



A Regular Meeting of the Parks And Recreation Commission Minutes
Thursday, May 14, 2009
Albany Community Center
Edith Stone Room, 1249 Marin Ave.
7:00 p.m.

1. **Call to Order:** 7:05p.m. Commissioners present: Chair Pilch (7:15), Commissioners Class, Kindle, Linden and Mullarkey. Excused Commissioners Como and Trout.

Staff present: Director Penelope Leach, Community Development Director Ann Chaney, City Engineer Randy Leptien and Robin Mariona.

2. **Approval of Minutes: 2009**

Motion:

Motion to approve minutes from April 2009 as corrected made by Commissioner Kindle and seconded by Commissioner Class. Motion carried 3 in favor and 1 abstention.

3. **Public Comment:** None

4. **Announcements/Communications:** None

5. **Director's Report:** Community Development Director Ann Chaney and City Engineer Randy Leptien reported to the Commission on questions about Lighting and Landscape and Measure R from the previous meeting. It was stated that Measure R funds could not be used for Pierce St. Park as was hoped. Measure R covered the acquisition of Albany Hill open space, creek restoration and ball fields. It was further reported that the City attorney had oked the use of Measure R funds for Harrison Field.

The question regarding the use of \$900,000 that CALTRANS had not used for a sound wall, was also no. CALTRANS reported that they had used those funds long ago for other projects. The clarification of how \$918,000 on the spreadsheet from the previous meeting was spent was: Memorial Park, Ocean View Park, burrowing owl mitigation funds for establishing habitat and playfields. The burrowing owl mitigation funds still had not been reimbursed by the City by Berkeley.

Director Chaney stated that the BART retrofit project would probably not begin until summer of 2010.

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

6-1. Presentation Fern Tiger and Associates: reminder from Fern Tiger Associates to encourage Commissioners/Committee members to promote participation in the *Voices to Vision* neighborhood gatherings, mid-May through the end of June. Fern Tiger reminded the Commission that the *Voices to Vision* community meetings were about to begin on May 16th, and asked the Commissioners help in spreading the word to neighbors and community members, to rsvp and attend the meetings. She also urged the Commissioners to check the model in the Community Center lobby and stated that these sessions were for Albany residents only.

Ms. Tiger stated that the intention for these meetings was to get as much input from the citizens of Albany as possible, but there would be regional sessions for outside stakeholders and Albany businesses as well later in the process.

6-2. Buchanan Bicycle Plan Presentation: Staff will present a draft of the Buchanan Bicycle Plan. Director Ann Chaney stated that there was a \$300,000 plus grant for a bicycle plan to connect Marin Avenue to the over crossing at the railroad tracks near Highway 80. She asked the Commission to share their concerns, thoughts and direction regarding the alternatives that were being presented this evening. She stated that each alternative could involve some loss of parking and trees. She asked that the Commission think about the presentation and alternatives, and come back at the next meeting with recommendations for Council.

Albany Transportation Planner Aleida Andrino-Chavez presented plans for alternatives to create bicycle links from Cornell to San Pablo, and creation of a Class 1 path from San Pablo to the over crossing. The plans were in four segments; the first from Cornell to San Pablo, the second San Pablo to Buchanan/Jackson intersection, third Jackson to Taylor or Pierce and fourth Taylor or Pierce to the over crossing.

There were alternative routes for each segment; two alternatives for segment one, one alternative for segments two, there were three alternatives for segment three and several alternatives for segment four. Ms. Andrino-Chavez invited the Commission to view the plans for several minutes. She stated that plan recommendations needed to be presented to the Council in July.

After viewing the plans the Commission had questions and concerns about crossing guards, tree removal, drop off and pick up points for children at Ocean View, parking spaces and preserving play structure area. Commissioner Kindle stated concern about who would furnish the crossing guards and, who would pay for them. He stated further concern regarding mixed use of a path and the division between bikes and pedestrians on one wide path.

Public Comment: An Albany resident asked that parking be preserved at Jackson and Buchanan, possible rerouting of the L bus and lengthening the traffic signal time.

Urban Forester Tony Wolcott stated that it was important to keep the number and value of trees in mind, when making path route decisions. The trees on the north side of Buchanan were well established and healthy, and those on the south side were not as healthy.

Motion:

Motion to conduct a tree review with the Traffic and Safety Commission at 6pm on May 28th made by Commissioner Kindle and seconded by Commissioner Mullarkey. Motion carried all in favor.

