

GRANTS PASS PARKS ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Minutes – January 10, 2019 at 3:30 PM
City Council Chambers

Members in Attendance:

Dick Matti (Chair)
Cliff Kuhlman (Vice Chair)
Jan Battersby
Brian DeLaGrange - Absent
Robert Cartmell
Rick Chapman
Mark Collier
Stephen Ware

City/Staff/Council Liaisons:

Roy Lindsay - Mayor
Tyler Flaming – City Council
Valerie Lovelace – City Council
Aaron Cubic – City Manager
Lora Glover – PCD Director
Wendy Giordano – Parks Superintendent
Eric Wade – PCD Business Op Supervisor
Ken Garrison - Absent

1. **Roll Call** – Chair Matti called the meeting to order at 3:31 pm. Roll was taken.
2. **Items from Public:**
 - a. Bethany (last name unknown), Science teacher at South Middle School, has prepared a proposal for a Nature Center in Grants Pass and is looking for interested parties. She handed out paper information to the members.
 - b. Ms. Williams (first name inaudible). Had a gallery in the Bay Area and wants to do a similar project in the area to promote non-profit.
 - c. Neighbor to Dollar Mountain that has concerns about the trail, and access and if the City will patrol it.
Aaron Cubic clarified that at this point, the Chair asks for comments for items that are not on the agenda. Later, during the Dollar Mountain topic, the committee can have time for discussion then take public comment.
3. **Minutes**
 - a. **Approval of Minutes:** November 8, 2018

MOTION/VOTE

Member Cartmell moved and Member Ware seconded the motion to approve the minutes from November 8, 2018. The vote resulted as follows: “AYES”: Chair Matti, Members Battersby, Cartmell, Chapman, Collier, Vice Chair Kuhlman and Ware. “NAYS”: None. Abstain: None. Absent: DeLaGrange
The motion passed.

4. **Work Session Items:**
 - a. Dollar Mountain Discussion -
 - Eric Wade showed a map of the parcels for the Dollar Mountain proposal. Wendy Giordano spoke about some of the process already underway such as working with the Grayback Forestry on fuels reduction, possibly stopping some of the dirt bike activity, and some of the concerns of erosion. She said the view is fantastic at the top and very inspiring. Wendy went on to show where the parking area is planned. They are in the beginning stages, but the next step would be working with Grayback and then a consultant to develop some trails and work with at Geotech on the steep slope. They are in process with BLM for an Intergovernmental Agreement. She showed another section of the BLM portion of the map where a trail system could continue along the ridgeline. She showed another access point and where one of our reservoirs is on Heiglen where it is a dirt trail.

- Arron Cubic spoke about how the property came to the City Council's attention from the current property owner. Council showed some interest in it so there were further negotiations with the property owner and are looking at the purchase of the property toward the end of this month. Council did see some large benefits with the purchase of this property for future recreational purposes. Now he wishes to get public input from stakeholders by first bringing it to the two advisory committees. There will also be an open forum on the 16th from 4 to 6 pm in the Council Chambers. This will provide Council with additional information for the potential for this property. After that point, if the Council goes through with the purchase process, then we will go through with further stakeholder input, look at options and alternatives then move into a planning stage and then move into development based on all the input from the planning perspective and the Citizens.
- Wendy added that the issues with debris that has been dumped on the land, so they are seeking grants to help get that all cleaned up.
- Aaron asked for questions from committee members.
- Jan Battersby asked if the Parks will be in charge of all the maintenance or if it would go under some other type of maintenance. How will it be funded?
- Wendy mentioned that she now oversees Parks and Property Management. Property Management takes care of undeveloped park land. Initially she will be working with Mike Byrne and then it will transfer over to the Parks division.
- A question was asked if there was any type of relationship with the Parks Department and County Law Enforcement with it being outside city limits.
- Wendy said they will work on a relationship with handling public safety. They haven't had a chance to address that yet.
- Aaron added that if this does transition into City ownership it does not mean City will be patrolling that since it is outside the city limits. Some of it is within the urban growth boundary. When you get good activity, it can drive out the bad activity. With the development of this for recreation purposes we see some benefit from the community with getting some of the negative activity out. There is potential for Community Corrections to do litter cleanup and we have an excellent relationship with the Sheriff and the Board of Commissioners.
- Someone asked if money has been put down on it.
- Aaron said there is an escrow agreement but no money down. They City is looking at finalizing the escrow on January 22. There was a question of why this is such a rush. Aaron went on to explain that this has been discussed in executive session for a couple of months. Once council determines there could be benefit and the price was acceptable, council wanted to turn this open and forward this to the public for comments. It wasn't just addressed last week. This has been going on for a number of months.
- Did Council feel this was more important than finishing the Hillcrest property and where is this kind of money coming from and how will it affect other projects around town?
- Lora Glover explained that the funding is coming from the General Fund, the Parks Department is not being charged for this.

