

MINUTES
Warrenton City Commission
Joint Parks Advisory Board Meeting
August 9, 2021

4:00 p.m.

Warrenton City Hall - Commission Chambers
225 S. Main
Warrenton, OR 97146

Mayor Balensifer called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Mayor Henry Balensifer, Tom Dyer, Gerald Poe, Mark Baldwin, and Rick Newton

Parks Advisory Committee Members Present: Ron Dyer, Chair Sara May Long, Bert Little, Carol Snell, and Brooke Terry

Staff Present: City Manager Linda Engbretson, Public Works Office Assistant Hallie Sweet, Public Works Director Collin Stelzig, Public Works Operations Manager Kyle Sharpsteen, and Deputy City Recorder Rebecca Sprengeler

Brief introductions were made by all in attendance.

ADVISORY BOARD REPORTS

ADVISORY BOARD BUSINESS ITEMS - None

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mayor Balensifer reviewed the agenda and noted he would like to discuss ball field policies and design and installation of park signs. City Manager Linda Engbretson mentioned memorial benches and memorials for discussion. Parks Advisory Board Chair Sara May Long requested to add Forest Rim and park signs for fundraising discussion. Mayor Balensifer added ballfield policies, park signs design and installation, park owner's association enforcement, memorial benches, and memorials to the "Park Policies" discussion. He added fundraising and concessions to the "Park Revenue" discussion. He also added Forest Rim and the Peterson lot proposal to the "Park Use" discussion.

Ms. Engbretson discussed the need for policy clarification for ballfield use. She discussed the evolution of Warrenton Kids Inc. becoming a de facto park operator. Mayor Balensifer discussed concerns brought to him by Mark Simenson about scheduling the ballfields. Public Works Office Assistant Hallie Sweet confirmed the normal scheduling is through Astoria Parks and Recreation, while unofficial games and practices are scheduled through City of Warrenton Public Works. She discussed the current scheduling process is for coaches to call on Wednesday for two practices the following week and Friday they can call again for any additional practice slots.

Mayor Balensifer noted his opinion is that available fields, regardless of designation, should be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. He noted the fields are public and not owned by coaches or organizations. He discussed issues caused scheduling fields by designation. He noted his opinion is that, unless there is a league game in need of specific field requirements, the fields should not be scheduled by designation. Ms. Engbretson noted there are two fields designated for hardball and two for softball. Ms. Sweet noted the hardball fields have a mound that is removeable. Ms. Engbretson asked the group if the hardball fields should be available for softball if not being used. Ms. Sweet discussed scheduling the fields this past year, noting she would like to see consistent schedule requests on a monthly or weekly basis. Mayor Balensifer noted his concern is fair use of the fields to maximize use. Commissioner Baldwin discussed concerns about injuries and field damage if older kids play on a tee ball field and vice versa. Ms. Sweet noted tee ball teams usually practice on the soccer fields. Parks Advisory Board member Ron Dyer noted the tennis courts could be used when the fields are wet. He discussed field suitability for different age groups, noting the removeable mounds and base lengths. Discussion followed. Mr. Dyer noted concerns about maintaining the grass infields on field 2. He suggested keeping the dirt fields 1, 3, and 4 available for everybody, but protect field 2 from overuse. Parks Advisory Board member Bert Little noted concerns about frequently removing the mounds causing unnecessary wear and inconsistent distances. There was discussion about base distances on each field. Mayor Balensifer recognized Mr. Simenson to speak on the field policy. Mr. Simenson discussed his thoughts. He recognized the efforts to maintain the grass fields. He noted grass is not required for hardball and noted it is not appropriate to designate fields by gender. He noted 3 hardball teams on two fields and 11 softball teams on two fields this year. He noted his opinion on the policy is that there is unfair distribution of the fields. Warrenton Kids Inc. board member Tabitha McGrorty noted fields should not be designated by gender, but by softball and baseball. She noted the issue this past year was overlapping team schedules caused by COVID. She noted most softball fields are dirt, while most baseball fields have grass infields. She discussed past experience with Warrenton Kids Inc., noting it was pushed that field 2 was only for baseball. She noted frustration about lack of field space and explained many kids participate on multiple teams. She commented on the existing policy that she likes the convenience of schedule weekly. She feels they have done a good job of maintaining the fields and feels it is beneficial for the baseball players to have experience playing on grass. She stated Warrenton Kids Inc. is able to work with the City. She feels there is an even number of baseball and softball fields. Mayor Balensifer noted the City is not subject to Title IX, but are held to non-discrimination and equal access laws. Commissioner Baldwin discussed the development of the softball field by parents and agreed with Ms. McGrorty that there are an equal number of fields for girls and boys. He feels access to the fields should be first come, first served. Mayor Balensifer asked if there is a written policy related to ballfield access. Ms. Engbretson responded she does not believe there is one. Mayor Balensifer suggested codification of or a resolution for a field use policy. There was discussion about scheduling this past year. Mayor Balensifer posed that the fields, for practice purposes, should have a policy that is equal access, first come, first served, regardless of the field's purpose. Ms. Engbretson asked for clarification if hardball teams can call for softball fields and vice versa. Mayor Balensifer noted it should be the caller's responsibility to know and provide the field number they want regardless of what kind of team they are. Mayor Balensifer called for a hands poll.

