



A Regular Meeting Of The Park And Recreation Commission
Minutes
Thursday, May 10, 2007
Albany Community Center
Edith Stone Room
1249 Marin Ave.
7:15 p.m.

NOTE: THE AGENDA FOR THE EVENING WAS REORGANIZED AS FOLLOWS:

Call to Order
Approval of minutes
Public Comment/Announcements
Item 6.7
Announcements/Communications
Director's Report
Item 6.8
Item 6.9
Item 6.4
Item 6.1
Item 6.2
Item 6.6
Item 6.5
Item 6.3
Adjournment

- 1. Call to Order:** 7:22 p.m. Commissioners present: Chair Linden, Como, Mullarkey, Pilch, Piller, Trout and Wilmsen.
Staff present: Dennis Smith, Richard Cunningham and Robin Mariona
- 2. Approval of Minutes: April 12, 2007:**
Motion:
Approval of the minutes of April 12, 2007 made by Commissioner Pilch and seconded by Commissioner Como. Motion carried, all in favor.
- 3. Public Comment/Announcements:** Albany resident Bill Cooper requested relocating or removing the live oak trees slated to be planted on the east side of Terrace Park according to the Renovation Plan. He stated that the trees would present problems for the individual properties along the east side of the park. Albany resident Maurice Kaufman stated the same concern.
Motion:
Motion to move items 6.7, 6.8 and 6.9 up to the top of the agenda for immediate discussion made by Commissioner Trout and seconded by Commissioner Wilmsen. Motion carried, all in favor.
- 4. Announcements/Communications:** Commissioner Pilch announced that Thurs. May 17th was bike to work day, and energizer stations would be set up along the bike routes for participants.

5. Director's Report: Director Smith stated that all City boards, commissions and committees, would be recessed for the month of August and the Albany Senior Center was now fully staffed.

The recruiting process for the Director's position was on schedule with a deadline for applications on May 31st, panel interviews planned for June 8th and a tentative hire date of July 1st.

Director Smith stated that he would be attending a meeting of the Ad Hoc Cable Committee and it was possible that they would be interfacing more with the Commission in the future.

6. Discussion and possible action on matters related to the following items, which could include reports and/or proposed resolutions if any:

6.1 Selection of Commission Representative to serve on the interview panel for the new Recreation and Community Service Director: Commissioner Mullarkey was chosen for the task.

6.2 Development of a community process to evaluate the desirability and the potential uses of the Veteran's Memorial Building for the purposes of advising the City Council on whether to pursue acquisition and a bond measure to fund renovation: Director Smith stated plans to begin the public process if the Commission agreed to participate. He stated the intention to conduct tours on Saturdays and weekends, a virtual walking tour on Cable Channel 33, facilitated workshops, a Fourth of July open house and a possible Town Hall Meeting. The data collected from these events would be compiled and a recommendation would be presented to Council. Director Smith referred to a document that included a memo from former Director Chinn with some recommendations for use and recommendations of upgrades to the building.

Commissioner Mullarkey stated the need for the Commission to remain open with regard to acquisition of the building. The Commission agreed that Director Smith should begin the process.

Public Comment: Roger Carlsen stated the need to make the public aware of the costs that would be required to bring the building up to code.

6.3 Report from the IPM Task Force on the draft policy: Manager Cunningham stated that there would most likely be two more meetings to complete the process and hopefully would be ready for Council by July.

6.4 Proposed Lighting and Landscape District Fund projects for 2007-2008: Manager Cunningham referred the Commission to a spreadsheet for review of the Lighting and Landscape District funds. He stated that the Commission had a sum of \$20,000 to use at their discretion and there were staff recommendations for the use of the funds included in the report. There was a line item showing funds for capital acquisitions amounting to \$910,000. These funds could be made available for the acquisition of Albany Hill property and there were also funds available for vegetation management. Manager Cunningham asked the Commission to approve the recommendations by staff or give direction to staff, so it could be brought before the Council in June.

Director Smith pointed out that the report allowed for significant increases in street tree maintenance and an urban forest program. Commissioner Mullarkey asked if the \$20,000 could be used for the shortfalls on the capital projects. Manager Cunningham stated that he would find out. He

further stated that the Commission could ask the Council to adopt without specific recommendation, and take up allocation of the funds later.

Chair Linden stated she did not feel comfortable making any recommendation without having more time to examine the report.

Public Comment: Nan Wishner stated that the math on sections of the report was incorrect, and cautioned the Commission on recommending it before the mistakes were corrected. She further stated that all the City parks, the waterfront, and Pierce St. should be considered for funds, rather than just considering using the money for Albany Hill.

Manager Cunningham stated that a comprehensive and cohesive staff report needed to be prepared and he would talk to finance about supplying that for the Commission. It was possible that a special meeting would need to be called.

6.5 Waterfront Selection Committee Representative Report: Commissioner Mullarkey stated that staff had chosen a consultant for the project and Council would need to approve the selection. The scope of work would then be determined. A public process would begin to evaluate what the community wanted with regards to the waterfront.

6.6 Ohlone Greenway Improvement and Construction: Manager Cunningham stated that construction was on schedule for July and August to be completed in September, and there was 95% completion of plans with BART.

6.7 Parks Renovation Project Update: Manager Cunningham stated that park renovations had begun with no major changes to report. He further stated that accommodating the neighbors on the east side of the park by removing the live oaks from the plan could be accomplished with a minor change order. Some neighbors on the west side of the park had requested tree restoration after removal of diseased pines and the live oaks could possibly be moved to that side.

