

MINUTES
BROOKINGS PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
City of Brookings 898 Elk Drive, Brookings
March 16, 2005

Call to Order

Chair Farmer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Roll Call

Commissioners present: Daryn Farmer, Haley Farr, April Gothard, Frances Hartman, Tony Parrish, Kathy Viola, and Jan Willms.

Staff Present: City Manager Leroy Blodgett, Mayor Sherman, Councilors Mickelson and Gordon.

Media: Brian Bullock for *The Pilot*.

There were approximately 31 people in the audience.

PUBLIC FORUM

Chair Farmer stated the purpose of the meeting was to gather input from residents so the Commission would have some ideas on type of recreation or community center they would like to see in the community. All ideas expressed will be written down on large sheets of paper, followed by a subcommittee who will consolidate the suggestions, and come up with a plan on the direction the Commission should work toward.

Chair Farmer welcomed everyone and encouraged them to participate in voicing their ideas on what they envision. With over thirty people in the audience, he asked that participants limit their presentation to 5 minutes.

Three letters were read into the record:

Exhibit A: Steve Underwood wrote we need a comprehensive youth center, well-equipped, supervised, and open 7 days a week. He also included perhaps assistance for youth behavior intervention.

Exhibit B: Bill Smith, President of *Chetco Pelican Players*, wrote he was very interested in the meeting, could not attend but offered to help the Commission to get the process going.

Exhibit C: Paula Edwards presented the suggestion of an ice skating rink in her letter. She discussed her involvement with a facility in New Mexico and said the venue could involve all ages, could have a range of activities from learning to skate, and figure skating programs, to having ice hockey. An alternative to the cost of maintaining a regular ice rink is a synthetic ice rink. Informational sheets from *Viking Ice Company*, a company that specializes in synthetic ice skating surfaces, were enclosed with her letter.

Tom Jones, 19875 Highway 101, Brookings, said he was involved with a 12-step program that has a summer "South Coast Round-up" and has to limit registration to 300 because there is no venue in the area that seats more than that. They have been using the Redwood Theatre which allows for 300 occupants. He stated if Brookings had an events

center, it would draw different types of conventions, and foresees it would pay for itself, if managed right. In conclusion he said, a good example of a convention center is the Pendleton Convention Center, which hosts concerts, trade shows, and conventions. (Note: a copy of their convention center taken off the Pendleton website is attached.)

Horst Wolf, 17440 Bluff Drive, a local artist, stated he was recently in Florence, and they have what Brookings needs; an events center. Describing the center, he said to the right is a theatre for concerts and plays, to the left is an area divided into 5 rooms, and in the back is a kitchen and restaurant. They have art shows and competition, and exhibits which change monthly. Something like this facility would serve the Brookings community with a large compass of events plus support the local artists.

Councilor Craig Mickelson, P. O. Box 952, recently visited the Florence Events Center, which at the time of his visit was setting up for a home show. The Center has an annual fund raiser for its facility, which is something to research, and recommended the commission consider visiting it. He introduced two items on convention centers:

- Exhibit D: was a page from the Sunday *Oregonian* (March 13, 2005), with the headline "Cities see centers as draws for coast". The article pointed out over the past decade attendance has languished and there is a glut of community centers throughout the nation.
Note: a copy of the article is attached.
- Exhibit E: he visited the website www.eventcenter.org/ for information on the design, floor plans, lighting, etc, for an events center.

Mickelson concluded elements such as raising money, and finding land will be challenging factors.

Leanne Curly, P. O. Box 2927, Harbor, stated she has been involved in the theatre community for 34 years, and during that time has seen committees form and then die out. She has been involved with the Chetco Pelican Players Association since its creation, 16 years ago. Ideally, having something like the Florence Events Center would be the answer. It could be used for anything and everything: plays, art gallery, small conventions. She suggested sidelining the idea of a youth center because from her experience, if they don't come up with the idea, they won't support it. She concluded, an events center is the best idea and appealed to the Commission to keep it alive, adding it is probably going to take private donations for the center to come to fruition and cautioned, if you propose the right facility, you'll get the right backing.

Liz James, 846 Winchuck Road, stated she and her husband have lived here for over thirty years. During that time as a member of the Curry-Del Norte Chamber Orchestra, it has been a constant struggle to find venues large enough to fit the players and their instruments; often some of the players have to sit on the floor with the audience. Because she has been a member of different art associations, one of the main points is to establish priorities. An ice rink and/or recreational center would be nice, but what this community really lacks is a cultural arts center. The same problem of finding a large enough venue is evident in both Gold Beach and Crescent City. We need a dedicated auditorium, with adequate seating for about 300, and a large enough stage where the performers don't have to sit with the audience.

Michael Fox, owner of Fox Productions. He stated although there are a lot of pluses to living here, he has to go out of town for big city productions, good concerts, etc. If we had a concert hall, we could draw some of the productions and performers to our area. He pronounced that sports are played by the youth of our community, which tends to be during a limited time of life, whereas the arts are long range. This area misses some of the performers who do tour throughout the state because we don't have a large enough venue for them to stop here. Fox discussed the Oregon Cultural Trust, stating grants are very limited for the performing arts. He stressed before applying for grants and/or funding, a clear plan needs to be defined by the Commission before approaching the financial stage. He concluded it is apparent the interest is in the community. The next step is defining what the community wants, and developing a plan.

