



**CITY COUNCIL
and
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
MINUTES**

**Tuesday, May 23, 2006
7:00 p.m.**

**701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Menlo Park City Council Chambers**

6:00 p.m. CLOSED SESSION (First Floor Conference Room – Administration Building)

1. Closed Session pursuant to Government Code Section to Government Code Section 54956.8, with real property negotiators David S. Boesch, Executive Director, William L. McClure, City Attorney, and Arlinda Heineck, Director of Community Development regarding price and terms of sale for the potential sale by the Community Development Agency of 735 - 811 Hamilton Avenue, Menlo Park (inclusive and consisting of approx. 2.21 acres of undeveloped land). Note: this Closed Session item is for the Community Development Agency Board. (Continued from May 16, 2006)

Reconvene in Open Session and Report on Aforementioned Closed Session.

The Council decided to decline to provide any authority to negotiate regarding the sale of these properties at this time.

7:00 p.m. REGULAR MEETING (Menlo Park City Council Chambers)

ROLL CALL - Jellins, Fergusson, Cohen, Duboc, Winkler

STAFF PRESENT – City Manager David Boesch, City Attorney Bill McClure, City Clerk Silvia Vonderlinden and a number of other staff members.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A. COMMISSION VACANCIES, APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

1. There is one vacancy on the Housing Commission to fill an un-expired term that expires September 2009. The extended deadline for receipt of applications is Tuesday, May 30, 2006 at 5:30 p.m.
2. There are two vacancies on the Las Pulgas Committee to fill two un-expired terms that expire March 2009. One vacancy is for a business member seat and one is for a rental owner seat. The deadline is Tuesday, May 30, 2006 at 5:30 p.m.
3. Commission Reports.

B. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS

1. Proclamation for National Public Works Week.

Mayor Jellins presented a proclamation for National Public Works Week to Mr. Kent Steffens, Public Works Director, who then presented an overview of the Public Works Department made up of Transportation, Maintenance and Engineering, and its achievements in the last year.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT #1 (Limited to 30 minutes)

Hank Lawrence spoke about inaccuracies in a local newspaper. He would have liked to see a correction printed but he didn't. Mr. Lawrence indicated that he did not speak out against one of the Council Members' projects at a particular meeting and in fact, he donated his time to Sam Sinnott. In addition, the staff report indicated that everyone lived far away from Mayor Pro Tem Fergusson's home when, in fact, half of the appellants lived within one-half mile of it. He requested that facts be checked so that reports don't include erroneous information.

D. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Authorize the Public Works Director to accept work by O'Grady Paving, Inc., for the Fiscal Year 2005-06 Street Resurfacing Project.

M/S Duboc/Winkler to approve Consent Calendar item D1. Motion carried unanimously.

E. PUBLIC HEARING - None

F. REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Review and consideration of a report from the Parks and Recreation Commission on the status of Sports Fields.

Michael Taylor, Acting Community Services Director, explained that under direction of the Council the Parks and Recreation Commission undertook a study to inventory and evaluate the usage of sports fields in Menlo Park. A taskforce was established to seek public input and ultimately make recommendations for the utilization of the City parks and open spaces. A total of 16 recommendations were presented in the report in a prioritized fashion, and it focused primarily on the need for an adult-sized soccer field. However, none of the recommendations are currently identified as Council project priorities. The following Commissioners addressed Council: Richard Cline, Paula Maurano and Heyward Robinson. Mr. Cline said that a playing field needs to have alternative uses such as baseball and soccer, and the recommendations should be considered at least in the '07-'08 project priority process. Ms. Maurano suggested incorporating the reality of the need with other projects in the City, with potential support for these types of facilities by the residents. Mr. Robinson said that the spirit of the recommendations was to cast a wide net and think outside of the box to consider all possibilities. Given the acute need for fields, options that could be acted on in a relatively short timeframe should be seriously considered.

