



A Regular Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes
Thursday, December 10, 2009
Albany Community Center
Edith Stone Room, 1249 Marin Ave.
7:30 p.m.

- 1. Call to Order:** 7:02p.m. Commissioners present: Chair Pilch, Commissioners Class, Como, Cunningham, Mullarkey and Trout. Excused Commissioner Kindle.

Staff present: Director Penelope Leach and Robin Mariona.

- 2. Approval of Minutes: November 2009**

Motion:

Motion to approve minutes as corrected from November 12, 2009 made by Commissioner Class and seconded by Commissioner Mullarkey. Motion carried all in favor.

- 3. Public Comment:** None

- 4. Announcements/Communications:** The Commission welcomed new member Heather Cunningham.

- 5. Director's Report:** Director Leach stated that a panel including herself and Commissioner Kindle had brainstormed with high school students regarding the garden design at Memorial for the school. She stated that questions and ideas had been generated and a chosen team would present a design to the panel and Commission.

Director Leach stated that there was no electronic copy of the BART 95% plans for the Ohlone Greenway, but she could obtain a hard copy from Ann Chaney and possibly make copies for the Commission if it was not too costly.

- 6. Discussion and possible action on matters related to the following items:**

6-1. Community Gardens: General discussion on creating more community gardens in Albany.

(Maps) Bibo Turman from the Berkeley Community Garden Collaborative gave a presentation to the Commission. Ms. Turman related her experiences working with the Collaborative for many years which consisted of; 31 school gardens, youth training and community gardens in Berkeley. She conducted meetings, delivered compost and contributed to a gardener's newsletter.

The Collaborative had a tool sharing program and was currently involved in outreach, grant writing and visioning process to create paths and community garden space along the Santa Fe right of way. Ms. Turman stated that an important goal of the Collaborative was to create common space gathering places.

Chair Pilch stated that there was allot of interest in creating community gardens in Albany and could Ms Turman give the Commission some ideas on how to get a program going and build the infrastructure necessary. Ms. Turman stated that the program in Berkeley had begun with a collaborative effort between neighbors interested in gardens and the Parks Dept. She stated the importance of community meetings for input. Many of the Berkeley gardens included artwork, tool sheds, bulletin boards as well as the gardening beds. Participants paid \$25/year and the City paid for water.

Commissioner Cunningham asked for information on Ms. Turman's work with school gardens. She stated that she had helped form a collaborative program using USDA grants for gardens and cooking classes. She presented the commission with a map of the gardens involved. The biggest challenges were often personal issues.

Director Leach recommended that the Commission visit some of the gardens on the map. She reported that the Ocean View Garden had cost between \$86,000 and \$87,000 by the end of the project. She stated that community garden space had been discussed during the park renovation process, but never implemented at Memorial or Terrace Parks.

Public Comment: Albany resident Signe Mattson stated that infrastructure for gardens at Terrace and Memorial had been requested during the renovations, but had not been installed. She suggested that it could be done now.

Chair Pilch stated that the Commission needed to identify areas for gardens. Ms. Turman stated that it was not necessary to have large areas. Beds could be 4'X8' with a 4' walkway in between and a small sitting area. Areas identified were; the Ohlone Greenway, Terrace and Memorial Parks, the Key Route median strip and the Senior Center. Commissioners Pilch, Mullarkey, Class, Cunningham and Como volunteered to check out the spaces and report back.

Public Comment: Signe Mattson recommended checking sun angles and light at the suggested areas, especially along the Greenway.

Ms Turman agreed to consult with the Commission on garden projects.

6-2. Location switch for Friendship Club and Teen Center: Commission will discuss the pros and cons of possibly switching the locations of the Friendship Club and the Teen Center. (Staff Report)

Director Leach stated that as reported in the staff report, it had been suggested that the locations of the Teen Center and the Friendship Club be switched to help with Friendship Club transportation issues. The project was being called Recreation Afterschool Care for WW Fund purposes and the funds could be used for the Ocean View portable whether it was for the Teen Center or the Friendship Club. It was hoped that the switch would be made in August, and issues regarding the concrete pad and the size of the portable were being reviewed. Other building modification issues needed to make the switch were minor.

