



County of Santa Cruz

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES

979 17TH AVENUE, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95062

(831) 454-7901 FAX: (831) 454-7940 TDD/TTY: call 711

JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA

Monday, January 12th, 2026
5:00pm – 7:00pm
Regular Meeting

Simpkins Family Swim Center
Community Rooms
979 17th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Introductory Items

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

2. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Any person may address the Commission during its Oral Communication period. Speakers must not exceed three (3) minutes in length, or the time limit established by the Chair, and individuals may speak only once during Oral Communications. All Oral Communication must be directed to an item listed on today's Consent Agenda, Closed Session Agenda, yet to be heard on Regular Agenda, or a topic not on the agenda that is within the jurisdiction of the Commission. Commission members will not take actions or respond immediately to any Oral communication presented regarding topics not on the agenda but may choose to follow up later, either individually, or on a subsequent Commission Agenda. Oral communications will normally be received by the Commission for a period not to exceed thirty (30) minutes. If, at the end of this period, additional persons wish to address the Commission, the Oral Communication period may be continued to the last item on the agenda.

4. ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA (item 8)

Regular Agenda

5. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

6. PARKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

7. ACTION ITEMS

a. Discuss and Approve Parks & Recreation Commission 2024-25 Biennial Report..... page 3.

i. Subcommittee Oral Report – Nick de Sieyes & Anne Less

Consent Agenda

Consent items include routine business that does not call for discussion. One roll call vote is taken for all items. Only a Commissioner may pull items from Consent to Regular Agenda. Members of the public must request that a Commissioner pull an item from the Consent Agenda prior to the start of the meeting.

8. **Approve minutes from December 8th, 2025**..... page 6.

Written Correspondence Listing

- I. Email from Amber Jones – Follow Up for the Half Basketball Court at Floral Park.
- II. Email from Jean Jani – December 8th meeting/discussion for proposed 38th Avenue park design.
- III. Email from Derek Draper – Next Phase for Floral Park.
- IV. Email from Jeremy Silveira – Santa Cruz County Outdoor Hockey Rink – Funding & Feasibility Inquiry.

Adjournment

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:00 PM Monday, February 9th, 2026

Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms

The County of Santa Cruz does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities. The Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms, located at 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA, are an accessible facility. If you are a person with a disability and wish to participate in the meeting and require special assistance in order to participate, please contact the Parks, Open Spaces, & Cultural Services Department at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting to make arrangements. Persons with disabilities may request a copy of the agenda in an alternative format.



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PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION 2024 – 2025 BIENNIAL REPORT

ROLE OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Assess the needs and resources of the Santa Cruz County Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services and recommend programs to satisfy those needs.

- I. Advise the Board of Supervisors and Parks Department on matters regarding parks, recreation, and open space in the County.
- II. Advise the Board of Supervisors on the preservation of historic, cultural, and natural resources in the County.
- III. Review the annual budget for County Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

MEETINGS AND STRUCTURE

The Commission met quarterly in 2024 on a Monday evening at 5:00 p.m. determined by the Commission. The Commission voted to meet bimonthly in 2025 on identified Monday evenings at 5:00 p.m. The Commission will agree upon a schedule for the year's meetings at or prior to the first meeting of the year.

The Commission is made up of five members, one nominated by each Supervisor and operates using Roberts Rules of Order. Commission meetings are governed by a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson who are elected on an annual basis each April. Staff support is provided by the Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services.

COMMISSION STAFF

Jeff Gaffney, Director
Rebecca Hurley, Deputy Director
Juan Perez Alvarez, Admin Services Manager
Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha, Admin Aide
Annalise Rodriguez, Admin Aide

ATTENDANCE

The Commissioners attendance for the past twenty-four months can be found on page **XX** of this report.

2024-2025 ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Four new commissioners were appointed:
 - a. **District 1** Alexis Konevich (6/25/2024)
 - b. **District 2** Nick de Sieyes (3/25/2025)
 - c. **District 4** Elizabeth Hernandez (12/17/2024)
 - d. **District 5** Anne Less (8/19/2025)
2. Attended a Commissioner Workshop on February 12, 2024, in which the 2024-25 Commissioner Work Plan was developed and adopted.
 - a. The commission amended the Work Plan in early 2025 to assign new members and clarify the goals.
3. Modified meeting schedule from quarterly (4) to bimonthly (6).