MINUTES

Warrenton City Commission

Joint Parks Advisory Board Meeting – 8.9.21

Page: 2

First come, first served, separated by type of activity: 6

Equal access regardless of type of field: 0

The general consensus was to have field use be first come, first served, separated by type of activity. Commissioner Baldwin suggested rotating the fields between users and feels scheduling a month in advance should not be allowed. He noted his opinion is that it should be scheduled on Mondays with a limit of two days, with extra days for pickup available on Fridays and have any field available after that point. Commissioner Poe commented on using the high school fields for practice in the past. Ms. Engbretson asked if after a certain date any field would become available if not used. There was agreement. Mayor Balensifer noted the dates will need to be codified and a public hearing will need to be held. Chair Long agreed with Ms. McGrorty that the grass infield on field 2 should be protected. She noted the baseball players going into high school should get to experience playing on the grass field. Ms. Engbretson noted the policy will be introduced in a public form. Brief discussion followed.

Chair Long noted she would like to revisit discussion about the wooden trailhead signs and the Triangle Park sign. She asked the Commission for a status update and next steps to move forward. Mayor Balensifer noted delay on the Triangle Park sign; it is subject to the districting proposal, then a theme needs to be developed. Mr. Little and Chair Long discussed simple wooden trailhead sign developed by RARE (Resource Assistance for Rural Environments) participant Morgan Murray. Mayor Balensifer briefly discussed State Park sign design. Ms. Engbretson noted issues with finalizing the signs. Mr. Stelzig noted it was never finalized. Mayor Balensifer asked if this needs to be contracted, noting Spruce Up Warrenton's work on the Fire Department Sign. It was noted Dennis Thomas did the Community Library and Fire Department signs. There was discussion about purchase orders versus bid process for the sign. Commissioner Newton noted the labor cost for the library sign and his donation of wood. Chair Long recalled the rush to finish the project that influenced the decisions. Mayor Balensifer noted he would like to see it costed out and brought to the Parks Advisory Board, noting it does not need to be fancy. Ms. Engbretson noted the decision was previously made and she will follow up on this. Mayor Balensifer noted the Triangle Park sign is in the CIP (Capital Improvement Program) for this year. Mr. Little discussed the vision for Triangle Park sign to see it stand out and show unity between Warrenton and Hammond. Commissioner Newton asked about repainting the "Welcome to Warrenton" sign on Highway 101. Mayor Balensifer noted the sign is not in a park.

Mayor Balensifer briefly discussed recent development and the need for a codified method to require developers to establish deed restrictions and a POA (park owner's association) for maintenance when lots are sold. He stated either a clear process needs to be delineated and codified, or legal needs to be able to provide an opinion that can be adopted in resolution form. Brief discussion followed about challenges. Mayor Balensifer restated the need for a clearer process for the City and developers. He requested this be put on legal's radar. Commissioner Newton noted play equipment standards. Discussion followed. Chair Long summarized the requirements for developers to build and maintain parks to City standards. Mayor Balensifer discussed recreational immunity. Ms. Engbretson noted potential pushback from developers

MINUTES

Warrenton City Commission

Joint Parks Advisory Board Meeting – 8.9.21

Page: 3

about cost. Commissioner Newton noted park equipment costs. Mayor Balensifer noted the intention is to create pocket parks. Brief discussion followed. Chair Long noted she would like to see parks similar to the pocket parks in Coast Guard housing. There was brief discussion about quality of equipment. Chair Long discussed establishing a certified volunteer to do park inspections. Mayor Balensifer noted his support for certification of a staff member to do park inspections. Mr. Stelzig agreed and noted it may be good to have a Parks Advisory Board member involved too. Brief discussion continued.

