



**SALEM PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
DIGITAL MEETING
November 12, 2020
MINUTES**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Alan Alexander
Diana Dickey
Woody Dukes
Dylan McDowell
Micki Varney
Keith Norris
Tony Caito

MEMBERS ABSENT

David Fridenmaker
Paul Rice

STAFF PRESENT

Patricia Farrell
Jennifer Kellar
Milan Davis
Becky George
Toni Whitler
Ben Haney

1. ROLL

David Fridenmaker and Paul Rice marked absent.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Alan Alexander moved to accept minutes from previous meeting. Woody Dukes seconded. Minutes approved with no changes.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments.

4. ACTION ITEMS

a. 2020 Annual Report Draft Text

Toni Whitler presented the 2020 Annual Report draft text. Requested all changes be submitted by 11/20/2020. Changes made and approved by board written below.

Mission Statement – The Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (Board) is a strong advocate for the acquisition, planning, development, preservation, protection, and enhancement of Salem’s parks including natural resources, trees, and recreational opportunities for current and future generations by receiving input from the community and providing advice to City Council.

Vision Statement – Our vision is for our community to have ample and robust parks that contribute to urban tree canopy, open spaces, and recreation opportunities for all people to gather, celebrate, contemplate, and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community, and the environment.

Alan Alexander made motion to approve as modified. Micki Varney seconded.

Vote: All members voted in favor of the motion.

b. Woodmansee Park Aquifer Storage & Recovery Project Construction and Tree Removal Update

Tom Walsh, Walsh Consulting Group LLC presented the construction and tree removal plans associated with the new ASR Treatment Facility at Woodmansee Park.

Chair McDowell asked if there were any concerns on Phase One of the Treatment Facility, Access Driveway, and Piping overlapping with Phase Two of the additional wells. Tom Walsh ensured the masterplan identifies both plans, and it will adapt to any changes.

Member Norris asked if the pipelines were buried pipelines, Tom Walsh confirmed they all are underground.

Member Varney asked if the level in our aquifer is dropping due to our multi-year drought. Tom Walsh said he was unsure about that, but Ben Haney noted that the City tracks how much they inject in the aquifer versus how much they draw and confirmed that we are injecting more than drawing.

Member Alexander wanted to know how many total trees are being removed. Tom Walsh stated 34 trees are being removed total. He stated they will be adding about 22 trees back. Tom Walsh also noted before removing trees they will post the trees for 30 days instead of the standard 15 for community feedback.

c. Mission Street Parks Conservancy Annual Work Plan 2021

Christine Chute, President, Mission Street Parks Conservancy (MSPC), provided the Annual MSPC Work Plan to the Board prior to the meeting.

No questions or comments by Board members.

Motion

Member Dukes moved to adopt the MSPC Annual Work Plan. Member Norris seconded.

Vote: All members voted in favor of the motion.

d. Board Goals for City Council Strategic Planning Session

Dylan McDowell presented the draft letter to the Board.

Member Alexander and Member Norris suggested to change the wording of the first bullet point to emphasize the City investing more and include "voter-approved levy" instead of "levy." Micki Varney suggested moving the first bullet point with adaptations to the bottom of the letter. Change in text listed below:

"Increase City investments in parks, such as through a bond measure, voter-approved levy, or other sources to fund park development and associated maintenance needs for existing and future projects." No other changes were determined to be needed.

Motion

Micki moved to approve as modified. Keith Norris seconded.

Vote: All members voted in favor of the motion.

5. INFORMATION REPORTS

(Information reports will now be provided as written reports ahead of the meetings.)

a. Urban Forestry Update

Member Norris noted there is a big focus on Oak trees and asked if there is active planting outside of replacement. Milan confirmed it is a focus to get as many large areas (1 acre – ½ acre) planted as possible.

b. Parks Planning Update

- Patricia Farrell mentioned a website is being developed for Parks & Recreation facts and information. This came from a previous request by the Board to have a fact sheet available to the public for park and recreation information. She mentioned that Rob Romanek created the draft page. (He will present the website to the board at a future meeting.)
- The Climate Action Plan Task Force will have their first meeting next week.
- The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Local Government Grant for Bill Riegel Park is now moving forward. A schedule for the grant review process has not yet been provided. The process was previously placed in a holding pattern due to COVID-19, which impacted the amount of funds available from Oregon State Lottery.

c. Parks Operations Update

Chair McDowell expressed concerns regarding the aggressive actions Parks Operations staff are experiencing and wanted to know if there were strategies to ensure staff safety in these situations. Jennifer Kellar clarified the security company, DPI's, role in Salem parks. DPI does not have any weapons, they monitor the parks and inform park visitors and do foot patrols of the parks, as well as reporting any issues to the appropriate people (Salem Police, Police Non-Emergency, or Parks Operations Staff).

Chair McDowell asked if there is talk of having more police officers present with City staff because of the increasing safety issues. Jennifer said that is not in the plans at this time. There are now two staff members working at one time at the Parks. They are relying on Code Enforcement for rules regarding camping and Salem Police for criminal activity. Ms. Kellar said they are meeting with Salem Police, the City Manager's office, and Code Enforcement to provide information and keep them engaged in these issues. They are tracking safety issues for Risk Management and City Manager's Office to determine the need of more Police presence.

They are doing clean ups (not displacing unsheltered individuals) for abandoned camps on November 20th at Wallace Marine Park and November 24th at Cascade. The Trash for Cash program is ongoing to motivate cleaning up garbage. They have been approved for additional equipment to assist in accessing the more difficult areas of the park. Jennifer reported there are 98 trees that have been found to be cut down from unsheltered individuals using them to try to cross Mill Creek. This is in addition to the 100 trees reported cut down from unsheltered individuals in October used to make fires, barriers and campsites. They are working with the Stormwater Division to try to remove these trees from Mill Creek.

Chair McDowell wondered what discussions are happening regarding options for restoration of damaged areas. Ms. Kellar explained that the plan is to wait until the Emergency Declaration is

no longer in place and then quantify the damage and start the planning process to rebuild. If they start to rebuild now, they risk the same damage occurring again.

Member Norris asked how many of these dangerous situations are being communicated to City Council. Ms. Kellar explained the clean ups are being done with Service Master with Parks staff present as well as Salem Police as necessary. She said Salem Police has been very receptive to being present as needed in those situations. She explained that they are doing self-defense classes for the Parks staff as well to help them when Police are not present. She explained that details and reports are shared to the Public Works Director, and City Manager's office and look to them to share this information with City Council.

Member Alexander asked if Parks Operations has been able to recover some of the additional costs that have come out of their budget due to the growth in unsheltered population in Salem parks. Ms. Kellar confirmed they have been approved for additional vehicles and resources that will help. Ms. Kellar had to leave the meeting early but said she will review any additional questions and dialogue and provide any information needed.

d. Recreation Services Update

No questions or comments regarding Becky George's Recreation Services update.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting is December 10, 2020.

7. New Business

Micki Varney proposed an additional letter to City Council regarding SPRAB's involvement in unsheltered persons camping in Salem parks. Micki expressed concerns about SPRAB not being included in meetings and discussions regarding this topic. Micki Varney and Dylan McDowell will work together on the letter for the meeting next month.

8. ADJOURN

7:36 PM

Minutes: Michelle Starbuck/Toni Whitler