- Aaron further explained that we have some excellent financial policies when it comes to reserve funds and all of our funds whether it be general fund or an enterprise fund which are water, sewer, transportation, or wastewater. We all have a designated amount that we try to hold as reserves. We also have a contingency each year that we budget for. The dollars for the purchase of this would be allocated out of general fund and not taken from any other land and buildings or capital project. This would be drawing down our general fund by the sale price but not affecting any other project. It will not affect any programs that are currently active. In the future, it will be in the hopper along with any other project through Strategic Planning. So, Council will need to prioritize this along with any other LB projects to determine what dollars go to those capital projects.
- Chair Matti asked if it could come from the SDC that is available for Parks Development. Aaron answered that this is not coming from System Development Charge Park dollars.
- Wendy added that they have already had contact from some trail groups that are interested in applying for grants. There is a lot of grant money out there for different parts of the process. We are quickly looking at getting those applications in, so we can get that funding.
- Dick Matti asked if there were any questions from citizens?
- A homeowner from Forest Hills Subdivision spoke about three residents that live up on the ridge. She mentioned transient activity they are concerned about. Her concern is where the entrance is on B Street, we are the next track of land from that. Are we making it easier for people to get up there? We already have people that try to come up. There are safety concerns, property values have been mentioned so where the property lines are, where would you start your project and how far down will people come to our houses? Will the gate be open 24/7? It was a surprise to some of them that if the City is buying the property that the police won't be managing it and that is a huge concern for us.
- Another citizen spoke about using Cathedral Hills about 2 or 3 times a week. The area around Dollar Mountain has a lot more garbage than at Cathedral Hills doesn't have any of that. We don't even see litter in Cathedral Hills. There is always trash up there [Dollar Mountain]. Volunteers take care of Cathedral Hills a lot. There are these concerns, but I think it will be better from what I've seen.
- Bryan stated he is in support of this project. He agrees with what was said about the introduction of positive activity and attitude that will drive out a lot of the negativity. He is an avid cyclist.
- Don Hendricks said he concurs with both statements. He is a little concerned about safety aspect but personally rides his bike up there and Cathedral Hills for over 20 years and has seen Cathedral Hills go from chicken scratch to what it is now and it's amazing. He has been all over the country mountain biking. He sees the potential for that happening here and I encourage that it be planned like that. He has never encountered any legal issues on Dollar mountain, but it feels spooky. I don't ever see it being Cathedral Hills but well maintained with trails that work for hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers. There is tremendous potential.

- Linda lives on Crescent Drive and is a coordinator for a Firewise Community on Crescent Drive. The trailhead on Crescent is right in the middle of our Firewise Community. We have a project on February 9 to pull Scotch Broom because it's highly flammable. As a Firewise Community I'm looking to work with [inaudible] to see if we can collaborate on that. One concern is that on February 9, there is talk about work being done with surveying. She hopes it won't compete with their February 9 work. She is also concerned about the B Street access. She knows it is not part of the purchase but it's an area where a lot of problems can continue. There is a lot of talk about once this is developed we will see the transients decline and motorized vehicles decline but there going to have access to B Street and I guarantee you if they do, they will be all over. It's a high fire danger area because if a fire ever started in that area it would go right up the hill and the folks on Starlight will be in danger.
- Another Forest Hills citizen said he climbs to the tower 3-4 times a week. He has this opinion too. If the current owner doesn't care about the transients or the trash, the City will, and I can't image that it won't be immaculately different and a lot better if the City owns it versus now. There is all sorts of junk up there. The only people that clean it up are the hikers. So that will all change. It is a little spooky this time of the year because there are beautiful moss canopies over the trail. As soon as that starts to dry up we get 4 and 5 months of wild flowers. It's a beautiful property. I am sure people that know how to make trails can make long trails around this mountain.
- Another citizen of Forest Hills mentioned the fire potential there stating they are right on the border. They did get permission from a land owner last year to do some mitigation behind a few houses there. I am also excited about having neighbors living behind her for 8 years now and they are on Sunview Place, but they are homeless. They have had a lot of problems in this tiny area that is privately owned that is not in the [inaudible]. It would be cool if they could get that property with meadows and flat land. New campers are coming in once every two months. There were some problems too with dogs taking the deer down and the Sherriff's department said we have to get the landowners to post "No Trespassing" signs before they can come in and do anything. So, unless it's posted, they can't evict them. She would highly recommend posting as soon as possible and they will try to get that landowner to post also. It is a beautiful area.
- A Sunview Place resident mentioned there is about 5 or 6 [residents] whose back border is at the property line is in this area (indicated on the screen). Her concern is safety. She worries about the people on the hill behind her. She understands that they will not venture down the hill to our backyards, but they are right there. Whoever is going to be putting those trails in needs to take into consideration that are people that are concerned. They don't want trails close to their properties. None of them do. She does not want anyone able to access their property.
- Michael Masters stated he represents the family that owns the property. He has posted "No Trespassing" signs on behalf of the family. He has empowered neighbors that were interested to patrol it. It is 400 plus

acres. The family is land rich, but they have no money. When they do have money, they give it all to the church. There is no profit motive in it for these people. They inherited this property and they went through a 20-year court fight with heirs to finally get title perfected. As a broker, they asked him to testify in court on their behalf a few times. They just wanted to get control over this property that they were left, and it has been in their family for decades. They wanted him to sell it to a developer and he is one of the developers for Forest Hills Subdivision. That whole section didn't make sense for it to be a practical development. We always thought of it as some kind of common area then part of a big subdivision. So, we have been battling mainly the motorcycle riders that ripped the "no trespassing" signs down on the very first day. He said he did not know all these people were hiking this property which is private property. He came down to the City and said he had a problem with fighting the transients and fighting the bikers and there are videos all over the internet about riding up there, so he suggested the City think about buying it for a park. The property owners have no money to fix it. They offered it to the City at half of what they were offered for it to a developer. It was appraised for 2 million. They are trying really hard but have limited resources. Once the City gets ahold of it, cleans it up, it will be a wonderful addition. And the City is getting a good deal on it. It could be turned into something that has a legacy.

- Tom Elliott spoke about being an avid hiker that hikes Cathedral Hills and lives in the city. The idea of having the City's version of it here would be a great idea.
- Germaine Cartmell said she is concerned that you are giving so much money, time and consideration to Dollar Mountain that she is worried what will happen to River Road Reserve. It is a beautiful property and she wouldn't want it to be sold but couldn't you consider as much doing something there as you do on Dollar Mountain? Could you keep them equal? Just don't forget River Road Reserve.
- Someone interjected that she agreed to not exchange one for the other. She mentioned that her concern is fire because she lives in the area. They did have a fire up there before. It was in the pullout where people park.
- Another Sunview Place homeowner stated they are in support of the project and they hike it all the time. Their only concern is the access points and patrols. The overall project they are in support of.
- Colleen Martin spoke about having property north of this and they are more concerned with where the driving of the transients will go. They are in the County and what's going to happen. Where will they push towards. They are also concerned about fire too and safety.
- Someone asked who owns Cathedral Hills. The answer was the BLM.
- There was a question about it being a very active motorcycle area and they have several access points. How can the City control access to the new piece of property they would like to acquire? It's going to be a motorcycle trail until you have enforcement. I don't know how you can enforce it. The 444 acres is only half of what is available there. It seems that it will have to be a joint effort between the County and BLM to be able to do something with it.

