

Agendas and Minutes

City of Ashland



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Parks Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

Minutes

Monday, May 24, 2010

City of Ashland

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

May 24, 2010

ATTENDANCE

Present: Commissioners Eggers, Gardiner, Lewis, Noraas, Rosenthal; Superintendents Dials and Gies

Absent: City Council Liaison Jackson; Director Robertson

CALL TO ORDER

Gardiner called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Ashland Civic Center, 1175 E. Main Street.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[Study Session – April 13, 2010](#)



MOTION Eggers moved to approve the minutes as written. Rosenthal seconded the motion.

The vote was: 4 yes – 0 no [Noraas abstained]

Regular Meeting – April 27, 2010

MOTION Eggers moved to approve the minutes as written. Lewis seconded the motion.

The vote was: 3 yes – 0 no [Noraas and Rosenthal abstained]

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

PARKS IPM POLICY

Gies said the Parks Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policy included three sections: revised policy, guidelines, and pesticide reduction plan for FY 2010-2011. He said the IPM policy would be reviewed in six months and then annually; the guidelines were designed to provide direction for Parks staff in handling and applying pesticides; and the pesticide reduction plan included hiring a volunteer coordinator to organize work crews, reworking fence lines to cut down on spraying, and using wood chips to prevent weed growth. He listed current or impending pesticide-free areas within the parks system including Garden Way Park, the Dog Park, Glenwood Park, the entrance to Lithia Park, and 98% of open space areas. He said the plan would guide staff in making reductions, with a goal toward pesticide elimination. He said Parks was in line with many of the values and practices outlined by the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP). He said one of their guidelines was to start small, with neighborhood parks, and Parks was following that guideline.

Public Input

James Moore, Jr, 1217 Park Street, acknowledged budget constraints and additional workloads but said a progressive community like Ashland needed to set precedents for other communities. He said the current Parks practices were not in line with the Valdez Principles. He said most pesticide labels did not include inert ingredients, which he described as proprietary information held by chemical manufacturers. He asked the commission to review their pesticide practices in terms of stream health.

Frances Dunham, 807 Beach Street, said an uncontrolled experiment was underway and the draft policy did not provide ample notice to park patrons about pesticide applications. She said park users needed to know what was applied, when it was applied, and the contents of each



application. She said pesticides were linked to diseases and ADHD and inert ingredients made up as much as 99% of some products. She urged the commission to reject the draft plan in favor of a plan that would allow Ashland to become pesticide-free.

Allan Peterson, 807 Beach Street, said the issue was not a matter of weeds but of public health. He said many pesticides formerly used were now off the market due to bad effects and he asked the commission to take the lead in eliminating pesticides in Ashland parks. He said exposure to chemicals had long-lasting effects and he asked the commission to set aside the draft plan in favor of a more stringent plan.

Julie Norman, 596 Helman Street, said Donn Todt and Anne Rich eliminated some Tier 1 chemicals but another Tier 1 chemical, glufosinate, was still used in Ashland parks. She said the chemicals at the golf course required careful scrutiny. She suggested providing more written guidance to spray applicators working out of the various Parks shops. She displayed six photographs of sprayed areas at Walker Elementary School and grounds.

Kindler Stout, 130 Orange Avenue, said the Parks Department made the parks look good to people passing by, without thought to the health and safety of children. He called for a moratorium on chemicals in parks and asked the commission to protect children, fish, and animals by implementing a 50-foot buffer along creeks.

Isa Lara Marie, 610 Ashland Street, asked for the total elimination of pesticides in Ashland. She said she worked as an energy medicine practitioner and healer and had patients with chemical sensitivities caused by chemical exposures. She said she was also chemically sensitive and experienced acute neurological symptoms upon exposure to pesticides, which she described as dangerous chemicals. She said Dan Deemer from Arcata, CA, was willing to come to Ashland and work with Parks staff to help with the paradigm shift. She asked the commission to make a difference locally by ceasing pesticide use.