4. Made recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, such as:
 - a. Naming the new South County Park located at 188 Whiting Road “Valle del Pajaro County Park.”
 - b. Protecting land currently zoned for park use and expanding access to open space in the County General Plan.
5. Fostered engagement with community members and stakeholders including participating in events at County Parks.
6. Encouraged fundraising initiatives and grants for park improvement projects and youth programs.
7. Encouraged collaborations with partners such as AmeriCorps and County Park Friends.
8. Received status reports on park improvement projects and potential projects including:
 - a. Mitigation planting and Natural Resource Management Plan at Anna Jean Cummings County Park;
 - b. Valle del Pajaro County Park – survey for interim use, name proposal development, and master plan;
 - c. Natural Resource Management Plan and Rapid Assessments for South County Parks;
 - d. Playground renovations at Floral County Park;
 - e. New ADA bathrooms at Hidden Beach County Park;
 - f. Moran Lake County Park - updates to the Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan, wind study, and tree work;
 - g. Santa Cruz Coastal Lagoons & East Cliff Drive Resiliency Study; and
 - h. Water quality issues at Pinto Lake County Park.
9. Were informed on:
 - a. Aquatics and Recreation Programs;
 - b. The Parks Department communications plan;
 - c. FY26 County Parks Budget;
 - d. the Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction, and Wildlife Protection Initiative (Measure Q);
 - e. County Park Friends’ Young Outdoor Leaders (YOL) Program;
 - f. Countywide Trails Update & Plan; and
 - g. Potential changes to Floral County Park and received community feedback.
10. Received regular reports on the activities of the Aquatics, Arts, Maintenance, Planning, Recreation, Reservations, and Volunteers Teams.
11. Were informed of new hires and changes to County Parks staff.

PROPOSED 2026-2027 GOALS

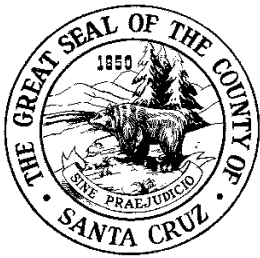
1.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION ATTENDANCE REPORT 2024

Meeting	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	Staff
Workshop – 2/12	Katherine Lee	Tricia Wiltshire	Jeremy Sanford	Absent	Monica Martinez	Jeff Gaffney, Frankie Farr, Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha
Feb. 12 th , 2024	Katherine Lee	Tricia Wiltshire	Jeremy Sanford	Absent	Monica Martinez	Jeff Gaffney, Frankie Farr, Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha
May 13 th , 2024	Katherine Lee	Tricia Wiltshire	Jeremy Sanford	Absent	Monica Martinez	Rebecca Hurley, Juan Perez Alvarez, Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha
Aug. 12 th , 2024	Alexis Konevich	Tricia Wilshire	Jeremy Sanford	Vacant	Monica Martinez	Jeff Gaffney, Rebecca Hurley, Juan Perez-Alvarez, Annalise Rodriguez, Frankie Farr
Nov. 18 th , 2024	Alexis Konevich	Tricia Wilshire	Jeremy Sanford	Vacant	Absent	Jeff Gaffney, Rebecca Hurley, Juan Perez-Alvarez

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION ATTENDANCE REPORT 2025

Meeting	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	Staff
Feb. 10 th , 2025	Alexis Konevich	Tricia Wilshire	Jeremy Sanford	Elizabeth Hernandez	Vacant	Jeff Gaffney, Rebecca Hurley, Juan Perez-Alvarez, Annalise Rodriguez
Apr. 14 th , 2025	Alexis Konevich	Nick de Sieyes	Jeremy Sanford	Elizabeth Hernandez	Vacant	Jeff Gaffney, Rebecca Hurley, Juan Perez-Alvarez, Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha
May 12 th , 2025	Absent	Nick de Sieyes	Jeremy Sanford	Elizabeth Hernandez	Vacant	Jeff Gaffney, Juan Perez-Alvarez, Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha
Aug. 11 th , 2025	Alexis Konevich	Nick de Sieyes	Jeremy Sanford	Elizabeth Hernandez	Vacant	Jeff Gaffney, Rebecca Hurley, Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha
Oct. 14 th , 2025	MEETING CANCELLED					
Oct. 20 th , 2025 <i>*Special meeting</i>	Alexis Konevich	Nick de Sieyes	Absent	Absent	Anne Less	Jeff Gaffney, Rebecca Hurley, Juan Perez-Alvarez, Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha
Dec. 8 th , 2025	Alexis Konevich	Nick de Sieyes	Jeremy Sanford	Elizabeth Hernandez	Anne Less	Jeff Gaffney, Rebecca Hurley, Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha



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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, December 8th, 2025
5:00pm – 7:00pm
Regular Meeting

**Simpkins Family Swim Center
Community Rooms**
979 17th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Introductory Items

1. **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL** Meeting called to order by Chair Konevich at 5:06 PM.