Chair Pilch stated that a bike path on the south side would be multi-use and one on the north side would be a bike path only, and the Commission should look at the trees in question for both plans. Chair Pilch stated preference for trees preserved over parking lost and a preference for planting space for trees. Some alternatives were to split the path to avoid some trees and create mid block bulb outs for tree planting space.

6-3. Update on Ocean View Community Garden: Request for the Community Garden Committee to update policies and information about the garden. Community Garden president, Jackie Hermes Fletcher, passed out a packet of information to the Commission and gave an overview of the garden. The Steering Committee functioned as the overseer of garden needs, the treasury, the interests of the plot holders, guideline enforcement, monthly meeting agendas, work parties, and promotion.

Steering Committee member Will Moore stated that there was a monthly meeting of the gardeners. The goals were to keep the garden together with monthly cleanup, develop a community of gardeners and a website. There was also a weekly open house for visitors. The gardeners were looking for more Albany space, composting help, a garden sign, bulletin board, a mural, developing a picking garden, tomato sharing, recipes, a harvest dinner and tree trimming.

Commissioner Linden stated that she had a composting container that the gardeners could have and Director Leach stated that garden funds could be for composting materials.

Director Leach stated that she would send out new gardening guidelines requested by the gardeners for the Commissioners to review and approve at the next meeting.

Public Comment: Peggy McQuaid stated that the Community Foundation had helped to fund the gardening shed and that the Arts Committee could work with the gardeners on the mural.

6-4. Accessibility of Albany Parks: Review accessibility of Albany Parks to determine if any changes/additions need to be made. Director Leach stated the City wanted to be ADA compliant and fair. The ADA consultant had made recommendations for improvement to what the City was already doing at Ocean View Park and the Bulb, but the budget had not provided for him to visit all the parks in Albany.

Commissioner Kindle stated that it was important for all the parks to be evaluated. He questioned if WW funds could be used to improve the path along Thousand Oaks at Memorial Park. Director Leach stated that 20% of funds specified for a particular project could be used for non-construction aspects, the other 80% used for construction only and it was possible WW could be used for a path project at Memorial.

Public Comment: Albany resident Dave Glasser stated that there were several areas in Ocean View Park and the Bulb that were non ADA compliant including; parking, surfaces in the playground and garden, routes around the beds in the garden and the restroom. He stated that there did not appear to be uniform surface practices for parks and schools and a standard surface should be used.

Peggy McQuaid stated that the ADA garden space was too high, gate handles should be paddle types and parking was not accessible at Ocean View and the Bulb. She suggested a disability walk through to create more awareness.

Commissioner Linden asked for notes from Mr. Glasser and Ms. McQuaid on their observations. Director Leach stated that the consultant had recommended a combination of rubberized and fibar surfaces. She stated that the City needed to be compliant with ADA laws at a minimum, and anything over and above legal standards would need to go on a prioritized ranking list for money expenditures and recommended to Council by June.

Prioritization of projects by Mr. Glasser and Ms. McQuaid were; cutting out a lip on the ADA raised garden bed to make it more accessible, flagstones on the garden path to make the surface navigable, accessible parking and fixing the restroom. Changing surface material was important in the long run and ramps to the swings.

Carol O'Keefe asked if parking improvements were possible through Golden Gate Fields. Francisco Papalia stated that as a member of the Waterfront Committee, he wanted to discuss the problems raised by Mr. Glasser and Ms. McQuaid with them directly and do everything possible to correct things right away.

Director Leach stated that prioritization for WW Funds projects needed to be submitted to Council by June or early July. Council would approve the projects they wanted to fund. The chosen projects would be submitted to WW administrators in February and March of 2010. If the WW administrators approved the projects, City money could then be spent and would be reimbursed from WW funds. It would be at least a year before any of those monies were available.

Director Leach stated that small fixes could happen right away and she could find some money for the garden path, the raised bed lip cut out, fixing the ADA button in the bathroom and parking. An eventual rubberized surface and other ADA upgrades would be costly and should go on the WW list for consideration.

Commissioner Kindle stated that money for research on accessibility at other parks should be considered in the future.

6-5. Pierce Street Park Update: Update on status of Pierce Street property currently owned by Caltrans. Director Leach stated that a detailed Caltrans timeline dating from the early 1990s had been handed out to the Commission to review. The report stated that the current offer was \$2.5-\$5 million financed by Caltrans for the 4.5 acres with conditions regarding development options and payback. There was \$580,000 from Measure F and \$771,000 from WW, which was at least \$1 million short. Director Leach stated that between the money issues and other considerations, the City was not close to being able to purchase the property.

