



PARKS AND TRAILS COMMISSION

Monday, November 18, 2024 at 4:00 PM

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chair Scott Jacobson
Vice Chair Dana Lathrope
Commissioner Howard Blumenthal
Commissioner Lynne Pettit
Commissioner Jacob Woodruff
Commissioner Nicholas Helmich

MEMBERS ABSENT

Commissioner Paul Barlow
Commissioner Jerry Belcher
Commissioner Reid Herman

STAFF PRESENT

Brandon Sundeen, City Councilor
Sheri Ingram, Public Works Office Assistant
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder

OTHERS

Lucas Green
Elliott Levin
Katy Daugherty
Gina Sisco
Heidi Green
Sydney Green

CALL TO ORDER - 4:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve Minutes of August 27, 2024 and September 9, 2024

Motion made by Commissioner Blumenthal, Seconded by Commissioner Hellmich to approve the minutes of August 27, 2024.

Voting Yea: Chair Jacobson, Vice Chair Lathrope, Commissioner Blumenthal, Commissioner Hellmich, Commissioner Pettit, Commissioner Woodruff

Motion made by Commissioner Woodruff, Seconded by Commissioner Hellmich to approve the minutes of September 9, 2024.

Voting Yea: Chair Jacobson, Vice Chair Lathrope, Commissioner Blumenthal, Commissioner Hellmich, Commissioner Pettit, Commissioner Woodruff

TOPICS FROM THE FLOOR: From attendees not otherwise of the agenda

Lathrope wants to postpone Item 6, Roles & Responsibilities until December and talk about OGE Public Meetings Laws training that happened earlier today.

Motion made by Commissioner Hellmich, Seconded by Commissioner Blumenthal to postpone Item 6. Voting Yea: Chair Jacobson, Vice Chair Lathrope, Commissioner Blumenthal, Commissioner Hellmich, Commissioner Pettit, Commissioner Woodruff

NEW BUSINESS**2. Port of Columbia County - Pope & Talbot Site Cleanup**

Elliott Levin from the Port of Columbia County is the manager for the cleanup of the Pope & Talbot site. Katy Daugherty from DEQ was on Zoom to help him answer any questions and Gina Sisco from the Port who is integral in putting together the grant application. He gave a slide presentation and talked about the areas with contamination that occurred before the Port owned the property. DEQ has been investigating the site since the 80s to determine the extent of contamination and determining how best to clean it. They released a decision last year and the Port is designing and implementing the cleanup called for.

They have been talking to several agencies about funding options. EPA announced a new grant cycle with individual grants up to four million dollars. The estimated cost to clean up all five action areas is upwards of 30 million dollars but they can apply for a grant for each action area once a year. They want to start with Upland Area 1. They are here today because Parks & Trails introduced them to the proposed Milton Creek project and the Pope & Talbot site fits well with that project. They would like to include that plan along with industrial development. He was told by Jacobson that there was a second trail envisioned on the south side of Milton Creek near the Port's bridge. One issue he sees is that would be getting into the action areas and the bridge is at the end of its life. They are planning on redirecting their access away from that bridge for that reason. Lathrope said regardless of whether the bridge is there or not, a cross-over somewhere in that region is still a potential desire so they can make a smaller loop that would navigate both sides of the creek. Levin said they understand this is a work in progress but they support the project.

Jacobson asked what he foresees with the property and Levin said most of the property is in the flood plain so he doesn't see any heavy industrial going in there as they can't get insured.

Daugherty explained what the capping process would be and how it would prevent stormwater infiltration and there are stormwater swales.

They have filed their application and won't find out about grant until May 2025.

3. Rare Plants on Milton Creek - Lucas Green

Lucas Green presented a slide show on the ecology of Milton Creek Reserve property. He gave a geologic history of the area and the varieties of trees and plants in the different areas including uncommon and rare species. He talked about the animals, birds and reptiles present and potential threats from invasive species and people. He would like to see walkways and bridges so people could enjoy it without disturbing the meadows. It would be a good place for the community to learn what is here. These areas are pretty rare. Hellmich told him about SOLV and suggested he become a team captain and they could get the old tires out because SOLV pays for the removal of the waste and tires are not cheap to get rid of.

