



County of Santa Cruz

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES

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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION Minutes of February 7, 2022, 7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting Virtual via Zoom

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Vivian Fenner-Evans, Kate Minott, Maggie Duncan-Merrell, Jim Rapoza
Staff: Jeff Gaffney, Noah Ross

II. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

Minott: Recommend time for public and commissioners to discuss future topics.

(Minott/Fenner-Evans 4/0)

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

1. Jean Brocklebank Subject: The last meeting was constrained to not discuss Scott Creek Management practices. Fortunately, the commission decided this topic would be moved to tonight's meeting. We are pleased to learn that a previous Parks Director had already clarified the pet policy at Scott Creek. We were also pleased to learn that Point Blue would be presenting at tonight's meeting. However, following the publishing of tonight's agenda, there is not information on Scott Creek nor the Point Blue Presentation. After contacting the chair, he informed me it would be fixed but it was not. Now the commission cannot take action on Scott Creek policies or management. Improper signage continues to be a problem.
2. Michael Lewis Subject: I am addressing the acting chair and commission. There is another unfortunate result of the postponement of a Scott Creek discussion: putting it off until April 4 means missing the start of the Snowy Plover nesting season. In the past County Parks has taken action to protect nesting areas during breeding season, however, there has not been action in 5 years. I suggest there be a special meeting prior to the start of nesting season to have a study session to discuss Snowy Plovers at Scott Creek.
3. Lisa Sheridan Subject: Regarding Farm Park and bridge situation, I am aware that the community nearby is frustrated with the bridge in its current state. I believe a narrow walking bridge at the park would be more appropriate than a larger bridge. I think a special meeting with neighborhood input would be beneficial to discuss this further. I would like to thank Jean and Michael for their words on Snowy Plovers.
4. John & Linda Brown Subject: We are surprised that Scott Creek dogs on beach was not discussed and upset it has been delayed. I understand it cannot be talked about, however, it is weird that it is not on tonight's agenda after what was discussed at the last meeting. Please find time to work on it this month.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: Minutes of December 6, 2021 were approved; motion for action tonight on Scott Creek not acted upon; reports considered and accepted (Minott/Fenner-Evans 4/0)

V. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Minott 2nd District: The bathroom project at hidden beach permits is progressing. App for graffiti reporting not working, Public Works and Rebecca notified.

Duncan-Merrell 3rd District: Things were great when we last checked in and it looks like we're on the cusp of exciting change in California for continued, safe use of our parks. Santa Cruz has done a great job with proceeding safely. Parks have been prospering.

Fenner-Evans 1st District: County Park Maintenance has been doing a great job. Heart of Soquel has become a community meeting place, with lots of attendance. Winkle Farm Park also great for parties and maintenance staff have been excellent in their work on Mondays following weekend events. Maintenance staff also have done a great job pruning succents near Opal Cliff. Regarding Santa Cruz Gardens, I now realize the necessity for large signs explaining dogs on leash only. I observed bilingual "play it safe" signs at Anna Jean Park. I also noticed Agents of Discovery banner and suggest that the banner and info signs be bilingual, as well as all other children's signs at this park. Great job with gopher abatement. Regarding Brommer Park, unhoused camp removed, adjacent tree removed, 24 pickleball players and sometimes 66. Picklers noted that the park feels safer with increased Sheriff's presence. Regarding the Farm Park, neighbors want to participate more in Park meetings, more social meeting outreach would be beneficial to the community.

Rapoza 5th District: No report

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Reading of Stephen Bennett's letter to commissioners: Stephen thought carefully about the Scott Creek Topic in question, and after careful consideration, decided it would most appropriate to be placed in Director's Report.
- Stephen resigned effective Sunday. Was on the commission for over a decade and he was always very helpful in discussions with commissioners and staff.
- Jennifer Mead is no longer with Parks and has moved to Environmental Health.
- A prior commission and administration had previously taken action (in 2001) on banning dogs from Scott Creek Beach, this action is still in effect.
- We have already ordered new signs for Scott Creek clarifying all dogs are banned from the beach.
- Reminder to commissioners, serial communications with members of the public are a violation of the Brown Act. Remember to be thoughtful with how we communicate things.
- Early draft of the agenda should not have been sent out and into public hands, we will avoid this in the future.
- Point Blue needed to reschedule, as this meeting did not work with their timing. April 4 meeting was preferable to them.
- We currently have 15 vacancies out of 49 full time positions, we've been working hard with personnel to get these filled.
- Thank you for the kind comments on our Park Maintenance Workers.
- Park Maintenance Supervisor Mike Pini has left Parks and moved to Vector Control.
- Willowbrook Park Memorial project is ongoing. We are working with the Deputy Sheriff's Association and County Park Friends.
- Heart of Soquel soil is slipping, resulting in damage to riparian corridor. Working with FEMA.
- Working on several grants and state partnerships.
- Started work at Simpkins. We are still offering swim activities at Harvey West.

VII. REGULAR AGENDA – Action Items

- a. Motion: Adopt resolution approving the commission's findings under AB 361 (Minott/Duncan-Merrell, 4/0)

VIII. REGULAR AGENDA – Info Items

- a. Director Gaffney gave update on Regional Transportation trail maintenance concerns
- b. Director Gaffney gave update on Parks Commission elections of officers

IX. NEXT MEETING: Monday, April 4, 2022, 7:00-9:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

X. WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE LISTING

XI. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m. (Minott/Fenner-Evans 4/0)