



A Regular Meeting of the Parks And Recreation Commission Minutes
Thursday, November 13, 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, Trout and Wilmsen.

Staff present: Director Penelope Leach, and Robin Mariona

2. **Approval of Minutes: September 11 and October 7, 2008**

Motion:

Motion to approve minutes as corrected made by Commissioner Piller and seconded by Commissioner Trout. Motion carried all in favor.

3. **Public Comment:** Albany resident and Waterfront Committee member Clay Larson stated that the next time money became available for Recreation projects; he would like to see improvements made at Waterfront Park. He stated that signs were damaged and there had been vandalism that needed to be addressed.
4. **Announcements/Communications:** Commissioner Trout stated that the Tree Task Force wanted to add wording to include suitable and appropriate fruit trees to the document already approved by Council. Director Leach stated that it would need to be an agenda item, but there was most likely still time to add it for the next meeting.

Commissioner Linden congratulated Chair Pilch on his campaign. She further noted that she had brought up issues having to do with the waterfront in the past, and suggested obtaining a list from the Waterfront Committee on matters they wanted attended to in the future.

5. **Director's Report:** Director Leach stated that City managers and staff had participated in disaster preparedness training drill that stressed the importance of communication and documentation in such an event. Director Leach encouraged the Commission to sign up for e-notification of meetings and events on the City website and to encourage others to sign up as well. She further stated that the Albany School Board had agreed to provide matching funds for Ocean View field improvements, and the March 31st deadline would be met.
6. **Discussion and possible action on matters related to the following items, which could include reports and/or proposed resolutions if any:**

6-1. Water Front Presentation: Fern Tiger Associates will present information regarding the Water Front Planning process. Chair Pilch introduced Liz Marrin and Steve Fish from Fern Tiger Associates. Ms. Marrin stated that Fern Tiger had been working directly with the Waterfront Committee and had recently spent time giving presentations to all City commissions, committees and Council. The goal in their outreach efforts was to get as many Albany citizens as possible involved in the waterfront decision-making process.

Fern Tiger had compiled a status report that was available on the City website. It covered the background work they had done on the process so far, their findings and observations, their outreach goals, strategies and observations and finally their plans for the community engagement process.

The analysis of the information gathered had identified six critical hot button issues for Albany residents including; a history of conflict and mistrust of information about the waterfront, the tradeoffs between finances and open space, whether the land would be available for purchase or public use, the interest of the community in engaging in a vision process, regional and local decision making and the definition of the waterfront site. Fern Tiger's intent was to build trust and excitement in the community through accurate unbiased information.

Ms. Marrin stated that Fern Tiger Associates had not completed the plan for the community engagement portion, but had decided it would be a 2-part process. Informational brochures would be created for distribution to the community by January or February. There would be small group neighborhood meetings from March to May, and the information gathered would be synthesized from June to August. It was possible that there would be a second set of group sessions from September to October and the report generated in November. The name they had created for the process was Voices to Vision, which was intended to be community driven guidance toward the actual physical planning at the waterfront.

Commissioner Piller asked if Fern Tiger had done this process in any other community. Ms. Marrin stated that they had never done anything exactly like it before, but they had done community visioning. Commissioner Linden asked if there would be any other opportunities to comment beside the group meetings. Ms. Marrin stated that they may include a blog, but their goal was to get as many people as possible to participate in the sessions. Commissioner Linden stated that not all people were comfortable sharing in that format, and it was important to use simple understandable language. Ms. Marrin stated it was a point well taken, and it was important to them to make the process accessible to all.

Chair Pilch asked if there would be an opportunity for people to comment through letters, and Ms. Marrin stated that they were open for input.

6-2. Tree Removal Request: Homeowners living at 732 Spokane Avenue are requesting two tree to be removed. Albany Urban Forester Tony Wolcott stated that the trees in question were three Monterey Pines located on the Ohlone Greenway, behind the property at 732 Spokane. He stated that all three trees showed signs of pine pitch canker, though the center tree was in the worst shape. He further stated that though the disease was mostly fatal to trees, they could last up to 10 years with the canker and normally removal would take place only after they had become completely brown or overrun with beetle activity. Forester Wolcott recommended leaving them intact for the time being as they still created a nice barrier, and possibly do some root pruning on the residential side, even though that could hasten the death of the trees.

