



A Regular Meeting of the Parks And Recreation Commission Minutes
Thursday, December 13, 2007
Albany Community Center
Edith Stone Room, 1249 Marin Ave.
7:30 p.m.

- 1. Call to Order:** 7:37p.m. Commissioners present: Chair Linden, Commissioners; Como, Mullarkey, Pilch, Piller, Trout and Wilmsen.

Staff present: Director Penelope Leach, Director Ann Chaney, Manager Richard Cunningham, Tony Wolcott and Robin Mariona.

2. Approval of Minutes: October 11, and November 15, 2007:

Motion:

Motion to approve minutes from October 11 made by Commissioner Mullarkey and seconded by Commissioner Pilch. Motion carried all in favor.

Motion:

Motion to approve minutes of November 15 as amended made by Commissioner Pilch and seconded by Commissioner Trout. Motion carried all in favor.

- 3. Public Comment:** Nan Wishner stated that the State of California Agriculture Dept. was poised to begin aerial spraying for apple moth control in the East Bay and San Francisco. She stated that there was controversy over the products being used as there were no long-term toxicity studies for aerial spraying, but the State had acquired an emergency exemption to protect crops. She stated that the use of the products by the State was not consistent with IPM. Signe Mattson added that the efficacy of the procedure was also in question, as it was not known if the spraying would stop the moth.

Albany resident Pete Hobart stated his concern over the lack of access to Ocean View Park and suggested the contractor provide a gate at the corner by the art sculpture. Rich Bauer questioned alterations to the fence at Terrace Park. Both Mr. Hobart and Mr. Bauer were asked to wait until items 6.1 and 6.5 on the agenda, which would provide information on parks projects.

- 4. Announcements/Communications:** Commissioner Como stated that tennis coach and instructor Susan Ford had questioned him on when the tennis bleachers would be installed at Memorial Park. Manager Cunningham stated within the next 60 days.

Chair Linden stated that the spraying for the apple moth would be on the City Council agenda in January.

5. Director's Report: No

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

6-1. Terrace Park- Discuss issues concerning residents living near Terrace Park re park renovations. Director Leach stated for review, that the Commission had agreed with the removal of one table near the fence, four barbeques, the raising of the fence height and the replacement of possible flammable material from under the barbeques.

After consulting with the Fire Chief, Director Leach stated that to err on the side of caution, the mulched material under the barbeques could be replaced with sand, redwood bark or another non-flammable material. The Fire Chief stated that he would continue to check into proper replacement materials. The two barbeques closest to the fence were his only recommendation for removal, and staff could determine the other two to be removed.

Director Leach stated that the cost of adding sleeves, slats and fabric to the entire west side of the fence to bring it to a height of eight feet would cost \$15,000. If the replacement were to be from the playground to the restrooms only, the cost would be half or \$7,500. Director Leach stated that the discussion for the evening would be splitting the cost for the improvement between the City and the neighbors who were benefiting from the raising of the fence. She stated that the City attorney had indicated that if the fence heightening were determined to be solely for the benefit of the neighbors, there would be no public funds provided. Director Leach stated that City staff would deal with the removal of the table, the barbeques and ground cover.

Commissioner Piller questioned if there were any past protocol in Albany for contacting the neighbors with regard to the issue of raising the fence. Manager Cunningham stated that Community Development would send a letter to each homeowner affected. Commissioner Piller stated that the City had an interest in raising the Park fence and should share the cost with the neighbors.

Public Comment: Terrace Park homeowner Rich Bauer stated that he had no opinion on the heightening of the fence, but was concerned that he would lose the gate in the fence bordering the park on his property. Manager Cunningham stated that the fence would be replaced in kind if necessary.

Chair Linden questioned what would happen if neighbors didn't want their fence portion raised. Manager Cunningham stated that the fence had to be continuous, whether it was from the playground to the restrooms or the entire length. If there were objections by any of the neighbors, the fence would not be installed.

Motion:

Motion to authorize staff to recommend to Council sending out a letter to the homeowners bordering the west side of Terrace Park, asking them to split the cost of raising the fence between the homeowner and the City fifty/fifty, and whether they wanted to raise the fence half way from the playground to the restrooms or the whole length made by Commissioner Piller and seconded by Commissioner Mullarkey. Motion carried all in favor.

Director Leach stated that the next issue was whether the Commission wanted to direct staff to replace the possible flammable ground cover, and if they approved of placing a border between the wood chips and whatever material was chosen. Commissioner Piller questioned staff as to whether there could be an estimate for the replacement material in January. Director Leach agreed that an estimate could be provided by then.

Motion:

Motion to table the ground cover issue until January made by Commissioner Pilch and seconded by Commissioner Como. Motion carried all in favor.

Director Leach stated that she was working on developing a set of park rules, based on current City Ordinances and other cities rules and regulations. Integrating the two together, she was creating a package that would generate signage particular to each of the City parks. Director Leach stated that she had tentatively scheduled review of the rules for the January Commission meeting.

