



A Regular Meeting of the Parks And Recreation Commission Minutes
Thursday, September 11, 2008
Albany Community Center
Edith Stone Room, 1249 Marin Ave.
7:30 p.m.

1. **Call to Order:** 7:34p.m. Commissioners present: Chair Pilch, Como, Linden, Mullarkey, Piller, and Wilmsen. Excused Commissioner Trout.

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

2. **Approval of Minutes: June 12 and July 10, 2008:**

Motion:

Motion to approve minutes of June 12 and July 10 2008 made by Commissioner Piller and seconded by Commissioner Wilmsen. Motion carried all in favor.

3. **Public Comment:** None

4. **Announcements/Communications:** Commissioner Wilmsen stated that the dog signs posted at Memorial and Terrace Parks would be useful at the Albany Bulb as well. Director Leach stated that she would speak to Director Chaney about it, and posting there would not be out of the question.

Chair Pilch stated that the Solano Stroll would take place on Sunday the 14th.

5. **Director's Report:** Director Leach stated that she had passed out packets to the Commission for the Dinner with Albany event scheduled for Saturday September 27th. She encouraged the Commission to attend and invite their neighbors as well. Chair Pilch stated that it was a wonderful idea.

Director Leach stated that Fern Tiger, the company that had been hired by the City to begin a comprehensive process with the community focused on the waterfront, would be attending October's Commission meeting to give a presentation.

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

6-1. Ohlone Greenway BART Retrofit Project Update: Verbal update from the Public Works Manager regarding the BART retrofit project. Manger Cunningham stated that PDF files had been sent to the Commission by Director Leach to review, with regard to the current plans and information on the Ohlone project. He further stated that Director Chaney was present to update the Commission.

Manager Chaney stated that 35% plans had been sent to BART, so they could estimate costs of the project. She stated that actual tree choices could still be changed, and the key components were the widened path, the replacement of destroyed trees, and the identification and possible replacement of seating. She stated that there were areas designated for gardens, and the less costly process of hydro seeding rather than sod replacement would be implemented in some areas. The City was further recommending recycled irrigation pipes.

Manager Cunningham stated that the City was working with EBMUD to add pipe that would reach to the Greenway for reclaimed water. Director Chaney stated that plans had been submitted to BART, and the next thing they expected to see was a cost spreadsheet in few weeks. Commissioner Piller questioned if staff would respond to the cost information from BART, or would the Commission and Council need to respond. He further questioned if there would be time to respond given time constraints. Director Chaney said that the information would be sent to Council. Commissioner Piller stated that it was clearly Commission jurisdiction, and the Commission may need to schedule a special meeting. Director Chaney stated that she would work with Director Leach to forward that information on to the Commission if necessary.

Commissioner Linden asked what recycled irrigation pipe was. Manager Cunningham stated that it was pipe appropriately made for the use of reclaimed water, when it became available. Commissioner Linden stated that there were objections to the use of reclaimed water at the Community Garden. Manager Cunningham stated that potable water had already been planned for at the Gardens as well as drinking fountains and the Teen Center.

Commissioner Linden asked about the removal of a tree on Masonic. Director Chaney stated that the tree had been infested with beetles, and it was an emergency removal. Chair Pilch questioned if BART replacement would be state of the art. Manager Cunningham stated it was what the City was working toward.

The Commission agreed that if it were necessary, a special meeting would be scheduled to review and respond to BART's cost analysis.

6-2. Robert-Z-Berg Grant Funds: With the Veteran's Memorial Building project on hold, the Robert-Z-Berg grant funds previously earmarked for the Veteran's Building project need to be reassigned. A Commission subcommittee met to discuss possible projects and have made a recommendation to expand the Teen Center. Director Leach stated that there were a couple of alternative options for the grant funds, the first being a Teen Center improvement project. She stated that she had met with Albany school superintendent Marla Stevenson. As was indicated in the staff report, a portable classroom situated by Ocean View School, could be used for a Teen Center homework area as well as other uses such as computer classes, presentations and intergenerational programs. She stated that the challenge would be completing the paperwork needed for the project and turning it in to the state by the deadline date at the end of February. It would also be necessary to procure and submit information about matching funds at the same time, to have the project approved. She further stated that there was a second non-matching grant that had a deadline of March 2011, but it was only for \$45,000.

Commissioner Wilmsen asked how many children were using the Teen Center. Director Leach stated that there were only twenty at this time, however if there were an area to do homework the number may go up.

