



County of Santa Cruz

PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES

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JOE SCHULTZ, DIRECTOR

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Monday, March 8, 2010

Government Center, Board Chambers

7:15 p.m.

701 Ocean Street

Regular Meeting

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:17 p.m.

Members: Dave Mercer, Katharine Minott, Michael Rosenberg, Francisco Serna and Barbie Gomez

Present: Katharine Minott, Michael Rosenberg, Dave Mercer and Barbie Gomez

Staff: Joe Schultz, Christine Bennett, Cristina James, Gretchen Iliff and Bob Olson

II. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS OR APPROVAL

The agenda was approved as presented (Rosenberg/Mercer 4/0). Commissioner Minott stated that the informational item regarding Anna Jean Cummings Park will be moved to the April 12th meeting due to a decision made with Supervisor Leopold at the community meeting on March 2nd and that oral communications will be accepted tonight, but discussions will happen in April.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

The information and reports were accepted and filed. (Rosenberg/Gomez 4/0) and the minutes of February 8, 2009 were approved (Rosenberg/Mercer 4/0).

IV. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Rosenberg requested information on the vandalism that occurred at Simpkins Family Swim Center on Saturday, March 6th. Gretchen Iliff stated that at approximately 2:30 AM a group of four males jumped the fence, threw all deck furniture into the pool, gained access to a custodial supply closet and poured soap and sanitizer into the pool. First Alarm responded in approximately 20 minutes and saw the group flee as they approached. The Parks Department is currently evaluating low-cost options for additional security such as motion detecting lights.

David Venner, who lives on Main Street in Soquel, stated he did not recall receiving a notice for the community meetings about the synthetic turf project. He expressed concern about the \$190K contract with Verde and requested he

The Mission of the Santa Cruz County Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services is to provide safe, well designed and maintained parks and a wide variety of recreational and cultural opportunities for our diverse community

receive a copy. He knows the community is concerned about the fence, “astro turf,” possible health issues, etc., and right now they have to travel long distances to play, but it is truly the money that concerns him.

Katherine Sweet stated that Anna Jean Cummings Park exists because of hundreds of people spending thousands of hours for 32 years to get it done. She feels that the project went “under the radar” and that Commissioners Minott and Rosenberg have used their positions to benefit their own perspectives and desired projects (i.e. water credits). This is not a regional park – the lower part is designated “neighborhood” and the upper is “community.” She is taken aback by the community meeting with people from Scotts Valley appearing there and she doesn’t understand what is “green” about synthetic turf. She will provide the Commissioners with a packet of information regarding artificial turf and feels that somehow, someone has convinced them all that this is the “magic bullet,” but it is not. The fields were designed for youth use and should be used that way only. She anticipates there will be angry people at the next meeting.

Katharine Herndon lives in Santa Cruz but is advocating for everyone in the community – the children and the earthworms. She feels this project is a huge problem with the toxicity and all the plastic will eventually end up in the oceans. She suggested that the Commissioners review www.synturf.org and instructed them “not to believe the corporations.” She feels money is corrupting Parks staff.

Marilyn Garrett provided two hand outs – one on the toxins of turf and the other on microwave radiation from wireless equipment in buildings. She stated that recycling of tires is big business for companies and that the mention of harmful chemicals has been omitted from the newspaper articles and the community meetings.

Edna Williams has been a resident of the area on and off for 30 years and just heard about this project. She feels that “grass is green” and wants to know who the Commission “is,” who the Public Health Officer is and why they all feel that bringing toxins to our children is a good thing. She asked the Commissioners to be accountable, not put a corporate stamp on anything down the line, and stand up for what they know is right.

V. DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Director Schultz introduced the new CAO Analyst for the Parks Department, Melodye Serino. An invitation was extended for the “Night of Inspiration for Adult Athletes” on March 19th and all Commissioners were given a copy of the flyer.

VI. REGULAR AGENDA (DISCUSSION ITEMS)

A. ACTION ITEMS

Cristina James gave a Power Point presentation to review the progress of this Proposition 84 project after the series of community meetings. Park Planners met with community residents at Ben Lomond Park on February 20th to refine the park plan even more. Parks staff is also asking the Commission and the Board of Supervisors for approval to apply for Proposition 40 funding. There are several members of the community, led by the Chamber of Commerce, working to continue to pursue re-establishment of the dam because this project does not have the timeline that would allow that feature to be included. Parks staff worked with Environmental Health regarding the leach field and was advised not to do any work within the leach field, and was told that the library and Wilder Hall share

the same field and septic tank. Bob Olson stated that Parks anticipates a CEQA exemption for Proposition 40 for Phase I of this project.

