



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, January 14, 2010 Albany Community Center
Edith Stone Room, 1249 Marin Ave., 7:00pm

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: December 2009

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

For persons desiring to address the Commission/Committee/Board on an item that is not on the agenda please note that each speaker is limited to three (3) minutes. The Brown Act limits the Committee's ability to take and/or discuss items that are not on the agenda; therefore, such items are normally referred to staff for comment or to a future agenda.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

6. DISCUSSIONS AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

6-1	Community Gardens:	General discussion on creating more community gardens in Albany.
6-2	Location switch for Friendship Club and Teen Center:	Commission to consider recommending switching the locations of the Friendship Club and Teen Center. (Staff report attached)
6-3	Field Use/Modifications Proposal from AUSD:	Review and consider recommendation from AUSD to modify uses and field configurations at Ocean View, Memorial, and Cougar fields to better serve baseball and softball groups in Albany. (School District's Staff report attached.)
6-4	Tree Task Force:	Update from Tree Task Force including Tree List and work plan.
6-5	Selection of Chair and Vice Chair:	Commission to vote on Chair and Vice Chair to serve Feb 2010 through January 2011.
6-6	Next Meeting:	Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 11, 2009.

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

(Commission/Committee/Board Member announcement of requests for future agenda items. No public comment will be taken on announcement of future agenda items).

8. ADJOURNMENT:

Please note that if you provide your name and address when speaking before the Commission/Committee/Board it will become part of the official public record, which will be posted on the Internet.

NOTE: Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the City Council/Commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at the Community Center counter located at 1249 Marin Ave during normal business hours, 8:30am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday.

**CITY OF ALBANY
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda date: January 14, 2010

SUBJECT: Switching Teen Center and Friendship Club Locations

REPORTED BY: Penelope Leach, Recreation and Community Services Director

BACKGROUND

Dara Birnbaum, UC Village Community Liaison, recently suggested to City staff the idea of switching the location of the Albany Friendship Club and the Albany Teen Center. The idea was derived due to similar projects that are being considered throughout Albany with the School District, UC Village, and the City of Albany facilities. The suggestion came at an ideal time for two main reasons; (1) City staff has recently been struggling with the transportation of students to the Friendship Club as enrollment is increasing, and (2) a recent audit by the California Highway Patrol (CHP) regarding the City's 15-passenger vans has decreased the number of students staff can transport.

The CHP regulates all vehicles that carry more than nine passengers. While being audited staff was informed that drivers transporting more than nine minors must have a Youth Bus Certification. Currently, City employees driving vehicles that transport more than nine passengers have a Class B license which was believed to be the standard requirement. Unfortunately, the Class B license allows employees to drive vehicles that transport more than nine adult passengers, but does not cover the transportation of more than nine *minors*. The CHP officer auditing the vans has mandated that seats be removed from the City's 15-passenger vans so that the vans will carry a maximum of nine passengers. Staff is investigating the requirements for acquiring the Youth Bus Certification; however, in the meantime, staff is removing seats from the three 15-passenger vans that are currently being used to pick up students at four different school sites each day.

ANAYLYSIS

At the very least, the City's two full-time youth and teen employees will acquire the Youth Bus Certification so that staff can use the 15-passenger vans to their fullest capacity in an effort to reduce the number of trips to and from schools each day. However, requiring part-time staff to have a Youth Bus Certification is a little more problematic. Part-time staff turns over more frequently; therefore, keeping part-time staff that are properly certified on an ongoing basis needs to be considered when trying to find solutions to the City's after school transportation needs. It should be noted that even though the City considered a Class B license sufficient to drive the 15-passenger vans regardless the age of the participants, there is only one part-time staff person that works with teens/youth that currently has a Class B license. Although she has been with the City for five years, she will be taking a leave of absence in the next few months. This is more evidence that the City needs to address issues concerning the daily transportation of students to after school childcare sites.