Council Member Duboc asked Mr. Boesch to elaborate on the status of the Bayfront Park evaluation and he said that the City has engaged the services of a landscape architect and a geotechnical consultant to get a better sense of the likely location for sports fields at Bayfront Park. If the Council is interested in further considering the options identified by the Commission as well, a cursory review of Burgess, Kelly Park and the property on East Hamilton could also be done.

In response to a question about recreation in lieu fees, City Manager Boesch said that the demand that new housing imposes on existing and unmet needs for recreation facilities is considered as part of the development review. The Linfield Drive projects are good cases in point where the amount of acreage was insufficient to be able to build new facilities in those locations. As a result, the developer paid the required in-lieu fee. Ruben Nino, Engineering Services Director, said that instead, the combination of both 110 and 175 Linfield is \$1.3 million.

The Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission, Patricia Watkins, addressed Council, thanking it for its consideration and recognized the task force members who worked very hard.

Public Comment

Hank Lawrence addressed the Council and reminded them that there is a 160-acre park and three fields with parking would be roughly seven acres. The only other viable location is Bayfront Park, and he believes that is why it is a good reason to have it on a ballot in November. Regardless of the intention, if there is no plan to deliver, there will not be ball fields. The only viable option right now is to put in playing fields at Bayfront Park. He encouraged people to vote for those, and he also cited an article that he read telling about a golf course that the environmentalists love.

Chris Macintosh is a member of the Friends of Bayfront Park and started by thanking the taskforce and Parks and Recreation Commission for their hard work. She urged the Council to move forward on implementing the recommendations in the report. She would prefer to see Council work on the recommendations in the report rather than placing all the expectations on Bayfront Park.

John Boyle also thanked the taskforce. With regard to the recommendation to switch more of the use to the under-utilized fields, Kelly and Belle Haven, while it is arguably good, it is difficult to do. In addition, consideration should be given to traffic and neighborhood issues. He also commented that

some of the numbers might understate the shortage and the problem. The numbers did not include all of the people who don't live in Menlo Park, and there are huge numbers who live in other places and use the fields free of charge. Perhaps an option of fees for non-resident users should be explored.

Nancy Borgeson thanked the Parks and Recreation Commission and the taskforce members and urged the Council to follow through on the first recommendation in particular as soon as possible. She pointed out the potential conflict in terms of the ultimate use of the Hamilton site. She gets the feeling that the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendations are not going to be taken seriously and that the Council's majority mind is already made up.

Eileen McLaughlin spoke as a representative of Wildlife Stewards, which works with the national wildlife refuges locally and with the salt pond restoration project. She is very interested in Bayfront Park and the incredible wild lands that surround it and the opportunity that the City has to combine the two in the formation of a shoreline that is beyond belief. She pointed out that any landscape that takes place at Bayfront Park would come under the purview of the National Wildlife Refuge under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

John Posthauer spoke as a 40-year resident of Menlo Park who has played in sports and has kids in sports. There has been a shortage for years, and he appreciates the taskforce and their study. However, the bottom line is full-sized fields are needed, and they need to go out at Bayfront Park, which is the only place where there is land and artificial turf and lights can be utilized. It takes people with foresight and courage to get it done, and people need to learn to share.

Richard Cline clarified that they were directed not to include Bayfront Park in the report. Mr. Boyle clarified that the numbers in the report do include non-Menlo Park residents. One of the issues with Kelly Park is the road access, and a question was raised as to whether an extra entrance could be put in from the industrial park. Typically, there is a fee for the use of the fields, and there is a 35% surcharge for non-resident groups, which is based on an hourly rate. However, the difficulty is a lot of communities don't charge anything for the use of their fields. It is tough to compare.

