



City Parks Advisory Board – Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, April 3, 2024 – 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, Nancy Connolly, Doug Buell, Emily Coonrod,  
Asa Sarver  
Absent: Molly Baumann  
Council Representative : Gary Ross  
Staff: Scott Woodford, CDD Director, Paul Bertagna, Public Works Director  
Visitor: Jennifer Holland, SPRD Representative  
Recording Secretary: Emme Shoup, Recording Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER

*Board Chair Madrone* called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm. A quorum was established. The agenda for April 3, 2024, was approved and seconded.

II. VISITOR COMMUNICATION - None

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 7, 2024.

*Board Chair Madrone* made a motion to approve the minutes for February 7, 2024, as presented.

*Board Member Sarver* seconded. Motion passes.

IV. STAFF

- A. Sisters Community Garden
- B. Creekside Park Memorial Bench Update – Kris Knight from the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council will provide an update.

*Director Woodford* stated that the Action Requested is a continued discussion of a proposal from Sisters Community Garden (SCG) to locate a community garden facility on city owned park land. Staff seek the City Parks Advisory Board (CPAB) input to help advise the City Council in determining an appropriate location for the garden and under what conditions.

Background:

- Last year, the Sisters Community Garden (SCG) approached the city about their need to leave their existing location at the Sisters Airport and the desire to relocate their garden to a new location starting in 2025.
- Initially, the SCG expressed interest in moving their operations to the vacant, city owned parcel known as the Sun Ranch Park off Sun Ranch Drive.
- On February 7, 2024, CPAB reviewed the proposal and provided the following comments.
- General support for the concept of a community garden in Sisters.
- Some concerns about private use of public lands – consider not having a locked fence for the garden so that the public can still utilize the park.
- Support of prioritizing garden plots for Sisters’ residents first – noting that they are the ones that paid the SDC’s that could help fund improvements for the garden and its move and then open it up to others.
- Encourage outreach and to the nearby residents and consideration of their concerns.
- Concern of the porta potty location close to the homes.
- Concern of impact to City Public Works employees in terms of additional responsibilities created by the garden on parkland.

A concern noted by city staff early on and brought up at the CPAB meeting was the proximity of the proposed gardens to the nearby City’s Well # 4 and the requirement of a 100-foot setback for wellhead protection from certain uses that could imperil the water supply for protection of the wellhead and the City’s drinking water. Basically, what was concluded is that we need a 100-foot setback around the well from any garden operations.

Clarification on this requirement noted a city concern for the possible use and/or storage of fertilizers in the gardens within this setback (SCG) maintains they do not use chemical fertilizers, but the city staff feels we will not be able to control all situations at the garden and the need to be conservative with respect to one of the community’s water sources. This necessitated that all garden plots be removed from the 100-foot setback. This impacted the original layout substantially, so SCG submitted a revised plan.

With the above identified limitation of Sun Ranch Park, the idea of using Cliff Clemens Park to locate the garden is now on the table, and SCG has prepared a concept plan for Cliff Clemens Park showing how the gardens could fit within the existing park that they would like feedback on from the CPAB.

The City Council will make the final determination on whether they support the garden in either of these locations and to help prepare for that, a Council workshop is scheduled for May 8, 2024.

Staff has recommended that the SCG representatives conduct outreach with the immediate neighborhoods to better understand their position on the garden locations. This is anticipated to occur during the month of April.

For considerations of changes to the city parks, the city relies on the Sisters Parks Master Plan (PMP) for guidance, which offers the following support for community gardens.

- During the community outreach phase of the PMP update, there was interest in a publicly accessible/rentable community garden space.
- PMP Policy 8.10: “Where appropriate, support inclusion of community garden spaces and work with local community groups and public entities to support development of neighborhood and community garden programs”.
- Recommended locations: Community Garden space on existing undeveloped parks land (Sun Ranch Park, Creekside Park Eastward Expansion, Future NW Park).
- New Facility Recommendations (N7 in the PMP); “Community Garden: Provide opportunities for community garden plots in different city quadrants. Support construction of fencing, gates, and secure access to potable water where community interest is present. Alternatively, work with Sisters Community Garden to support expansion and improvement of amenities and utilities at existing location as need increases”.

