



City Parks Advisory Board – Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, December 6, 2023 – 4:00 P.M.  
520 E. Cascade Avenue, P.O. Box 39, Sisters, OR 97759

City Parks Advisory Board Attendees:

Board Members: Eli Madrone, Emily Curtis, Doug Buell, Emily Coonrod, Asa Sarver  
Absent: Molly Baumann, Nancy Connolly, Gary Ross  
Council Representative : Jennifer Letz  
Staff: Scott Woodford, CDD Director  
Visitor: Jennifer Holland, SPRD Representative  
Recording Secretary: Carol Jenkins

I. CALL TO ORDER

*Board Chair Madrone* called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm. A quorum was established.

*Board Member Sarver* made a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

*Board Member Buell* seconded the motion. Motion passes.

II. VISITOR COMMUNICATION

Nancy Bright, 69860 Camp Polk Rd., Sisters, OR 97759

*Nancy Bright* stated that she has gardened at the Sisters Community Garden for 10 seasons since August 2012. Julie and Benny Benson have generously hosted the Sisters Community Garden. That has changed and they have asked us to find a new site in October of this year, 2023. We could not find a garden space for the 2024 gardening season, but the deadline was extended one (1) year, so we feel like we have some breathing room. The extension provides little breathing room and still need a new site. We need a commitment for a new site before we can write grant applications, finalize the garden design, plan the move, seek donations of time and materials, schedule the building of the deer fence, install irrigation, move the raised beds, move the green house, etc. Sisters Community Garden is a 501C3 funded non-profit and entirely volunteered. Rental fees, fund raisers, and a few donations are the only income, but it is sufficient to pay for maintenance and improvement costs.

*Ms. Bright* continued to say that our sense of community is strong and infectious, and we work together for common goals raising vegetables, flowers, and keeping the garden maintained. We talked about our failures and successes, shared tricks and protect the gardens from early and late frosts. We share the ups and downs of our lives, we become friends and newcomers can grow roots to the Sisters community. All ages are comfortable and welcome from newborns, teens, young adults, to families, to retirees. She is asking the Board to put the

relocation of the Sisters Community Garden on the Agenda early and 2024 and take the next step toward moving the Sisters Community Garden onto city parks property – we need land.

Mimi Schaefer, Sisters Community Garden

*Ms. Schaefer* stated that the Sisters Community Garden was not allocated garden space in the SPRD proposed outdoor lease. They hope that the Parks Board will seriously consider giving the garden a place on an upcoming agenda early next year because without a firm site, it is difficult to apply for grants or begin fundraising. Last month, they proposed a design for a Sun Ranch Park Garden and will have a design ready in January showing how our garden might look in Cliff Clemens Park. It is an enhancement to the City as a whole, and a luxury for people to come and plant plants in a city sponsored or a community sponsored area. We have about 50 gardeners now and it is a place that people like to come to and have lunch, catch up, and we even get requests to have receptions for weddings, etc. She asked that the Board put them on the agenda as soon as possible.

*Board Chair Madrone* stated that it has been on the agenda a couple of times and is on the Boards radar as we move into 2024 as well.

*Director Woodford* stated that we have been communicating back and forth with the Community Garden representative – Janie Boyle. We had some initial comments when they first put this proposal forth to the city and have been talking about it internally as staff – the Public Works Director, Finance Director, City Manager, and getting everyone up to speed on this. It participated in some questions that we had of the group that we did share with the group and they responded back to us – how does the reservation system work and is it just open to the City of Sisters residents, prepared a site plan of how it would fit on the site (Sun Ranch), questions if this would fit on the site at one time, and they prepared a very nice site plan. Another big question is about the mechanics of the agreements between the city and a non-profit to run these things. We are going to do some research from other communities, but we have not finished that research yet. The plan is to bring it back in February 2024 with more information, the Board will take the first crack at it, and then run it through the City Council as well. It is good to know the timeline they are on and the quicker the better to get some feedback and resolution.

*Board Chair Madrone* thanked all the people that sent in messages as well and the community values it a great deal.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 4, 2023.

*Board Member Sarver* made a motion to approve the minutes for October 4, 2023, as presented.

*Board Member Coonrod* seconded. Motion passes.

IV. STAFF

- a. Review of 2023 CPAB Accomplishments
- b. What to expect in 2024 for CPAB.

*Board Chair Madrone* wanted to say thank you to Emily Curtis for her contribution to the Parks Master Plan and all the efforts she put in to make that happen. He stated that he learned a great deal about the whole process, about Sisters, about Planning, and appreciates everything that she did.

*Director Woodford* stated that he wanted to echo that as well and having her on those project management team meetings was very valuable through the process, and to get the inside to what the Parks Board is thinking in terms of the Parks Master Plan where she was able to relay the information she learned back to the group.

*Director Woodford* stated that he wanted to keep continuity going with this group and Board Chair Madrone thought it would be a good idea to discuss what was accomplished in 2023 and use it as an opportunity to talk about what is on the plate for 2024. To hear thoughts from the Board about things that they would like to see put on the agendas, or other projects, and things to consider.

