



County of Santa Cruz

PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES

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PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Monday, July 9, 2007
7:15 p.m.
Regular Meeting

Government Center, Board Chambers
701 Ocean St., 5th Floor
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:20 p.m.

Members: Janet Doten, Dave Mercer, Katharine Minott, Michael Rosenberg
Francisco Serna

Present: Janet Doten, Dave Mercer, Katharine Minott, Michael Rosenberg,
Francisco Serna

Staff: Maria A. Hurtado, Clark Beattie, Gretchen Iliff, Beth Porter

II. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS OR APPROVAL

The agenda was approved as modified – Kate Minott asked to move #3 on the action agenda to the discussion agenda (Serna/Doten 5/0).

III. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes of May 14, 2007 were approved as presented (Minott/Mercer 5/0)
- B. Information and Reports (Accept and File)
 - 1) Facilities Division – Status Report
 - 2) Maintenance Division – Status Report
 - 3) Planning Division – Status Report
 - 4) Recreation & Cultural Services Division – Status Report

The Information and reports were accepted and filed as written (Minott/Doten 5/0).

IV. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS - None

V. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Hurtado reported on some updates:

- ▶ A pedestrian gate has been installed at each end of the bridge at Jose Avenue Park due to community concerns regarding safety. First Alarm has been contracted to close the gates daily at 9:00 p.m. and open them early in the morning. Signage has been posted to inform the public about the new gate closure hours.

- ▶ The Veteran's Hall renovation is complete. A tremendous effort was made to maintain the integrity of the mural that resulted in a good restoration.
- ▶ The climbing wall has been installed at the Simpkins Pool.

Gretchen Iliff provided more information about the locked gate at Jose in response to Chair Rosenberg's inquiry. The neighbors report that it is quieter at night with the locked gate. A commitment has been made to ensure the gate is open in the morning so children can walk to school via that route. First Alarm has a master contract to lock the restrooms and the main parking lot gate and there is no additional charge to lock the gates at the pedestrian bridge. Graffiti is ongoing and the clean up is constant. When graffiti is detected, it is immediately taken care of, particularly when it is gang related or bad language is used. All maintenance staff keeps paint and brushes on hand to keep a constant handle on the graffiti problem. There is a graffiti abatement hot line that sends community members out within 24 hours of a call to eliminate graffiti. Redevelopment Agency eliminates graffiti in all public areas such as bus stops and walls. Parks Department handles graffiti on park property.

VI. REGULAR AGENDA (DISCUSSION ITEMS)

A. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. 2007-2008 Budget Overview

The Park's Department Fiscal Year 2007/2008 budget, including capital and operating budgets, is \$27 million. \$9 million is in the operating budget which funds a variety of recreation programs, operations for the Simpkins Family Swim Center, park maintenance to support our 1400 acre park system, the public art program and various community contract agreements. This \$9 million operating budget has a net County cost of \$4,640,807. Fifty percent of this budget goes into park maintenance and the remainder funds the recreation and administrative staff.

Some highlights from the operating budget include three positions for the fiscal year 07/08. A full time park planner III, funded by RDA, will be hired to assist with upcoming capital projects in the Redevelopment area.

A full time Recreation Coordinator will be added to assist with the off site recreation programs. This new position will coordinate the kindergarten and preschool programs. Two three quarter time Recreation Specialist positions have been added to operate the aquatic programs, funded by transferring funds from extra help and overtime to regular pay accounts with no net county cost.

The remaining \$18 million in the capital budget will be utilized for capital improvements or development projects that will begin in the coming fiscal year:

- ▶ Design and construction of renovations to the Simpkins Family Swim Center including carpeting the lobby area, enclosing the lifeguard area, renovations to the locker rooms, some painting of the interior and installation of solar heating systems.
- ▶ Felt Street Park final design
- ▶ Fifty parking spaces will be added to the parking area of Anna Jean Cummings Park
- ▶ Installation of the play structure at Highlands Park
- ▶ Design and construction work for the Farm Park Project
- ▶ Rehabilitation of the interior of the historical Valencia Hall Post Office and General Store

2. Cost of Decomposed Granite in the Polo Grounds Dog Park

Gretchen Iliff shared information she researched on the use of decomposed granite for the Polo Grounds dog park. Decomposed granite has been found in some dog parks in the Bay Area. It provides a hard surface and eliminates walking dogs on muddy surfaces. The cost for installing grass in the dog park would be about \$44,000 for one acre, using Park staff for labor. Grass is the most desirable and uniform surface however, is very costly to mow, water, fertilize, watch for gophers and maintain. Decomposed granite would cost about \$36,000 to install, more needs to be added each year to compensate for the disappearing material, some weeds come through and the surface is more compact. The redwood chip material currently being used is free with no cost to Parks and minimal maintenance is needed. Some complaints received by staff include splinters in dogs' paws, difficulty cleaning up the dog waste and irrigation does not wash through to cleanse. When the dog park was built, it was done inexpensively, incurring no new staff or costs. Ms. Iliff reminded the Commissioners that the dog park was installed on an interim basis in an area where a community center is intended. Very few complaints have been received about the chips in the dog park in comparison to the number of dogs using the park.