Chuck Weller, P. O. Box 1446, Brookings, discussed the Oregon Cultural Trust. He also reported on a recent conference he attended at the Gold Beach Event Center and was dismayed at the facility. He referred to the Chetco Library as a great example where a plan was developed and the community came together to donate funding. He suggested approaching the school since it lacks any theatre, performing arts of any kind, and has expressed an interest since 1992. Perhaps forming a partnership with the school is one of the ways to get funding.

Charlotte Heatherly, P. O. Box 301, founded ORCA (Oregon-California) a local chorus group, and is currently the director. Heatherly said she is also involved with the Azalea Middle School *Knowledge Bowl*. Being involved with the boys and girls and the adult chorus led her to pose the possibility of combining the uses, a youth center and performing arts. Combining the uses might be a way to get it built. There is money for educational uses and other funds could be researched for performing arts programs.

Lon Goddard, P. O. Box 7018, Harbor. He stated he left the area in 1993 and since returning found nothings changed in the cultural area. His interest in the performing arts stems from playing guitar, like during the Art Walks, but there are not enough areas for performing here. He discussed when listening to Public Radio and hearing about cultural events in Ashland, and the Arcata/Eureka area, he vows that something has to be done to draw performers to our area. He enthused at least we have the new Pelican Arts theater, but stated it is small. He concluded we can measure up with Ashland and Arcata, if we have a performing arts facility.

Judy Caplan, P.O. Box 4187, Brookings. She stated she would like to see a multi-purpose recreational center, but did not think the community would support a center for just the performing arts.

Dr. Juliane Leighton, 9637 Spindrift, Brookings, researched the internet to find out what exactly is a "community center", and quoted a mission statement from a community center in New York:

- *Our goal is to provide a safe, accessible community space for activities and programs that meet community needs, strengthening and uniting the community by bringing together its diverse elements and raising conscious awareness through public education and to promote the full inclusion of all persons.*

Dr. Leighton discussed her experience when there is a physician's conference/meeting, they are held either in Gold Beach or Crescent City; in other words, because Brookings does not have a facility, she has to go out of town. She said her wish list would include an indoor track, indoor pool with shower facilities, and perhaps even a rock climbing wall. Leighton concluded as a physician, her main objective for a recreational center is for the health and wellness of folks in our community. People tend to not exercise in the winter due to increment weather and having a recreation center would meet a viable need.

Sue Gold, 95730 House Rock Road, representing *Friends of Music*, said when and if this center comes together, she will donate a 7 foot Grand piano.

Mayor Sherman, P.O. Box 1140, suggested including soundproof music rooms to the center. Also, while designing the inside is important, consider the outside premises for things like an art show, Farmers Market, etc. She concluded, communities with centers draw tourists and help the economy. A comment from the audience followed up that thought stating "communities that support the arts are more prosperous."

Chair Farmer said the committee might want to contact the City of Florence to find out the process of planning the center, funding it, and what their fee schedule is.

Commissioners and Audience Comments:

Commissioner Hartmann stated she was pleased with the turn-out because it reflected the interest in the community, particularly the performing arts. The challenge now is how to incorporate the performing arts and sports interests like a skate rink, hockey, and pool suggested at the meeting.

Commissioner Farr stated the meeting shows the number one interest is a community center. She added her interest in serving on the acquisition sub-committee.

Commissioner Parrish said he liked the idea of a facility for the arts. He added perhaps if a park district was created, funds could generate from it. He favored partnering with the school.

Commissioner Willms said it was very interesting to see the range of ideas. She took issue that there was no representative for the 17-25 age group.

Commissioner Viola stated she had some input from the "Teens to Teens" group. They expressed they want a place to perform, a space of their own. They also said they want a pool to have a swim team. She commented that the Commission should stay focused and share the same vision.

Commissioner Gothard commented, the mayor has been working with the Commission in determining the direction and authority for this issue. She said she enjoyed hearing all the ideas, stating it will be an expensive undertaking but worthwhile if completed. Gothard discussed some possibilities for funding the center: a child-care facility, or having some exercise equipment where a membership would be sold along the same idea as a YMCA.

Chair Farmer remarked the Commission also has the park system on its agenda, to not overlook the importance of them. He asked for volunteers to serve on the community center planning subcommittee. Commissioners Gothard, Farr, and Viola volunteered. Farmer said he had been contacted by the architect from Eugene who did the plans for the

middle school 2004 addition. The architect suggested, define what you want, come up with a model, and then present it to the community. Farmer directed the subcommittee to follow that process: come up with a plan, determine a concept, perhaps contact the architect responsible for the school addition for ideas, and work on funding after completion of those steps.

Pete Chasar, 935 Marina Heights Road, suggested asking the folks involved with planning the Florence Community Center to come to Brookings, have a meeting with them to get information on how they started, and the steps they took in getting the center built.

Claire Williams, Stitt Lane, said finding property/land has been briefly discussed and questioned the status of the 7-acre property next to City Hall on Fifth Street. City Manager Blodgett responded because it is a prime piece of land, and is expensive.

Michael Fox interjected there is a grant that provides funds for initial planning of a performing arts center. Chair Farmer said he would be contacted for more information.

Members of the audience questioned when the next meeting would be held. Chair Farmer announced usually the Parks and Recreation meetings are held the fourth Thursday of the month but with this special meeting, and Spring break, the next will be Thursday, March 31st.

With no further business before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathie Mahon
Recording Secretary

Approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission
March 31, 2005