



# County of Santa Cruz

## DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES

979 17<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95062

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

JEFF GAFFNEY  
DIRECTOR

### MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
5:00pm – 7:00pm  
Special Meeting

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

#### Introductory Items

1. **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL** Meeting called to order by Chair Konevich at 5:05PM.

**Present:** Alexis Konevich (District 1), Nick de Sieyes (District 2), Anne Less (District 5)

**Absent:** Jeremy Sanford (District 3), Elizabeth Hernandez (District 4)

**Staff:** Jeff Gaffney, Rebecca Hurley, Juan Perez Alvarez, Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha

2. **AGENDA MODIFICATIONS**

Item 8a. All Kids Play Campaign – County Park Friends will be heard after item 6. Parks Director's Report.

3. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** 1 member of the public.

Tricia Proctor: Thanked the County Parks Department for their collaboration with the Richard Novak Foundation.

4. **ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA** (items 10-11)

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

#### Regular Agenda

5. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

District 1: There is a community meeting on Floral Park on November 5<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm. Recently connected with Chairs from other local Parks and Recreation Commissions.

District 2: Youth soccer program at Polo Grounds in Aptos is in full swing (400+ youth). It has been great to see the facilities in use and the work the maintenance team is doing to maintain the fields during the season.

District 3: Absent.

District 4: Absent.

District 5: Introduced herself and is excited to represent district 5. Looking forward to bridging the challenges the district experiences in relation to park and recreation. Working on cultivating new relationships with local groups.

6. **PARKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

## Board of Supervisors

Two Measure Q items will go before the Board of Supervisors on October 21: a presentation of the Five-Year Vision Plan and recommendations for first-year County funding. Additionally, two new positions — a Recreation Coordinator and Parks Maintenance Worker I — were approved on September 30.

## Park Updates

Felton Library Friends inquired about a land acknowledgment; Parks staff noted that rather than installing a plaque or sign, they aim to honor local tribes through ongoing partnership and collaborative efforts. The bridge at Farm Park is planned for surplus. Staff are coordinating with the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County on the Valle del Pajaro County Park Master Plan and with Santa Cruz Mountain Trail Stewardship on North Coast trail work. Tree work has been completed at 40 Moran Way, trenching at Greyhound Rock did not identify a fault line, and improvements and fuel reduction are underway at Miller County Park. Cabrillo Gals are building batting cages at Anna Jean Cummings County Park, and Parks is partnering with Shoreline Middle School to provide pool access for PE. Pace Trails are about halfway complete, with volunteer work continuing.

## Events

Floating Pumpkin Patch last weekend was a success. Trunk or Treat on October 24<sup>th</sup> at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds and the Sheriff's Office Headquarters.

### **8(a) All Kids Play Campaign – County Park Friends**

Mariah Roberts, Executive Director, provided an overview of the organization and their All Kids Play campaign. County Park Friends aims to raise \$100,000 by December 2025 to expand youth access to Santa Cruz County Parks programs. The initiative provides scholarships for swim lessons, sports camps, and nature programs, and supports park improvements to reduce barriers for families. Last year's donations funded access for over 1,000 youth, and the campaign continues to promote equitable, affordable recreation opportunities for all children in the county.

## Public Comments

- Yadira Flores, Community Engagement Director for County Park Friends, spoke of the Youth Outdoor Leaders program and how this program benefits the youth and benefits through the support of the community. She also invited everyone to "Festival Los Muertos to the Park" that youth in District 1 helped to make possible.
- Sarah Shea, Parks Superintendent, spoke about the benefits of the All Kids Play Campaign and shared feedback they had received from families that had participated.
- Tricia Wiltshire invited commissioners to the opening of the new, all-inclusive Treasure Cove Playground in the city of Capitola.

**Motion** to endorse, amplify and share information about the All Kids Play Campaign by County Park Friends: Konevich/2<sup>nd</sup>: Less/All in favor.

