

**Parks and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting
Thursday, December 4, 2014
Board of Supervisors' Chambers
400 County Center, Redwood City**

MINUTES

Chair Merrilees called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Cooney, Enriquez (Vice Chair), Merrilees (Chair), Okelo, Pincus

Commissioners Absent: Ruehl (Youth Commissioner)

Staff Present: Arechiga, Bennett, Brien, Castillo, Finley, Hallett, Harris, Herzberg, Lombardi, Schoof, Smith

Oral Communications

There were none.

Agenda Amendments

There were none.

Introductions

Parks Superintendent Lombardi introduced Park Ranger III Jason Brien, who was recently promoted from a Park Ranger II to a Park Ranger III position, and is assigned to District I, and recently hired Park Ranger II Alex Smith, who most recently worked for the Exploratorium in San Francisco, and is assigned to District II.

Action Items

Review and Recommend to the Board of Supervisors to Amend the County Parks Department's Five-Year Strategic Plan to include Goals and Strategies for Parks as a Community Resource for Health-Focused Settings, Use and Activities

Presentation: Jean S. Fraser, Health System Chief

Ms. Fraser made a short presentation highlighting the fact that increasing numbers of Americans' lack of physical activity was leading to obesity and higher incidences of disease. She said that parks were a valuable asset to help County residents get and stay healthy. She expressed appreciation that the Commission was recommending the addition of a health goal to the Parks Five-Year Strategic Plan. She said her recommendations were to invest in urban parks, prioritize parks in low-income communities with poor parks/open space access, increase parks/open space access through transit, expand urban agriculture in parks, and have parks reflect the culture, history and diversity of the local communities.

Commissioner Cooney asked how transit might be provided to those who need it for access to parks. Ms. Fraser suggested talking to SamTrans about possible transit on

weekends or other identifiable times. Commissioner Cooney suggested inquiring about SamTrans shuttles which were phased out every few years to see if those might be still in good condition and obtainable for some type of shuttle system for parks.

Commissioner Okelo asked about data collected by the CDC and if that was available for the same period of time at the cities and counties level. Ms. Fraser said she did not know if that data was available for the same time span. She shared some current statistics about San Mateo County including that over half of County adult residents were not getting the amount of daily recommended physical activity; 55% of County adult residents were overweight; and 22% of them meet the medical definition for obesity. She said this data did not go to the city level. She said they have information that some of their lower-income communities notably some communities in the northern and southeastern parts of the County were particularly hard hit in the percentages noted. Commissioner Okelo asked if that information could be shown on a map corresponding to the availability of parks in those areas. Ms. Fraser said they have data on longevity by community and they could map that showing where parks are in relationship to the communities. She said they could bring the map to the Commission at its next meeting.

Commissioner Pincus asked about physical activity programs for seniors. Ms. Fraser said the Health System did not run individual programs and were not a physical activity organization. She said they supported seniors through their Aging and Adult Services Division's senior centers that provide some activities. She said the best way to treat the epidemic of physical inactivity was to change communities to make it easy, safe and inviting for people to walk to a park, store, or library – to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Staff Report: Marlene Finley, Parks Director

Director Finley said the report proposed that the Commission as discussed at its previous meeting recommend to the Board of Supervisors to add a fifth goal area of "Healthy Community" to the Parks Five-Year Strategic Plan. She said the report showed how that would link closely to the County's Shared Vision 2025 outcome of "Healthy Community." She said the report also highlighted health-related programs Parks has been doing successfully in the past few years. She said the proposal was to include in the Community Engagement goal area an action around the community outreach programs that would position parks as a resource for fitness and emotional wellbeing with suggested strategies to accomplish that. She said the second area staff was recommending was to adopt Goal 5 Healthy Community and noted there was a typographical error in the staff report where it referenced Stewardship. She said the intent of Goal 5 Healthy Community was to provide additional opportunities for the public through acquisition and development of additional park lands and trails when funding was available for both acquisition and ongoing operation, and adding a strategy to support that goal of seeking opportunities to provide parks and trails within and near neighborhoods to promote fitness and wellbeing.

