

The City of Columbia City

In Columbia County on the Columbia River



PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 21, 2023 - 6:00 P.M.

City Hall Council Chambers – 1840 Second Street

Present:

Katrina Claridge, Committee Chair
Mark Gordon, Committee Member
Nell Harrison, Committee Member
Jack Hruska, Committee Member
Micah Rogers, Public Works Superintendent
Mike McGlothlin, City Administrator

Attendees:

Sally Ann Marson, Citizen
Wendy Wells, Citizen & Friends of the Columbia City Community Library Representative
Paulette Lichatowich, Friends of the Columbia City Community Library Representative
Catherine Lundberg, Librarian & Friends of the Columbia City Community Library Representative
Kay Brown, Citizen & President of the Friends of the Columbia City Community Library

Committee Chair, City Councilor Katrina Claridge, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

1. Review of the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for City Parks Projects affecting the CIP; along with a closeout report for the Rivers Walk Trail Project:

The Committee completed the review of the "Parks Projects" portion of the CIP and retained the Bike Path Refurbishment and Improvements Project for the 2023-24 fiscal year, and also added the following projects to the City's CIP: The Veterans Park/Rivers Walk Trail System Parking Project was identified and placed into the 2024-25 fiscal year and the Harvard Park Playground Equipment Improvements Project was identified and placed into the 2026-27 fiscal year.

2. Discussion regarding planning, logistics, and event program for the City's

Memorial Day Ceremony; to be held on May 29, 2023: The City Administrator and the Parks Committee reviewed the program from the 2022 Memorial Day Ceremony and the following suggestions were made for 2023 ceremony implementation: Retain, as much

as possible, the participation of speakers at select locations within the program with veteran experience, the City Administrator was recommended to serve as the event's master of ceremonies, previous Oregon State Representative and Oregon State Senator Betsy Johnson was recommended as a potential candidate to serve as the "Welcome" speaker, Mayor Ziglinski; with Council President Gordon Thistle as a potential back-up, was recommended to lead the event attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, Frank Hupp and Dave Beldon were recognized for their conducting of the Missing Man Table and Honors Ceremony within the program and the City Administrator was asked to include them in the program for 2023, Police Operations Sergeant Jerry Bartolomucci was recommended to serve as a speaker due to his status as a US Air Force veteran, and the City Administrator shared that he had a recommended youth speaker for the portion of the program dedicated to the newest Patriot Pen District Speech Contest Winner.

3. **Status review of City Parks, led by Public Works Superintendent Micah Rogers:** Due to time constraints with an attendee group presentation, this item on the agenda was covered through group discussion with no major issues noted. Superintendent Rogers will facilitate a full discussion of this subject at the next Parks Committee meeting.
4. **Discussion regarding a "community garden" concept at small parks within the City's park system:** This conversation was a continuance of earlier discussions regarding the demands of parks maintenance upon city staff responsible for their upkeep and ways to better manage and maintain the city parks. The City Administrator led the discussion regarding this topic and solicited the thoughts of the committee members present as to what they thought of the idea. The concept was explained as identifying small city parks within the City that are located within neighborhood areas, soliciting and identifying interested residents for the formulation of vegetable/fruit gardens at the locations selected, and the City providing the area within the identified small parks so that this opportunity can be taken advantage of. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Parks Committee said that they supported the overall concept and advised the City Administrator to speak with the City Council about the premise, and if supported, to consider conducting a survey through the city's newsletter for gauging the interest levels of the community.
5. **Other Business:** The Friends of the Columbia City Community Library (FOL) addressed the Parks Committee by representative Wendy Wells reading a letter, dated February 21, 2023 and specific to the FOL's 5-Year Strategic Plan along with their "pausing" of consideration to be granted land to build a library/community hub at the northern end of Bundy Park. A copy of this letter is attached to these minutes, along with a copy of the FOL's "5-Year Strategic Plan 2023-2028" document.

During the discussion, committee member Jack Hruska asked if fire service personnel had researched the availability of property within the current Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) footprint in Columbia City as other possible sites for construction of a fire station. The City Administrator replied that he was unsure if they had done so, but that he would research the question and provide follow up to all involved in the discussions. The City Administrator then reviewed the other possible siting locations that he had knowledge of being explored. No further substantive discussion took place regarding this topic and the City Administrator reiterated that he would provide feedback to those involved in these discussions.

6. **Discussion regarding date for next meeting:** The next meeting of the Parks Committee was scheduled to take place on April 18, 2023 at 6:00 am in the City Hall Council Chambers.
7. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm.



Columbia City Community Library

Connecting community through
friends, service, and books

An all-volunteer library free to county residents

February 21, 2023

Parks Committee
City of Columbia City
P O Box 189
Columbia City, OR 97018

Dear Committee Members:

The Friends of the Columbia City Community Library is a nonprofit organization that has managed and operated the city's community library for 22 years. The library is staffed by volunteers and is a free library without taxpayer support. In March 2022 we established a Strategic Planning Committee with the goal of writing a 5-year strategic plan for a permanent home for a 21st century library and community hub with construction funded by grants and capital campaign fundraising. Attached is a copy of that plan which was completed in December 2022. We are writing you regarding two issues.

Last Thursday we presented our plan to Columbia City Council, and we are in the process of due diligence for an appropriate location for our library and community hub. We are currently evaluating two sites. We have had initial conversations with city administration about a small portion of Bundy Park for the library and at the same time we have ongoing discussions with Caples House Museum owners to obtain or lease a small parcel near the elementary school on 2nd Street.

At City Council meeting we were caught off guard by a presentation by representatives of the Columbia River Fire and Rescue who presented a schematic for building a fire station and emergency response facility at the southern end of Bundy Park and locating the library at the northern end of the park. We had not had any conversations with anyone about this new concept of a fire station and emergency response facility in the park.

After review of the Columbia River Fire and Rescue initial plan presented to the council, we feel that Bundy Park is too important to our community to be industrialized. The park has many assets for our community and the beautification of Highway 30. First it is a greenbelt that is bookended by the Veterans Park and the Marson Rose Garden and gives identify to the city. Second, large trees serve as a noise barrier from highway traffic to the residential neighborhoods adjacent to the park. Third, native plants such as trillium and other species are natural features of that landscape. And fourth, the park is used by dog walkers and people for health benefits.

We wanted to present you with a copy of our strategic plan and to let you know that we have decided to pause our due diligence for use of Bundy Park for the library and community hub.

When you read our strategic plan note that we anticipate building the library and hub using grants available to us. We discuss the need for some taxpayer funding in our library budget, so we qualify for library status with the State of Oregon. You can imagine how important that is for having the latest features and additional financial support as a state recognized library.

One way the Parks Committee could assist us is by applying for grants for park maintenance staff, grants for paths and trails, and grants for operating expenses of these facilities. Those grants are readily available and would free up the current tax funded budget dollars for use in other city needs and perhaps assign a small portion of those dollars for library operations. Friends of the Library plan to continue to do the heavy lifting for fundraising for the capital campaign and operating expenses.

As a side note, the 2022-23 City Budget, Parks Development Fund, page 64 states: “designed to finance the construction, extension or enlargement of parks and recreational facilities.” We feel that by working with us to locate grants to enhance your operations can benefit both Friends of the Library and the City.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this information to you.

Best Regards,

5-Year Strategic Planning Committee
Friends of the Columbia City Community Library