Commissioner Piller stated concern about notification of the Terrace Park neighbors as to the movement of the trees from the east to the west side, to be sure that all were informed of the change and in agreement. Manager Cunningham stated the intention of the Public Works Department to inform the neighborhood of the possible change, and requested a motion by the Commission to poll the neighbors. Commissioner Pilch expressed concern as to whether the change of trees might be a significant landscape change, and asked that the process not be too hasty.

Public Comment: Mr. Cooper and Mr. Kaufman stated that the neighbors would like to know what trees would be chosen in terms of sight line, view issues and shade.

Motion:

Motion by Commissioner Piller to direct staff to canvass the Terrace Park neighbors with regard to the removal of the live oaks from the Park Renovation plan on the east side, and the choice of tree for the possible relocation to the west side. Seconded by Commissioner Mullarkey. Motion carried, all in favor.

Chair Linden questioned whether this issue would come back to the Commission in the future. Manager Cunningham stated that the polling and final choices could be made by Public Works and

John Cahalan in their weekly meetings, and Commissioners were welcome to attend the meetings if they wanted.

Manager Cunningham stated that the parks project was currently running at a 10% deficit and the Commission may need to be prepared to approach Council for additional funds. Commissioner Pilch questioned the cause of the deficit. Manager Cunningham stated that it was the up front soft costs including design and public process that put the project in the hole, but there were no surprise elements.

Chair of the Art Committee Nan Wishner, reported briefly on public art in the Parks projects and that all projects were moving ahead and on schedule.

6.8. Preliminary discussion of developing an urban forestry program. Commissioner Trout stated the intention of developing a task force to evaluate the urban forest and street tree policy, find ways to plant more trees, create a master tree list and develop a list for homeowners and their possible contributions. The Task Force would be composed of three Commissioners and four members of the public. He stated that there was a draft of a call for volunteers that the Commission needed to review.

Commissioner Piller asked Commissioner Trout to reiterate his reasons for wanting form a task force.

Commissioner Trout stated that there were major issues in addition to the reasons stated above with regard to sidewalks and street trees, allergic reactions, addressing the species list, the planting of more trees, solicitation of funding, expertise on urban forestry and development of a policy that worked well into the future.

Commissioner Mullarkey agreed with Commissioner Trout that an urban forestry program was needed, but questioned why a task force was needed rather than the Commission taking up the issue. Commissioner Trout stated that trees had proved to be a contentious issue in the City, and there would need to be substantial public input to any decisions made, as shown by the public reaction to the removal of a Toyon tree in Terrace Park and Ramona St camphor trees. This along with the other issues stated above, would take up too much of the Commissions time.

Commissioner Piller questioned whether the Commission had authority to authorize a task force with the way the item was stated on the evening's agenda. It was determined by reviewing the minutes of previous meetings, that a task force had not been authorized at an earlier meeting. Commissioner Piller suggested agendizing the creation of the task force until the June meeting and would include both the task force creation and the approval of the notice for volunteers.

Commissioner Pilch stated that he was in favor of discussing the task force and the notice for volunteers further. Chair Linden asked for a straw poll as to whether the Commissioners were preliminarily in favor of the task force. Commissioners Pilch, Wilmsen and Como were in favor of creating the task force. Commissioner Mullarkey had not decided and Commissioner Piller was not in agreement with the straw poll.

Public Comment: Nan Wishner stated that she had witnessed a lot of controversy about trees in the City, and what was currently in place, was a tree removal policy. She further stated that a task force was appropriate. Roger Carlsen encouraged the Commission to move forward on the task force so they would be able to begin in September.

Chair Linden stated that the issue of volunteers and the vote on the creation of the task force needed to be on the agenda for the next meeting. Commissioner Piller concurred and added that discussions concerning meeting schedules and selection of volunteers should be should also be included.

6.9 Albany Hill Open Space: Thelma Rubin requested that the Commission take over the activities and responsibilities of the Friends of Albany Hill including maintenance and solicitation of funds. Commissioner Pilch asked for clarification on the tasks of the Friends. Carole Fitzgerald stated that the Friends had been active through the 1990s and hoped that the Commission would get involved in making sure that money from bond measures would be allotted for Albany Hill.

Commissioner Trout asked if the Friends wanted the Commission to write a grant. Carole Fitzgerald stated that the Friends wanted the Commission to find the money to purchase some or all of eleven acres on the west side of the Hill currently owned by a Chinese consortium and take over vegetation management. Director Smith stated that the Commission would be the body to approach the Council about recommending projects for funds that would be available through Measure AA if approved by the voters in 2008. Manager Cunningham stated that funds from the Lighting and Landscape District Fund might relate to the possible acquisition as well.

Manager Cunningham suggested moving the evening's discussion to item 6.4, which possibly related to the Albany Hill discussion.

Motion:

Motion to move to item 6.4 made by Commissioner Pilch and seconded by Commissioner Mullarkey. Motion carried all in favor.

Motion:

Commissioner Piller motioned to direct staff to begin addressing funding for the acquisition and maintenance, and vegetation management of Albany Hill property and place it on the agenda for the next meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Mullarkey. Motion carried all in favor.

Motion:

Commissioner Pilch motioned to extend the meeting beyond 9:30 pm. Motion seconded by Commissioner Trout. Motion carried all in favor.

7. Future Agenda Items

8. Adjournment: 9:56pm

Motion:

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Como and seconded by Commissioner Wilmsen. Motion carried all in favor.