CPAB 2023 Accomplishments:

- Parks Master Plan (CPAB Rep. Contribution).
- Update on the Whychus Creek Restoration of planting native riparian and wetland plants; Engineered riffles to improve fish habitat; Retrofit the footbridge to be ADA accessible; Reduced Erosion with dedicated access points; Fencing of riparian area; Outreach signs.
- Reviewed Creekside Park Memorial.
- Creekside Park Signage.
- Arbor Day Tree Planting Assistance.
- Reviewed Urban Camping Regulations.
- Reviewed Dog Park. East Portal Location.
- Preliminary Review of Sisters Community Garden Proposal.
- Regular Updates from SPRD.

CPAB 2024 – What to Look Forward To:

- Arbor Day – Planting trees in the park for Arbor Day.
- Dog Park Design and Construction.
- Community Garden.
- Parks SDC's. (Council Adoption).
- Level of Service.
- City Council Goals (NW Park Feasibility?).
- Andrew Dutterer memorial bench to be dedicated by family in July of 2024 Creekside Park (CPAB to be invited).

Other Items:

- Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and how it might affect parks.
- CPAB Adopt a Park/Park Liaison Program.
- What Each of Us Learned about the City of Sisters Parks this Year.
- Interviews for open 2023 CPAB position (four terms during end of 2024).

*Councilor Letz* stated that City Manager, Jordan Wheeler floated the idea to Council to going to a two-year budget and goal cycle instead of a one year which is what we are on right now. That stretches out our goals and locks us into things for a longer period, but it gives us more time and helps flush out larger projects in a two-year period. Another thing that we are going to different this year with Council goals is to have a public forum in January 2024 and the location is not determined yet. Council will be there; the public is welcome to come, and it will be a welcoming environment where people can share ideas and we are trying to engage the public and get more public input on what the community wants us to be working on which is a little bit of a departure from the last two years and will be a nice addition.

V. UPDATE FROM SISTERS PARKS AND RECREATION DISTRICT

*Jennifer Holland, SPRD Representative* stated that we are looking to partner with other local governments or agencies to expand services and better serve the community. There are continued opportunities that arise and there will be some additional ones, etc. We are looking at the Elementary School and designing the eight (8) acres of currently public property but not accessible to the public but will become a public park and there are opportunities to work together as local agencies and will be something to value and appreciate. Partnerships were a priority in the Parks Master Plan, and we want to continue to make sure that is thought of as we continue to go through all these opportunities because we cannot meet all of the goals alone and we need to do it together.

*Councilor Letz* stated that she is excited about the dog park design and being able to see that. We are excited about the transit-center project for our community and is a great asset, but one thing that always plagues transit-oriented centers like that is the use at times where there are times where there are a lot of people and times when nobody is there. In a facility like that, also a park, and having that constant flow of people in and out is important because if there are the quiet times it invites vandalism and having amenities at that site like a dog park could be really adventurous because it is going to be a draw not only for people traveling in and out of the community or through it, but just for locals and keeping a constant presence of people in that space will be a good thing. In regards moving forward considering amenities like a Community Garden – Council with all the housing, we eat lunch every day and everything we do is around housing so one of the tactics is higher density, multi-family, etc. are housing types that do not lend themselves well to having space for gardens, etc. It is a balancing mechanism and high density is great if we can balance it out with what people are not getting if they do not have enough space in a single-family house. We changed the Code for multi-family that those developments need to have storage units on site. In having a Community Garden or dog parks for outdoor spaces is important moving forward, etc. Parks keep us vital and successful.

*Director Woodford* stated that we have been working over the last three (3) years starting with the Comprehensive Plan Update where there is a combination of getting community input for the next 20-years, but also involves technical analyses to plan properly for the future where the Comprehensive Plan looks 20-years out. You base all the planning off what is going to happen in 20-years and to do that, you need to know the population projections and Sisters will double in population in 20-years. You base planning for housing, transportation, water, wastewater, Master Plans and we have done a Housing Needs Analysis which takes the population projections and equates it to a number of housing units that are needed to

accommodate the growth. Our average population per housing unit is about 2.4 people. In looking at the zoning maps, the zoning boundaries and municipal boundaries are the same as the Urban Growth Boundary which every community is required to have an Urban Growth Boundary which is much larger around the municipal boundary and have that 20-year supply of land to grow into. That has not happened in Sisters, and we are getting to the build out stage. We have a handful of medium to large size lots. We put together an Urban Growth Boundary Efficiency Analysis which takes all the numbers and reconciles them with how much land we have left in our existing boundaries to accommodate some of that growth and determines how much we can accommodate. It not only looks at housing but looks at employment lands, Light Industrial, and Commercial that is needed to support the populations as well as the parks needs, Public Works facilities, School District with those needs, etc. We are going to need about 206 – 256 acres of new land in the Urban Growth Boundary to accommodate our 20-year growth projections.