Financial Impact:

Depending on the preferred location there will be costs for the improvements. Sun Ranch Park requires a higher level of investment based on the need to extend water and electrical services to the gardens and for parking.

The SCG contacted the property owners to see what their position was relative to that and some concern about parking along the alleyway that might inhibit their access. There is direct access to the park and that parcel has a flagpole (blacktop walkway) that connects to Sun Ranch Dr. and worse comes to worse there is access off there and would not have to utilize the alleyway.

Cliff Clemens Park has all the required utilities at the site plus existing parking and restrooms, so the infrastructure costs are low there. The City and SGC have had initial discussions about costs and SCG has inquired about financial assistance from the city. If either of these sites are acceptable for this use, there may be additional costs to the city as determined by the City Council.

Projects recommended in the Parks Master Plan are generally paid for with Park’s System Development Charges (SDC’s), but it is unclear if there are funds set aside for garden improvements. Other funding sources could be in the form of grants.

*Board Chair Madrone* asked what is allowed in the setback.

*Director Woodford* stated that basically they are things that do not have potential foot oil dropping on the ground like a parking space, the potential for chemicals that might accidentally seep into the ground and be an issue for the well. Other potential allowed uses are trails and #18 on the plan as a covered gathering space are potential allowed uses in that setback.

Attachments provided:

Attachment A: Revised Sun Ranch Park Layout.

Attachment B: Cliff Clemens Park Layout.

Attachment C: Alternative Cliff Clemens Park Layout.

Janie Boyl – Garden Manager of the Sisters Community Garden

*Ms. Boyl* stated that she is the one that made the drawings and, in that shed, currently there are leftover boxes and bags for people to take things home, seeds, umbrellas, chairs, and a table that need to be stored inside. We do not allow any chemicals in there, no canisters of anything, and a marker board, etc. We all know the concern of what it is now, but what is it going to be in the future. That all has to do with our management style which is hovering over everybody. We try to communicate with our gardeners and if we find something out of whack, we will let everybody know that it is not ok. We have newsletters every month and communicate with the people. We can amend our bylaws if we need to, but it is an organic garden, and nobody breaks the law, and we just want to do organic gardening.

*SGC Member* stated that they had concerns about getting in and out of the site and only have three (3) accessible parking spaces, a nice big door for people to get in if they are not completely mobile for wheel barrels to get in and out. We are concerned about Heising Dr. and not sure who owns it or if it is going to be part of private property. We wanted to bring up the flagpole and is it big enough for cars to get in and out. The area upfront is big enough for cars to make a 3-point turn and get back out that same way for deliveries and dropping people off which could occur on that flagpole piece, etc.

*SGC Member* stated that we had a meeting with the gardeners a week ago and 12 people came because they wanted to know what was going on with our site search, and we had the chance to show them both plans for both properties – Cliff Clemens Park as well as Sun Ranch Dr. and what would be the deciding factor. It was clear that people felt very positive about Cliff Clemens Park because of the lack of restrictions, the fact that there is a restroom already there, plenty of parking and there is space. The infrastructure could fit into any location in that land with the meandering path that shows seven (7) different ways of locating the garden depending on neighbor feedback and input from the City Council as well as the City Parks Advisory Board.

*SGC Member* stated that depending on your point of view, some of these are better than others. She stated that she did talk with Jennifer Holland about this because they did not want to upset people, but because there is going to be added open space at the old Elementary School that there will be four (4) acres of grass added to the inventory of play space in the City. She thought that even taking 1/3 of the grass area could help with the anxiety of the loss of open space because of the upcoming new space available. The plan is self-explanatory – parking along the whole south parameter and some along the west area. There is a break in the fencing that is there now and a fire hydrant there, an electrical service, so we know that there is water and power on the site. There is irrigation on the site that would need to be removed and altered.

