



A Regular Meeting Of The Park And Recreation Commission
Minutes
Thursday, July 12, 2007
Albany Community Center
Edith Stone Room
1249 Marin Ave.
7:15 p.m.

- 1. Call to Order:** 7:17p.m. Commissioners present: Chair Linden, Como, Mullarkey, Pilch, Piller, Trout and Wilmsen.

Staff present: Community Development Director Ann Chaney, Ass't City Administrator Judy Lieberman, Recreation Supervisor Chelle Putzer and Robin Mariona

- 2. Review of Minutes: 2007:** Motion to approve the minutes of May 10, 2007 by Commissioner Mullarkey and seconded by Commissioner Pilch. Motion carried 5-0 with 2 abstentions.
- 3. Public Comment:** Albany resident and Terrace Park neighbor Belinda Lesser requested that Terrace Park renovation plans be revised to take out three of the six planned picnic tables and one or two of the barbeques. She stated that the picnic area expansion would be a hardship for the neighbors as it would cause crowding in the park, parking congestion on the surrounding streets, excess trash, noise and vandalism. She further stated that she was speaking on behalf of a group of neighbors that did not want Terrace Park to become a destination park.
- 4. Announcements/Communications:** Commissioner Pilch stated that the Albany School Board was in favor of pursuing the purchase of the Albany Veteran's Memorial Building by the City and using it for school related activities.

Commissioner Como stated that in his experience at Terrace Park, there had not been past problems with regard to some of the issues brought up by Belinda Lesser.

Chair Linden stated that Ruth Meneketti had been a good friend and an active Albany citizen for years, and many would feel her loss.

Chair Linden stated a request to change the order of the evening's agenda. She requested that item 6-5 be moved up to 6-2 and item 6-7 be moved up to 6-3. The Commission agreed.

- 5. Director's Report:** Supervisor Chelle Putzer introduced Penelope Leach who had been chosen as the new Director of Recreation and Community Services.
- 6. Discussion and possible action on matters related to the following items, which could include reports and/or proposed resolutions if any:**

6-1. Waterfront Planning Process Update: Community Development Director Ann Chaney stated that Don Neuwirth had been hired by the City to prepare a scope of work for the waterfront planning process. He had been meeting with commissions, committees, community groups and other representatives to

solicit ideas on how to develop a plan. She introduced Mr. Neuwirth and encouraged the Commission to share their ideas and issues with him.

Mr. Neuwirth stated that he had collected information from the various groups with regard to policy including levels of detail, vision statements, development agreements, public benefit agreements, environmental impact reports, and Measure C voting. He further stated that another policy issue was the geographic scope of the plan and whether it would include the entire waterfront or just Golden Gate Fields, consideration of the Berkeley portion of the Golden Gate Fields, the Bay Trail, regional and state issues, resource constraints, seismic, toxic and traffic capacity issues.

Mr. Neuwirth stated that one of the most important issues was community participation in this most important decision and how to encourage people who did not normally participate to become involved. He suggested many ways including education, visioning sessions, house parties, inviting the public to attend planning and commission meetings, polling, calling, mailing questionnaires, and accessing the cable channel. Mr. Neuwirth stated that the opportunities for recreational facilities and amenities, particularly for children, were very important.

Commissioner Trout stated that it would be useful to put up signs so people would know what the different areas of the waterfront were. Commissioner Mullarkey stated that she appreciated creative ways of reaching the public and people were looking for opportunities to voice their opinions. Both Commissioners Mullarkey and Pilch stated support for the idea of inviting the public to already established commission and committee meetings to solicit opinions, and these meeting should be well publicized in advance.

Chair Linden stated that it was crucial to create a vision statement, that it was important to look at regional open space patterns with an eye to the future, and that all the stakeholders in the process should be included. Commissioner Wilmsen stated that wind energy that might be generated from the bulb would be worth exploring. Commissioner Pilch questioned the jurisdiction of the bulb, and Mr. Neuwirth replied it was under Albany jurisdiction.