*Director Woodford* stated that as it relates to parks, we had a range of 2 – 19 acres of parkland that was needed based on the Level of Service, etc. The City Council gave us the formal go ahead to start with finding a consultant because it is a heavy lift for a small community, and that is about a 1–2-year process. There will be a lot of opportunities for public comment, public input and we all know that Sisters value that input for understanding why we are doing it and what some of the advantages for doing this advanced planning for our community, etc.

*Councilor Letz* stated that this is a two-phase process – we come up with an expansion where a line is drawn around certain properties around the community, which is the new Urban Growth Boundary, but then each property needs to be annexed into the City and into the city limits separately. It is supposed to be a 20-year inventory that we can access when needed and it will not be a big change overnight because there is infrastructure needed, takes a lot of money, time, and design to get it installed.

*Jennifer Holland, SPRD Representative* stated that things have been super busy at the Park Integration District so just wrapped up the seasons of events. We had three major events – the Car Show, the Downtown Tricker Treating, and the Holiday Palooza. There is a little breathing room before the kid’s carnival which will be in May this year. Most of the time is being taken up looking that the Elementary School site and figuring out what we can and cannot do at that site. We are trying to finalize the lease and are in the middle of conducting a conceptual design process for the outside space. The amount of information that you think people know when starting to do the community engagement – you realize that they do not know, and there are a lot of questions out there which is a good reminder just because information is out there, we do not need to remind people what the information is. A lot of people are surprised to see how much the roundabout will take out of that space and realize that leaves a very awkward shaped space and what you can and cannot do within that space.

*Jennifer Holland, SPRD Representative* stated that she is trying to remind people that SPRD is one of the lowest funded Parks and Recreation Districts in the State, and we are not changing our taxing structure at this point. We would have to resolve as a District and reform as a District which takes a vote of the people and anything that we do, we need to do with sustainability in mind. We would not be able to build anything that would require additional subsidy and we are just leasing this property and anything that we build, we want to make sure that the community gets the return on that investment.

*Jennifer Holland, SPRD Representative* stated that the two engagements nights turned out great. The first night there were 70 people there – a full house. There were a variety of interests from pickleball, community gardens, basketball, baseball, and pool advocates were there as well. The last one is where the consultants took all the information through different matrix with not only feedback on the engagement nights, but also through the surveys and emails that were received. Through that matrix, we were able to come up with some priorities that the developers took and developed a draft concept which includes pickleball, basketball courts, multi-use courts, athletic fields, bathrooms, and walking paths. They will be discussing this draft concept at a Board meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Lastly, the Winter Guide will be in the Nugget on December 20<sup>th</sup> and will cover the months of January through March, and the Spring/Summer Guide will come out sometime in March. We are in the middle of a pre-school redesign to better serve the community based on the need for more full-day care and additional spots to fill some gaps for Sisters.

*Board Member Buell* wanted to thank Jennifer for her hard work and applaud her for the Holiday Palooza, the Parade, and Tree Lighting. It was excellent, our family was there, and it was a very good event.

*Board Chair Madrone* stated that he wanted to bring up that last year, our Chair Dana Bratton asked us to pick a park and be a park liaison to check in on the park and see how it was doing, etc. The group agreed and stated that we would talk about it at the next Board meeting.

*Board Chair Madrone* thought it would be fun to go around and tell each other what they learned about the City of Sisters parks this year. It was a big year, and we went through all of our accomplishments.

*Board Chair Madone* stated that he learned so much about putting things in a Master Plan to make sure they get done eventually even if you are never going to do them – you need to write them down so that you can have money 20-years from now. He talked about the Whychus Creek restoration project and being a 5-year process.

*Board Member Curtis* stated that she learned so much from the Parks Master Plan process and what it takes to look at a 10-year Master Plan at a City level. She is very grateful, found it very insightful, and has a much better understanding because of what is important to the citizens here and what kinds of services and opportunities they are looking for – Pickleball, Dog Park, Community Pool, and Community Gardens.

*Board Member Buell* stated that he would go back to the Master Plan as well because for being new to the Board it was a great opportunity to get the breath of all the city parks and know the private parks as well. Also, what is at each one and the priority of the future. That was a great accomplishment and applaud everybody that worked on that.

*Board Member Coonrod* stated that the big learning came when she read the Master Plan early on and joining this group where the statistics referenced earlier which was that despite the feeling that we have a lot of parkland in the city – it is well below what the goal would be which was a big surprise to her which attracted her and her husband to move here a year ago. Understanding that and having an opportunity to hear about parks being in that conversation around the Urban Growth Boundary change long-term plan is very satisfying.

*Board Member Sarver* stated that he learned a ton from the Parks Master Plan and what it takes to plan around a city for parks which is very intense. He stated that what he has enjoyed about being part of parks is seeing what the community wants because usually we stay in our lane, and the things that he is interested in and those are the people that he communicates with. He did not know that pickleball was so popular here, and that is just one example because everyone uses parks. Even though it is a small community, there is a lot going on for everybody else.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS / OPEN DISCUSSION

*Director Woodford* discussed the open position on the Parks Board and that it will be announced at the next City Council meeting.

VII. ADJOURN

*Board Chair Madone* adjourned the meeting at 4:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Jenkins, Recording Secretary