

**PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting Minutes – March 9, 2023, at 3:30 PM**  
**Council Chambers**

**Member Attendance:**

Chad Thorson (Chair)  
Michael Sellers (Vice Chair) - Virtual  
Jan Battersby  
John Blackett  
Rebekah Nugent  
Shane Hickman  
Brad Converse

**City/Staff/Council Liaisons:**

Josh Hopkins – Parks Superintendent  
Chad Westbrook – Parks Supervisor

**Guests:**

Chris Walker – True Juice  
Cat Bostwick – Dutch Brothers  
Liselle Vetch - Virtual

**1. Roll Call:**

- Chair Thorson called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm and roll was taken.

**2. Introductions:**

- None.

**3. Approval of Minutes:** February 9, 2023.

- The Committee did not approve the February Minutes. They will be moved to the next meeting.

**4. Public Comment:**

- Liselle Vetch ~ She was born and raised in Grants Pass, and she wanted to take a minute to talk about the Skate Park. It is a very highly used place by a broad spectrum of people, in particular, a lot of youth that really need support and a place to be. She is here to see what the Parks Committee does and to see what the process is and advocate for keeping up that facility because it is important to the community.
- Member Sellers ~ He wanted to reiterate the same. The community is amazing here and he just wants to help clean up the Skate Park. There are a ton of cracks, and he is trying to figure out what we need to do to make it safe because it is highly used during the summertime. Tons of people after school, during the summer, and weekends use this park. Chair Thorson stated that the Committee is working on a plan to get it resurfaced and brought up to date.
- Parks Superintendent, Josh Hopkins gave an update on the Skate Park. The City has planned to do this project for the last few years, resurfacing the skate park, addressing cracking issues and other places where it is sufficient and certain a TSM Standard Safety Testing. With that, we went out for a formalized RFP to request responses back from different contractors to develop and repair the Skate Park. We just finished that process about two weeks ago and the RFP is still listed online. It shows the different data items. The City has been looking at different contractors that were interested in the case of the Skate Park. We only received one bid and it was substantially higher than what we were expecting as well as there was a discrepancy in the way the bid was written. The bid came in for a couple million dollars because they messed up the way they wrote it. So, we ended up having to reject that bid. At this point we are back to a phase one scenario of needing to further diagnose what we put in our RFP to find out why our construction costs came back so high. It was towards \$300,000 for the construction project we were planning and the original estimate from engineering was about \$120,000 with staff and expecting it to be increase to about \$150,000 with the servicing plan. At this point we are just a few weeks to a week and a half out from our original bid documents. Now we are just reviewing what we can

moving forward. We don't have the funding to repair the Skate Park at the amount of the actual bid. The original idea was that the City would do the repair work to the Skate Park. That gives us five to seven years before we have to propose redoing the entire Skate Park at about 1.7 million. There were other repair options on the table as far as concrete overlay and everything that was valued somewhere in the \$500,000 to \$750,000. At that time, we were looking at the cost of all three options with expectation originally of just doing the repair at roughly \$120,000. Now that we know it is going to be more than \$300,000, we have to evaluate whether it makes more fiscal sense to put money away to be able to do option 2 of the concrete overlay, which will give us a 15-to-20-year skate park or if we just start planning for follow up of the entire Skate Park itself at \$1.7 million. We don't have the funding for the \$1.7 million, so we did put the RFP out there. It was not successful in getting us a bid that we would be able to move forward with.

- Liselle Vetch ~ She wanted to know if this is something that the City promotes? Is that something where there is an opportunity for us in the community to put the word out to a larger group that maybe would be aware of this? Josh let her know that yes, the City bid the project and sent notices out.

