

PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes – April 13, 2023, at 3:30 PM
Council Chambers

Member Attendance:

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

City/Staff/Council Liaisons:

Josh Hopkins – Parks Superintendent
Chad Westbrook – Parks Supervisor

Guests:

Adriana Martin-Wyatt
Jim Thompson

1. Roll Call:

- Chair Thorson called the meeting to order at 3:33 pm and roll was taken.

2. Introductions:

- None.

3. Approval of Minutes: February 9, 2023, and March 9, 2023.

MOTION/VOTE

Member Battersby moved, and Member Blackett seconded the motion to approve the minutes from February 9, 2023, with the name of Jeff Thompson changed to Jim Thompson. The vote resulted as follows: “AYES”: Chair Thorson, Vice Chair Sellers. Members Battersby, Blackett, Hickman, and Converse. “NAYS”: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Member Nugent.

The motion passed.

MOTION/VOTE

Member Battersby moved, and Member Blackett seconded the motion to approve the minutes from March 9, 2023. The vote resulted as follows: “AYES”: Chair Thorson, Vice Chair Sellers. Members Battersby, Blackett, Hickman, and Converse. “NAYS”: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Member Nugent.

The motion passed.

4. Public Comment:

- Adriana Martin-Wyatt ~ She introduced herself stating that she is a local attorney here in Grants Pass. Three River Youth Baseball and Softball used to be Grants Pass American Little League and Grants Pass National Little League. They came together this year to form the team that focuses on children’s baseball and softball. She wanted to discuss the state of the parks with the homeless situation. Volunteers are having to clean up the feces and needles. They would like the Parks Department to keep the parks clean and keep the kids safe. She feels the Parks Department is pointing fingers and would like them to better clean the parks of needles, fentanyl, and feces. She says parent volunteers should not have to decipher what fentanyl and drug paraphernalia is.
- Parks Supervisor Chad Westbrook clarified that the Parks Staff cleans each park daily.

5. Discussion:

- **Community Garden Discussion ~ Cat Bostwick and Chris Walker –**
Cat and Chris did not make it to this meeting. Parks Superintendent Josh

Hopkins stated that they can do a follow up. He said that they reached out to the Grants Pass Garden Club regarding the gardening area at Riverside Park. They are still planning to utilize that area and have a bunch of clean ups planned. They had slowed down during Covid but are getting started on moving forward again. They have used that space as a butterfly garden for 20+ years. So, there is no space at Riverside Park for the Community Garden. Member Converse spoke with Kelsie at Weekend Beer Company and she expressed interest in using some extra land that they have up at Weekend Beer Company. The fastest option would be using a private party vs. the City.

6. Action Items:

a. Adult/Relic Softball Fee Request ~ James Thompson:

- James Thompson introduced himself. He has been involved with softball in the City for years. The fields over the years have suffered. He stated that the City used to run every sport and activity that happened in this town. He said that he and others organized the sports and took care of the fields, and the City charged them a nominal fee that they could manage. There were big budget cuts, and the City lost the Recreation Dept. James Thompson picked up the City League Softball and Little League. and the Boys and Girls Club picked up other things. Costs went way up. The City wanted them to take care of the fields in their entirety. They compromised saying they would take care of the infield and the City would take care of the outfields. They bought a lot of products. The infields have not been maintained properly over the years and it is like concrete. Now, it seems that they are losing their parks for the citizens with the drug camps. Nobody wants to go to the parks anymore. On top of that, now, they are getting charged. Parks Superintendent Josh Hopkins and Parks Supervisor Chad Westbrook both stated that it has always been the responsibility of each team to take care of the infield before and after each game regardless of whether a fee is paid or not.

b. Parks and Recreation Master Plan Updates:

- Parks Superintendent Josh Hopkins discussed the Master Plan. Parks has yet to achieve the goal of providing a parkland within ½ mile of all city residents. We have yet to attain the goal of providing 9.9 acres with all park land. Level of service has decreased by population 4.98 to 4.92 of developed park lands over the last 13 years and population has gone up by 900. We did add the Doller Mountain Reserve which increased our undeveloped reserve to 11.70 for undeveloped land. If we combine it together it gives us 16.1 potentially developed parcels that we could use. This is a lot higher than what we initially had at 12. It is important to note that we did add a 400-acre mountain, but we decreased 200 acres of really developable land with River Road Reserve. While we can develop mountain biking and trails on that mountain it does not have the same recreational overall impact to the community that we would have gotten out of a regional park where we would be able to put everything that we have, like Reinhart Volunteer Park.
- Josh went over the small changes to the Master Plan. We do need to update the maps. He sent the Committee the map and data information. He ported it all over to Eric Wade, our Business Operations Manager. Eric has all of those hard dated files, and you would be able to add those. We updated the demographics to reflect our new population number. There is an increase of about 900 more people then 13 years ago.
- Allenwood reserve is a property that is likely to be sold shortly and maybe an acre of that will remain.

- Beacon Hill was the next park we were looking at to develop. Council has been discussing sectioning off portions of the park to eventually sell for housing. At this point we don't know what is going to happen with that, but overall, we have a little bit of a decrease in total acreage.
- Josh stated there is an update to the facility types. That is basically the table listing the number of tennis courts and baseball fields. Parks has added 18 pickleball courts and decreased the number of tennis courts. Disc Golf is gone. We changed the number of basketball courts. There have been some minor changes.

7. Matters from Committee Members and Staff:

a. Project updates:

- Code Updates: Superintendent Josh Hopkins discussed that the only thing going to Council this month is a discussion on updating two sections of the City Municipal Code. The first section is about Commercial Use Activity. Currently the way it is written now is Council has to approve every commercial activity that happens in the parks. We are adopting a new code language that does not require the City Manager to approve commercial activity, with large impact commercial activities being approved by Council.
- The other code update is Boat Parking Restrictions with Baker Park. Baker Park is the only boat launch inside city limits. Right now, it is not useable because of all the blocked parking spaces. Law enforcement was not able to do anything about this because it was not in the code. The City is developing a new municipal code that hopefully Council will adopt, which will allow law enforcement to enforce the no parking.

b. Staff Updates:

- None

8. Future Agenda Building for Next Meeting:

- Project Updates
- Master Plan Update
- Morrison Park Safety and Cleanup ~ Discussion
- Park Funding Options ~ Discussion

9. Adjournment: Chair Thorson adjourned the meeting at 5:08 p.m.

Next scheduled meeting: May 11, 2023

Minutes prepared by Jayme Hyatt, Community Development Department.