



A Regular Meeting of the Parks And Recreation Commission Minutes
Thursday, January 8, 2009
Albany Community Center
Community Room, 1249 Marin Ave.
7:30 p.m.

- 1. Call to Order:** 7:33p.m. Commissioners present: Chair Pilch, Commissioners Como, Kindle, Linden, Mullarkey and Trout.

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

- 2. Approval of Minutes:** December 11, 2008

Motion:

Motion to table minutes from December 11, 2009 until the February 12, 2009 meeting made by Commissioner Mullarkey and seconded by Commissioner Linden. Motion carried 5 in favor 1 abstention.

- 3. Public Comment:** None

- 4. Announcements/Communications:** Commissioner Kindle stated that it was his intention to promote the increase of community gardens and accessibility of parks to all of the community.

- 5. Director's Report:** Director Leach stated that the Community Center was hosting a Call to Serve Expo on MLK Day, Monday January 19th 9AM-noon. The intention was to provide citizens with information and opportunities to pledge to volunteer, serve or donate to organizations in the community. She encouraged the Commission to attend and pledge to serve the community in some way, and pass the word of the event on to their contacts.

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

6-1. Teen center and Youth Volunteer Presentation: Staff will present information regarding Albany's Teen Center and Youth Volunteer Activities during 2008 and what's coming up in 2009. Director Leach introduced Jeremy Allen; Teen Center Supervisor and Vanessa Ferrer; youth volunteer coordinator.

Vanessa Ferrer created a slide presentation that highlighted the active and very successful role of the youth volunteers in the City. The events that were featured were Dinner With Albany, Halloween Events, and the Holiday Hoopla. At all of the events, the teens participated in projects requiring planning, teamwork and dedication logging up to 560 total hours. Ms. Ferrer stated that the volunteer groups that she had organized were willing and enthusiastic to work on future projects such as tree planting and any projects the Community Foundation may have. She asked the Commissioners and to contact her with any ideas.

Teen supervisor Jeremy Allen stated that he had been doing youth and cable programs in the City from 2000. The Teen Center was an after school middle school program, located at Ocean View Park. He showed a slide presentation of the facility, resources and teens participating in the programs including; art, homework, games, activities, projects and the community garden. He stated that the teens had a Monday salad bar using vegetables grown in their garden when available. There was also a teen night on

the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month that featured teen DJ's, games, live bands and food. The teens had also participated in teen and seniors dinners created to help seniors with texting and playing Wii games.

Mr. Allen continued his presentation with slides of summer programs including activities such as; rafting, climbing, DJ workshops, backpacking, camping, moviemaking and music workshops. Epicentre, was a monthly pilot program for high school teens. One Friday evening per month, the teens transformed the Community Center Hall into a concert space. They were responsible for promoting, setting up equipment, filming and soliciting bands to play. He stated that they were a very talented group of teens.

Finally, Mr. Allen stated that a party package plan had been created for Teen Center rental, that included the facility, use of all the games, as well as staff, for a packaged price.

6-2. Dog's in Parks: The Commission will discuss possible options and alternatives for addressing recent concerns regarding aggressive dogs in Albany's parks as well as how best to share Albany's limited park space with considerable need for having areas within parks for dogs. Chair Pilch stated that the Commission would continue the discussion of dogs and Albany parks begun in December.

Director Leach stated that there was information included in the staff report, requested by the Commission at a previous meeting. Some of the information was gathered from other cities and their policies, which was food for thought and further discussion.

Commissioner Kindle, who worked in Berkeley Animal Control, stated that Berkeley ordinances had rules for dog behavior in parks and on streets. Berkeley required dogs to be on leash no longer than 6 feet in all parks except dog parks. Dogs were never allowed in play structures, must be in voice control on the street and no more than 6 ft away from a responsible party at any time. Commissioner Kindle stated that the Albany ordinance had contradictory language that might need to be changed. He further stated that Piedmont had specified off leash areas that require special tags and posted hours for different sized dogs to play. The proceeds from the tags were used to maintain the dog parks

Chair of the Dog Ad Hoc Committee, Brad Griffith, stated that the committee had discussed options and suggestions at the last meeting including; the possibility of designated hours for pet owners, designated days for pet owners, sanctioned areas in City parks, classes on training and socialization and creating a community outreach newsletter with guidelines on behavior. The Ad Hoc Committee recommended postings at each park outlining aggressive pet behavior issues and the need to self-police. It was not recommended that the police be contacted or owners cited for aggressive behavior.

Public Comment: An Albany resident asked how many and what kind of complaints had been reported.

Director Leach stated that she had received complaints from families not using the parks due to the numbers of dogs and aggressive behavior, team coaches reporting dogs on the fields during play, destruction of turf at Terrace Park, fecal matter and the large numbers of dogs at certain hours of the day.

Public Comment: An Albany resident stated that because of Albany's size, it would not be wise to emulate Berkeley, and questioned if the Pierce St. off ramp could be fenced and used as a dog park.

Director Leach stated that the land was owned by CALTRANS and not available. She further stated that the issue was basically sharing space. She suggested the possibility of hours for animal use and non-use for fairness sake, and asked for suggestions on how to divide up the time. She stated that 300 notices had been sent out to residents, encouraging them to participate in this evenings meeting.