Mr. Neuwirth stated that he would be writing his report in August to present to the Waterfront Commission, the Planning and Zoning Commission and finally to the City Council in September and October.

Commissioner Trout stated that he would like to see an analysis of the economic feasibility of hotel space. Mr. Neuwirth stated that he had asked Golden Gate Fields for all the information they were comfortable revealing.

Public Comment: Albany resident Trevor Graham questioned the Commission as to whether they thought Albany spent enough on Parks and Recreation, and if not, did they have a figure in mind with respect to what could be gained from waterfront development.

Commissioner Piller stated that Parks and Recreation would like more money, but there was no specific figure in mind

6-2. (6-5) Report from the IPM Task Force on the draft policy. IPM Chair Nan Wishner stated that the Task Force was down to the last 10% of the draft. It was hoped that the remaining issues would be resolved in the next meeting, so the ordinance and policy could be worked on in August with Director Chaney, and presented to Council by October.

6-3. (6-7) Parks Renovation Project Update. Nan Wishner stated that the art projects in Terrace and Ocean View Parks were on schedule and that the installation at Memorial would most likely be in 2008.

Director Chaney stated that the fencing around Terrace Park would remain in place for up to 90 days so the grass could settle in and the grading had been started on Memorial Park playing field.

Public Comment: Albany resident Michael Arenton stated that he was a Terrace Park neighbor that had been involved in meetings and planning for the park renovation. He stated that it had been clear in the planning stages that some of the tables should be removed and he wondered how there were more than were settled on at those meetings.

Commissioner Piller stated that there had not been any changes to the plans, however they likely looked larger in reality than in the plans. He suggested that the Terrace neighbors let the Commission know exactly what it was they wanted to change. The Commission would then see if it was possible to make changes, being aware that there would be additional expense for changes.

Michael Arenton stated that the neighbors wanted the same amount of tables, barbeques and configuration as the old picnic area. Belinda Lesser asked that more trash cans be installed, park rules posted and parking signs posted.

Commissioner Piller stated that there was a conflict between trying to address the interests of the neighbors and the needs of the general public with Albany being so small and having limited park space. He further stated that no changes could be made until the September or October Commission meetings, at which time they would decide whether to recommend to the Council to make the changes. In the meantime the neighbors could send e-mails to the Council if they thought it necessary.

Albany resident Signe Mattson questioned what was going on with the community garden at Ocean View Park. Commissioner Piller stated that staff knowledgeable about this matter was not in attendance, and it should be tabled until next meeting.

6-4. (6-2) Proposed Lighting and Landscape District Fund Projects for 2007-2008. Director Chaney stated that staff recommended spending discretionary assessment money as follow; \$45,000 on Buchanan/Marin banners, \$10,000 on an urban forest program, \$30,000 on Ohlone Greenway lighting and \$100,000 to repair the Community Center Tower windows, as stated in the staff report presented to the Commission. Judy Lieberman stated that staff had been working on developing a half to three quarter time Urban Forestry/Landscape position with part of the salary possibly coming from the LLD if the Commission approved.

Director Chaney and Administrator Lieberman explained to the Commission the reasons for the staff recommendations for the LLD money and questioned if the Commission had suggestions or further recommendations.

Chair Linden asked for further explanation of the urban forestry position. Judy Lieberman stated that the goal would be to create a position for an urban forester/arborist that would also have landscape experience and the funding would be through reorganization and re-appropriation. She further stated that she was not looking for specific dollar recommendations, just direction from the Commission as to their support for the position.

Commissioner Piller stated support for staff recommendations for the LLD funds, but also expressed concern and regret for having to spend further revenue on the Community Center Tower.

Motion:

Motion in support of the Urban Forestry position made by Commissioner Piller and seconded by Commissioner Mullarkey. Motion carried all in favor.

Motion:

Motion to approve staff recommendations for the LLD funds made by Commissioner Piller and seconded by Commissioner Pilch. Motion carried 6 in favor and 1 abstention.

