

# The City of Columbia City

*In Columbia County on the Columbia River*



## **PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES** **FEBRUARY 11, 2025 - 6:00 P.M.** **City Hall Council Chambers – 1840 Second Street**

### **Present:**

Lyle Bluhm, Committee Chair  
Karen Shervey, Committee Member  
Sally Ann Marson, Committee Member  
Nell Harrison, Committee Member  
Katrina Claridge, Committee Member  
Mark Gordon, Committee Member  
Kim Karber, City Administrator  
Micah Rogers, Public Works Superintendent

Lyle called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **Pixie Park Lifejacket Station**

Kit Gardes of 1830 7<sup>th</sup> St and Rosemary Jeffrey of 1420 2<sup>nd</sup> Street asked the Parks Committee to add an action item and budget item to install a life jacket station in Pixie Park, since the City now owns it. Kit went on to explain how Pixie Park is an asset to the City and people from all over, not just Columbia City use it. It is located right on a narrow part of the channel and the surges produced by the ships going by can sweep kids off of their feet and there are drop-offs that change with the seasons and the level of the water. They feel that to be responsible to our citizens and visitors a life jacket station should be provided. Kit named various places that have lifejacket stations and statistics from the Army Corps of Engineers. They already have life jackets to provide for the station. Kit put together a packet with pictures of other life jacket stations, different resources to reach out to, sign estimates, and a sample kiosk design. She mentioned the petition that was passed around in June of 2023 and that they collected over 100 signatures on it and turned those over to the Council. Karen raised the question of who would maintain the station since life jackets have safety standards, no answer at this time. Kim explained that when the subject

was approached before when the Park was not owned by the City the D.A.R. had insurance/liability concerns and that is why they did not okay a station. When Kim talked to the City's insurance agency about putting the station in the right-of-way, they had several liability concerns. It was also brought up that people should not be swimming at Pixie Park at all because of the shipping channel being so close to shore. If we put up a life jacket station where they should not be swimming, it sends contradicting messages. Kit pointed out kids may just be putting their feet in, but when those wakes come in from the ships it can knock them over. Lyle asked what the City's liability is and Kit said there is recreational immunity that has been reinstated for the waterways and her understanding is the City would not be liable. The life jackets would offer them some protection if they are choosing to wade into the water even with all the warning signs. Kim will revisit with the insurance company now that the City owns the park. The committee will look at and discuss Pixie Park at the next meeting for different options to take to Council regarding a life jacket station, signs, and items regarding safety.

### **Memorial Day Celebration**

The Committee discussed the Memorial Day Program and offered different suggestions on who we could have as speakers. Everyone will also be putting the word out that we are looking for people from the different branches to raise the flags - they do not have to currently be active.

### **Develop proposed project list for the draft 2025-26 Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan**

After reviewing the project list, the five-year plan is as follows:

- Harvard Park Playground Equipment Improvements Project in budget year 2025-26
- Parks Master Plan in budget year 2025-26
- Veteran's Park/Rivers Walk Trail System Parking Project in budget year 2026-27
- Bike Path Refurbishment and Improvements in budget year 2028-29
- Basalt Rock Relocation in budget year 2028-29

### **Other Business**

- Mark Gordon brought up a suggestion for the possibility of a community service program between our Municipal Court system and working in the Parks. Micah said he is open to it. They will discuss it more to go over the details.
- Kim explained that the Parks Masterplan RFP will be going out Friday. After the deadline for turning RFPs has passed, we will need to review the proposals. Several members volunteered to help with that.

**The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.**