## **7. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### a. Pinto Lake Water Quality – Zane Mortensen, Park Planner III

Zane Mortensen, Park Planner III, presented an update on Pinto Lake's water quality issues and ongoing restoration efforts. He reviewed the lake's history, past and current mitigation work, and outlined next steps, including continued monitoring, pursuing grant funding, and implementation. He noted the collaboration among the City of Watsonville, the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, the County Environmental Health Division, and County Parks.

## Commissioner Questions

- *Commissioner de Sieyes asked when the harmful algal blooms (HABs) problems occur.* Zane explained that HABs have been an issue since the 1970s. An alum treatment was effective in treating the issue, but after the 2023 flood became ineffective.

- *Commissioner Less asked if an increase in rain events and flooding would change the situation as to what strategies are available. If it does, she asked how that is being planned for.* Yes, and that is why there is a focus on the upstream implementation. Another alum treatment would be successful but only in the short term. *She also asked what efforts have been made to make the community aware of the hazards.* Creating awareness is a collaboration between the City and County, but the lake is currently closed. On the County side, there are signs and notices, as well as restricted access.
- *Commissioner de Sieyes asked what is being monitored and how often.* Environmental Health monitors the toxin levels in the water weekly. *He also asked if staff have looked into any case studies for other lakes.* Zane confirmed that the consultant is looking into them and will provide a report to County staff on other similar cases.

b. Measure Q Update – Robert Tidmore, Parks Principle Planner

Robert Tidmore, Parks Principle Planner, provided an overview on Measure Q, the Citizens Oversight Advisory Board (COAB) and the newly developed Five-Year Vision Plan.

Commissioner Questions

- *Chair Konevich asked if the Parks department would apply for a grant or if the money is automatically given to the County.* Parks staff clarified that the Parks Department is an eligible applicant for grant money, but there is a separate bucket of money for the County.
- *Commissioner Less asked for clarification on what “bucket” the allocation being requested at the Board of Supervisors was coming from.* Parks staff explained that the projects proposed would be using funding from the 20% allocated to the unincorporated County.
- *Commissioner de Sieyes asked if the COAB will be the one to evaluate and make the decision for grant proposals.* No, County staff will manage the grant program. There will be an outside consultant that assesses the applications, so County departments are eligible to apply for grants.
- *Commissioner Less asked for clarification on the new Senior Analyst position.* This position is a collaborative effort between Parks and OR3. However, the position will be housed in OR3.
- *Chair Konevich asked if the commission would be considered a stakeholder.* Robert Tidmore clarified that it may have been an oversight to not include the commission as a stakeholder. Since there was already an established advisory group for the Measure, there could have been a potential conflict between the two groups and their opinions. However, it is possible to include the commission on future decisions regarding County Parks and Measure Q funding.

Public Comment

- Mariah Roberts commented on her participation as a stakeholder in the Parks group. She appreciated the recognition of working collaboratively within the parks world and being able to represent the opinion of County Parks during the process.

**8. ACTION ITEMS**

- a. All Kids Play Campaign – County Park Friends..... page 3.

Moved after item 6.

- b. Draft Parks & Recreation Commission 2024-25 Biennial Report..... page 4.

Director Gaffney provided a brief background on the Biennial Report prior to the Commissioners discussing changes and approaches to completing the report.

Commissioner Comments

- *Chair Konevich requested adding the previously submitted letter to the Board of Supervisors — recommending the expansion of open space rather than rezoning for new development — to the accomplishments section. She also recommended forming a subcommittee to draft goals, allowing*

*commissioners to dedicate time outside meetings to develop recommendations for discussion at the next meeting.*

- *Commissioner Less asked for clarification on how the commission's goals relate to the work plan and proposed outcomes.*
  - o Chair Konevich expressed that the commission should either establish goals or develop a work plan, but not both. She noted that the Watsonville Parks Commission uses broader themes assigned to commissioners and suggested adopting a similar approach. Commissioners could then report on their focus areas during commissioner reports rather than as a separate process.
- Commissioner de Sieyes noted a disconnect between being assigned topics from a work plan developed by others and the individual reasons commissioners volunteer. He expressed support for restructuring the system so that focus areas are more commissioner-driven.

Further discussion among commissioners supported aligning future goals with the Powers and Duties outlined in the commission's bylaws. Commissioners also discussed strategies for drafting these goals and approaches for reviewing and discussing them at the next meeting.

**Motion** to create a subcommittee of Commissioner de Sieyes and Commissioner Less focused on creating goals for the Biennial Report that will guide the next 2 years: Konevich/**2<sup>nd</sup>**: de Sieyes/All in favor.

## **9. SUBCOMMITTEE ORAL REPORTS**

- a. Parks and Recreation Commission 2024-25 Work Plan..... page 7.

See attached report.

### **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.

- 10. Approve minutes from August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025.....** page 9.

## **11. Consider Reports:**

- a. Aquatics Section Report..... page 14.
- b. Arts and Cultural Services Report..... page 16.
- c. Maintenance Section Report..... page 18.
- d. Planning Section Report..... page 20.
- e. Recreation Section Report..... page 24.
- f. Reservations Section Report..... page 26.
- g. Volunteer Section Report..... page 27.

### **Written Correspondence Listing**

- I. Email from Clinton Robustelli – Request for Consideration of a Local Pet Cemetery at the Miller Property.
- II. Letter from Santa Cruz Bird Club – Anna Jean Cummings Park Swallow Nest Removal

**Adjournment** Motion to adjourn at 7:20 PM: de Sieyes/**2<sup>nd</sup>**: Less/All in favor.

## **NEXT MEETING DATE:**

5:00 PM Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION WORK PLAN 2024/25						*Funds utilized for nominal Work Plan expenses are included within the Parks and Recreation Department operational budget.							
#	Stated Goal	Members Involved	Timeline	Fiscal Impact*	Projected Outcomes	Update #1 05.13.2024	Update #2 08.12.2024	Update #3 11.18.2024	Update #4 02.10.2025	Update #5 04.14.2025	Update #6 05.12.2025	Update #7 08.11.2025	Update #8 10.20.2025
COMMUNITY OUTREACH													
1	Attend County sponsored events, serving as County ambassadors by welcoming, meeting and greeting the public, and serving in a volunteer capacity conducting various event duties as needed.	All	April 2024 - December 2025	No Impact	Commissioners engage and interact with citizens while remaining aware of current trends in the public use of parks, beaches, trails, recreation programming, and special events.  Create outreach to the public, educating them on what the Parks & Recreation Commission does, how to engage with the Commission and local government, programs the County offers, and spaces & places to recreate.  Each Commissioner participates in a minimum 2 events.	Wiltshire - Attended Willowbrook Memorial Seating Area Unveiling and Live Like Coco events.  Martinez - Attended Willowbrook Willowbrook Memorial Seating Area Unveiling. Plans to attend Felton Library Community Event and Felton Remembers.	No update provided.	No update provided.	No update provided.			de Sieyes - Went out to the location in Aptos village, where members of the community are discussing the potential of a parcel being donated to County Parks. Beginning conversation.  Hernandez - Attended the Valle del Pajaro County Park grand opening. Spoke to neighbors, heard their concerns and connected them with resources that could address the concerns.  Konevich - Plans to attend some volunteer events in the fall.	No update provided.
2	Connect with local City and County Commissions to better understand collaboration opportunities.	All	April 2024 - December 2025	No Impact	Attend meetings of area commissions, create connection with members.  Better understand efforts of area commissions generating ideas for future Santa Cruz County Parks & Recreation goals and determining opportunities for collaboration where synergy exists.	Wiltshire - Has been visiting/working with Commission on Disabilities. Would like to work with Brenda Gutierrez Baeza more on reviewing plans and possibly making adjustments to consider those with disabilities and increase equity throughout County Parks. Trying to make it to the Arts Commission meeting in July.	No update provided.	No update provided.	No update provided.			No update provided.	Konevich - Met with Noe Ibarra (Chair of the Watsonville Parks & Recreation Commission) and David Sanguinetti (Chair of the Scotts Valley Parks & Recreation Commission and member of the Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board).
3	Identify and schedule guest speakers for Parks & Recreation Commission meetings, as appropriate.	All	April 2024 - December 2025	No Impact	Commissioners gain awareness and understanding of topics relevant to goals outlined in this Commission Work Plan and other topics of interest.	Martinez - Working with County Parks staff to have a speaker from RCD on 8/12.	No update provided.	No update provided.	No update provided.			Konevich - Reached out to Mariah Roberts to have County Park Friends regularly attend meetings and provide commission with updates on their activities/programs.	No update provided.
GREAT FACILITIES													
4	Research community needs related to facility use, development, and programming.	de Sieyes, Sanford	April 2024 - December 2025	No Impact	Generate a better understanding of community interests and needs related to facilities and programming. Identify related core and stretch objectives.  Provide findings to Parks & Recreation department for consideration and planning.	Sanford - Would like to bring youth rugby to the Monterey Bay area. The league could use various facilities such as Pinto Lake or Polo Grounds. One challenge identified with programming and facility use is the limit in time. Many fields are not designed to be used year-round, is there a way to address this issue?	No update provided.	No update provided.	No update provided.			Sanford - Heard from some constituents that limited field usage in the winter creates an impediment in growing their sports programs.  de Sieyes - Has heard some excitement from constituents on the modification to the County's reservation systems. There is a hope that other organizations will follow in suit and modernize their systems.	No update provided.
EFFECTIVE STEWARDSHIP													
5	Examine climate resiliency efforts and advise Park & Recreation department of best practices.	Hernandez	April 2024 - December 2025	No Impact	Gain awareness and understanding of topics relevant to climate resiliency through research and connection with local organizations.  Identify gaps in climate resiliency efforts/education and advise Parks & Recreation department of best practices.	Lee - Did some research on pollinating creatures and planting hedgerows. Maybe Parks can take advantage of some spaces in various parks and plant some hedgerows to increase resiliency and support pollinating populations.	No update provided.	No update provided.	No update provided.			No update provided.	No update provided.
6	Identify best practices for sustainability and advise Park & Recreation department of findings.	Konevich, de Sieyes	April 2024 - December 2025	No Impact	Commissioners examine current sustainability efforts within the County and explore additional best practices in all areas of sustainability.  Areas of exploration could include, but are not limited to those outlined in the Strategic Plan 5-year Update such as balancing recreation and conservation, restoration or enhancement, water conservation, nature programming, interpretive signage, community partnerships, etc.  Provide recommendations on best practices, potential partnerships, and community outreach opportunities to Parks & Recreation department.	Lee - Has been working with maintenance team and workers at different Parks regarding maintenance. Suggested planting hedgerows.  Sanford - Is continuing to research more sustainable, all-weather fields that could be implemented throughout the County. This would expand the opportunity to provide year round programming and field use.	No update provided.	No update provided.	No update provided.			No update provided.	de Sieyes - Asked County Parks staff for data related to water usage at County Parks with playing fields. Has not had a chance to dive fully into it, but plans on reviewing it for possible recommendations on sustainable practices.
SPECIAL PROJECT(S)													
7	Explore Best Practices for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) related to Parks & Recreation	Konevich, Hernandez	April 2024 - December 2025	No Impact	Explore DEI best practices and make recommendations for greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in all areas of parks & recreation including, but not limited to, those outlined in the Strategic Plan 5-year Update such as signage, health and well-being, park accessibility, recreation programming, and collaboration with non-profit groups.	No update provided.	No update provided.	No update provided.	No update provided.			Hernandez - While networking with CPFA and Young Outdoor Leaders at the ribbon cutting, some of the group expressed wanting to create a plaque that discusses the history of the land.	No update provided.
ADVISE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS -- NOTE:													
	2024/25 Parks and Recreation Commission Work Plan Outcomes to be submitted in the Biennial Report	Chair	On or before January 31, 2025		Board of Supervisors is advised of past year work plan outcomes in Biennial Report.								
	2025/26 Parks and Recreation Commission Proposed Work Plan/Goals to be submitted in the Biennial Report	Chair	On or before January 31, 2025		Board of Supervisors reviews proposed work plan goals and intended outcomes in Biennial Report.								

AMENDED WORK PLAN AND REASSIGNED COMMISSIONERS TO GOALS.

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