Angie Thusius, 897 Beach Street, said the statement made by Gies about working with NCAP was not accurate, as they recommended using no pesticides. She asked why Parks did not invite NCAP, OSU, and other academics to review the draft policy. She said 207 pesticide applications occurred in Ashland parks in the previous year and she asked why notices were not placed in parks educating the public about those applications. She said pesticides would be prohibited on school grounds by 2012.

John Olson, P.O. Box 972, said the community was asking for zero pesticides and eliminating pesticides was the right thing to do. He asked the commission to do as the community requested and eliminate pesticides.



Noah Sohl, 283 Scenic Drive, speaking as the co-President of Ashland High School, said chemicals were manufactured by big companies like Monsanto, the manufacturer of Roundup (used on school grounds). He said it was important to not support Monsanto and to stop using pesticides around children. He said the pesticide used to kill poison ivy also killed fish and ducks, as runoff went into creeks.

John Ward, 1525 Baldy Creek, a Rogue Fly Fisher, questioned the chemicals used at the golf course. He said glyphosate required a great deal of drift control and he was surprised to learn that so much was used at the golf course. He said the product used to kill blackberries could last in water for three years.

Dan Gregg, P.O. Box 1195, said he did not want his tax dollars spent in supporting Monsanto. He asked the commission to cooperate with the public by eliminating pesticides, taking care of the beautiful surroundings, and serving as stewards of the land.

Bach-Thor, P.O. Box 3587, showed photos of grass burners and other alternative methods for removing unwanted vegetation. He urged the commission to consider using them as alternatives to pesticides. He said the university put dye in their herbicides to alert people about their use. He suggested using natural herbicides like vinegar and he asked for the elimination of all pesticides.

Tom Marr, 955 N. Mountain Avenue, said he met with the Parks Commission in February 2009 to ask for a pesticide-free Parks Department. He spoke with appreciation about the Pesticides Subcommittee and thanked commissioners, staff, and citizens for their efforts.

Rivers Brown, 1067 Ashland Street, a neighbor of Glenwood Park, said he was glad to see pesticide reduction efforts at that location. He said pesticides were found in every body on the planet. He asked how the environment could be saved and global heating slowed if poisonings were not eliminated in one's own backyard. He said it was time to relinquish the pesticide addiction for the sake of the planet.

Niki DelPizzo, 321 Clay Street, outreach director for Lomakatsi Restoration Project, spoke favorably about the work by Parks in removing non-native invasive species, which she described as a threat to the watershed. She said Lomakatsi worked with the school district and Parks over the past six years to teach environmental stewardship to youth groups and community members assisting with removals. She said many significant changes occurred over those six years.

Shannon Clery, 92 Emerick, mother of two young boys, thanked the commission for their work in reducing pesticides and said it was not enough. She asked them to phase out pesticides over the next few years. She said her boys played in parks and along the bike path, which she knew were sprayed without being posted, and said links were found between ADHD and pesticides. She asked them to take a stand and stop using pesticides.



Donna Benjamin, 258A Street, Suite 123, said she had suffered from asthma all her life. She asked how high a price the commission was willing to pay for green grass and asked them to go pesticide free, as health and wellness were of utmost importance. She suggested converting parks into areas for growing food.

Calleen Taylor, 1361 Quincy Street, said she recently moved back to the area and visited local parks with her children, then realized her children's health was adversely affected by those visits. She asked the commission to hear the citizens' voices and let them know they made a difference. She asked them to consider the health of current generations as well as seven generations into the future.

Nora Coolridge, 1040 Linda Avenue, said she moved to Ashland from Santa Barbara four years before. She said Santa Barbara County was pesticide-free within parks, schools, and golf courses. She spoke with surprise that pesticides were used in Ashland, a progressive community, and said she knew it was possible to go pesticide-free in Ashland. She suggested using students to help with non-pesticide maintenance efforts.

Sue Graham, 575 W. Nevada, wrote a letter to the commission that was read into the record by Cate Hartzell: "Please support these pesticide recommendations [from the Rogue Group Sierra Club of April 2010]. It is vital to the health of ourselves and future generations. We need the change now. If not now, when?"