Director Chaney reviewed staff recommendations for Measure R as follows; \$15,000 for vegetation management, \$115,000 for improvements to Cordonices Creek.

Motion:

Motion to approve staff recommendations for Measure R made by Commissioner Piller and seconded by Commissioner Mullarkey. Motion carried all in favor.

6-5. (6-3) Priority Conservation Areas: Recommendation to the City Council regarding submission of nominations to the Association of Bay Area Governments with consideration to the Albany Waterfront, the Gill Tract and Albany Hill: Director Chaney stated that ABAG was looking for priority conservation area recommendations and that staff recommended nominating Albany Hill and the Waterfront. The Waterfront Committee recommended beach restoration, Cordonices Creek, the salt marsh, Fleming Point and the Bay Trail. The Planning and Zoning Commission voted to recommend to the Council not to participate in nominations at this time, as it could be a hindrance to the waterfront project. The deadline for nominations was August 17th.

Chair Linden stated that she thought it important that the Commission weigh in on the conservation of the three remaining open space areas in Albany including, Albany Hill, the Waterfront and the Gill Tract. Commissioner Pilch asked for an explanation of the inclusion of the Gill Tract. Chair Linden stated that there had been some preliminary planning for the Gill Tract to become retail space, and the Clean and Green Task Force and community groups were working toward leaving it as open space. Commissioner Piller stated that the Commission had no jurisdiction over the Gill Tract as it was owned by the Regents and as such should not be included in the recommendations for nomination to the Council.

Public Comment: Signe Mattson stated support for including the Gill Tract for it's importance and usefulness in local food production. Barbara Erder and Carol Fitzgerald reinforced support for Albany Hill.

Chair Linden restated her recommendation for the inclusion of the Gill Tract. Commissioners Como, Wilmsen and Pilch stated support for including all three of the open space. Commissioner Mullarkey stated reluctance to make a recommendation on something so vague without knowing the consequences.

Motion:

Commissioner Piller stated a motion to recommend the Waterfront and Albany Hill. No second to the motion.

Motion:

Commissioner Como motioned to recommend the Waterfront, Albany Hill and the Gill Tract. Motion seconded by Commissioner Wilmsen. Motion carried 5 in favor and 2 abstentions.

6-6. (6-4) Albany Hill Open Space:

Public Comment: Albany resident Carol Fitzgerald stated that many of the concerns of the Friends of Albany Hill had been addressed, and further stated her appreciation for Dr. Barbara Erder’s help and support for Albany Hill throughout the years.

Chair Linden stated that there had been some discussion regarding a public seating area being placed at the Ohlone grinding stone site on Albany Hill.

Motion:

Commissioner Piller motioned to have significant discussion with the Ohlone people and others before planning or building seating at the grinding stone site. Commissioner Trout seconded the motion, motion carried all in favor.

Public Comment: Albany resident Ann Clausen recommended that no benches be placed at the grinding stone.

6-7. (6-6) Creation of Urban Forest Task Force, approval of notice for volunteers and discussion concerning meeting schedules and selection of volunteers:

Motion:

Commissioner Piller motioned to approve the creation of the Urban Forest Task Force and the notice for volunteers. Motion seconded by Commissioner Trout. Motion carried all in favor.

6-8. Ohlone Greenway Improvement and Construction Updates: Discussion tabled for the next meeting.

6-9. Veteran’s Memorial Building: Discussion tabled for the next meeting.

7. Future Agenda Items:

- Albany Hill seating area at the grinding stone
- Ohlone Greenway Improvements
- Statistics on criminal activity and vandalism in Albany, specifically regarding the Greenway.
- Discussion regarding traffic problems at the intersection of the Greenway and Masonic
- Discussion regarding the condition of the ginkgo tree
- Information about the Community Garden at Ocean View Park
- Terrace Park Picnic Area changes

8. Adjournment: 9:48pm