Questions for Staff: Commissioner Pincus said he thought that publicity regarding opportunities and activities in parks needed to be increased. Director Finley said that a

bullet to increase publicity about what was available in parks to promote health could be added.

Commissioner Enriquez asked about the difference between Goal 5 and revised Goal 22.1. Director Finley said Goal 22.1 was about programs, the connection with people and the service, and was being suggested under Community Engagement in the Strategic Plan. She said the Goal 5 Healthy Community was crafted more around park acquisition and trails. She said however that the suggested bulleted strategy items under Community Engagement could be moved under Healthy Community instead.

Public Comment: Chair Merrilees opened the meeting for public comment. There were none. Chair Merrilees closed the public comment period.

Commissioner Pincus moved to recommend to the Board of Supervisors the addition of Healthy Community as a fifth goal with the modifications noted by staff. Commissioner Cooney seconded the motion.

Commission Action: M/S Pincus/Cooney to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to revise the Parks Five-Year Strategic Plan to add Healthy Community Goal 5: Provide additional opportunities for the public through acquisition and development of additional park lands and trails when funding is available for both acquisition and ongoing operation to include the following strategies to support achieving the goal:

- Seek opportunities to provide parks and trails within and near neighborhoods to promote fitness and wellbeing.
- Enhance communications to reference benefits of parks in connection to health and wellbeing.
- Explore feasibility of expanding Take A Hike program.
- Partner with health and community partners to establish a connection with public lands to promote health and wellbeing. (Under Community Engagement revise Strategy 22.3 to include community partners.)
- Partner with health and the community to identify barriers that inhibit high health need populations from using parks as a resource for improving wellbeing.
- Increase publicity about what parks has available in support and promotion of health.

Motion carried 5-0.

Review and Approve Minutes of the November 6, 2014 Special Meeting

Commission Action: M/S Cooney/Enriquez to approve the November 6, 2014 Special Meeting minutes as presented.

Motion carried 5-0.

Review and Approve Proposed Appendix G, Commemorative Picnic Table Program to Policy 301: Guidelines for Donations, Memorial and Sponsorship Contributions

Staff Comment: Development Consultant Harris reported similar to the Commemorative Bench Program that staff were proposing a Commemorative Picnic Table Program, which if adopted would amend the Department's Policy 301: Guidelines for Donations, Memorial and Sponsorship Contributions, as Appendix G.

Commissioner Pincus said he was concerned that funds from the existing and proposed programs were deposited into funds to be used for maintenance of the benches and as proposed picnic tables and there was no revenue going to the Parks system from these programs.

Ms. Harris said these funds were not General Fund but were also available for other non-commemorative benches, which was also anticipated would be the case for picnic tables under the proposed programs.

Superintendent Lombardi said bench fund was not only for the maintenance of the commemorative benches but also for the site where the benches were located. He said the bench might need brushing around it or maintenance of base rock or surfaces under it. He said generally these commemorative sites receive annual maintenance. He explained that depending upon the weather conditions where benches were located that annual maintenance could include removing, refinishing, and reinstalling the bench boards. He said similarly funds in the commemorative picnic table program would support maintenance costs.

Chair Merrilees asked if the fee was enough noting if it was higher perhaps funds could go to the General Fund. Ms. Harris said that \$5,000 seemed to be the most for the existing commemorative bench program that was supportable by individual sponsorship.

Commissioner Okelo said he would have liked to have seen expected revenue under the fiscal impact section of the staff report. Ms. Harris said that was a projection that could be done.

Chair Merrilees noted that this program could offset costs for new picnic tables needed. Ms. Harris agreed and said that currently there were 1,200 picnic tables and the Department was acquiring more land which would create opportunities for more picnic tables.

Chair Merrilees said he thought there were premium sites for commemorative picnic tables suggesting Mirada Surf was such a site. Ms. Harris said the commemorative bench opportunities at Mirada Surf had been taken quickly and the same with the new Devil's Slide Trail. Chair Merrilees asked if the fee could be greater for different locations.