Cate Hartzell, 892 Garden Way, congratulated the commission on their work and said it was not finished. She said the golf course escaped the public process. She spoke in support of the Sierra Club's and Julie Norman's recommendations and said targets needed to be specific. She asked the commission to post 48-hour notices about sprayings and to make the signs educational and artistic for those too young to read. She asked them to put the golf course into the reduction plan and to consider the Valdez Principles before voting on their integrated pest management policy.

Carrie Zoll, 78 N. Mountain Avenue, suggested an alternative to pesticides in the form of a restoration project utilizing mushrooms. She said the public wanted to work with the commission on chemical eliminations and she asked them to reach out and ask for help from the community.

Tom Dimitre, 901 Beach Street, speaking on behalf of the Rogue Group Sierra Club, voiced support for pesticide eliminations in Ashland and said the draft policy was not adequate. He said many chemicals once embraced as safe were later banned due to negative impacts on fish and other living creatures. He said a recent petition was circulated and more than 660 signatures obtained from citizens requesting pesticide-free parks. He asked for minimum 50-foot buffers and pre- and post-application notices. He asked the commission not to approve the draft policy but to send it back with a goal of eliminating pesticides in Ashland.



Ann Barton, 361 Patterson Street, said she had a dream of living in a pesticide-free Ashland that could become an example to the world of a sustained community. She said her puppy played at the North Mountain Park ballfield, ate the grass, and then became ill with seizures. She spoke in support of the change to eliminate pesticides in Ashland parks.

Heather Robinson, 210 California Street, Apt B, said she moved to Ashland from Burlington, VT, a progressive city, and learned that Ashland parks were sprayed with pesticides such as Roundup. She said her daughter had suffered from respiratory issues since November and was found to have high levels of toxicity in her blood. She asked the commission to eliminate pesticides in Ashland parks for the health of the community.

Discussion Among Commissioners

Eggers said she was not in favor of using chemicals that poisoned the earth or humans. She agreed that the golf course required closer examination in terms of chemical applications and spoke with concern about inert ingredients in products. She said she was glad to hear people voicing interest in volunteering to assist with pesticide reductions. She said the existing draft policy was a good start and she was ready to make a motion for approval. She said the commission was committed to listening to new information, reviewing it every year, and working on further reductions and eliminations. She spoke of her grave concern about the environment in terms of invasive non-natives and said they might be one example where pesticides could be useful.

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MOTION Eggers moved to adopt the IPM policy as presented. Gardiner seconded the motion.

Discussion Among Commissioners

Gardiner said the commission was striving to become pesticide-free and the current version of the policy was a logical progression toward that goal. He said the commission's intention was to learn from the community.



Noraas said the Pesticides Subcommittee was formed based on citizen concerns about pesticide use practices. She said citizens asked the commission to reduce pesticide use, include reduction language in the pesticide policy, look at inert ingredients in products used, and come in line with city pesticide practices. She said those requests were honored, a subcommittee formed, and many changes implemented. She said the commission chose to **dedicate \$80,000 in the next fiscal year to hire a volunteer coordinator toward a goal of reducing pesticides.** She said the golf course required additional scrutiny and she wanted to look at the 24- or 48-hour signage issue. She said signage following applications was most important. She said there was erroneous information circulating within the community such as the misperception that Parks sprayed lawns when they did not spray lawns. She said Ashland Parks used fewer pesticides than other communities.

Rosenthal said the current draft policy was light years ahead of where the commission was fifteen months prior. He suggested amending the policy to include 48-hour postings (educational signage), 50-foot buffers, and discontinuing the use of Tier 1 chemicals in Ashland parks, with all changes reviewed in six months.

Lewis thanked the subcommittee for their work on the draft policy and the public for their input. He said the draft IPM policy was a good faith effort toward reductions and eliminations of pesticides. He said the draft also brought the commission in line with city practices and policies. He said the Volunteer Coordinator would provide assistance with pesticide reductions and the policy would be reviewed in six months and then annually. He said the Parks Department was only one group in the city using pesticides and encouraged proactive citizens to talk with their neighbors and promote community-wide pesticide reductions. He agreed with the concept of increasing notice from 24 hours to 48 hours, implementing a 50-foot buffer, and reevaluating pesticide use at the golf course. He spoke in support of adopting the policy and reducing pesticides immediately.

