

CITY OF YACHATS
PARKS & COMMONS COMMISSION
SUMMARY MINUTES

December 3, 2024

The regular meeting of the Parks and Commons Commission was called to order Chair Meg Simans at 2:00 PM in the Civic Meeting Room of the Yachats Commons. Members present Co-Chair Dan Sterling, Ron Simans, Dean Shrock, George Giroux, and Michael Hempen

Audience: 10

Announcements & Citizens Concerns: None

Review Summary – Made a name correction for the Scharen Design Team to the meeting minutes.

The Commons coordinator presented a report on her work, and the commissioners provided feedback, which included updates on various projects and events, including a minor injury incident and the mushroom festival. A commissioner mentioned the need to reserve spaces early.

The Chair acknowledges two veteran commissioners who are leaving, Hempen and Shrock.

Transparency and Communication

A commissioner expressed concerns about the lack of transparency and communication within the Parks & Commons Commission, particularly regarding the planning and management of the bathrooms; the team questioned the role of the commission in these matters and suggested that there might be a larger issue at play; and emphasized the importance of public input in the planning process. It was suggested that the commission needs to have a clearer understanding of its role; it was acknowledged the efforts of the current commission members in stepping up to handle new responsibilities and emphasized the importance of maintaining good communication among the commissions and city council.

Evolving City Management and Commission

The members discussed the evolving nature of the city's management and the potential changes to the Parks & Commons Commission; suggested that the commission's role might shift from managing the Commons to advising the city council on various issues; and a possibility of a name change for the commission. It was emphasized the importance of the commission's role in advising the city council and suggested that the city council might impose changes on the commission; the need for ongoing clarity about the commission's role and responsibilities and the need for the commission to adapt to the changing nature of the city's management.

The Parks & Commons Commission discussed the need to fill vacant commission seats, with the current number being 4 and the goal being 7. The possibility of reducing the commission size to 5 was considered, but the majority agreed that having an odd number of members would be beneficial. The commission also discussed the importance of having a diverse representation, including more women and younger individuals. The idea of promoting the commission through the city's website and newsletters was also discussed. The commission also acknowledged the need for better communication and outreach to potential applicants.

Discussion continued about the role of the commission in decision-making processes, emphasizing the importance of input from the commission on significant projects, suggesting revisiting an agreement made with the previous city manager, Rick Sant, which outlined the preferred process for communication and input on projects; and proposed adding a retaining wall to the west side of the sidewalk in front of the Commons to prevent erosion and improve safety. The commission agreed to consider this proposal for future projects.

Resiliency Grant and Public Restroom Discussion

A short discussion about the Resiliency Grant, expressing uncertainty about its future availability and suggesting that it might be folded into the master plan. The group also discussed the placement of a public restroom, suggesting that it should be part of the master plan discussion and not prematurely decided. The possibility of integrating bathrooms into an amphitheater was also raised.

1 The group agreed to leave the decision on the restroom's location to the
2 Scharen Design Team. The discussion concluded with the addition of a
3 sidewalk, retaining wall, and handrail to the goals list, and the removal of the
4 Resiliency Grant from the list due to its premature nature.

6 **Commons Area Projects and Totem Pole**

7 Discussion of several potential projects for the Commons area, including a
8 pollinator garden west of the pavilion, interior remodeling to accommodate
9 childcare facilities and secure the area, constructing a retaining wall and
10 sidewalk with handrail on the east side, and potentially enclosing the pavilion
11 to make it usable as a building. The group decides to remove the resiliency
12 item from consideration; and also brings up the idea of relocating the totem
13 pole to a more visible location with interpretive signage about the area's Native
14 American history but notes there were previous agreements about its
15 placement that would need to be revisited.

17 The group discussed the idea of forming a work group to design and plan for
18 the Indian tribes' origin, which could be a future agenda item; and suggested
19 that this could be a separate project from the Scharen Design Team and could
20 potentially be funded through grants. It was also mentioned the idea of
21 building a trail up the river, which she believed was outside the commission's
22 purview as it deals with city property; and suggested that this idea could be
23 presented to the city manager for further research and consideration. The
24 team agreed to email the city manager for more information on the Indian
25 tribes' project and to consider the river trail idea for future research.

27 The Recorder proposed the idea of bringing the existing binders for each
28 commission to the next meeting for review and discussion; and suggested that
29 the team could start reviewing the contents of these binders and decide what
30 they want to include or exclude; policies are being reviewed and making sure
31 they align with the city's expectations.

33 The team also discussed the idea of limiting or designating where plaques
34 could go, which was a part of the discussion for the next meeting. Additionally,
35 an update on the storage situation, mentioning that the doors need to be put

on hinges and that the ladders will be stored in the storage bay. The team also discussed the possibility of moving some items to better utilize the space.

Next Steps

- The Chair to email the City Manager requesting information on contracts and documentation regarding the totem pole.
- The recorder to bring Parks & Commons binders to the January meeting for commissioners to review.
- Commons Coordinator to provide an update on the boardwalk project at the next meeting.
- Parks & Commons Commission to discuss the potential trail up the river in a future meeting.
- Parks & Commons Commission to review and discuss the orientation manual contents in a future meeting.
- Parks & Commons Commission to continue discussion on plaques and memorial locations in a future meeting.
- Parks & Commons Commission to remove resiliency/solar energy from the goals list for 2025-2026.
- Parks & Commons Commission to add construction of retaining wall/curb/handrail on the west side of the sidewalk in front of the Commons to the goals list for 2025-2026.
- Parks & Commons Commission to add pavilion repairs/upgrades to the goals list for 2025-2026.
- Parks & Commons Commission to add pollinator garden west of the pavilion to the goals list for 2025-2026.
- Commons Coordinator to follow up regarding sound and lighting estimates for the Commons.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

By Kimmie Jackson Recorder