Director Finley said there had been a high demand for benches along the new Crystal Springs Trail South of Dam. She said there were so many requests that if the Commission supported the idea the commemorative bench sites could be offered for bid with the minimum bid being \$5,000. She said it was not clear what the price point would be and it would vary from site to site. She said one goal was to have a pricing structure that was not too administratively cumbersome.

Chair Merrilees suggested there could be a premium category requiring another \$2,000 above the minimum \$5,000 donation.

Commissioner Okelo said he did not think a public agency could provide a service that made profit. He thought staff needed to find out if that could be done legally. Commissioner Enriquez said he thought there were options to raise funds by setting up a minimum price with opportunities to bid more. Commissioner Okelo said the legality of that needed to be determined.

Commissioner Cooney suggested that there could be different designs that might cost more or less. Commissioner Okelo asked if there were price differences between the concrete and wood tables. Ms. Harris said they were the same price and noted that concrete was preferable for bay and coastal areas.

Commissioner Pincus asked if the Parks and Recreation Foundation could do a competitive bid auction and donate those funds to Parks. Ms. Bott said that was something that could be explored if desired.

Chair Merrilees suggested adopting the program with the caveat to have the Commission consider other pricing mechanisms in the future.

Commission Action: M/S Cooney/Enriquez to add Appendix G, Commemorative Picnic Table Program to Policy 301: *Guidelines for Donations, Memorial and Sponsorship Contributions* per staff recommendation.

Motion carried 5-0.

Presentations

Natural Resource Management Plan

Ms. Arechiga, Parks' Natural Resource Manager, said she looked at the County's General Plan and the Parks' Five-Year Strategic Plan in framing a Natural Resource Management (NRM) Plan. She noted that natural resource management includes land, water, soil, plants and animals with a specific focus on a scientific and technical understanding of those resources and ecology that manages the way people and natural landscapes interact.

Ms. Arechiga described the three components of the NRM program: Habitat Management, Integrated Pest Management, and Fire Risk Reduction. She said coordination with Parks' Operations staff was crucial for implementing these

components and noted that growing volunteer corps was also essential to those efforts. She said they were looking at a stewardship corps to include three types: weed warriors, perennial planters and green space guardians. She showed photographs of volunteer programs she has previously worked with and described how the stewardship corps would be developed. She said the key would be a core of volunteer leaders. She said a focus would be on developing volunteer crew leaders for each of the three stewardship corps elements. She described ways in which parks and other land management agencies were developing new ways to engage the public with technology.

In response to a question from Commissioner Okelo, Ms. Arechiga said that the state was responsible for wildlife.

In response to Commissioner Pincus, Ms. Arechiga said she could add “air” as one of the resources noting that trees were a powerful resource for cleaner air.

Commission Action: M/S Pincus/Okelo to accept the report.

Motion carried 5-0.

Crystal Springs Region Trail South of Hwy. 92 Report

Parks’ Senior Planner Herzberg provided the Commission with the history of events that led to the creation of the multi-use trail segments now known as Crystal Springs Regional Trail (CSRT). He described current efforts to extend trail segments noting County Public Works Department would build a road over the SFPUC’s recently replaced Crystal Springs Dam and that would include a 14-foot wide multi-use trail on the west side of the bridge. He noted that the .9-mile segment known as the CSRT South of Dam was nearly complete and was 10-foot wide. He said graveled shoulders were not possible for this segment because of adjacent steep slope conditions and that the SFPUC did not want this segment opened until a .1 mile trail gap between it and the Dam was constructed. He said that another trail segment know as South of Hwy. 92, .9-miles, 10-foot wide with three-foot graveled shoulder to accommodate equestrians and runners was planned but might need greater environmental review for potential federal grant funding due to National Environmental Protection Act or NEPA requirements. He noted that plans were needed for a Hwy. 92 crossing trail segment and the .1-mile gap he mentioned previously.

Staff Reports

Director’s Report

Harbormaster’s Report

Parks Superintendent’s Report

Natural Resource Manager’s Report

Fiscal Officer’s Budget Report

Park Planner’s Report

Community Program Specialist’s Report

Development Consultant’s Report

Director Finley noted that staff had no additions to the written reports but were available for questions.