## 5. Discussion:

- **Community Garden Discussion ~ Cat Bostwick and Chris Walker –** Cat and Chris came to the last meeting and gave a public comment regarding the Community Garden. We put it on the Agenda for today's meeting to discuss it.
- Member Nugent led the discussion detailing parcels that are options. The Nursery Reserve parcel was one option. The pond at the Sports Park (RVP) was another option.
- Parks Superintendent Josh Hopkins ~ Josh let them know that staff needed more information on what their goal is. What size they need dictates how we would be able to respond and if there are any parks currently that have been identified as preferably having a community garden in that location or around that location. We do have several reserve properties that could be a possibility. Nursery Park Reserve is over by Tussing Park. There is also Overland Reserve over by Hamilton Lane. There are a handful of other places as well. They all have some issues for a Community Garden but could probably be worked out.
- Cat Bostwick: She stated that she thinks it would be a great opportunity to recruit volunteers. Once the garden is established, she and Chris can plug in with different events because that is what they do, they organize events for people to plug into. They would like a big space and segment it as they go. Gradually adding an orchard and other things. But they will take whatever they can get. For most of the properties in mind there would need to be parking added. Which would be more feasible? Putting in parking or using a park that already has a lot of the infrastructure.
- There was a lot of discussion regarding the cost of putting in a parking lot, what size to start off with, what size space would work, type of structures (raised beds), tool sheds, community involvement and a lot of other things. The goal would be to use it as much as possible.
- **Adult/Relics Softball Fee Request ~ James Thompson ~** Josh explained that James was not here at today's meeting but went on to discuss some of the issues. He reached out to Jim Thompson last week and let him know that he was on the agenda. He was not available for today's meeting. He requested to put it off until the next meeting. In preparation Josh pulled the softball and Senior Relics. The Senior Relics are the people who have not been paying field usage for their events. It is just to show what our thought is. Essentially there is a

number of user groups of adults who use that facility. They use it three days a week for pretty much all day between the two groups, three days a week for 7-8 months throughout the year. With that Josh has been looking into this for other reasons too. As far as our reservation fees and how they compare to other jurisdictions, our fees are very low comparatively. To give an idea that our fees are not astronomical or anything that would create a burden considering our fees are \$5 for an hour and a half when everyone else is 5 to 10 times that much. As far as staff perspective there is no agreement in place that was ever made outside of some sort of verbal agreement 30 years back or so saying they shouldn't have to pay fees. We essentially think they should be paying their use fees. The work that they are doing corresponds with the amount of usage they are actually doing in this facility. They do provide extra things to us like pitching in surface every year that certain other users do as well. This discussion will be moved to the next meeting to discuss it further.

## **6. Action Items:**

### **a. Parks and Recreation Master Plan Updates:**

- Parks Superintendent Josh Hopkins discussed the Master Plan. The Master Plan was emailed out to the Committee for review before the meeting. Josh also brought up that the Committee was waiting for background from the school district. We sent them a copy of the table to try to get today's numbers of how many ball fields and space the School District has that is available to the community.
- Josh suggested that the Committee spend some time and go through the Master Plan. The idea is to go through it update by update and see if there were any sections that need to be updated. I would be more efficient to make those final minor adjustments that still need to be made. The Committee could then discuss it at a future meeting.

## **7. Matters from Committee Members and Staff:**

### **a. Project updates:**

- Land, Water Conservation Fund Grant which is for replacing the playground and Reinhart Volunteer Park, (RVP). Josh is going to Salem on April 23<sup>rd</sup> to do the presentation showing that the City of Grants Pass passed all the technical reviews. We were one of 10 or 11 projects that are going to be reviewed for potential funding.
- **Dollar Mountain Parking Lot:** The flagging consultant has completed flagging the routes for Dollar Mountain for the city portion. We are at that 12-mile mark with a variety of different routes.
- **Lawnridge Pickleball Courts:** The pickleball courts are nearing completion. We ended up with a sizeable delay due to the weather we have had. They just completed the concrete. It should be completed by the end of the month.
- **Reinhart Volunteer Park lighting:** RVP did get automated lighting installed for the baseball/softball fields.
- **Parks Committee Advisory Committee Membership reminders:** Some of the Committee Members memberships are expiring soon. They will need to reapply if they wish to continue being on the Committee.

### **b. Staff Updates:**

- **Parks and Recreation:** Staff is no longer housed at RVP. They were moved to City Hall when our Urban Forester started. At some point in the future, they will move down to the Welcome Center.

- **Parks Specialist Position:** Chad Westbrook was the Parks Specialist before he was promoted to Supervisor. We should have Park Specialist interviews in the next week or so.
- **Joel King/Parks Council Liaison:** Joel is the new Parks Advisory Committee Council Liaison. He introduced himself and told the Committee some things about himself. He was a planner for the United States Forest Service, and he wrote the Urban Forest Management Plan. He said that with the Urban Foresters permission he would like to show the Committee a draft he has been working on. He has chapter one and two done and wanted to run it by the Committee. He wants them to at least be aware of it. If they have any thoughts on it, they can discuss it.

**7. Future Agenda Building for Next Meeting:**

- Project Updates
- Master Plan Update
- Adult/Relic Softball Fee Request ~ James Thompson
- Community Garden Discussion ~ Continued

**8. Adjournment:** Chair Thorson adjourned the meeting at 5:10 p.m.

**Next scheduled meeting: April 13, 2023**

Minutes prepared by Jayme Hyatt, Community Development Department.