Chair Pilch asked what Caltrans financing conditions were. Director Leach stated that she would find out. Commissioner Class asked for the legal opinion on the use of Measure R money. Director Leach stated that legal language clearly excluded the Pierce St. property from eligibility. Commissioner Kindle asked if legal action had been considered against Caltrans. Director Leach stated that she was not aware of any action.

Public Comment: Pierce St. neighborhood representative Jacqueline Armstrong stated that the neighborhood group had an appointment to meet with Caltrans on May 28th. She stated that a park on Pierce St. had been included in the Master Plan and asked that the Commission to recommend using WW funds for the purchase.

The Commission discussed the zoning of the property, possible legal issues and expressed encouragement in regards to the neighbors meeting with Caltrans. It was suggested that the media be invited to the meeting. Director Leach stated that she would find out more information on the zoning and legal issues, but the purpose of the discussion was to determine if WW funds should be spent on the property.

Motion:

Motion to move items 6-7 and 6-8 up to the next positions on the agenda made by Commissioner Mullarkey and seconded by Commissioner Kindle. Motion carried all in favor.

6-6. Measure WW: The Commission will continue to discuss possible uses of measure WW funds. An update on proposed projects is due to Council June 2009. Chair Pilch stated that the Commission needed to decide on criteria to rank projects, how many projects to recommend and possibility of rank order. He stated that current criteria included; immediacy of need, other funding not available, cost, geographic areas of the City under served, people under served, recommended in the Master Plan, meets

a Master Plan Goal, project on hold too long and perfect timing for a project. The Commission agreed on the criteria.

Director Leach stated that the criteria was now set and unless there were additional projects, the Commissioners should each choose three projects on the current list. Commissioner Linden stated that she needed to leave and couldn't participate in any further discussion.

Chair Pilch stated that each Commissioner got six votes; three votes would go to the first priority project, two to the second and one to the third.

Commissioner Class stated that the maximum amount should be spent, but asked for clarification on various projects in order to make his decisions. The Commission and Director Leach clarified Commissioner Class's questions and reviewed some of the projects on the list. Some of the projects didn't have exact costs.

Public Comment: Francisco Papalia clarified that there was \$27 million dollars for acquisition of the Bay Trail, \$1 million of which could be used from that portion of the WW fund for the Albany portion of the trail. He stated that the Waterfront Committee had decided on removal of hazardous material, cove improvement, and triangular renovation. Their intention was to take possession of the waterfront through improvements and attention to the area. Mr. Papalia clarified some differences in proposed costs for cleaning up the bulb and stated that it was important to keep the bulb as Albany property and not hand it over to the East Bat Regional Park District.

Carol O'Keefe supported cleaning up the Bulbs health and safety hazards and Voices to Vision needed to address issues at the Bulb as well. A Pierce St. resident stated that spending the money to enlarge the Senior Center seemed unfair and hoped that the Commission would consider the WW funds for a Pierce St. park.

Commissioner Kindle asked to submit the sidewalk on Thousand Oaks and partial covering of the paths at Ocean View to the list of projects. Commissioner Class stated that that the City needed to obtain a legal opinion on development rights at Pierce St. in order to determine the value.

6-7.Tree Task Force Update: Update and recommendations from the City's Tree Task Force. Urban Forester Tony Wolcott stated that the recommended street tree list had mostly been completed, but there had not been a quorum to finish Task Force business, and two Commissioners were needed . He further recommended planting trellised fruit trees in the Community Center parking lot. Commissioner Kindle stated that a ditch near the Community Garden would be an ideal spot for fruit trees. Commissioners Mullarkey and Kindle volunteered to become members of the Task Force until their business was completed.

6-8. Green Albany Day: The Commission will discuss having a booth at the Green Albany Day, May 17, 11am-3:00pm. Chair Pilch stated that the Sustainability Committee had asked the Commission to have a booth at the event. The Commission would have a copy of the Master Plan for people to review at the booth.

Motion:

Motion for the Commission to participate in the Albany Green Day event made by Commissioner Kindle and seconded by Commissioner Mullarkey. Motion carried all in favor.

6-9. Next Meeting date/time: Note Commissioner conflicts re next months meeting. Meeting date June 11, 2009.

7. Future Agenda Items: Portables for the Teen Center

8. Adjournment: 10:45pm

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.