



APPROVED

**MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 24, 2012
City Hall
250 Hamilton Ave**

Commissioners Present: Deirdre Crommie, Stacey Ashlund, Jennifer Hetterly, Ed Lauing, Pat Markevitch, Daria Walsh, Paul Losch

Commissioners Absent:

Others Present:

Staff Present: Daren Anderson, Greg Betts, Catherine Bourquin, Rob de Geus

I. ROLL CALL CONDUCTED BY: Catherine Bourquin

II. AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS: Remove item 1 under Comments and Announcements.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None

IV. BUSINESS:

1. Approval of Draft Minutes from the December 13, 2011 regular – The Draft Minutes from the Regular December 13, 2011 minutes were approved as amended. Approved 6:1 abstention (Losch)
2. Selection of Chair and Vice Chair for 2012 – Staff de Geus gave a brief overview on the process of electing a Chair and Vice Chair for the Commission. Chair Walsh commented on what her experience was like as Chair for the past year. Commissioner Losch also added his comments from being a past Chair for the Commission. The Commission was then asked if they had any nominations for Chair. Commissioner Markevitch nominated Commissioner Lauing for Chair. Commissioner Lauing accepted the nomination and the Commission placed their vote for Chair by ballot.

Vote 7:0 Lauing for Chair

Commissioner Walsh then asked if there were any nominations for Vice Chair, since no other nominations were brought forward, Commissioner Walsh nominated herself. The Commission accepted her nomination and placed their vote for Vice Chair by ballot.



Vote 7:0 Walsh for Vice Chair

The newly elected Chair Lauing continued with the meeting as Chair.

- 3. Review draft Comprehensive Plan Amendment – Community Services and Facilities Element** – Staff de Geus introduced Steven Turner, Advance Planning Manager for the City’s Planning Department. The Draft Comprehensive Plan – Community Services and Facilities element was reviewed with the Commission. Mr. Turner went through the report with the Commission remarking on the pages pertaining to the programs and stating if the existing policies changed, were improved, and what new programs were added. He added that 32 policies were not changed and 21 were reworded. Staff de Geus remarked that the next step is to solicit stakeholder feedback including the Parks and Recreation Commission review. The Commissions Comprehensive Plan ad hoc committee will review the draft plan and come back to the February PARC meeting with a summary of their comments/suggestions. It will then go the Planning Transportation Commission in March for review; and then the City Council for review and approval.

Staff Betts commented on the history of the current Comprehensive Plan, noting that 13 years ago there were 198 people involved in the process. He noted that because of this extensive involvement that the policies and programs did not have to be changed significantly. He added that the three areas that did change significantly were in the areas of Community Partnerships, Youth wellness, and healthy lifestyles.

Comments from Commission

Commissioner Losch commented that he found the external funding portion not clear to him. He also spoke on the demographics and wanted to know if anything was considered in this area. He commented on the Performing Art Center and didn’t know how the city could afford to do something like that.

Commissioner Crommie commented on page 14 of the report, C3.3 Policy and wondered if Community Gardens should be included in this and page 17, Opportunities to Develop New Parks and Recreation Facilities.

Commissioner Ashlund, questioned the area in page 11 to include the word disabled, she also had questions on page 14 Policy 3.7 wanting to know what qualified as “resident” or does it limited to children. Staff de Geus replied that it pertained to fee reduction program and was pertained to low income and disabled residents of all ages.

Commissioner Hetterly spoke on the section on page 15 and wanted to make sure that sand and swings would still be available in parks and not removed because of ADA requirements. She also commented on page 17, C4.7.3 encouraging the consideration of pocket parks.

Staff de Geus said he would provide the ad-hoc committee with dates to meet.

4. **Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan Update** – Commissioner Crommie reported as a representative of the Creeks and Urban Trails ad hoc committee. She commented on the public meeting on the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan that she attended on January 12th. She said that the meeting was well attended and conversation concentrated on connections for the area of South Palo Alto to Los Altos border that wasn't well developed in the plan as it could have been. The Consultants and Jamie Rodriguez, Chief Transportation Officer for the city was in attendance. Public attendance ranged from not just South Palo Alto residents but residents from other sides of Palo Alto. This brought other areas of interest into the conversation.
5. Commissioner Crommie reported that the report was being released electronically this week. The current plan is to have staff from Planning and Transportation come to the next Parks and Recreation Commission meeting in February. The Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan is scheduled to go before the Council in March.