*SGC Member* stated that they talked about the deer fence because they need 6-feet to keep the deer from coming in and a known fact that deer do not like to jump over two (2) fences that are placed 3-feet apart and the fence could be 4-feet tall which is appealing.

*Board Chair Madrone* asked Director Woodford if the city has looked at the feasibility of Cliff Clemens Park. We were mostly worried about Sun Ranch, and the other question is that it is not part of the Master Plan – Cliff Clemens Park.

*Director Woodford* stated that in some respects this does have some advantages as was noted with the availability of existing parking, availability of power, water, and irrigation to the site would be much easier to accommodate this use here versus Sun Ranch which would need some additional infrastructure improvements to make it happen. The real question is how long it has been with the feasibility of having it be able to sit side by side with the rest of the park, does it make sense, how much space is left over, and how the neighboring property owners would look at it. We have emphasized that community engagement with the neighbors is a priority and a must with these. The Master Plan did not call Cliff Clemens Park out as a location for the garden. We did not get that far into the detail of what site would be the best potential location.

*Board Chair Madrone* asked Ms. Boyle what one is her preferred location.

*SGC Member* stated that after thinking about who uses the park now, a lot of parents with little kids use the park now and dogs as well. Looking at Concept # 2, that would be a nice way to arrange the shelter outside the garden and in between the play space and the restrooms. People could gather around that shelter with speakers, workshops, and a nice transition from inside to outside the garden and not including garden people at all but having it there.

*Board Chair Madrone* stated that his biggest concern is if you are taking the park away from other people to put it into garden hands.

*SGC Member* asked Board Chair Madrone what people you are talking about. The only users she is aware of are summer Sunday's at 8 am, open area yoga, and have never seen anything structured going on in there.

*Board Member Buell* stated that his son plays there with a friend kicking soccer balls and throwing footballs and using that whole green space. That is his concern, and taking away from that area where he feels like we should not be doing a tradeoff.

As an SPRD Board Member, in that greenspace, we are only in a conceptual plan right now and it is not solidified. There are proposed eight (8) pickleball courts that will be taking up a lot of that green space along with a playground and bathroom, etc. She would hate to see other greenspaces go away, especially where there are a lot of children playing and a lot of activities occur. As an Alpine Race Coach, we have used that space for dryland training, flying kites, soccer with the kids, etc. Regarding deer fencing whether it is 6-feet or two fencing, that aesthetic look might pose an issue for some and take up more space. Sun Ranch with that 100-foot setback and to make it work, it is a great space for the community garden because it is your space. With Cliff Clemens Park, you would be sharing it with a lot of people – not just users of the park, but the neighbors. If doing fencing at Sun Ranch, it would not be

as much of an aesthetic issue or pose any concerns for anyone. She stated that her vote would be for Sun Ranch.

*Board Member Buell* stated that he took his grandkids over to Cliff Clemens last weekend because he was thinking that Sun Ranch was on the table as the primary place. That whole parking area along there was filled with cars. He said that he did not see any room for additional parking for the garden. I agree with Board Member Baumann that the Sun Ranch location was identifiable as this is our community garden and visible from the roads, but not impacting anybody there except for the neighbors.

*Board Vice Chair Curtis* thanked the community garden members for the very well thought out plans and the multiple irritations of them. She stated that she likes the idea of Cliff Clemens Park from the standpoint of the infrastructure that is already there, particularly the bathrooms. One thing that was a concern for her was placing a porta potty on the Sun Ranch property and how that might impact the neighbors but does think that at Cliff Clemens Park there is going to be soccer balls and footballs that come onto the little plants as they are trying to grow and kids that are going to go into the fence and retrieve them. It is going to be problematic for the mission to have traffic in there which is going to happen because it is a park. In the Sun Ranch location, if some of the concerns about the well and the porta potty could be mitigated, she feels that Sun Ranch is a more appealing spot even for the mission.