- Another citizen asked if it is possible to have a motorcycle park, far away, that they can have?
- A citizen spoke about hiking it hundreds of times and have hundreds of encounters with motorcycles. All but one was very polite. They don't want confrontation. Based on his experiences they're going to leave. They don't want us to be anything with it. Everyone is very polite because they know they are trespassing. I think it will be like Cathedral Hills.
- Another comment, as a hiker, I don't expect anything different. As a homeowner having access to this, once it is shut off in one area, it's going to be research to see how else they can get in there. There are the railroad tracks and you can't stop them off the railroad tracks. They are going to find multiple places to be able to still get in.
- Tyler Flaming stated he agreed you cannot stop the access points. There is no way you can't. Even if we had agreements with BLM and the County there are many access points in Cathedral Hills that can't be stopped. The issue is that once you get public and people out there and circulating around, just like at Cathedral Hills, those motorcyclists do not want public confrontation because they know they shouldn't be there. I've been an active user of Cathedral Hills for over 20 years and I have never run into a motorized vehicle at Cathedral Hills.
- The borderline from the City to BLM, they can ride anywhere they want. So, you are going to push that activity more towards other homeowners and other access points.
- Chair Matti noted there will be the open house for you to come make comments at and a lot of these questions. It won't be settled until the dust settles. Keep bringing your input to these meetings if you have a strong interest.
- Wendy stated they will make a webpage on the City website with some of the answers to your questions. We will provide information as we get it. We will also have more answers at the forum next week. There is a combined survey online for the Hillcrest Park Development, the Community Center and Dollar Mountain. We can separate Dollar Mountain out because it seems like we have a lot of interest and a big response. If you want to access that, we have it posted on our website. Aaron also got it on our Facebook page. This is just the start.
- Chair Matti added that this is the thing to keep in mind. This is a fairly long and involved process and just stay involved and up to date on what's going on. Being involved with the Reinhart Park in the beginning that there was a lot of concern on the part of the neighbors that the park was going to bring undesirables to the neighborhood and bring issues for them. The exact opposite is what occurred. It is City patrolled but to a homeowner now, I think you would find they are all glad the park is there and feel safer and feel the neighborhood has improved by the presence of the park.
- Another note, hunting season is allowed on BLM. The concern she has is about hikers and hunters.
- There was further discussion regarding this topic.

- b. Sponsorship Discussion –
 - Wendy wanted to mention she is working on sponsorships to raise funding for deferred maintenance and improve the parks. She can bring back information for next meeting. There was some discussion about park naming, fields, benches, etc.
- 5. **Information Sharing**
 - a. **Items from Staff**
 - Wendy mentioned she was very happy to see the large check to go towards the turf field lights. Chair Matti delivered a check for \$122,600 for the lights. Pacific Power needs to finish the upgrade of the transformer and the final electrical connection in the next few weeks. She reached out to the soccer clubs and they are interested in a grand lighting ceremony.
 - Chair Matti said the funds came from the treasury of the Riverside West All Sports Park. When the previous soccer club merged with the new one they had money in their treasury that they had collected for years. Every time a child registered, \$5 went into the field development fund.
 - b. **Items from Committee Members -**
 - Cliff asked for more information about the Wall of Fame down at Reinhart Park with Buck Baker and other folks that put that all together. Where are we on that? Chair Matti said he gave the names and documents to Buck Baker. Lora Glover stated she mailed a copy to them as well.
 - Valerie Lovelace got information about grants. Oregon Parks gives grants every year and it was 2009 when the City got one for Reinhart. Chair Matti added that for River Vista, his name and John Reinhart's were on the original mortgage but that was a state lands fund that repaid that mortgage. In terms of sponsorship those guidelines and Council approved them and its not to say that we couldn't change it. It was just something that this committee put together and got approval from the Council.
 - Wendy will prepare information on the fields that are not named and the benches that they talked about.
 - Chair Matti let Tyler know that he appreciates having a councilor here to attend these meetings when items come up.
 - c. **Items from City Council Liaison –**
 - None.
- 6. **Future Agenda Building for Next Meeting**
 - None
- 7. **Adjournment**
 - Chair Matti adjourned the meeting at 4:46 pm.

Next meeting: February 14, 2019

Minutes prepared by Donna Anderson, City Administration.