Commissioner Crommie commented that the members of the committee consisted of herself, Commissioner Hetterly, and former Commissioner Dykwel. She added that this might be a good time to select another Commissioner to replace former Commissioner Dykwel on this sub-committee. Staff de Geus said that it will take the month of February to digest the plan since it is a large document. Commissioner Walsh interjected that it might be a good idea to hear about the different ad-hoc committees that are available to be on and select new members at the upcoming Commission retreat. It was agreed by all that this would be a good idea to do. Commissioner Crommie also added that she had requested from the Planning and Transportation Department that they receive a hard copy of the plan. There were no other comments from the Commissioners.

5. **El Camino Park Improvement project Update** - Staff Anderson was introduced and provided the Commission with an update to the latest information related to the El Camino Park Improvement Project. He informed the Commission that the item was being brought before them for informational purposes only, and that staff wanted them to be informed on the recommendation they were given to Council and why staffs recommendation is different from the Commissions. Staffs recommendation to Council is:
 1. Accept CSD staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendation For the approval of the final design for park improvements at El Camino Park, including pathways, a synthetic turf playing field, landscaping, and expanded parking lot, a dog exercise area, and other amenities(Attachment A);

APPROVED

2. Accept CSD staff recommendation that \$2,394,310 of Park Development Impact Fees be used to fund staff's final list of improvements to El Camino Park (Attachment B)
3. Defer the Council and Park and Recreation Commission's recommended dog exercise area until an environmental assessment can be completed to Stanford University's approval, and when funding can be identified and secured.

Staff Anderson explained to the Commission the primary reasoning of the differences in the recommendations. One being, after discussing funding with Administrative Services, they informed staff that using CIP funding was highly competitive and would be hard to have these funds approved for these upgrades. Second, staff felt that with the increase in usage of the park, the expansion of the parking lot was a critical necessity to the project. Third, after conversations with Stanford, the dog exercise area would have to go through environmental assessments and funding would have to be identified. Staff felt after reviewing these considerations, that funding all of the improvements and deferring the dog park until the impact fee balance could be replenished would be the best recommendation.

The Commission was given time for questions and comments.

Commissioner Crommie: Commissioner Crommie expressed her discontent with the process of this project and still does not approve using impact fees to fund the parking lot segment of the project. She supports the design but not the use of impact fees for the expansion of the parking lot. She would prefer to see funding used for connectivity issues first. She also didn't understand why this wasn't an action item.

Commissioner Walsh: Commissioner Walsh spoke in response to Commissioner Crommie's comments explaining that during conversation with staff as Chair, she thought it would be in the best interest of the Commission if staff came tonight and explained why they were not supporting the entirety of the Commission's recommendation from September 2011. Commissioner Walsh added that she disagreed on Commissioner Crommie's comment and felt that the Commission had participated fully with this project.

Commissioner Markevitch: Commissioner Markevitch supported the parking lot expansion as a priority for the project.

Commissioner Hetterly: Commissioner Hetterly wanted to clarify in the staff report the Commission's position in her opinion is that although the dog exercise area is a desirable feature, it isn't critical to the project and that the commission strongly supports dog exercise areas in parks. She also commented on Attachment A, the mention of rubber mulch instead of wood chips in the southwest corner of the park. Staff Anderson

APPROVED

commented that it was in error and it will be natural wood chips; he will correct this in the report. Another area she remarked on was the connectivity issue at the MacArthur park restaurant, and ensuring that Transportation is aware of the problem for bicyclist/pedestrians in crossing from MacArthur Park to El Camino Park trail. Staff Anderson commented that he agreed that Transportation needs to spend more attention on correcting this area of connectivity and staff will remind Transportation.

Commissioner Chair Lauing: Chair Lauing commented that he wanted it noted that the Commission did support and recommend all of the areas of improvement, dog exercise area and expanded parking lot; it was just a matter of funding. He didn't feel that there was any consideration made for alternative funding, which is the integrate core to this project. The matter of funding and using it all on one park and knowing there would be limited funding for the future, was the driving force on the Commissions recommendation.

Commissioner Walsh: Commissioner Walsh added that the reason she was against the dog exercise area in the selected location was she wanted to have the open area in the north end to be used as a multi-use dog exercise area.

There was some discussion on the timing delays on the project. Staff Anderson commented that he had a conversation with Siegfried the consultant regarding the schedule and they were confident that if the necessary approvals were made in March it wouldn't be delayed.