Terry Huwe, one of the residents at 732 Spokane, requested that the three trees be removed and replaced. He stated that since 1989 the terrain of the backyard had changed due to the root growth from the trees. He stated that the yard had become uneven; the concrete patio had cracked and had become a liability issue.

The other resident at 732 Spokane, Thom Weyand, stated that removing trees was not something they normally would request, but the trees had caused so much property damage that they saw no other alternative and asked for replacement with a more suitable species. He questioned if the City could possibly be liable for an injury if the trees were not removed, since the residents had stated the danger. Mr. Weyand stated that he and Mr. Huwe had submitted a formal letter requesting the tree removal.

Commissioner Trout stated that further pruning and property repair could destabilize the trees further, and the residents may legally have to share in any liability. Commissioner Piller asked if the trees had been posted for possible removal. Director Leach and Mr. Wolcott stated that they had not posted the trees. Commissioner Piller stated it would not be possible to take action until the trees had been posted. Commissioner Linden agreed and further stated that without pictures, the application and the formal letter sent by the residents there was not enough material to take action.

Motion:

Motion to table the tree removal until the December meeting pending more information and tree posting made by Commissioner Piller and seconded by Commissioner Mullarkey. Motion carried all in favor.

6-3.Eucalyptus Tree Report: Tony Wolcott, Urban Forester, will report on the status of the Eucalyptus tree along Solano Avenue. Tony Wolcott referred the Commission to the Staff Report on Eucalyptus in Albany that he had compiled. In it he stated that he had focused on Eucalyptus nicholii, that were the predominant large Eucalyptus on Solano Ave, though there were other smaller species spread out across the City. He stated that when they were spaced 40-50 feet apart they provided a healthy and attractive streetscape. He further stated that on the down side, they had many branch failures, tree litter and infrastructure conflicts including sidewalk lifting and curb damage.

Mr. Wolcott proposed three management issues for the Commission to consider. First was to consider the possible removal of some Eucalyptus that were too close together and suffering as a result on Solano Avenue. Second was expanding existing basins for the Eucalyptus and possibly substituting decomposed granite when replacing concrete over tree roots. And finally planting under-story trees at removal sites or where it made sense.

Commissioner Piller asked for a basin cost estimate in December. He suggested clearing up any questions about liability and safety with regard to decomposed granite in December as well, and questioned if there would be budget money for basining. Mr. Wolcott stated that the cost would be approximately \$1,500 each, but it would be discussed further in December.

Commissioner Trout stated that he was expecting an inventory of the condition of all the individual Eucalyptus in Mr. Wolcott's report. He further stated that he would not support tree removal for spacing. Mr. Wolcott stated that he did have tree health information that he could provide to the Commission. He further stated that in general there were no high risk Eucalyptus on Solano and he was not necessarily recommending removal, just providing information.

Chair Pilch stated that he was in favor of planting new trees on Solano as a priority, the use of decomposed granite and further supported tree preservation. Commissioner Trout stated that hopefully he would bring back a tree list in December.

6-4. Commission/Committee Transition: This is an informational item only. The City Council adopted a resolution providing for an orderly transition of Commissions, Committees, and Board Members. Staff report and resolution from the October 20, 2008, Council meeting attached. Director Leach stated that this agenda item was informational, and questioned if there were any Commissioners who planned not to return of their own accord. She stated that the staff report outlined the timeline for transitions and that appointers had 45 days from their swearing in on December 8th to make new appointments. She added that appointments could be made in December, but it was not recommended, so there would be no problems with overlap.

6-5. Ocean View Sports Field Improvements: A Notice of Exemption was filed with Alameda County regarding the future improvements to Ocean View Sports Field. Attached is the staff report from Planning and Zoning. Director Leach stated that this agenda item was also informational. It was a staff report notifying the City Council that the Ocean View project would be exempt from CEQA review.

7. Future Agenda Items: Begin a general discussion of dogs in the City parks, Solano Avenue trees, tree removal at 732 Spokane, a review of the tree removal process, and the Tree Task Force tree list.

8. Adjournment: 9:40pm

Please note that if you provide your name and address when speaking before the Commission/Committee/Board it will become part of the official public record, which will be posted on the Internet.

NOTE: Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the City Council/Commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at the Community Center counter located at 1249 Marin Ave during normal business hours, 8:30am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday.