

CITY OF ALBANY  
CITY COUNCIL (WORK SESSION)  
Council Chambers  
Monday, March 9, 2009  
4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sharon Konopa called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Councilors present: Councilors Ralph Reid Jr., Bill Coburn, Jeff Christman, Bessie Johnson, Dick Olsen, and Floyd Collins.

Councilors absent: None.

BIKE PARK TASK FORCE REPORT

Recreation Programs Manager Rob Romancier said the Bike Park Task Force grew out of Councilor Bessie Johnson's request to the Parks & Recreation Commission to create something for the youth. The Task Force has met for eleven months and includes parents, skaters, bikers, Police Officers, and other participants.

Romancier said the Task Force has evaluated their vision, bike park concept, and funding options. They have a petition with 250 signatures.

Task Force member Ryan Powell said their vision is simple: to have a safe place where bike riders of all ages and skill levels can practice their chosen sport. The Albany Skate Park by Eleanor Hackelman Park is closed to bikes, and most other riding areas are private property. Bike lanes are next to traffic and unsafe. They want a place to ride where they won't be asked to leave. Bike riders often get overlooked. A bike park doesn't just appeal to the riders, it also allows spectators to be active, walk, and watch the riders. Creating a park would add value to the Albany community and the surrounding area.

Task Force member Josh Thomas said a the bike park would be designed to include something for everyone, young and old, beginner and advanced.

Councilor Jeff Christman arrived at 4:04 p.m.

Task Force member John Van Buskirk said there are two locations they have considered: next to Albany Skate Park and next to the proposed YMCA facility at Timber Linn Park. The benefit of using the Timber Linn site is that the City owns the property and it is close to I-5, so would make promotions and events easier. The downside is that the bowl would require digging and the park has a high water table. It would be more difficult for in-town riders to get across the freeway to the park.

Van Buskirk said, the benefits to the Skate Park location is that a bowl can be dug out more easily, it is closer for kids to get to, and it is easier for Albany Police Department (APD) to enforce. The downside to the Skate Park location is the presence of drugs, the poor reputation of the area, and past conflict between bikers and skaters.

Task Force member Chris Kropf explained that the Task Force will be raising the money themselves. They know the City has financial hardships. They have created a list of community members that could help with concrete and civil engineering, saving \$200,000-300,000.

Administrative Assistant Tari Hayes is a Parks & Recreation employee and a mother of a biker. She said, the Task Force feels strongly about this project and asked if the Council agrees this project is beneficial to the community. She asked, should the Task Force continue pursuing it?

Romancier said, this is a great group to work with and he has learned a lot. The kids are very open and care about this park. They are motivated to make it happen. They know times are tough economically and are not expecting a handout. They would like to use City property if possible. Before proceeding they would like to get the Council's support.

Johnson said her first impression of bikers and skaters was incorrect. A minor percentage of bikers and skaters that cause trouble give all bikers and skaters a bad name. Dealing with these young folks, boys and girls, has been a pleasure. She said it is also a great opportunity for them to experience the democratic process. They have stuck with the Task Force, are dedicated, and understand the concept that they will need to work for this bike park. She asked for the Council's support on their behalf.

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Councilor Bill Coburn said he is supportive, but is concerned about the drugs prevalent at the Skate Park. Romancier said the drug use is not specifically attributed to the skaters or bikers, but more so to the transient population at the park. Hopefully with more lights and with folks using the park, drug activity would eventually subside. APD would like to install cameras which feed directly to APD, which the kids support. Also, there seems to be less conflict between the bikers and skaters.

Task Force member Evan Abernathy described the difference between a bike park and a skate park and how obstacles are worked into the design.

Hayes said the reason the Corvallis Bike Park is so successful is because the flow is good. The bowl is wider and open between the elements, whereas Albany's is tighter and so is not as safe or enjoyable. Romancier said that 60 x 200 feet would be a nice size park.

Councilor Ralph Reid recalled when the skaters worked towards getting a Skate Park. Then, when the bikers complained, he told them to pursue their own park. He is proud to see their progress so far.

Konopa supports the idea. She feels the Skate Park location is better since most kids would be riding from their homes. Also, it would help to build cohesion between bikers and skaters.

Romancier said the next step is to continue to work on the design, with the biker's input. They will also be speaking at community and neighborhood meetings.

Hayes said, the Task Force will create a budget, a sponsorship plan, identify seed money for fundraising events, and pursue promotional items like t-shirts, hats, and stickers. Many of these items have already been designed by the kids. A design/build skate park company wants to come to Albany's Skate Park on March 22. This would serve as a great kick-off event for the Bike Park, with local vendors and distributors, and would provide an opportunity to begin fundraising.

Romancier said amenities would include curbs and benches and other popular features, and they may be able to secure a food vendor. They hope to carve out a smaller area for young riders too.

Councilor Floyd Collins agreed that Eleanor Hackelman Park is the more appropriate site. He thinks this is a great civics project for these kids.

Councilor Dick Olsen is fully supportive.

Hayes noted that while riders prefer concrete for bike parks, dirt trails do serve a portion of the biking community so they might incorporate some dirt jaunts around the perimeter. There are a lot of grants available for trails and it would help to make the park as inclusive as possible.

Konopa asked if there would be landscaping. Staff said it would be included in the full design. There are tentative sponsors for landscaping, and the kids are willing to do the labor.

Collins supports the bike park but made it clear to the Task Force that they need to do fundraising themselves, because the City is not in a position to take on any additional costs right now.

**CONSENSUS:** The consensus of the Council was to encourage the Bike Park Task Force to continue their efforts towards a new bike park; and that the location should be by the skate park at Eleanor Hackelman Park.

## RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT

Senior Accountant Mike Murzynsky said the Risk Management policy, attached to the staff report, will come to the next Regular Session for approval.

Murzynsky introduced Steve Uerlings, President of Barker & Uerlings Insurance.

Uerlings handed out a Risk Management Update report (see agenda file). City/County Insurance Services (CIS) provides coverage for almost all Oregon cities. Uerlings said all of Albany's coverage is with CIS except for earthquake, Senior trips, and the Airport, which are provided by separate vendors.

Uerlings said the two public official bonds, for the City Manager and the Finance Director, are statutorily required by the Secretary of State.

Overall, statistically Albany fares better than other cities in Oregon. In categories where the loss ratio is high, it is usually because the claims are infrequent but expensive.

City Manager Wes Hare said that directors regularly discuss safety issues. Still, even with attentiveness to detail, there will be unavoidable accidents to skew the averages.

COUNCILOR COMMENTS

Christman asked when the sign ordinance will come back to the Council. Hare will give the Council an update at the next Regular Session. Hare said it is difficult to discourage the overuse of signs while still keeping good relationships with local businesses. He believes that perhaps staff is doing an appropriate job because the Council is not being deluged with such calls. In his experience Hare has seen every city struggle with sign regulation and has yet to see one city regulate it successfully.

Coburn will be out of town on Tuesday and Wednesday. He will miss the Oak Street LID meeting but reiterated its importance to him. He should be back in time for Wednesday's Council meeting.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

Hare said the Library donor is extremely pleased with the new Library. The donor will not be available for the Grand Opening on March 29. A new shade of green for the striping on the building has been suggested by the donor's consultant and will cost about \$5,000.

Hare will be gone Tuesday and most of Wednesday. He should be back in time for Wednesday's Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the Work Session adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Dibble, MMC  
Deputy City Clerk

Reviewed by,

Stewart Taylor  
Finance Director