Public Comment: Albany resident Ms. Mendez, stated that she appreciated the Ad Hoc Committees work, and asked if there was a way to inform non dog owners when the dogs would be using the parks, and was there a way to encourage the small number of owners who were irresponsible to be more aware.

Chair Pilch stated that dog owners had informal meetings at Memorial Park in the early evening. Brad Griffith encouraged education and responsibility.

Public Comment: An Albany Terrace Park resident suggested designating hours.

Commissioner Como stated that time limits made sense. Commissioner Mullarkey stated that there needed to be a community conversation to reach some middle ground without creating too many rules that could not be enforced. Commissioner Kindle suggested public meetings focusing on each individual park.

Commissioner Linden stated that there were short and long term issues. She suggested for the short term, enlisting volunteer leaders at each park to collect email lists, creating a communication structure. She stated that it was important for the stakeholders to meet and share ideas. She further stated that she did not support specifying hours, but did not think that dogs had more rights than humans.

Chair Pilch stated that Albany had lenient dog policies but most dog owners were responsible. He stated that it was important to provide park time and space for families with young children, where they could feel safe. He stated that he liked the idea of promoting education, volunteer neighborhood leaders, clarification of the meaning of voice control and self-policing among dog owners. He further stated that it was important for the Commission not to act too hastily on the issue or impose rules that were too strict.

Commissioner Kindle stated that he liked the idea of fenced in dog parks. He also stated that many cities charged a fee for dog walkers, and it could create a revenue source for Albany.

Director Leach stated four community meetings could be arranged, one for each of the parks. She suggested that the focus should be on dogs and dog behavior, include owners and non-owners and be hosted by a Commissioner. Commissioner Kindle volunteered for the Ohlone Greenway, Albany Ad Hoc Committee member John Kartychack for Ocean View, Commissioner Mullarkey for Memorial and Commissioner Como for Terrace Park.

Commissioner Trout suggested a time goal be set, considering the lenient current policy. He further suggested adopting Berkeley's regulations, subject to revision. Director Leach stated that any change to the ordinance would take time.

Motion:

Motion to post a flyer at each park asking for volunteer stewards willing to take on the dog issue and liaison tasks for communication between the public and the Commission made by Commissioner Linden and seconded by Commissioner Como. Motion carried all in favor.

Motion:

Motion to form a sub-committee to develop language for the park posting made by Commissioner Mullarkey and seconded by Commissioner Linden. Motion carried 5 in favor 1 opposed.

Motion:

Motion to organize public meetings for the four parks in February, March, April and May to deal with dog issues, to come back in June to discuss the findings, to leaflet all parks in a two block radius as

notification of the meetings and to use middle school volunteers to distribute the leaflets made by Commissioner Kindle and seconded by Commissioner Mullarkey.

Amendment to motion:

Motion to amend the motion to have the meetings take place in the months of February and March at the convenience of staff, with the hopeful outcome of meeting completion by the end of March made by Commissioner Mullarkey and seconded by Commissioner Kindle. Motion carried all in favor.

Nancy Caputo volunteered to take on the liaison task at Terrace Park.

6-3.

Ocean View Sports Field Improvements Update: The OVSF project is funded by a State Park Bond; however, the State has frozen park bond funds. Staff will report on how this will impact the OVSF project. Director Leach stated that staff had worked hard to get the bid packet out for the Ocean View improvements, but the State Park Board had frozen park bond money. It was unknown if the City would be reimbursed, and nothing was being guaranteed by park representatives.

Director Leach had spoken to the Albany Finance Director Charles Adams regarding Measure R funds. He stated that there was \$240,000 left in the fund. Director Leach advised asking Council in February to use some of the funds to complete tasks at Ocean View including; the bullpen, batting cages and scoreboard, which would bring Ocean View amenities up to par with Memorial. She thought that the projects would cost approximately \$90,000. The caveat was that the money might never be reimbursed, though it was also possible that it would be completely reimbursed or the deadline extended. Director Leach stated that she felt it would be a good and important use of the money and it was considered to be Phase One of the project.

Director Leach stated that the AUSD agreed to pay up to \$97,000 for Phase Two, but there was a parent territorial issue with regard to Memorial Park and resistance to using Ocean View. The next step would be a facilitated meeting with key baseball and softball parents.

Motion:

Motion to recommend to Council to use Measure R funds for the bullpen, batting cages and scoreboard at Ocean View Park made by Commissioner Kindle and seconded by Commissioner Mullarkey. Motion carried 5 in favor and 1 abstention.

6-4. Selection of Chair and Vice Chair: Each year the Commission selects the Chair and Vice Chair for the upcoming calendar year.

Motion:

Motion to nominate Commissioner Pilch for Chair made by Commissioner Linden and seconded by Commissioner Kindle. Motion carried all in favor.

Motion:

Motion to nominate Commissioner Mullarkey for Vice Chair made by Commissioner Kindle and seconded by Commissioner Trout. Motion carried all in favor

7. Future Agenda Items: Tree list, meeting start time earlier, accessibility issues in parks, new Tree Task Force member form the Commission, evaluate and possibly broaden scope of work for the Tree Task Force

8. Adjournment: 10:25pm

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.