Director Leach stated that the second project was to provide funds for field amenities at Ocean View to bring the park and fields up to the same level as Memorial Park. The funds would provide for an electronic scoreboard, batting cages, a snack area and a bullpen. The biggest advantage would be flexibility in scheduling.

Director Leach stated that there was only enough money for one of the projects, and the Commission would need to choose.

Commissioner Piller questioned if it was possible to meet the deadline for the first project. Director Leach stated the challenge would be procuring the matching funds. Commissioner Piller asked if the school district was interested in contributing the matching funds. Director Leach stated that the school district was more interested in the Ocean View Field project.

Public Comment: Roger Carlson asked if Superintendent Stevenson had shown any inclination toward providing matching funds for the Teen Center. Director Leach stated that she had not directly asked if the school district was interested in providing those funds, and most of their discussion had centered on the Ocean View Field amenities. The Superintendent would still need to go to the school board for approval. Mr. Carlson stated that asking for the matching funds for the Teen Center was a key element.

Dave Pruis, President of Albany Little League, stated that in conversations with Superintendent Stevenson she had expressed interest in providing the \$22,000 in matching funds for the Ocean View field project. He stated that if the Commission chose that project, the funds could be provided very quickly and the project could be completed by the February deadline.

Commissioner Piller stated that he was very sympathetic to the Teen Center project, however there was a lot of pressure for use at Memorial, due to the lack of amenities at Ocean View. Therefore, due to the pressures of use and Title 9 legal issues having to do with gender equity, there was not much alternative but to allocate the funds to Ocean View. Commissioner Piller further stated that the Commission was obligated to equalize the amenities and desirability of the two facilities.

Director Leach stated that AB 2404 described the obligations of Title 9 if any Commissioner were interested in reading detail. She stated that improving Ocean View opened up many more possibilities in terms of being sure that both boys and girls teams were able to play in parks with similar facilities. This would help in avoiding possible violations of Title 9, as well as open opportunities to work with the school district.

Commissioner Mullarkey stated that she liked the Teen Center project. She further stated the importance of providing the teens with a suitable place to do their homework, and appreciated that the school district was willing to help in providing a space, but the field equality was a possible legal issue that needed to be addressed. Commissioner Mullarkey stated that if the Commission were to choose the field project over the Teen Center project for the funds, the Commission needed to aggressively pursue solutions for the Teen Center.

Commissioner Linden asked why Director Leach had not asked the Superintendent for the matching funds for the Teen Center project. Director Leach stated that the Ocean View project had been more of a focus in the discussion, and the alternative for the Teen Center in the conversation was the Superintendent helping to find space at Ocean View School for a teen homework area.

Commissioner Piller stated that both the City and the AUSD were legally exposed in terms of Title 9 issues, and comparability of the amenities at the fields was important. Commissioner Linden stated that the Teen Center should be a high priority and would there possibly be any money left to help that project. Director Leach stated that there would not be enough left to help the Teen project but, if there were a small amount left it could possibly be used for a small project such as creating a permanent concrete stage at Memorial Park.

Commissioner Wilmsen stated that he was leaning toward the Ocean View project, but agreed that the importance of the Teen Center should not be diminished.

Commissioner Linden asked if the Ocean View project could be delayed. Director Leach stated that liability would only increase with time.

Chair Pilch stated that the Teen Center project was very important, and expressed concern over the distance that the teens may have to travel from the Center to the school to do homework. He stated that it was a tough call but the Ocean View project had a slight edge. Commissioner Mullarkey volunteered to accompany Director Leach to any further meetings with Superintendent Stevenson. Director Leach stated that the Commission might want to think about drafting a letter to the Superintendent expressing the importance of a study area for the teens.

Motion:

Motion to adopt and recommend the grant funds for the Ocean View field project and to convey to Council that the Teen Center project warranted funding as quickly as possible made by Commissioner Piller and seconded by Commissioner Linden. Motion carried all in favor.

6-3. Terrace park Follow-up: The Commission will review current park policies and recommend language for signage at Terrace Park listing park rules. Prior to the July meeting, staff received another request to remove a portion of the newly installed picnic tables. Earlier in the year the Commission put the removal of the picnic tables on hold so that the use pattern of the park could be reviewed. Director Leach stated that she had done some investigation into use patterns at Terrace Park. Unfortunately there was no way to determine the size of the parties in 2006 or 2008, but the number of parties was likely to increase by 15 or 20 by the end of the season. She stated that it seemed more helpful to limit the number of persons in the party size and display signs in the park stating the rules, rather than take out tables in an effort to control overuse. There were currently 2 operational BBQs and 6 tables in use, as well as some remaining grill posts.