One long-term solution is to switch the locations of the Teen Center and the Friendship Club. The number of trips needed to transport students would be significantly reduced throughout the school year. All students from Ocean View Elementary School could walk to the Friendship Club everyday if the Friendship Club were located at Ocean View Park. This would reduce 2-3 trips each day. Similarly, if the Teen Center were located at Memorial Park, participants could walk from Albany Middle School to the Teen Center on most days. Staff would offer to pick up students from the middle school on bad weather days. Almost all of the Teen Center participants attend Albany Middle School. Part-time staff would walk with participants from Ocean View Elementary and Albany Middle School to their respective after school sites.

The Parks and Recreation Commission recently recommended and the City Council approved Measure WW funds for the expansion of the Teen Center which is currently located at Ocean View Park. If the Friendship Club and the Teen Center switched locations, there is still a need for additional programming space at the Ocean View site. The current facility at Ocean View is approximately 1200 square feet. The Memorial Park facility where the Friendship Club is currently located is approximately 2200 square feet. If the Friendship Club were to move to the Ocean View site, more space would be needed to accommodate the number of students the City currently serves.

When the Commission considered the expansion of the Teen Center it was intended that the site would be used for a variety of indoor recreation needs when not being used for Teen Center activities. This would still hold true if the site were to be used for the Friendship Club. The facility would be used for other recreational/educational classes as well as rental space when the facility is not being used for Friendship Club activities.

With the additional portable at the Ocean View site, the programmable space would be approximately the same size as the current Memorial site. Brad Griffith, the supervisor in charge of the Friendship Club, sees no programmatic disadvantage to having two buildings instead of one building, given the overall space is approximately the same.

One of the main reasons for the Teen Center expansion was to provide homework space for Teen Center participants. If the Teen Center were to move to the Memorial site, this issue could still be addressed. The Memorial site has two large rooms, approximately 1000 square feet each. The rooms could easily be separated with the addition of a wall. Another solution is to gain access to one of the classrooms (or Library) at the high school for the purpose of providing quiet homework space. Staff has already approached the School District Superintendent and there should be no problem getting study space for the Teen Center participants at the high school.

At the December 2009 meeting the Commission asked staff to solicit input from the community regarding the switch for discussion at the January 2010 meeting. Staff sent an informational letter to current Teen Center and Friendship Club members as well as posted the letter asking for input on all the Albany schools e-trees. So far everyone who has responded has been in favor of the switch. Participants spoke with the Friendship Club and Teen Center supervisors as well as corresponded via email to the Recreation and Community Services Director.

Attachments - Letter that was sent to community

December 16, 2009

Dear Parent,

In an effort to offer after school care programs in the best possible locations for Albany residents, the City is considering switching the location of the Friendship Club with the Teen Center. We would like your input and ideas regarding the potential change.

The Teen Center is currently located at Ocean View Park at 900 Buchanan Street and the Friendship Club is currently located at Memorial Park at 1331 Portland Avenue. By making the switch, the City would decrease the number of trips to pick up children after school by at least four trips per day. Given that almost all of the participants at the Teen Center attend Albany Middle School, participants could walk to the Memorial Park location daily. Van rides would be offered on poor weather days and Teen Center staff would supervise the walk from the middle school to the Teen Center.

Similarly, participants from Ocean View Elementary could walk to the Friendship Club if the Friendship Club were located at Ocean View Park site. After school pick up would continue at Cornell Elementary and Marin Elementary.

In addition to reducing the number of trips per day, City staff and School District staff have worked together to ensure that a classroom at Albany High School would be made available for a homework/tutoring program for Teen Center participants. Accommodations at both the Memorial site and the Ocean View site include a park and a ball field as well as size appropriate outdoor basketball courts and green space. The Ocean View site and the Memorial site have a community garden in which the after school care program will have a plot. Ocean View garden is complete and the Teen Center already enjoys working the garden and using food from the garden as part of its snack program. The Memorial garden should be ready by May 2010 and will similarly serve the after school care program at the Memorial site.

We invite you to attend the January 14, 2010 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting where the location switch will be discussed in more detail. The Commission meeting is held at 7:00pm at the Albany Community Center, 1249 Marin Avenue, in the Edith Stone room. If you are unable to attend the meeting and would like to contact staff, please email Penelope Leach, pleach@albanyca.org.

As we talk through this idea, we hope you will participate and let us know of your support, questions, and concerns.

Sincerely,

Penelope Leach, Recreation and Community Services Director
City of Albany
pleach@albanyca.org

**ALBANY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD AGENDA BACKUP**

Regular Meeting of January 5, 2010

ITEM: **RELOCATION OF ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL
SOFTBALL TEAMS TO COUGAR FIELD AND ALBANY
HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL TEAMS TO MEMORIAL
FIELD**

PREPARED BY: Marla Stephenson, Superintendent

TYPE OF ITEM: **REVIEW**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Albany Unified School District was first alerted to possible Title IX compliance issues in 2007. **Title IX**, is a law enacted on June 23, 1972, that states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Although the most prominent "public face" of Title IX is its impact on high school and collegiate athletics, the original statute made no reference to athletics.

One component of Title IX addresses the effective provision of equitable services, facilities, and supplies for female athletes. Schools have an obligation under Title IX to ensure that its' female and male teams have equal access to comparable facilities, including practice and competitive sites.

The Albany High School baseball teams have greater flexibility and a less constrained practice schedule on district owned Cougar Field than the Albany High School softball teams do at city owned Memorial Field. The Albany High School softball teams play on a field with a permanent mound. This presents a safety hazard for players and the integrity of the game is compromised. Both problems (less practice time and playing on a field with a permanent mound) exist because Albany Unified School District does not have the property to build enough sports fields to meet the needs of high school athletics. To this end, the City of Albany has allowed the district to use Memorial Field. Then district must share the field with Albany Little League and other teams.

In 2008, the Superintendent worked closely with the City of Albany, Albany High School and Albany Little League and proposed a plan that would move Albany Little League from Memorial Field to OceanView Field. This move was to occur in concert with a City plan to improve OceanView Field thus allowing the District to financially contribute to the improvements that were necessary to relocate Little League. The Board allocated funds to make the OceanView Field improvements. As a result of moving Albany Little League to OceanView Field, the permanent pitching mound at Memorial Field would have been removed thus creating an equitable field for Albany High School softball teams.

As plans were being developed for the OceanView Field improvements, the State of California experienced an economic decline. The City of Albany was unable to access funds to make the improvements. During this period of uncertainty, new members were elected to the Little League Board and there was push back from the baseball community on the move. The plan to move Little League to OceanView Field became untenable since we no longer had the support of all stakeholders.

Members of Albany Little League and Albany High School Softball supporters met several times during spring and summer of 2009 to see if they could develop a plan that all could endorse. Nothing official was brought to the City or School District as a result of these talks.

In September, 2009, the Superintendent retained a sports field consultant to review the layouts of Cougar Field, OceanView Field and Memorial Field. As a result of that review, it has been determined that Cougar Field is the best site to locate the home field of Albany High School softball teams. Memorial Field is the best site to locate the home field of Albany High School baseball teams.

The Superintendent has met with representatives of Albany Little League, Albany High School Baseball and Softball teams, Albany High School Administration and the City Parks and recreation Department. There is no opposition to the relocation of the baseball and softball teams. All representatives have indicated that they will work collaboratively with the City and School District to help make this solution work.

Albany Little League and Albany High School baseball are working on field scheduling. The plan is that both entities will play home games at Memorial Field and to use OceanView primarily for practice. Cougar Field will become a dedicated softball field for high school and community use.

Field improvements will have to be made. It is anticipated that the costs will not exceed what the Board has already committed to solve Title IX problems with field equitability. Baseball and softball supporters have expressed an interest in making this a community volunteer project. Tom Murphy, Facilities Supervisor, will provide project management. We will work together with the City of Albany to relocate the teams for the 2010-11 season.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Review only.

<p>RECOMMENDATION: Discuss relocation of Albany High School softball teams to Cougar Field and Albany High School baseball teams to Memorial Field</p>