Nick Naccari expressed concern of “major problems” with importing the sand because of Fish & Game restrictions due to the parcel being in the flood zone. He quoted Don Kelly at Fish & Game as being opposed to the sand, and that we need bank stabilization with vegetation. He feels there are too many artificial surfaces proposed and that more people would use the horseshoe pits over bocce ball, so he is asking for the Commission not to support those features. He also said that according to Dave Hope (retired from Water Resources) the project would be “303D” and suggested not removing the dam parts from the site so that there will be a better chance of putting it back in the future. He wants to see grass instead of sand by the bathrooms and by the new area for tot/river access.

Commissioner Rosenberg asked about any changes in required maintenance at the site and Gretchen Iliff responded that the department maintains the park at this time so there would not be increased demand on her staff. Gretchen expressed concern about the safety/structural integrity of the dam panels and that inspection should be considered before saving or reusing the parts.

Joni Martin expressed how grateful the community is to the Parks Planning staff for their assistance and patience during this process. She stated that the idea of the sand near the bathrooms was presented by parents of teens and as a kind of “place saver” in hopes of using the area for a dam again in the future. Flooding and silt are concerns for the area, so perhaps native grasses would prevent the risk of sand washing away and reduce maintenance costs. Suggested we keep the area in the “footprint” stage and not determine specifics until later because it doesn’t have to be included with the Proposition 40 part of the project. She continued to say that the community would like to see the current fence along the roadside replaced with a 42” fence and Gretchen responded that the height of the fence is for safety concerns when the river rises and floods the park site. Joni stated that the children expressed specifically that they did not want to play on wood chips and perhaps maybe a combination of that and rubberized surfaces can be done instead. She conveyed that this project has really brought the community together and expressed desire for them to remain involved as the project moves forward.

Commissioner Mercer expressed the desire for more mister features because of the high temperatures in that area during the summer and Bob Olson stated that they are being considered, but the GPM usage is a consideration because the design does not include a recirculation system for the water.

Cristina James stated that there are drought tolerant plants on the plans because they are sustainable features which are what they wanted to see on the application, too. She also said that Parks staff will keep residents informed and that the project will be on our web page with photos of the progress when possible. She requested that the Commissioners provide their input and/or approval for the Proposition 40 portion of this project.

Commissioner Rosenberg made a motion to ratify Proposition 84 plan as proposed and submitted to the state, and Commissioner Mercer made the second (4/0). Commissioner Gomez made a motion to approve Proposition 40 application and plan, and Commissioner Mercer made the second (4/0).

Cristina stated that the Proposition 40 application will be submitted once CEQA exemption is received, plus a 30 day waiting period for public comment, then it will also need to go to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

B. INFORMATION ITEMS

2. Farm Park Update

Bob Olson stated that Environmental Planning is concerned about the amount of proposed grading and currently, that is one of the biggest issues with the project. He said that hopefully plans can be resubmitted in 2-3 months. Melodye Serino suggested contacting Brian Van Stratten with the Public Works Department about possible using the dirt for an Eco Park project at the Landfill.

3. Felt Street Park Update

Bob Olson stated that RRM's findings are that there are hazardous materials at the site (which is typical for this type of project with existing structures) and that those details will need to be incorporated in the bid package. The main development plans were submitted to Planning on March 5th.

4. Veteran's Memorial Building Update

Director Schultz recapped that the building was closed on January 16th for structural concerns – the Veterans Services County staff was placed at the Emeline Campus and Tim Brattan of the Veterans Memorial Building was given a work space at the Parks office. There was also a meeting with the Veterans Council to discuss their needs for meetings, but they declined assistance at that time. On March 16th, the Director of GSD will notify the Board of Supervisors that the findings of the architect and structural engineer will be received in mid-April. Parks administers a contract with the Veterans Memorial Building Board of Trustees to coordinate events and generate income and without the building operating the revenue ceased, but the contractual obligations remained. On March 2nd a Termination of Agreement was given to the Board of Trustees effective April 2nd. It is anticipated that members of the Board of Trustees will be present at the Board of Supervisors meeting on March 16th.

VII. AGENDA/MEETING FOR: Parks Commission, April 12, 2010 at 7:15 p.m. at the Board Chambers, 5th floor, 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 (Government Center).

A. ACTION ITEMS

1.

B. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Anna Jean Cummings Park Soccer Field Renovation Update

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting was adjourned at 9:29 p.m. (Rosenberg/Mercer 4/0)