Public Comment: A Terrace park neighbor stated that he appreciated the efforts of Public Works with regard to the new park, and wanted a provision made for disposal of ashes from the barbeques. He further stated concern over the disconnect in the process that had happened in the past with regard to problems. He expressed further concern over the recovery of the turf, that in the two months since the opening was significantly damaged. Manager Cunningham stated that there would be a hard close to allow the juvenile turf to recover from heavy usage and the damage done by dogs, which would be an on going problem. The turf would be fenced off in the winter season to protect the City's investment, similar to Memorial and Ocean View Parks.

Manager Cunningham stated that the final contract would be signed off for American Civil Construction, and sub-contractors and staff would take over the care and maintenance of the turf from now on using ETC technology to use the least amount of water required. He stated that there was no evidence of negligence with regard to the contractor and drainage, and there would be significant signage on the fencing regarding turf recovery.

6-2. Draft Integrated Pest Management Policy (IPM)- Consider recommending to Council the IPM policy and ordinance drafted by the IPM Task Force as well as the cost for implementing the policy. Chair Linden stated that Vice Chair Pilch would take over the chair position during this item, as she been a member of the IPM Task Force and introduced the members of the Task Force in the audience.

Director Leach stated that there had been two minor text changes made to the policy on pages 14 and 17, one change to the ordinance and the focus of the evening should be on the cost estimate material in the staff report.

Manager Cunningham stated that the spreadsheet staff report on costs was collaboration between himself and Steven Ash. He stated that the annualized cost would be \$22,000 minus some one time start up items and the IPM Coordinator, Tony Wolcott, was included in the total.

Chair Nan Wishner questioned if Mr. Wolcott was in fact definitely slated to be the IPM Coordinator. Director Chaney stated that Mr. Wolcott was not at this time slated to be the IPM Coordinator and the salary for the staff person in that position would need to be added to the \$22,000 spreadsheet total. Director Leach stated that the quarter time IPM Coordinator position plus benefits would be approximately \$15,000.

Chair Wishner stated that the spreadsheet was somewhat confusing as there was \$3,500 in staff hours that were already being paid, and were not additional hours, but a shift in duties to cover IPM tasks. She stated that \$3,500 should be subtracted from the \$22,00 and would bring the total to \$18,500. She further stated that the spreadsheet included items that may be start up costs and would not necessarily be annual after the first year, and this should be clarified in reporting the figures to Council. Director Chaney agreed that there may be costs that would decrease and some tasks would eventually become less time consuming.

Commissioner Piller questioned Manager Cunningham as to the allocation of City staff time for IPM. Manager Cunningham stated that IPM was an added cost item, and as such there would need to be added resource hours for IPM tasks. Commissioner Piller stated that the Commission should take the opportunity to remind the Council that the City staff was already overtaxed, and IPM would add to their tasks.

Public Comment: Signe Mattson asked Commissioner Piller to clarify his comment. Commissioner Piller stated that there was a limit to how much staff could do with the current amount of hours, and it would be irresponsible of the Commission not to inform the Council of the possibility of having to add staff and hours. Roger Carlson stated that there was currently no fertilization program in the City, other than grass, and any additional fertilization would be added cost and staff hours.

Vice-Commissioner Pilch reiterated that the full cost to be presented to Council would be the addition of the spreadsheet cost plus the \$15,000 for the IPM Coordinator.

Motion:

Motion to recommend the draft IPM Policy, Ordinance and budget to Council with the addition of a quarter time IPM Coordinator made by Commissioner Trout and seconded by Commissioner Mullarkey. Motion carried 5 ayes, 1 abstention and 1 nay.

Commissioner Piller stated that he voted against recommending the IPM due to the Precautionary Principle and his feeling that as stated, it would impose too great of a burden on City staff.

Motion:

Motion to convey the Commissions concern to Council with regard to adequate staff to implement IPM made by Commissioner Piller and seconded by Chair Linden. Motion carried 6 in favor and 1 abstention.

Public Comment: Signe Mattson stated that it might be helpful to give the Council a range of estimated figures, with regard to extra staff time. Nan Wishner stated that there was a hope that there may be an additional horticultural to assist with issues. Alan Maris stated that there would most likely be a need for an additional maintenance worker.

6-3. Vet's Building Community Meeting- Discuss Community Meeting held in November re the possible acquisition and renovation of the Veteran's Memorial Building and what to recommend to Council at their January 22 meeting. Director Leach stated that City Administrator Beth Pollard had asked that the Commission be prepared to make a recommendation to Council by January 22nd, with regard to the Veteran's Building and whether to recommend the issue be put on the ballot in November 2008. Director Leach further stated that if the Commission did support moving forward with the project recommendation, a tax and bond measure consultant would be used to put together the ballot measure. She asked that the Commission be prepared to discuss lists of reasons for and against the project.

Commissioner Piller stated that he did not feel comfortable recommending putting the Veteran's Building on the ballot to Council. He stated that despite adequate noticing, the community meeting was not well attended and those that did attend had expressed skepticism and concern over the purchasing and renovation costs. Commissioner Trout agreed with Commissioner Piller.