Present: Alexis Konevich (District 1), Nick de Sieyes (District 2), Jeremy Sanford (District 3), Elizabeth Hernandez (District 4), Anne Less (District 5)

Staff: Jeff Gaffney, Rebecca Hurley, Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha

2. **AGENDA MODIFICATIONS** No modifications.
3. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** 2 members of the public.
4. **ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA** (items 9-10)

Motion to approve: de Sieyes/2nd: Less/All in favor.

Regular Agenda

5. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

District 1: Reported that issues at Floral Park are the primary concern in the district at this time. Additional information, as well as hearing from the public, would be provided as part of item 7(b).

District 2: Reported minimal updates – the playing fields at Polo Grounds County Park are entering a winter maintenance phase in preparation for spring use. There was significant safety improvements completed last year, so he is looking forward to this year's maintenance.

District 3: Reported minimal updates and expressed interest in the recent observation of burrowing owls at Scott Creek Beach.

District 4: Reported minimal updates. Noted participation in ongoing volunteer efforts throughout Watsonville, including kayaking activities on the Pajaro River and collaboration with Community Health Trust to establish community gardens in various areas of the city.

District 5: Reported that the rainy season is beginning in the Santa Cruz Mountains and soccer activity at Highlands County Park is slowing. Noted that Highlands served as a hub for children's programming in the fall and that trail construction is progressing at Quail Hollow Ranch and the Pace Trails.

6. PARKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Gaffney reported the **Measure Q** Five-Year Vision Plan has been adopted and the COAB is transitioning to development of the grant program, with the goal of making grants available in early 2026. The County is moving forward on its budget determinations for FY26. He noted that County Park Friends is conducting its **All Kids Play campaign**, with a fundraising goal of \$100,000 by the end of the year. Updates were provided on several projects, including the **Valle del Pajaro County Park** Master Plan with support from the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, ongoing improvements at the **Miller Property**, and **Greyhound Rock's** return to County management. He also reported on trail work and environmental review efforts at Cotoni-Coast Dairies, the upcoming **Winter Wonderland event** on December 13, and recent programmatic updates, including the launch of an outdoor education center at **Quail Hollow Ranch**, continued work toward opening the **Pace Trails**, and ongoing accessibility programming at the **Simpkins Family Swim Center**.

7. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. CPRS Mini-Conference – Sarah Shea, Parks Superintendent

Sarah Shea provided an overview of the California Parks and Recreation Society (CPRS), including its mission and Santa Cruz County Parks' involvement as part of Region 2 and Local District 6. She outlined CPRS-sponsored events such as monthly district meetings, an awards ceremony, an annual conference, and an annual regional mini-conference. She reported that Maintenance, Aquatics, and Recreation staff attended the regional mini-conference in November, which drew approximately 300 participants and featured presentations from a variety of speakers, noting that the event supports staff development and is more accessible and affordable for staff to attend.

Commissioner Comments

Chair Konevich asked Sarah Shea to share the most interesting takeaway from the conference. *Sarah responded that many agencies are actively discussing pickleball and its associated challenges; while no agency has identified a perfect solution, it has been informative to learn how others are addressing the issue.*

Public Comment

2 members of the public.

b. Potential Upgrades at Floral County Park

Mariana Colibri-Urgo, Park Planner III, provided an update on recent renovations at Floral County Park and presented conceptual options for the next phase, including a half basketball court, a dog exercise area, and an open, unprogrammed turf area. She explained that these concepts are intended to initiate discussion and that further planning would occur prior to construction. Deputy Director Hurley referenced the original master plan and constituent interest in adding a half basketball court, noting that community feedback has already been gathered through a survey and a community meeting held in November, with the Parks Commission meeting serving as an additional forum for input. If an amendment to the master plan were required, opportunities for community involvement would continue.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner de Sieres asked whether the park's turf is natural or artificial; how the master plan was developed and what the process would be to change it; and whether County Parks has conducted needs-based assessments or has visitation data to inform amenity needs. *Mariana confirmed the turf is natural and that the department does conduct park assessments. Deputy Director Hurley explained that a preliminary master plan was developed internally in collaboration with SSA Architects and received preliminary Planning Department approval, but was never finalized after RDA funding was dissolved. Director Gaffney added that the department typically partners with cities and other jurisdictions on feasibility studies and needs assessments, but this has not occurred in Capitola due to limited resources. He noted this is an approach the department intends to continue. Staff also clarified that visitation data is not available for unreservable amenities, while usage of reservable amenities is tracked through County Park's reservation system.*

Chair Konevich asked who would fund and maintain a potential basketball court. *Staff responded that ongoing maintenance would be absorbed into County Parks' operating budget.* She also asked whether there are statistics on the number, usage, and need for basketball courts in District 1. *Staff noted that the closest*

basketball court is at Felt Street Park and is well used. While an exact count was not available, staff explained that District 1 includes both County and city parks.