6. Parks and Recreation Commission Ad Hoc Committee Updates –

1. Evaluate staff recommendation to place limits on amplified sound at Lytton Plaza

Chair Lauing reported on this committee, they had several meetings and they determined that some of the issues come from people using the outlets at the Plaza. New ways to sponsor/coordinate music in the plaza appears to be of interest. Chair Lauing also noted that the objective is not to restrict free speech in the plaza. Relevant to loud sound, there was insufficient evidence at this time that they need an ordinance. Another meeting is to be scheduled in the next 4 weeks with further outreach to the business community. Council Liaison Espinosa asked if Russ of the Business Association had been contacted. Staff Anderson explained that he had been in touch with him and Russ was invited to the meeting but did not show up, Staff Anderson said that he would set-up another meeting and Russ acknowledged that he understood that he needed to attend to validate his complaint. Some comments were made on the volume of music coming from Pizza My Heart in the plaza.

APPROVED

2. Urban Creeks and Trails

Commissioner Hetterly reported for this committee and announced the revised Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan is coming out soon. She reported that the Leztowitz tunnel just closed for the next two months and recommended that the commission discuss at the retreat what want the ad-ho committee will focus on this coming year.

3. Activities and Resources for High School students during non-school hours

Commissioner Walsh spoke for this ad-hoc committee. Commissioner Losch and she make up this committee. She reported on trying to get a focus group together for teens, she is looking into having our partners (field user groups) help work with teens on developmental assets and supporting Project Safety Net initiatives .

4. Palo Alto Municipal Golf Course Reconfiguration Project

Chair Lauing asked if staff de Geus would speak on this committee. Staff de Geus reported that a lot has happened on this project. They are considering a several options with JPA in the configuration of the golf course as part of the Levy project. They are trying to get a broader perspective of park, open space and recreational interests at a community meeting scheduled for January 26 . The announcement for the Community Meeting was sent to a wide variety of different park and recreation users and potential users.

7. **Infrastructure Blue Ribbon Commission (IBRC) Final Report** – Commissioner Markevitch reported on this report. She said that there were over 200 meetings to get to this final report. Some of the highlights from the report were:

Found that infrastructure was under funded by 2million a year. The backlog of catch up to keep us current is 40 million; they found 5 major facilities that were below standards. To resolve these problems they recommend increasing the current spending by 6 million, replace safety building 79 million, Municipal Service Center (MSC) study 16 acre land estimated at 100 million to replace it. The Infrastructure management system needs to be implemented, total of four – two with Cubberley, two without Cubberley looking for funding alternatives. Council and City staff will have several meetings over this next year to review the IBRC recommendations. Commissioner Crommie asked a question from page 8 table 1.1 last project 10 million highway 101 bridge, 80% of cost, why is it listed as a solid number when the cost would be below that, Commissioner Markevitch replied the number was given as a place holder.

Council Liaison Espinosa added his input to the history behind the bond initiative Next step for our commission, support the City when they come up with a plan. Staff de Geus suggested selecting a Commissioner to attend the Council meetings on the IBRC report.

Council member Espinosa said a process for discussing the future of Cubberley has already been developed and has begun with the School District. Council is very aware of the Cubberley situation and it will be on Councils agenda in the coming months.

- 8. Preparation for the January 31 Parks and Recreation Commission Retreat** – Staff de Geus started the discussion by offering a suggestion on how to facilitate the retreat. He suggested doing it in three parts. First, discuss what worked and didn't work for the past year, second look toward the year ahead and what we want to accomplish, and third discuss how we go about addressing them, do we have more ad hoc committees, what would be the timeline. Staff de Geus commented that he will share the answers to the questionnaire he sent out over the holidays. His intent is to have the answers to these questions assist the Commission with how they would like to go forward with next years priorities.

Council Liaison Espinosa provided his input to what he felt the commission should concentrate on during the retreat. He proposed that the Commission look at creative ways that Community Services can bring back special events that have been stopped because of resource issues. He added that these ideas would be ways that wouldn't add hardship to staff but finding ways to have others (partnerships) take on these events.

V. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Staff de Geus spoke on gate-keeper training.
2. Martin Luther King event put on by Recreation at Lytton Plaza.
3. Bridal Faire coming up on January 29th from 11am – 2pm at Lucie Stern Community Center.
4. Summer Camp Registration Faire coming up on February 4th at Lucie Stern
5. Khashayar "Cash" Alaei has taken a position with the Planning Department, so there is a vacancy for his position.
6. A "Bon Fire" event for teens at the Boy Scouts fire circle is planned for January 29 was also mentioned; this event is not sponsored by the City but rather organized by a non profit called Breakthrough the Static.

VI. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR FEBRUARY 28, 2012 MEETING

1. Bike Pedestrian Master Plan
2. Golf Course update
3. Ad hoc committee updates
4. Shia Geminder – Field Use and Gym Space brokering update
5. Comprehensive Plan

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 10:10pm