Chair Pilch expressed concern about teenagers in close proximity to the play structure at Memorial. Director Leach stated that rules could be devised during certain hours. Commissioner Mullarkey stated concern about middle school and high school groups mixing.

Director Leach stated that she would like a formal vote from the Commission endorsing the change for Council by the end of January. Chair Pilch stated that he wanted to hear from the public and the Teen Center and Friendship Club users before recommending the change. Director Leach stated that she would send out a questionnaire to the parents. Chair Pilch stated that the vote should be delayed until January.

6-3. Review of facility use policy: Commission to review AUSD use of City facilities specific to sports fields. (Staff Report) Director Leach stated that there were two parts to the scenario for sport field usage. Part A included in the staff report, answered questions and provided history regarding the sports fields reciprocal use agreement, priority listing and the Master Fee Schedules showing field rental payment amounts from 2006-2009. The only hours not include were Senior Center adult school hours. The new Joint Use Agreement would formalize agreements.

Commissioner Class thanked Director Leach for the background information provided in the staff report.

Director Leach stated that Part B had to do with Title Nine and field use issues. She stated that sports field experts recommended converting Cougar baseball field into two softball fields for high school softball. Memorial Field would be turned into a baseball field with minor modifications and Ocean View modified for baseball. The recommendations were a draft and it was hoped that all liability issues for the City would be covered by an ironclad agreement with the AUSD to have access to Cougar Field for softball. The agreement would also provide field space for any City run displaced programs, and the mock schedules seemed to accommodate everyone. The AUSD would pay for all changes.

The tentative timeline for completion of all field changes was the playing season 2011, beginning construction in August 2010 at Ocean View field. Superintendent Stevenson hoped to present the plan to Council in February for approval.

Commissioner Class stated that it would be valuable to identify the bond money spent on the Cougar baseball field improvements that was now being switched to softball fields. Commissioner Como asked that the netting between the Memorial Park tennis courts and the ball field be added to the list of items to be completed. Commissioner Mullarkey commented that the project was being done at considerable inconvenience to the City. Director Leach stated that accomplishing the changes helped to create greater field availability for youth softball, as well clearing up some long standing conflicts over field usage and creating clear rules for usage as well.

Public Comment: An Albany resident stated that most of the bond money spent at Cougar field was for drainage.

Director Leach stated that the changes to the fields would most likely be project managed by the school district. Commissioner Class asked who would be responsible for overruns. Director Leach stated that it would be the school district.

Public Comment: An Albany resident asked who was responsible for insurance.

Director Leach stated that she would find out.

6-4. Senior Center Expansion: Discuss recent community meetings re the possible expansion of the Senior Center. Commission to provide input for concept design. (Sketches @ meeting) Director Leach stated that there had been several community meetings regarding the Senior Center expansion and there would be 8 total. She directed the Commission to the plans and clay model and explained all of the additions, changes and improvements being planned.

Director Leach stated that architect estimated the expansion would cost between \$2.2-2.5 million to renovate and redo, which would hopefully be funded through a grant from Prop 84. It was estimated that the City had a 50/50 chance of securing the grant and if approved, the opening would possibly be 2012.

Chair Pilch asked where relocation during construction would be. Director Leach stated mostly likely at the Community Center. Commissioner Mullarkey asked what would likely be cut from the plans if necessary. Director Leach stated that the heated floor in the gym area. Commissioner Class stated that the multi tiered roof would be costly.

Motion:

Motion to support the Senior Expansion Plans made by Commissioner Como and seconded by Commissioner Mullarkey. Motion carried all in favor.

6-5. Next Meeting: Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, January 14, 2009.

7. Future Agenda Items: Community gardens, relocation of Teen Center and Friendship Club.

8. Adjournment: 8:45pm