After further discussion among the Commissioners it was agreed that the dog park would continue to use the redwood chip material as ground cover.

B. ACTION ITEMS

1. Disc Golf

Gretchen Iliff recapped the May 14th Commission meeting where Tom Schott and other representatives of the Disc Golf group presented their request to install a disc golf course at Pinto Lake Park. The group manages a very successful disc golf program at De La Viega Golf Course and would like to install the program at Pinto. The group proposed to install the disc golf course at Pinto Lake and enter into an agreement with the Parks Department to operate and manage the program. Gretchen met with the Planning Department to determine the steps necessary to implement the program. The existing development permit would need to be modified, with a possible minor variation. Staking and mapping would be required, and potentially a riparian exception, if necessary. Gretchen asked Mr. Schott to provide further information about the pathways for the course to determine the affected areas. The disc golf group requested 18 holes for the course initially, however have agreed to begin with a nine hole course. The trails will also be available for walking, strolling with dogs, etc. The area now contains a lot of dense brush along with poison oak that would be cleared. Planning Department agreed that using the area for the disc golf course would be consistent with the goals of the Parks Department. The fiscal impact would be \$45,000 along with some additional planning fees. Funds for the project have not been identified in the operating budget. The disc golf group asked that the County pay for half the cost. The next steps needed to proceed are that the Parks Commission approve in concept the idea of installing a disc golf course at Pinto Lake and forward the recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. If the Board of Supervisors approves the concept, funding would need to be identified before the Planning Department issues a variance to the existing development permit. Construction would follow issuing a permit. Chair Rosenberg asked if the nine hole course would achieve the groups objectives. Tom Schott explained that yes, the nine holes could be played twice by players for 18 holes and the course layout he displayed indicated that the path anticipated for the course would not disrupt the riparian path. A nine hole course at Pinto would be user friendly and close to

the parking lot for easy access. Mr. Schott explained that the forest service will provide a crew and supervisor to clear the land for a charge of \$200 per day. No trees are scheduled to be removed. Gretchen responded to Commissioner Minott's question that there are no endangered species identified in the area that would be affected by clearing the area. Chair Rosenberg suggested that the Commission move the concept forward by making a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors in support of a nine hole disc golf course at Pinto Lake. Commissioner Doten suggested that this is a different sport and a change from skate boarding and BMX bike tracks and would provide an interesting new sport to kids. Commissioners agreed that it would be a good use of the area. Tom Schott has taken into consideration the liability factor of disc golf in this area and determined that there is none. Dave Mercer made a motion to approve the disc golf program concept and inform the Board of Supervisors that the Commission approves the disc golf project at Pinto Lake Park with a second from Janet Doten (5/0).

3. Floral Park Renovations

Paul Rodriguez of the Redevelopment Agency presented the plan for renovations of Floral Park at last month's Commission meeting. Paul requests the Park Commission's approval to move forward with permitting and contract approval. The renovations at the park would include a new restroom building, swing area and a dog area. The volleyball area has already been removed due to concerns from the neighbors. Two community meetings have been held with neighbors contributing their wishes for the park. Commissioner Serna asked about the volleyball players and the number of complaints received from neighbors. Gretchen Iliff responded that the complaints were ongoing for about two years, with neighbors complaining about too many people from outside the neighborhood, playing past daylight, no restroom facility or parking for participants, too much noise, trash and public urination. It was decided that the park was not conducive for volleyball use, as there are other parks that have volleyball courts that may be used. Commissioner Minott made a motion to approve the Floral Park conceptual design as presented with a second by Commissioner Mercer (5/0).

4. Possible Sites and Hours for Dogs Off Leash

Commissioner Minott asked if there are county park areas with beach access for use by dogs off leash. Chair Rosenberg asked about using Aptos Park in early morning hours. Gretchen Iliff responded that there are many weddings and parties scheduled for Aptos Park as well as use by Renaissance Camp all summer and evening use of the building. Aptos Village Park is the only green grass park in Aptos. The playground is scheduled to be renovated as the budget allows. Director Hurtado suggested that more time be taken to research appropriate sites. Some residents are in favor of the idea with some opposed. A report can be provided on pros and cons and possible places to use. Commissioner Serna asked about Davenport Landing as a possible off leash area. Commissioner Minott reminded the Commission that the discussion began with the request from residents that the great meadow at Polo Grounds be fenced and used as an off leash area. There are concerns with that plan due to the accessibility for the water district to check on their well. The well project will affect the area and the decision was made that more discussion will take place at next month's meeting.

4. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Michael Rosenberg was elected Chair (Minott/Doten 5/0). Dave Mercer was elected Vice Chair (Doten/Minott 5/0).

VII. AGENDA/MEETING FOR: Parks Commission, Monday, August 13, 2007 at 7:15 p.m. at the Government Center, Board Chambers 5th Floor, 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

A. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. The Farm Park Consultant
2. Valencia Hall Renovations
3. Highland Park Playground

B. ACTION ITEMS

None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m. (Mercer/Doten 4/0)