Commissioner Less asked about dog parks. *Staff noted that the closest dog park is at Chanticleer Park and that the proposed design is inspired by that facility.*

Vice-Chair Sanford asked whether a full basketball court was considered. *Deputy Director Hurley responded that a full court was not requested and would not be appropriate for this neighborhood park, as it would be larger than the existing play area.*

Public Comments

21 members of the public.

8. ACTION ITEMS

a. Ordinance Signage at Moran Lake County Park.

Deputy Director Hurley informed the Commission of ongoing issues with e-bike use at Moran Lake County Park, where bikes are being ridden on a single-track natural area trail through the monarch habitat. She explained that to mitigate impacts, County Parks has installed signage requesting riders to walk their bikes through the area. She noted that the County's e-bike ordinance does not apply to parks due to community benefits of bicycle access in some park areas. Until a park-specific ordinance is adopted, Parks seeks to continue posting signage at Moran Lake County Park and requested that the Commission grant the Parks Director authority to do so pursuant to Santa Cruz County Code 10.04.305.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner de Sieyes asked whether the signage has helped address the issue. *Deputy Director Hurley responded that it appears to be effective, as the department has received fewer complaints, though there is currently no enforcement due to the absence of park rangers. If the issue escalates, Parks would coordinate with the Sheriff's Office on enforcement.*

Commissioner Less asked about the status of the countywide e-bike ordinance. *Deputy Director Hurley explained that the County has adopted an ordinance governing e-bike use on streets and sidewalks, but it does not include provisions for use in parks.*

Public Comment

1 member of the public.

Motion to allow the County Parks Director to post restrictions at Moran Lake County Park in accordance with Santa Cruz County Code 10.04.305: de Sieyes/2nd: Sanford/All in favor.

b. Discuss and Approve Parks & Recreation Commission 2024-25 Biennial Report..... page 3.

i. Subcommittee Oral Report – Nick de Sieyes & Anne Less

Commissioners de Sieyes and **Less** noted that past goals had not produced tangible results. Their subcommittee focused on aligning goals with the Commission's powers and duties, meeting with Parks staff to understand departmental priorities. They emphasized the importance of setting goals that all commissioners support and tracking progress alongside Parks Department work. Rather than proposing specific goals, they presented an approach for prioritization and goal setting, noting it would be inappropriate to propose goals on behalf of the entire Commission without full input.

Commissioners discussed future priorities, with **Vice-Chair Sanford** supporting alignment of goals with the County Parks Strategic Plan. **Chair Konevich** suggested focusing on familiarizing themselves with parks in their districts, understanding their needs, and strengthening connections with their County Supervisor. Commissioners agreed on creating goals that reflect their priorities, the department's priorities, and the department's strategic plan.

Motion to add item “9(g). changes to Floral Park and heard community comments” to activities and accomplishments and discuss and approve goals at the next commission meeting following a proposal from the subcommittee: Sanford/2nd: Hernandez/All in favor.

- c. Discuss and Approve 2026 Meeting Schedule..... page 6.

The commission reviewed two options for the proposed 2026 meeting schedule: meeting every other month on either the first Monday or the second Monday of the month. After brief discussion, the Commission moved to approve a meeting schedule.

Motion to approve option 2 with an additional meeting on January 12th: Sanford/2nd: de Sieyes/All in favor.

Consent Agenda

Consent items include routine business that does not call for discussion. One roll call vote is taken for all items. Only a Commissioner may pull items from Consent to Regular Agenda. Members of the public must request that a Commissioner pull an item from the Consent Agenda prior to the start of the meeting.

- 9. Approve minutes from October 20th, 2025..... page 7.

10. Consider Reports:

- a. Aquatics Section Report..... page 12.
- b. Arts and Cultural Services Report..... page 14.
- c. Maintenance Section Report..... page 16.
- d. Planning Section Report..... page 18.
- e. Recreation Section Report..... page 23.
- f. Reservations Section Report..... page 25.
- g. Volunteer Section Report..... page 26.

Written Correspondence Listing

- I. Email from Julie Howard - Concerns Regarding Proposal for Half-Court Basketball Facility at Floral County Park
- II. Email from Kodiak O'Neill – Floral County Park

Adjournment **Motion** to adjourn at 7:57 PM: Sanford/2nd: Less/All in favor.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:00 PM Monday, January 12th, 2026
Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms