



County of Santa Cruz

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES

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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/**2**nd: 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