Eggers suggested posting spray notices on the City of Ashland Web site to notify the public of their occurrences.

MOTION TO AMEND Eggers moved to amend the motion to include 48-hour pre- and post-application notification for all applications. Gardiner seconded the amendment to the original motion.

The vote was: 5 yes – 0 no

MOTION Rosenthal moved to approve the guidelines with the change of implementing a 50-foot buffer. Noraas seconded the motion.

The vote was: 5 yes – 0 no



MOTION Noraas moved to adopt the IPM reduction plan with a specific goal of looking at pesticide use at the golf course and possible areas of reduction. Eggers seconded the motion.

The vote was: 5 yes – 0 no

NORTH MOUNTAIN PARK DOG TRAIL

Dials said the commission voted, in 2005, to amend the city's dog ordinance and allow dogs on leashes in "dog friendly areas" within city-managed lands, including one trail section within North Mountain Park. She said signs at the park were confusing, as some signs directed patrons toward the area along which dogs were allowed while others indicated that dogs were not permitted in city parks. She said Nature Center staff frequently communicated with dog walkers near the Nature Center to ask them to remove their pets from unauthorized areas. She said Nature Center staff suggested discontinuing allowing dogs in all areas of the park to eliminate such confusion. She said dog walkers would still have the option of traveling from North Mountain Avenue to the Village Square subdivision via Village Green Drive. Gies said staff could install three additional "no dog" signs and remove the signage showing the area through which dogs could pass.

Discussion Among Commissioners

Commissioners agreed that the dog signage at the park was confusing for park patrons and caused problems for staff. They discussed reevaluating the issue of dogs in city parks. Rosenthal said banning dogs from the short trail section would not keep dogs out of the park.

MOTION Eggers moved to honor the request of North Mountain Park Nature Center staff and discontinue allowing dogs on the trail section. Lewis seconded the motion.

The vote was: Eggers, Gardiner, Lewis, Noraas – yes
Rosenthal – no

UPPER CLAY STREET PARK STORMWATER REQUIREMENTS

Gies said the commission heard a presentation from landscape architect Kerry KenCairn at the May 17 study session in which she said the Rogue Valley Community Development Commission (RVCDC) housing project located near the upper Clay Street park property would require an onsite stormwater handling system and there was not adequate space on RVCDVC land to accommodate it so they asked to place it on Parks property. He said the commission chose to allow it in exchange for RVCDC funding KenCairn's planning services for the park. He said planning services would include public meetings and the arrangement would eventually require City Council approval for the easement needed by RVCDC on Parks property.



MOTION Lewis moved to direct staff to proceed with the agreement with RVCDC for the bioswale area in exchange for RVCDC providing master planning services. Rosenthal seconded the motion.

The vote was: 5 yes – 0 no

NEW BUSINESS

FOREST LANDS COMMISSION – PARKS COMMISSION POSITION

Gies said Noraas's term as Parks Commission representative on the Forest Lands Commission was completed. He asked the commission to appoint a new representative.

Noraas agreed to serve on the Forest Lands Commission throughout the remainder of her Parks Commission term (through December 2010).

SUB-COMMITTEE and STAFF REPORTS

Gies reported that slack line posts were recently placed at Triangle Park. He said staff and the commission received one letter of complaint from a neighbor. Noraas reported speaking to the neighbor about the concerns.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

None

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- Study session set for June 21 at 7:00 p.m., Parks office, 340 S. Pioneer Street.
- Regular meeting set for June 28 at 7:00 p.m., Ashland Civic Center, 1175 E. Main Street.

ADJOURNMENT– By consensus, with no further business, Gardiner adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m.









Respectfully submitted, Susan Dyssegard, Ashland Parks and Recreation Department

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