Mayor Balensifer briefly discussed issues with memorial benches. Ms. Engbretson noted the current application and discussed issues with placement including the attraction of transients, illegal activity, and vandalism causing hardship for the surrounding homeowners. Mayor Balensifer noted his opinion is that memorial benches have a right to be within the parks system. He asked if specific locations are requested on applications. Ms. Engbretson confirmed locations are sometimes requested. She noted her opinion is that it should be staff's decision to approve locations based upon access, maintenance, neighbors, etc. Mayor Balensifer discussed issues with the bench at the kayak dock. He noted he is not a fan of putting "gravestones" in the parks because it creates a sense of ownership. He noted his concern is that it will create operational issues and feels named memorials should be on permanent facilities. He noted he would like staff to have the ability to move or temporarily remove benches if necessary. Commissioner Dyer noted a city that uses cement tables and benches that are easier to clean. Mayor Balensifer asked if the use of memorial benches should continue or if the policy should be amended to clarify that placement locations are not specific. Chair Long noted in the past there were preset locations and feels staff should be involved in placement. She noted preset locations worked well especially for easy advertising. Discussion followed about locations outside of city parks. Mayor Balensifer suggested notifying property owners prior to placement of benches in front of their property. He noted he also likes the idea for preset locations. Ms. Sweet noted there is a pending application. Chair Long suggested allowing applicants to request a specific park. Ms. Engbretson suggested having staff provide a recommendation for each request. Mayor Balensifer noted he would like a caveat in the application that memorials can be moved within their placement area. Ms. Engbretson noted the memorial becomes a property of the City. Mayor Balensifer noted the need for clarification of bench ownership in the application language. Chair Long suggested a policy acknowledgement for applicants to sign. Mr. Stelzig read the current memorial policy. Commissioner Dyer noted he likes retaining the ability to move memorials. Discussion continued about a signed acknowledgment. Chair Long agreed with using concrete because it is easy to clean, difficult to vandalize, and uncomfortable to sleep on.

Chair Long noted after finishing the master plan the Parks Advisory Board would like to focus on fundraising. She noted concerns about management of raised funds. She noted the board's concern is getting money for maintaining what they already have. She discussed holding a corn hole tournament fundraiser and would like guidance for use of the funds raised. Ms. Engbretson noted it would be general fund money and staff can work with the Parks Advisory Board to designate the funds to the capital reserve fund via resolution. Mayor Balensifer agreed the event revenue should be earmarked for parks and has no issue with giving the Parks Advisory Board authority to manage the funds. Ms. Engbretson noted the Finance Director can work with the board. Chair Long noted the desire to ensure funds can be applied to maintenance. She also noted

MINUTES

Warrenton City Commission

Joint Parks Advisory Board Meeting – 8.9.21

Page: 4

concerns about liability and other requirements for events like raffles and kayak rentals. Commissioner Dyer suggested a tax levy for park maintenance. Brief discussion followed. Mayor Balensifer offered suggestions to Chair Long: 1) the Parks Advisory Board run the event and work with staff or 2) leverage the partnership with the Chamber of Commerce to free up City staff. He discussed the benefits of the Chamber of Commerce. Chair Long noted the tournament could be done 3-4 times a year based upon interest levels. Ms. Engbretson suggested adding a barbecue. Chair Long mentioned the addition of a bounce house for kids. She discussed having a raffle for the first cornhole event. Ms. Engbretson noted successful raffle events at the Community Center. Commissioner Baldwin suggested having the cornhole boards sponsored. Chair Long noted the importance of standard, quality equipment. Commissioner Newton discussed Adam Israel's experience with cornhole events. Mayor Balensifer noted the Chamber of Commerce has great outreach potential and a volunteer network. Ms. Engbretson noted she will reach out to the insurance company and Finance Director about requirements for the event. Mayor Balensifer suggested inviting the Chamber of Commerce to the next Parks Advisory Board meeting. Discussion followed about scheduling the event. Chair Long noted she would feel more comfortable having more time to prepare and promote the event rather than rushing for this year. There was discussion about having the boards on the tennis courts, additions to the event, and variations. Mayor Balensifer noted there are great ideas and feels it will be successful. Mr. Dyer asked about having cornhole pads available in the parks year-round. Chair Long discussed the idea for permanent cornhole slabs. She also discussed working with the Warrenton Community Library to have a "library of things" like cornhole boards and tennis rackets. Commissioner Newton noted a cornhole set the Parks Advisory Board can borrow.