*SGC Member* stated that an idea that the Forest Service has with their porta potty on some of their sites is they will create a wooden blind (shown in the drawings) and that might be a nice option to make it a western style enclosure. The fact that there are going to be kids, balls, and people wondering in and out – there is a downside to that but a big upside for building community, educating people, and getting them enthusiastic about what can grow here and maybe joining us and being a part of that movement.

*Board Chair Madrone* stated that he loves the idea, but also one consideration is that other groups have asked for Cliff Clemens Park such as the dog park, and people have asked why we cannot have a dog park because it is not being used. Part of what he feels is why do you get preferential treatment over the dog park. It is a great spot, and we all know that Cliff Clemens Park is being underutilized, but not the most used park in the world. If we came back to you as a group or decided as a committee to recommend Sun Ranch what would your members think of that.

*SGC Member* stated that we will get to building it as soon as possible.

*Counselor Ross* asked for clarification about the discussion with Jennifer Holland on community property.

*SGC Member* stated that there is that big open greenspace and now it is not available to be used because of school hours, etc. When the school is not operating, there is all that space, about eight (8) acres apparently. On the concept drawings there have been different shapes of things being proposed and where the pickleball would be and where the playground would be. Once this is sorted out, the amount of space seems to be for other uses other than open play areas would take about half of that property. Then, it is a matter of space planning.

*Board Member Buell* stated that on Board Member Sarver's point about building community that seems like it is something that should be on the table if we are talking about pickleball courts, etc. It seems like the garden activity fits into the same category in building community but still thinks that Sun Ranch would be a very good spot as well, but to have that on the table as well.

*SGC Member* stated that we all agree and that it is about fostering community and that is one of our highest goals.

*Board Member Connolly* stated that she did not count all the plots that you were proposing for Cliff Clemens Park and if it was the same amount as the pollinator space.

*SGC Member* stated that the first drawing had more plots, but we thought that we would get that size and square footage down to under 12,000 feet and is approximately the same number of plots that we have now which is about 50.

*Board Chair Madrone* asked for clarification on the square footage, and what is the difference between the square footage between Cliff Clemens Park and Sun Ranch.

*SGC Member* stated that Sun Ranch is hard to calculate because of all the curves, but it is a squeeze play on Sun Ranch to get that many plots and many of the plots are not as big as the ones that fit nicely at Cliff Clemens.

*Board Member Connolly* asked how long the wait list is for the garden.

*SGC Member* stated that typically after we get signed up in the spring, we have about 5-6 people seeing us grow things and they want to join in. That may come in around June and some people are not active in gardening, so they drop away, and the new people come in. We expect that more people are going to want to garden with us as time goes on with a beautiful new facility and we will take care of everybody well. The interest in Sisters will grow and we have even talked about pocket parks which might be our next step once we get this accomplished.

*Counselor Ross* stated that he would have liked to see a proposal that ran linear down the length of the back fence line (west side) rather than take a chunk out of the middle of the park. That is a concern because the park is about 2.3 acres, and 12,000 square feet is roughly a quarter of an acre. There you have a street with houses on the other side of the street and there are side views of the garden, so you do not have the issue of people thinking they are losing their view, etc. And that maintains the largest amount of open greenspace of any of the proposals. When this comes to City Council for review, we will be looking at weighing the value of this against the value of greenspace and against what other types of development may be happening in that region that may or may not bring people to the area, and what would that impact be on Cliff Clemens Park versus the importance of having a place to grow food especially for those who live in low income housing, etc. Maybe think of proposal #8 or something like that. He stated that his first question would do we preserve the maximum amount of greenspace if we are going to do this because it may make sense. He stated that he would continue to look at Sun Ranch as well.

*SGC Member* stated that they are going to have a question-and-answer flyer go out so that people can give their input.

*Board Member Sarver* stated that Sun Ranch right now is a 100 percent addition to Sisters than going to Cliff Clemens Park, and he feels like we are taking something away even if it is underutilized, he wanted to remind everyone that the lot across the street from Cliff Clemens Park is owned by a developer, so even if it is underutilized right now, it might not be in the future.

*Board Chair Madrone* asked the Board if they had a consensus one way or another, or do we want to recommend something to the Council saying that Sun Ranch will be our first choice, etc.

*Board Vice Chair Curtis* stated that she felt very torn between the two concepts and really appreciated the thoughtfulness when reviewing what the Community Garden Club has put into these new proposals and do like the new Sun Ranch concept and design. She still thinks there are a lot of improvements that will need to be made by the city, but it could be workable but not necessarily as ideal as what our other counterparts feel. She would like to see something like what Counselor Ross recommended like a concept along that west end of Cliff Clemens Park and not breaking up that open space. She likes the fact that there is infrastructure in place at Cliff Clemens Park but thinks it would be valuable to have the community see the garden – a public use of public space.

*Counselor Ross* stated that some thoughts that come to mind – surveying the neighbors at Cliff Clemens Park is going to be a lot of work for this group. If this organization is not likely to recommend to the City Council – Cliff Clemens Park, he would not want to have this group go through the exercise of the difficulty, expense, and the time of canvassing those neighbors. He stated that he can say that he does not know where Council is on this, but Cliff Clemens Park has been a piece of greenspace that we get a lot of reactions both ways – it is not used enough, and it is used all the time. It needs more shade, etc.

*SGC Member* stated that we all might be surprised by what the neighbors might say and until we get those facts, it is an unknown.

*SGC Member* stated that we still have more work to do and one of the things that might be helpful for people to think about is what is all this going to cost and who is paying. We are working on a rough budget, first identifying all the tasks, and then looking to see if we can ask for a grant or something we can get in donations – what is coming out of our pockets or yours. That might be helpful in the City Council discussion because we are of the sense that this is all on us and there is not much that the city needs to do.

*Kris Knight* – Upper Deschutes Watershed Council

*Mr. Knight* stated that he wanted to give an update on a couple of items – first, the interpretive signage of Creekside Park and second, the memorial that Director Woodford mentioned. He stated that he came last fall and talked to the group and had reviewed two signs for Creekside Park that talk about the creek, the history of Whychus Creek, the Park, and the collaboration with the City of Sisters and the Watershed Council. One of the signs talked about the name



of Whychus Creek and the indigenous history of that name and the idea of the tribes being the first stewards of that creek and space. This committee asked me to go back and have tribal review for that sign since it did have components mentioning that tribe. He stated he was able to get that review from the tribes and worked with the culture in heritage committee and it was worthwhile. There was one word that was not accurate in there and we got that changed. Those two signs are under production now that we have the tribal review, and it should be shipped to us any week here and Director Bertagna stated that the city can get those installed at the park. That is good news and that is moving forward with the two interpretative signs.

*Mr. Knight* stated that the second piece to that is there is a third interpretative sign that will go near the memorial and is about partnerships and collaboration around Whychus Creek. Half of the sign is about what we did at Creekside Park in terms of restoration with the city, the components of that work, and how we collaborated. The second half of that is about partnerships and collaboration across the last 20 years for all the different organizations that have helped bring Whychus Creek back to life.

*Mr. Knight* stated that he had hoped to have a draft of that sign for this committee to review and it did not get done – the graphic designer could not get the next draft before today but was wondering if there is another opportunity for me to email that draft to Director Woodford when it is ready later this week, or earlier next week and is there an opportunity for this committee to review that third sign and provide any feedback, or give thumbs up so we can go ahead and get that under production, or wait until you meet two months from now.

*Director Woodford* stated that typically, we like to have decisions made in the context of a meeting, but if the timing is such that we need to get it done earlier, we can look at doing that over email. It is more of a blessing of the concept and not a big vote kind of thing that should be held in a public meeting.

*Mr. Knight* stated that the third update is related to the memorial at Creekside Park for Andrew Dutterer. We talked about this as a committee and the Board recommended this to go before the City Council and presented this to the City Council and that led to an agreement between the Dutterer family, that memorial and the City of Sisters. He stated that he worked with Director Woodford and others and the City Attorney to put that agreement in place. The agreement is in place and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all parties related to that. The memorial is very much in progress now. It consists of a boulder with a plaque that will go near the creek and near one of the new access points at the park and is being installed this month in April.

*Mr. Knight* stated that there is a bench that is a part of the memorial and the details on that. The tree that we are carving the bench out of has a connection to Sisters and to some of the restoration work – part of the tree is part of the restoration work on Whychus Creek, and the other part of the tree is going to be this bench. Local artist, Skip Armstrong, has carved this bench, it is completed, and is incredible with fish, otters, rivers, etc. and will be a great amenity for the park. The one cool connection there is, we have started seeing otters showing up in Whychus Creek right at Creekside Park. Plans are in the works to have that bench placed in the park later this spring before a Saturday, July 20<sup>th</sup> dedication for this memorial. Right now,

we are working on getting some brackets installed on the bottom of the bench so it will sit up off the ground. We will put some pavers down for the bench to rest on near the creek. He stated he had asked Director Woodford to send out an invitation to the Board and the City Council and anyone is welcome to join. The family is proud of this memorial and glad that they were able to work with the city to make this happen.

(Added this information for those members that may have not seen the original handout regarding Andrew Dutterer).

Creekside Park Memorial for Andrew Dutterer – September 15, 1978 – September 25, 2021.

Andrew Dutterer worked for the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and was influential in bringing grants for projects to restore Whychus Creek, including the project at Creekside Park that was recently completed by the City of Sisters and the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council. Andrew tragically died in a car accident in 2021. Andrew's family is interested in establishing a memorial for him that would be located at Creekside Park at one of the new access points to Whychus Creek. The family would pay for the memorial and would enter into an agreement that has been prepared by the City of Sisters regarding this memorial. The family is ready to sign the agreement.

The memorial would include a wooden bench carved by local Sisters' artist, Skip Armstrong. This bench would be an added amenity at the park because there is no bench or picnic table at this location near this creek access point. The memorial would also include a boulder like rock used for stone steps to the creek, with a plaque on rock that memorialized Andrew. The family was inspired by the bench and boulder seen in a picture along the Deschutes River owned by the Bend Park and Recreation District.

While only preliminary, sketches and ideas have been created by Skip Armstrong. Those ideas have been shared with the family but are still very preliminary and not finalized. One of those ideas is a sketch with river otters and salmon and steelhead carved into the bench that would be carved from a ponderosa log. The Sisters Park Advisory Board has voted and made a recommendation to the Sisters City Council to approve the creation of this memorial at Creekside Park. There is a picture that shows the view of Whychus Creek and Creekside Park from the proposed bench location.

V. UPDATE FROM SISTERS PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT

VI. OTHER BUSINESS / OPEN BUSINESS

*Mimi Schaefer* stated that she works with the committee and hearing Mr. Knight talk about how beautiful the art is, how everybody would appreciate it, and how thankful to make a memorial that is beautiful, and having people in Sisters sit down and have their picture taken. She stated that there are a lot of people that come out to the garden to have their picture taken and appreciates the comment about a nice, cozy, and private space, but we never think about the garden as a nice, cozy, private space. We sit out there, and it is a place where people come, people drive by, they come in, and talk about the community garden. She would like the Board to consider when thinking about the Community Garden in the future, that we can

make the garden at Clemens Park and the garden at Sun Ranch a more beautiful place, and as an option for people to think about things being possible in a park. She would like the Board to expand thoughts about what could be a real asset to the city because, as art is the heart and soul of Sisters – we love all the art, and it expands and makes our Sisters Country a more pleasant place to be.

*Planner Shoup* stated that Arbor Day is on Friday, April 26<sup>th</sup> and is being held at Creekside Park. There will be a class of 20 students helping to plant trees, and with the help of the Urban Forestry Board Members, we have been able to acquire over 100 tree seedings and will be planting them all over the riparian area at Creekside Park. She stated that she will send out a flyer about the time that the event will be held.

VII. ADJOURN

*Board Chair Madrone* adjourned the meeting at 5:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Jenkins, Recording Secretary