They would like to include his presentation in their presentation to City Council and he said he would love to advocate for this location.

4. Term Expirations - Jerry Belcher and Nick Hellmich

Hellmich said he was not going to serve another term so his position will be advertised for. Belcher had indicated he was interested in serving another term. His position was advertised for since he has served more than two terms but there were no new applicants.

Motion made by Vice Chair Lathrope, Seconded by Commissioner Blumenthal to recommend Council appoint Belcher for another term.

Voting Yea: Chair Jacobson, Vice Chair Lathrope, Commissioner Blumenthal, Commissioner Hellmich, Commissioner Pettit, Commissioner Woodruff

5. 2025 Meeting Schedule

Motion made by Commissioner Blumenthal, Seconded by Commissioner Hellmich to recommend Council approve the 2025 Parks & Trails meeting schedule.

Voting Yea: Chair Jacobson, Vice Chair Lathrope, Commissioner Blumenthal, Commissioner Hellmich, Commissioner Pettit, Commissioner Woodruff

OLD BUSINESS

6. Public Meeting Laws Training -Dana Lathrope

There was a Public Meeting Laws training today. It was clear and concise on meeting laws. Some concerns she brought up earlier in the year were answered. There are resources and an advice page on their website at www.oregon.gov/ogec. They can ask questions directly and if they follow advice given, they can have safe harbor. All on the Commission are responsible for action and inaction and can be fined. Fines cannot be paid by the entity but must be paid by the individual. She recommends they all go through the OARs and Statutes regarding Public Meeting Laws so they stay within guidelines and keep themselves protected. They are a governing body and subcommittees are subject to meeting laws and quorums too. If they are information gathering only and not discussing and deliberating it does not count as a meeting but they recommend not having subcommittees because that is a gray area. They have to be mindful of discussions out in public because they cannot discuss anything pertaining to the Commission. They can go to gatherings like Citizens Day but they can't discuss anything relating to the Commission because they could potentially be reported by a third party. If they have questions about any situation, they should go on the website and ask. It is their individual responsibility to comply with the laws and rules. If you are in a situation that you are aware of that is not in compliance, it is your responsibility to state that it is not in compliance and remove yourself from that situation. That is your best way to protect yourself.

7. Milton Creek Reserve - Standing Item

Jacobson had sent new presentation for them to review and they discussed the things they need to decide on for the Council Presentation and who will present it. He will send them another updated one before the next meeting to review so they can finalize things at the next meeting.

Motion made by Vice Chair Lathrope, Seconded by Commissioner Hellmich to recommend they invite Lucas Green to join them and give his presentation to the Council in addition to their presentation.

Voting Yea: Chair Jacobson, Vice Chair Lathrope, Commissioner Blumenthal, Commissioner Hellmich, Commissioner Pettit, Commissioner Woodruff

STAFF REPORT

COUNCILOR'S REPORT

Sundeen said thank you for those who attended training today. This is also a good time of year to look at long-term and short-term goals. Lathrope asked if it is possible to have John Walsh and Jenny Dimsho give an update and timeline of waterfront project, specifically the park and riverwalk and he said they would just need to make a request.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Blumenthal said they had 12 people at their work party. They planted some more plants and got some weeding done and picked up some tires they found in the woods.

Pettit said she is curious about what is going on in other parks. Jacobson said he would look into it. Ingram said the monthly reports got waylaid with Belcher being gone and a meeting being cancelled. Pettit said the last amended Bylaws were 2023, not 2019.

Hellmich said he worked with another disc golfer at McCormick Park to spread the pile of wood chips past the second hole in the areas that get wet in the winter so it will be safer for people to walk the course. He talked to Tupper about getting another 4-5 yards of chips in the same area but they are holding off until they see where there are other wet spots or maybe there is a tournament coming to town. As he said earlier, he will not be serving another term so he thanks them for letting him do this.

ADJOURNMENT - 5:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Sheri Ingram, Public Works Office Assistant