

Parks Funding Task Force

November 19, 2020

Meeting Summary

**This written indexed summary of minutes is provided as a courtesy to the reader.
The recorded minutes created pursuant to ORS 192.650(1) are the official minutes of this body under Oregon law.**

The recorded minutes are available on the Lane County Parks website:

http://lcpubw05.lanecounty.org/Information/PW_Parks/PFTF_111920.MP4

Members Present: Janelle McCoy (Chair) , John Clark (Vice Chair), Dale Weigandt, Brad van Appel, James Houghton, Randy Dersham, Art Farley, Scott Coleman, Andy Vobora, Jim Mayo, Don Mathes, Bob Warren, Erika Thessen

Members Absent: Renee Jones, Kevin Shanley

Staff Present: Brett Henry, Ed Alverson, Cynthia Schlegel

Meeting Facilitator: Bob Keefer - SDAO

Elected Officials Present: None

Guests Present: Carolyn Burke - City of Eugene Parks & Open Space Planning Manager, Caitlin Arnot-Copenhaver - Public, Bob Henson - Public

McCoy called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

00:00:33 **Introductions** – Introduction of attendees

00:05:48 **Public Comment** - None

00:06:35 **Approval of October 22, 2020 Minutes**

- Brad van Appel motioned to approve the October minutes, Vobora seconded, motion passed unanimously.

00:09:30 **City of Eugene Parks & Recreation Bond Measures**

- Carolyn Burke gave an informative presentation on the background work that went into the successful passage of two important funding measures for the City of Eugene Parks & Recreation program. Their goal was to utilize the public feedback from the Master Plan to solicit ways to subsidize shortfalls within their parks system which included outdated facilities and safety concerns among other issues.
- In the spring of 2018, the City of Eugene passed a \$49M bond measure and \$3M annual operating levy that were put on the ballot at the same time. Burke's presentation included scenario development (capital funding), City Council sub-committee (operations), polling, and assurances.
- Scenario Development – While creating the System Plan, they realized scenario development was key to building a bond measure package so they began to put together different scenarios. Burke

presented a pie chart to represent the whole of Eugene and a 30-year vision. Efforts were then focused on how much they could accomplish in the next 10 years and what the cost would be to accomplish those goals. Polling was used to find out what the community was most interested in funding and the results informed parks staff on the target amount to solicit to make the improvements. The bond measure then focused on projects where they leveraged funding with their local match, grants, and through facilitating partnerships with stakeholders.

- City Council Sub-Committee – The City of Eugene utilized the expertise of a City Council sub-committee to put together their operational funding package. The sub-committee specifically looked at security and maintenance funding. They began by quantifying the need, identifying categories of spending, and identifying the type activities that would happen in those categories. The defined categories were:
 - Safety and Security
 - Illicit Activity Response
 - General Park Maintenance
 - Natural Area Maintenance
 - Future Maintenance
- The City also recognized the need to secure operational funding for future park maintenance. The sub-committee identified funding mechanisms, how much revenue could be obtained through those mechanisms, and how they would be implemented. Then they looked at how those funding mechanisms aligned with some of the other goals and priorities with the Master Plan.
- Polling – After the sub-committee completed their work, they went conducted public polling through a hired firm. They reached out to approximately 400 people looking at topics such as issue context, bond measure support, operating fee support, voter priorities, alternative funding mechanisms, and messaging. The polling efforts were focused on pinpointing what the public would support and understanding their top priorities.
- Assurances – Built into the funding measures was a resolution that stipulated the use of the funds. They also committed to creating a citizen advisory board to oversee implementation of the bond and levy and to perform annual audits of the bond expenditures.

00:47:08 **Staff Recommendations for Reducing Costs**

- Henry presented a number of cost cutting measures identified by staff to reduce expenditures and create efficiencies. Some of the recommendations are currently being implemented and others are ideas for future implementation.
- The Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA) kick-off meeting with Faithful + Gould was announced for Monday, November 23, 2020. The FCA will inform Lane County Parks on the magnitude of the deferred maintenance which is needed to understand more about the budget shortfall.

01:05:40 **Discuss Funding Options for Different Categories of Parks, Facilities, and Services**

- Keefer presented a memo and led a discussion on potential funding sources for the Lane County parks system for facilities and services. Keefer reminded the Task Force of some of the priorities the group had identified in previous meetings and the pros and cons associated with each. The Task Force had determined routine maintenance and deferred maintenance as priorities. Keefer

stated the funding target for funding routine maintenance and operations is \$3.5M based on information Henry provided in the last meeting. Currently Parks receives about \$1M in discretionary funds through Transient Lodging Tax & Car Rental Tax.

- Keefer summarized a memo that listed the following funding sources (among others):
 - Utility Tax or Fee
 - Solid Waste Fee
 - Local Option Levy
 - Transient Room Tax
 - Public Private Partnerships
 - Public Service District
 - GO Bonds
 - Timber Sales
 - Grants

- Overall the Task Force favored a Local Option Levy which would require a voter approval to increase property taxes. At the last Task Force meeting Henry presented a funding target of \$3.5M annually to properly operate and maintain county parks. To achieve this amount over 5 years, a home assessed at \$200K would pay \$21 per year in increased property taxes over a 5-year period, if the measure were approved. The 5-year levy could be a way of proving that Lane County Parks will put these contributions into action, and if the results are effectively communicated, the county could ask the public for a renewal of the levy.
- Other options favored by the Task Force were Utility Fees, Video Lottery Funds for economic development, and a County Service District. All of these are viable options but either require public vote and/or legal review and approval.
- Christine Moody who is the county's Budget & Financial Planning Manager is scheduled to speak at the next PFTF meeting to discuss how discretionary funding is distributed within County government.

01:49:27 Determine Meeting Date for Next Meeting

- The Task Force agreed the next meeting would be on Jan. 21, 2020.

01:51:19 Task Force Member Comments

- Keefer will review Task Force members' comments and formulate a draft of funding packages for the group to consider.

01:52:00 Identify Action Points for Next Meeting

- The Task Force will discuss community polling at the January meeting.

- Keefer requested the Task Force review the memo he presented with possible funding options and provide additional input, feedback and comments to him in the next couple weeks. At the next meeting, the Task Force will focus on refining the possible funding sources into several packages.

01:53:59 Meeting Wrap-up/Assignments

- More discussion on funding sources and feedback from the memo of funding mechanisms.

McCoy called for Adjournment of meeting – Clark motioned to adjourn, van Appel seconded. Meeting ended at 7:56 p.m.