In response to a question from Commissioner Enriquez, Director Finley said that Supervisor Horsley's office was asking whether the Parks and Recreation Commission could serve as the County's designated Bicycle Advisory Committee to meet a new requirement related to grant funding from the City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG) for bicycle and pedestrian projects funded through the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) rather than a separate advisory body being established. She said it was not anticipated to increase workload significantly and there were available grants for a number of projects. She said the Board of Supervisors would make a determination.

Commissioner Okelo said he thought the County should have a separate Bicycle Advisory Committee. He said perhaps the Commission might serve temporarily but there should be a separate body.

Chair Merrilees said that the funding and those projects were important and at the least the County should move forward to obtain funding. He said with that he foresaw an increase in other users interested in the Commission's work and making requests.

Commissioner Cooney said he thought perhaps the area might be larger than manageable by the Commission.

Commission Action: M/S Okelo/Cooney to temporarily accept the responsibility of being a Bicycle Advisory Committee with a strong recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to consider establishment of a separate Bicycle Advisory Committee.

Motion carried 5-0.

Friends and Subcommittee Report

Parks and Recreation Foundation's Report

Executive Director Bott noted an important donor providing support for the Coyote Point Recreation Area had contributed even more this year as a match for Phase II of the Promenade Replacement project so there was nearly a half million dollars as a match, which made grant applications more competitive. She said they also donated another \$150,000 for other improvements at Coyote Point including Beach area picnic sites next to the new pirate-themed playground that would be reservable. She said her Board had approved funding to help with school transit to parks and they would look at transit as requested earlier in this meeting for seniors to parks.

Mini-Parks Subcommittee Report

Commissioner Okelo said the work the subcommittee was doing was exciting and there was great community participation and staff and intern support. He said that they expected to bring a policy on mini-parks in unincorporated San Mateo County to the Commission soon to recommend to the Board of Supervisors.

Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Okelo said he had attended the most recent Menlo Park Parks and Recreation Commission meeting and had shared with them the possibility of convening a countywide parks and recreation commissions meeting, which was embraced. He said one of the topics they discussed was their recreation services. He said residents were given first priority and local unincorporated residents were given second priority. He said the latter group were in attendance and were very passionate and vocal about not being classified as second class citizens. He said also an individual expressed great interest in using the ball field at Flood Park and asked if the Director could update on the refurbishment of that park.

Director Finley said that staff had met numerous times with the Friends of Flood Park regarding that. She said additionally there were different sports advocates expressing great interest for playing fields. She said the Department was in the process of requesting proposals for a landscape architect to work with the community and Department on conceptual designs for the Park.

Commissioner Pincus said he met with a San Bruno Parks and Recreation Commissioner who also indicated he would be very interested in a countywide parks and recreation commissioners' meeting.

Director Finley said she would be meeting with the Parks and Recreation Directors in the County and would ask for their assistance in getting the idea going.

Commissioner Okelo noted that the California Park and Recreation Society had sessions for parks commissioners at their annual conference, and asked about Commissioners attending. Commissioner Cooney said previously such conference attendance for Commissioners had not been reimbursable but suggested Director Finley inquire about some reimbursement for Commissioners to attend such conferences. Director Finley said she would look into it.

Correspondence

Commissioner Enriquez said he read the letter from the UC Riverside professor about the Devil's Slide Trail signage and the previous letter from Mr. Clifford, and asked what the status was. Director Finley said staff were meeting with the contractor who did the signage to do three new ones for Devil's Slide Trail: one for the Ollie Mayer Overlook, one about the murre scientific project, and one on native plants. She said they would rotate out the sign in question. She said this historical interpretation was more appropriate to Sanchez Adobe.

Director Finley noted there were two upcoming public Measure A information meetings on December 10 and 17.

Chair Merrilees said a letter had been received about disc golf. Director Finley said that this use was very controversial and that changes to use needed to be considered under park master plans. She said this was not budgeted for currently.

Commission Action: M/S Cooney/Enriquez to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried 5-0.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:53 p.m.