Ms. Engbretson briefly discussed the concession stand. She noted VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) has been running it for about four years. Mr. Little clarified the history, noting permission was given by Warrenton Kids Inc. Ms. Engbretson noted VFW does a great job, but it was not Warrenton Kids Inc.'s permission to give. She further explained the City is paying the utilities and maintenance for the facility and noted the need for consideration of a policy for concession stand use. Commissioner Baldwin noted his opinion is that it does not seem right to charge a fee for concession stand use. Ms. Engbretson noted there have been past concession stand agreements. Mayor Balensifer noted the purpose of the stand is for nonprofits or groups to hold fundraisers, but the City still has due diligence to ensure the facility's longevity. He noted he does not feel charging a fee is unreasonable to ensure maintenance. Commissioner Dyer noted VFW does a wonderful job and stated if the wheel is not broke don't try to fix it. Mr. Little discussed efforts by VFW to meet health department requirements and noted concerns about moving their equipment out if other groups want to use the stand. Ms. Engbretson discussed past concession agreements to address multiple groups using the stand. It was noted there is no existing agreement between VFW and the City. Mayor Balensifer stated it is a public facility first and foremost. He thanked VFW for their work and repairs to the facility and noted other groups should have free and full access to use of the facility. He noted the current monopoly on use of the public facility and suggested an agreement be put out for proposals by organizations to pose what is in the highest best public use interest. Brief discussion followed. There was brief discussion about separate fees for food vendors and nonprofit groups. Commissioner Newton noted he feels that VFW's consistent operation of the concession stand is valuable and benefits many people. He noted he does not want to dissuade their work and stated he is not prepared to

MINUTES

Warrenton City Commission

Joint Parks Advisory Board Meeting – 8.9.21

Page: 5

make a decision at this time. Commissioner Baldwin noted concerns about losing volunteers and does not agree with charging people that are taking care of the facility. Ms. Engbretson suggested the policy allow nonprofits to bid to use the concession stand at no cost. Brief discussion followed. Chair Long noted she understands the need for a written policy. She suggested an agreement that outlines maintenance responsibilities and gives VFW exclusive use until a time they no longer want to use it. She noted the soccer field agreement. Commissioner Dyer suggested providing utility costs to the organization using the facility or donating the use of the facility to the organization. Mayor Balensifer noted the importance of creating an agreement to outline responsibility of facility maintenance. He noted discussion about monetizing parks to encourage people to use unutilized spaces and fundraise for maintenance of those facilities. He noted the City is essentially subsidizing one organization's fundraising activities and restated the need for an agreement outlining facility use. He noted current lack of funds to rebuild or repair the concession stand. Commissioner Newton complimented VFW's organization. Mayor Balensifer clarified the discussion is not to place value on one organization over another, but about park revenues and activities. He noted there is general consensus on the need for an agreement. Mr. Little made comments on VFW's community contributions. Ms. Engbretson asked for clarity about other nonprofit groups using the concession stand. There was continued discussion about the need for a clear policy. Chair Long noted if VFW is granted exclusive use of the concession stand, they should not have exclusive food sales in the parks. Brief discussion continued. There was discussion about multiple nonprofits using the parks. Brief discussion followed. Chair Long suggested separate policies for use of the concession stand and other food vendors in the parks moving forward. Mayor Balensifer restated the need for an agreement and noted he is okay with the Parks Advisory Board being involved with developing the policies. Chair Long noted the board would like to look at the policy to ensure it does not prevent future fundraising opportunities or harm existing community relationships. Parks Advisory Board member Brooke Terry suggested the agreement allow the City to revoke the use of the concession stand from future groups if not operated to a certain standard and outline the process for other groups' requests for use. Commissioner Newton suggested the agreement include a clause for operation standards. It was noted the agreement would be between the City and VFW. Ms. Engbretson noted that Warrenton Kids Inc. has been a wonderful group but is not in charge of the park. Ms. McGrorty discussed the history of the relationship between Warrenton Kids Inc. and the City. She noted vague direction for park and concession stand use. She also noted concerns about the City's intentions around creating a concession stand policy. Mayor Balensifer discussed the agreement with the senior center meal site at the Community Center. He noted the City Commission decided to subsidize this because it is a social good. Discussion followed. Mayor Balensifer noted he would like a policy for liability protection for both parties involved. Discussion continued. Parks Advisory Board member Carol Snell asked about increasing SDC (Systems Development Charge) fees. Mayor Balensifer noted SDC requirements. Discussion followed. Commissioner Newton discussed additional clauses to the agreement. Ms. Engbretson noted an agreement will be drafted and shared with VFW and brought to the Parks Advisory Board. Chair Long asked what time of the year VFW uses the concession stand. Mr. Little noted March – July, weather dependent. Mayor Balensifer suggested asking VFW if they would be interested in running the concession stand for other events. Brief discussion followed. Chair Long agreed with Mayor Balensifer and suggested an addition to the agreement to either request or require VFW to run the concessions stand for other events in the park.