Commissioner Piller stated that there was a need to balance the needs of the neighbors with the demand from the public, and he was skeptical about the policing of party size. Director Leach stated that an idea was to have the renters pay a \$50 deposit. The park attendant would be responsible for reporting the size of the party. If the renter exceeded the party size, their deposit would not be returned. Commissioner Piller stated he was inclined to remove tables instead.

Public Comment: Belinda Lesser, Terrace Park neighbor, stated that an individual park user standing on the table that was closest to her backyard had heckled her son. She asked that the closest table be removed, that landscaping be installed to enhance privacy, and signs be installed stating rules.

Park neighbor Craig Hendrickson stated his observation that there were more and bigger parties, and less parking as a result. He requested signage with park hours to discourage late night visitors, and stated that dog activity was destroying the turf. He stated that problems could occur when dogs chasing balls at high speeds collided with playing children.

Park neighbor Dave Guthrie asked if there was a leash law that could be enforced, as it was his observation that there were a lot of dogfights. He suggested a noise abatement law, which could be posted on a sign and enforced with a citation, as well as signage posting hours, leash requirements, and respect for privacy of the neighbors.

Director Leach stated that the current ordinance required dogs to be under voice command, and the police would be unable to enforce anything that was not backed up with a code. Commissioner Piller stated that it may be impossible to maintain the grass at Terrace because of dog overuse, but it would be a lengthy process to deal with the dog community.

Commissioner Como requested a review of a possible noise abatement code. Chair Pilch stated an inclination to recommend to Council banning cleated sports to help maintain the turf. Manager Cunningham stated that a winter fence might be installed again. Commissioner Wilmsen stated that there should be a leash law in Albany.

Commissioner Piller suggested an agenda item to consider renaming Terrace Park to Jewel Okawachi Park.

Motion:

Motion to recommend to Council limiting the size of parties at Terrace Park to 40 people, to remove the table closest to the fence as well as the remaining unused BBQ stems, to introduce signs with park rules, codes and good neighbor messages, and to recommend landscaping for fence line privacy made by Commissioner Piller and seconded by Commissioner Mullarkey. Motion carried all in favor.

6-4. East Bay Regional Parks District Proposed Extension of the Regional Open Space, Wildlife, Shoreline and Parks Bond Measure AA on the November 4, 2008 ballot: Information item only. Should the Measure AA pass, the Parks and recreation Commission will make recommendations on the use of the funds. Director Leach stated that City Manager Beth Pollard had submitted a staff report to Council regarding background information about where monies would be coming, so all parties would be informed if the time came to make decisions about Measure AA funds.

6-5. Update on the Parks Projects: Updated information from the Public Works Manager re park projects. Also, an update of the limited water use at the parks and the potential impact on the turf. Manager Cunningham stated that evaporation-transpiration controllers had been installed and so far no penalties had been incurred for overuse by EBMUD. He stated that the well at Memorial had too low of a recharge rate to be of use except in an emergency. Manager Cunningham stated that an EBMUD representative would be in attendance at the next Council meeting to hear support for the installation of the reclaimed water line. He further stated that there might come a time when decisions would have to be made regarding usage versus viability of the turf.

Manager Cunningham stated that repair on the Community Center tower was pending litigation results, but design work was proceeding. He stated that he would forward a report to Director Leach regarding water usage, to distribute to the Commission.

6-6. Letter to the UC Regents: Commissioner Linden would like to draft a letter on behalf of the Commission regarding the recent loss of appeal to spare the woodland at the stadium. Commissioner Linden stated that she would submit a letter for review at the next Commission meeting to be submitted to Council.

6-7. Update from the Tree Task Force: Tree Task Force will update the Commission. Commissioner Wilmsen stated that the tree list had been completed and would be submitted for Commission review in the future. He stated they continued to work on spending for the \$10,000 budget.

6-8. Information re the use of Decomposed Granite on City sidewalks: Information item only. At the previous meeting the Commission asked for information on the use of DG on sidewalks. Director Leach referred to the staff report stating the eco-friendly nature of decomposed granite, but the porous nature required more weeding and it was slippery when wet. Institution of its use would require a revision of the sidewalk masterplan. Manager Cunningham stated that the preference would be to stiffen the DG with resin, as stated in the report. Chair Pilch stated that he was interested in the use of pervious

materials that were not hardscape, to allow runoff to percolate. The staff report stated that DG could destroy asphalt in some cases.

7. Future Agenda Items: Report from Tony Wolcott on treescape and a possible item on the capital improvement plan.

8. Adjournment: 9:45