has contacted Pioneer Christian Academy and Central Linn Elementary to work towards an Arbor Day project. Coleman will handle the logistics as needed. The schools have until September 15th, 2023, to respond to the City's participation request. Otherwise, Coleman will execute the display normally used for the celebration.

The Board agreed by consensus.

Lynlee Bischoff mentioned one of the trees previously planted at the end of the dog run is no longer there.



Progress Reports

Chair Simon turned the floor over to McDowell for updates.

Recreation Center Renovation Update

McDowell shared a multi-slide presentation on progress being made at the Rec Center. McDowell indicated that the contract completion date has been pushed back to October 24th, 2023, mostly due to circumstances beyond anyone's control. The windows made it to Oregon today and Ken Shields, Construction Superintendent for J.E. John, said they would receive the windows Friday or next Monday. Painters are busy prepping and painting while the weather is conducive. A few utility issues have caused delay, including Pacific Power, NW Natural Gas and the City's Public Works. The City is waiting on parts from the City's supplier who is still experiencing supply chain issues. Overall, everything is going well.

The relationship between the city, architect & professional contractor has been a tremendously positive experience. McDowell said that Council and the Emergency Preparedness Board would like to invite all the civic organizations to an Open House once the Rec Center renovation project is completed in mid-Fall to early-Winter.

Betsy Ramshur asked about the money budgeted for the playground. McDowell indicated that Council did change the nomenclature for that line item for it to be used for the renovation. The City did borrow \$600,000 for gap financing to ensure completion of this project. McDowell also stated that the City will start working on the pavilion project in the near future upon determining funding.

McDowell reported that the Central Linn Recreation Association is fielding two volleyball teams this Fall. Pioneer Christian Academy and Central Linn Elementary School will be hosting practices and all games will be away.

McDowell said that this is the time of year when the Board considers park rates. However, the Central Linn Recreation Association is reviewing their rates in light of the renovation and will render their recommendations soon. McDowell said the Board would consider the City's rates at the January meeting.

Park Caretakers

Fred & Terri Shepherd have been offered an extension. The City looks forward to working with the Shepherd's next season. Members Bischoff & Solberg had complimentary things to say about the Shepherd's performance.

Central Linn Middle School Soccer

McDowell and Frink have been working with the new Athletic Director, Kevin Wise, to provide a space for the middle school soccer team. The District understands that the City is unable to irrigate the field. The District will be using the area south of the basketball courts in Pioneer Park for practices and games. Soccer season ends before the Park closes on October 31st, 2023. McDowell will prepare an agreement for the use of the field.



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State Requirements/Around Town

City Audit was completed in August.

The OAWU (Oregon Association of Water Utilities) finalized the WMCP (Water Management Conservation Plan) for the city, which is required by OWRD (Oregon Water Resources Department). McDowell & Frink will submit recommendations to Council at the next meeting. DEQ gave the city TDML requirements, which could create expenditures the city cannot afford to make.

River's Edge subdivision is moving forward, however, the five remaining streetlights to be installed by Pacific Power have not been installed.

Camping Future

McDowell talked about the implications of HB 3115. The City did experience a difficult situation with people who camped illegally in the Park. The Sheriff's Office assisted the City with the situation. Council received different legal advice and changed course at the last minute. To meet the minimum requirements, the City only need to allow lay and rest – not camping. The City designated, by ordinance, the area in front of City Hall for this purpose. So far, there have been no concerns. The Brownsville Art Center will contact the City should concerns arise. Council has appointed a subcommittee to review camping practices and make recommendations to Council on the matter later this Fall. McDowell said there could be modifications to the ORS around HB 3115 although no reports of such activity have been discussed to date. McDowell said he would not be surprised due to the reported burden on cities such as Albany.

Camping is allowed in the Park through October 31st, 2023 which is when the Park closes for the season. The Sheriff's office has been notified.

Bischoff was concerned about camping outside the designated areas, people defecating in the bushes, and a picnic table in the river. McDowell said that this is not a new occurrence. It happens every single year. Peoples' behavior is terrible in terms of the way they treat public property which is why the City has rules.

Pam Solberg recounted a situation where a camper had created a campfire at the rear of the Park. Bischoff asked for clarification on where camping is allowed. McDowell said that during certain events each year, the Caretakers have the flexibility to allow camping in areas that are not normally used for camping. Several times each year campers end up camping in these areas and typically it ends well – but not always.

McDowell asked all Board members to report any safety issue to the Linn County Sheriff's Office, such as the fire situation. McDowell warned members not to interact with any citizens breaking rules in the Park. Please call law enforcement. The City tells the Caretakers the same things – the City does not want employees or agents potentially getting in an altercation with people. This includes speeding, alcohol in the Park and even the enforcement of the leash law. People are very sensitive and unpredictable these days. Please exercise caution.



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Bischoff mentioned a conversation with someone who had moved a Park bench into the area back by the river. McDowell and Bischoff talked about the requirements of the Park Board to reiterate that the Board is an advisory board. McDowell said that if there is an issue in the Park with a maintenance or upkeep item, contact McDowell. If it is a safety issue, please contact the Linn County Sheriff's Office. Public Works is in the Park all the time. There is nothing new with items such as these.

Chair Simon asked members to follow the advice of McDowell on the kinds of interactions they may encounter while in the Park.

General Updates

GR 12 Waterline Construction

This project will supply water for the next 40+ years and roughly 500 additional units.

McDowell indicated that the project had experienced a significant delay due to the need for an easement with Linn County. Recently, long time Linn County Parks Director Brian Carroll retired. Newly hired Director, Stacey Whaley, had questions and concerns about the easement that required attention, which delayed the City's survey crew. McDowell received the full easement documents this afternoon and will start negotiating with the County tomorrow. Hopefully, the project will be able to commence this Fall. The City will also have to look at financial impacts of the delay as construction costs continue to rise.

Maintenance & Upkeep

Most of the items were covered above.

Events

2023 proved a great event year from the City-Wide yard sale, Stand by Me Day, Antique Faire & Car Show, Hands on History, to the Festival of Tents. Wade Long, coordinator of Rally on the River, had another busy year in Pioneer Park and may be part of bringing the Spartan Vintage Trailer rally to Brownsville in 2025. Ramshur mentioned the Pioneer Picnic received encouraging words about trying new things, more help, etc.

Regional Efforts

McDowell reported that SMAC (Small Municipalities Advocacy Coalition) is in the middle of two training courses for elected officials and seems to be going well. REAL (Rural Economic Alliance) recently completed their five-year strategic plan and gave a report to the Linn County Commissioner's Office. The group of nine cities is accomplishing some great things in terms of economic development for our region. The strategy is around retention & growth for existing businesses in the Valley and to encourage local talent from LBCC, OSU & U of O to stay in Oregon. Three cities are working towards Disaster Preparedness, logistics for potential creation of an EOC (Emergency Operations Center), etc.



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Citizen Input

Don Lyon attended the meeting to learn more about the Park Board. Don commented that there were a lot of things the Board did, and he may be interested in becoming a member in the future.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

ATTEST:

Handwritten signature of S. Scott McDowell in blue ink.

S. Scott McDowell
City Administrator

APPROVED:

Handwritten signature of Brandie Simon in black ink.

Brandie Simon
Chair - Vice