MINUTES

Warrenton City Commission

Joint Parks Advisory Board Meeting -- 8.9.21

Page: 6

Chair Long noted an area near the Pacific Rim apartments that has potential to become useable greenspace. Mr. Little discussed his vision for the park including parking, fencing, and a basketball court. He suggested requesting Camp Rilea remove the dirt and store it on the Peterson property. Commissioner Baldwin noted concerns about foreign objects in the dirt in that area. Brief discussion followed. Ms. Engbretson noted an existing, approved plan and funding for a different little park at Forest Rim. She noted she would like to proceed with this before expanding. Chair Long discussed the vision for the area, noting the intention for it to be low maintenance and usable space in addition to the pocket park. Mr. Stelzig noted concerns about the amount of dirt to be moved. Mayor Balensifer noted this will take several years. Ms. Engbretson noted this is something that can continue to be discussed but there is no funding allocated right now. Mayor Balensifer agreed to complete pending projects first and continue this conversation. Chair Long would like to start the ball rolling by clearing the dirt. Commissioner Baldwin suggested placement of materials on airport hill. Mayor Balensifer noted there is an agreement to see phase 1 hashed out first and continue the conversation on phase 2 and 3. Commissioner Newton asked if this work would be a prevailing wage job. Discussion followed.

Mayor Balensifer discussed the Peterson lot proposal from Spruce Up Warrenton. Chair Long noted the general consensus from the Parks Advisory Board was they were amicable to gazebo but would like to see more information for anything further. Mayor Balensifer discussed maintenance concerns. Chair Long agreed and noted concerns about who will be responsible for the gazebo. Brief discussion followed. Mayor Balensifer discussed the evolution of the project. He noted his opinion is that the Peterson lot is best used as an extension of Quincy Robinson Park and the other side of the wetland as an extension of City Hall for parking. Chair Long briefly discussed a pump track or a BMX track on the Peterson lot. Commissioner Dyer asked about mitigation and fill on the lot. Brief discussion followed. Mr. Dyer noted he likes the parking lot idea. Chair Long noted Spruce Up Warrenton is only interested in the far side of the lot. Mr. Dyer noted he would like a substantially sized gazebo. Ms. Snell asked about other ideas for the lot. Discussion followed. Ms. Engbretson noted the gazebo at Seafarer's Park needs maintenance. Mayor Balensifer discussed Spruce Up Warrenton's discussion for a cover on the tennis courts. He noted his opinion is it would be better to improve something that is already in use. Chair Long noted Spruce Up Warrenton has been advised to review the parks master plan. Mr. Dyer noted a lack of park opportunities for elderly people like step-up stations. Mayor Balensifer noted the community garden, senior meal site, and the paved trails. Mr. Dyer discussed the need to be more inclusive in the parks. Discussion followed about senior park features. Chair Long noted discussion during the master plan was focused on maintenance and noted steps being taken to include more ages in park activities. Mr. Dyer asked why Warrenton does not have a parks and recreation department. Commissioner Newton noted the need for additional parking. Discussion followed. Mayor Balensifer discussed other jurisdiction's parks departments. Ms. Engbretson noted the City of Warrenton's recreation department was cut in the 90's due to lack of funding. Discussion continued. Chair Long asked about the financial benefits of working with Spruce Up Warrenton on the covered tennis courts. Mayor Balensifer noted the group's grant potential as a nonprofit. Chair Long discussed her expectation for a high-quality, long-lasting structure. Discussion followed about funding. Commissioner Baldwin noted the company that built the shop building at Warrenton High School. Chair Long noted concerns of

MINUTES

Warrenton City Commission

Joint Parks Advisory Board Meeting – 8.9.21

Page: 7

child safety and vandalism for a building versus a just a roof. Discussion followed. Mayor Balensifer asked for a poll on whether to pursue the gazebo or improve existing facilities.

Pursue gazebo: 0

Improve existing facilities: 8


The general consensus was to improve existing facilities. Discussion followed. There was brief discussion about the gazebo at the Community Center.

Commissioner Newton noted the new hosts at the dog park. Discussion followed. Chair Long noted concerns about drug-use at the bathrooms in Carruthers Park. Brief discussion followed. Mayor Balensifer reminded the Parks Advisory Board that Chair elections should occur in October.

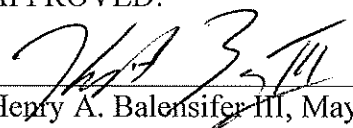
There being no further business, Mayor Balensifer adjourned the joint meeting at 6:19 p.m.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by Rebecca Sprengeler, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:


Dawne Shaw, CMC, City Recorder

APPROVED:


Henry A. Balensifer III, Mayor