Director Leach stated that thus far there was no community group that was championing the cause, despite advertising and campaigning for the issue, and asked if the Commission should be that group. Commissioner Como asked if the building would continue to deteriorate. Director Leach stated that the county was required to keep the building useable and safe.

Commissioner Mullarkey stated that there continued to be a lack of understanding regarding the building with regard to the public, and stated that there would need to be a lot of education and groundwork before a bond measure would be feasible.

Public Comment: Nan Wishner stated that education and advocacy around the building would need to take place, and that might be a role for the Commission. Alan Maris stated that the building had been identified as a goal in the Master Plan, and recommended that a survey of the community be suggested to Council.

Director Leach stated that the cost of a survey was an issue, but that the Commission was not a fundraising body. Commissioner Piller stated that Council needed to update the figures on the costs. Director Leach stated that Segal and Strain were in the process of updating the costs. Manager Cunningham stated that a high level of study would most likely cost \$50-\$100,000.

Chair Linden stated that her impression from the community meeting was that there were concerns about finances, usability and the crossover problems with regard to restoration. For those reasons, she would not be comfortable recommending a ballot measure to Council. Director Leach stated that she had gathered enough information from the discussion to create a staff report for Council.

6-4. Tree Task Force Applications- From the applications submitted, choose Tree Task Force members.

Motion:

Motion to accept the four citizens that applied for the Tree Task Force made by Commissioner Piller and seconded by Commissioner Pilch. Motion carried all in favor.

Motion:

Motion to accept Commissioners Trout, Wilmsen and Como as Commission members of the Tree Task Force made by Commissioner Mullarkey and seconded by Commissioner Pilch. Motion carried all in favor.

6-5. Update on Park Projects- Updated information from the Public Works Manager re the park projects. Manager Cunningham stated that Ocean View Park was in the last 10% of completion. He stated that there was a plaque on the rebuilt fireplace in Memorial Park that was available for inscription for the parks dedication, and the Park would remain closed until spring sports began. Director Leach stated that Park Rules including rules for the Community Gardens would most likely be completed by the beginning of March.

Public Comment: Roger Carlson asked if there was a financial report available, to compare the original budget with the final costs. Alan Maris asked about a rest and recovery period for the turf at Ocean View Park, due to the usage by the High School football team.

Director Chaney and Manager Cunningham agreed that the projects were still in the black collectively, but would request a report from the Finance Department, with the understanding that it would not be complete until all the projects were complete. Manager Cunningham stated that there was awareness of the damage to Ocean View turf and it was hoped that the School District would take some financial responsibility for its restoration.

6-6. Ohlone Greenway Project- Discuss community meeting, December 12, 2007, facilitated by Gates and Associates, regarding the Ohlone Greenway Project. BART will soon be seismically retrofitting the BART columns throughout the Greenway, which will impact the pathway. Input from the Community was solicited at the meeting Dec. 12th re the pathway alignment and design for when the pathway in certain sections is reconstructed. Director Leach stated that BART had

moved up their timeline for input to the design on the first draft of the path alignment, and discussion on this would be taking place at the January 10th Commission Meeting. Commissioner Pilch stated that BART wanted to replace only what may be damaged in their retrofit, and there would be no additional funds. He further stated that there was concern over safety with both bikers and pedestrians using the bike path. Manager Cunningham suggested using grants to create another pedestrian path.

Chair Linden stated that any further comments and suggestions could be submitted to Director Leach by the following week to pass on to Gates and Associates.

Public Comment: Signe Mattson questioned whether space could be made available for Community gardens along the Greenway. Commissioner Mullarkey stated that there were many ideas, but they required funding. Director Leach stated that Gates and Associates could provide Master Planner services for future ideas.

Nan Wishner stated that there needed to be collaboration between groups including the Art's Committee, for ideas with regard to the Greenway. Alan Maris stated that the Community Foundation might be available to provide funding for projects.

Director Leach stated that the meeting would take place on the 28th and all interested parties should attend.

6-7. Request by Commission Chair- On behalf of the P and R Commission, the Commission Chair would like to send a letter to UC Berkeley re the health and maintenance of the grove of trees at the northwest corner of the Gill Tract, at Buchanan and San Pablo Avenue.

Motion:

Motion to write a letter requesting information regarding the state of the trees at the Gill Tract made by Commissioner Piller and seconded by Commissioner Trout. Motion carried all in favor.

6-8. Vote for the 2008 Chair and Vice Chair- Each year the Commission votes for the Chair and Vice Chair to serve for the upcoming calendar year.

Commissioner Piller stated his thanks to Chair Linden for her year of service.

Motion:

Motion to nominate and accept Commissioner Pilch as Commission Chair for 2008 made by Chair Linden and seconded by Commissioner Como. Motion carried all in favor.

Motion:

Motion to nominate and accept Commissioner Mullarkey as Vice Chair of the Commission for 2008 made by Commissioner Piller and seconded by Chair Linden. Motion carried all in favor.

7. Future Agenda Items

8. Adjournment: 10:43pm