Council Member Duboc pointed out the financial considerations, including the money that has already been spent on the fields and the expense for land given the City's limited resources and an ever-growing need for playing fields. Mayor Pro Tem Fergusson expressed her desire for the report to become a living document with updates on it continuing. She is not willing to take the VA property off the list just yet, and she doesn't think the option of fields at Bayfront Park has any chance for success. In light of that, she would like to focus staff resources on achievable results.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Fergusson to shift resources from pursuit of fields at Bayfront Park to focus energy on implementing the recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Commission. Motion died for lack of a second.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Fergusson to direct staff to meet with groups in the community, specifically Committee for Green Foothills and Friends of Bayfront Park, that have researched pursuing fields at Bayfront Park, and to bring those materials to the Council. Motion died for lack of a second.

Council Member Duboc provided a historical perspective to illustrate that there are a lot of things that take a lot of work to get accomplished, and a lot of things have been done in the City. Council Member Winkler stated that her feeling is if the community demonstrates support for the ball fields at Bayfront Park, it will have a tremendous impact on the permitting agencies. She doesn't think it is feasible to use land that is not currently City-owned because of the cost, and even City-owned land has an opportunity cost. Council Member Winkler believes that deferring further discussion until the report is received from the consultant in mid-July makes sense.

Mr. Boesch added that the consultants' work will be fairly narrow in scope as the direction was to look at where ball fields could potentially be sited at Bayfront Park. There will be rough estimates on what it would cost to develop ball fields with minimal ancillary facilities associated with them. They will also look at the feasibility of adult-sized fields at Burgess Park, Kelly Park and the East Hamilton property. It will give Council some information upon which it can then decide whether or not to pursue some form of a ballot measure in November.

Council Member Cohen made the observation that in his opinion it would be a mistake to give staff any direction because of staff's narrow band width. However, the Commission might well revisit some of the issues in their report and come back with a supplement. The additional areas of concern could be to meet and confer with the sponsors of activities in the City now, investigate fees and recommend increases, assess the cost of the improvements that have been seen by the Commission as potential at Kelly, Burgess and East Hamilton; and, finally, go to Palo Alto and talk to people there who worked with Stanford to get the fields at Page Mill and El Camino to see if something like that might be accomplished in Menlo Park, perhaps near where Stanford is building the new hotel. Above all, listen to the will of the people, but do so without putting all of the eggs in one basket.

Mayor Jellins concurred that the Commission should pick up where it left off in following through and filling in some of the gaps and unknowns with the recognition that there are only so many staff members to go around. In terms of expanding staff's assignment, there is no particular need for that at the current time. The pointed political question is to whether or not the community will accept development of active recreation use of Bayfront Park.

It was suggested that Mayor Jellins meet with the Mayor of Atherton and City Managers of adjacent cities to discuss this issue, but Mayor Jellins pointed out that they have an ongoing dialogue regarding these issues. Council Member Cohen suggested that people sit down and talk it out together lest all of this becomes a political issue in November and goes no further.

2. Consideration of state and federal legislative items including decisions to support or oppose any such legislation, and items listed under Written Communication or Information Items.

G. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION - None

H. INFORMATION ITEMS

Mayor Jellins announced that City Manager Boesch had announced his selection for the new Police Chief, and he welcomed Commander Bruce Goitia as the incoming Chief of Police of the City of Menlo Park. A formal swearing-in will take place, and the community will be notified as to when and where that will take place.

I. COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS –

Mayor Pro Tem Fergusson had the opportunity to attend the League of California Cities' Legislative Day in Sacramento last Wednesday, and it was an extraordinarily informative day. She witnessed the signing of the Bill authoring Bond 1C, which will be on the November ballot having to do with housing. She also attended on Thursday and Friday of last week a flu pandemic planning conference. She is proud to be part of San Mateo County as it is really taking a proactive preparedness stance in informing the citizens and the medical community.

J. PUBLIC COMMENT #2 (Limited to 30 minutes)

K. ADJOURNMENT – the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Silvia Vonderlinden, Certified Municipal Clerk

Approved at the Council Meeting of October 17, 2006.