



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Regular Meeting
December 21, 2005

Chair Cline called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Chair Cline, Vice Chair Watkins, Commissioners Luder, Maurano, Robinson, Silano and Whittaker.

OTHERS PRESENT: Curtis Brown, Community Services Director; Bob Roessler, Community Services Manager and Michael Taylor, Senior Recreation Supervisor

ABSENT: None

A. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS:

Chair Cline recognized the efforts of Curtis Brown, Community Services Director and Bob Roessler, Community Services Manager and the difficulties of the past year.

Motion by Commissioner Luder that the Commission adopt a resolution commending the efforts of Curtis Brown, Community Services Director and Bob Roessler, Community Services Manager, seconded by Commissioner Silano and unanimously carried.

Curtis Brown, Community Services Manager, thanked the Commission, Chair Cline and past Chairs. He announced the current budget proposals will create a new set of challenges for the Commission and encouraged the members to advocate for Parks & Recreation at the upcoming budget workshops. He announced that Michael Taylor, Senior Recreation Supervisor has been appointed as Acting Director of the Community Services Department.

Bob Roessler, Community Services Manager, related his move to private business. He considers his move as a calculated risk. He recommended that the Commission support remaining staff and advocate for the Community Services Department.

B. COMMISSION VACANCIES, APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS:

Chair Cline announced that a new Chair and Vice Chair will be selected at the January 18, 2006 Parks & Recreation Commission meeting.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT #1:

John Slater – Menlo Park addressed the Commission regarding the lack of exercise in Parks and Recreation. He mentioned that 400 cars and bikes visit Bayfront Park during a single day and that none of the users of Bayfront Park mentioned the need for a golf course.

Elizabeth Lasensky – Menlo Park addressed the Commission regarding the minutes of the November 16, 2005 Parks & Recreation Commission meeting. She asked that the minutes reflect that Chris Macintosh is a female and not a male.

D. CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. Approval of Minutes:

Approve the November 16, 2005 minutes

ACTION: Approve the minutes for November 16, 2005 with a modification on the public comment of Chris Macintosh to reflect she is a female not a male and with a modification under **COMMISSION VACANCIES, APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS** to read “funding” rather than “more funding”.

Motion Commissioner Maurano, seconded by Commissioner Luder and unanimously carried.

E. PUBLIC HEARING: None.

F. REGULAR BUSINESS:

1. Buy a Brick Program Update

Commissioner Whittaker has requested that an area of 10' x 28' be reserved for 400 bricks. He mentioned that 80 bricks have been sold to date. Chair Cline discussed an extension of the deadline and Curtis Brown, Community Services Director, explained the process to request an extension from the City Council.

Motion Commissioner Whittaker to discuss the Buy a Brick Program at the January 18, 2006 Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting to give time for Commissioner Whittaker to present a marketing plan. Seconded by Vice Chair Watkins and unanimously carried.

2. Sports Field Update

Commissioner Maurano distributed an inventory list of facilities. She met with staff on December 6, 2005 to get data on existing fields, she will provide notes from that meeting at the January 18, 2006 Parks & Recreation Commission meeting. Chair Cline

Public Comment

Nancy Borgeson – spoke against the City's methodology for estimating the shortage of soccer fields, a methodology that resulted in an estimated need for 15 additional fields. She pointed out the following major shortcomings:

It assumes that all players practice simultaneously when two time slots are normally available every weekend for every practice area. Correcting this assumption would reduce the additional fields needed by 50%.

It ignores about 50% of the practice spaces used by Menlo Park youth soccer players by assuming Menlo Park players play ONLY on Menlo Park fields. The website for AYSO Region 109 that covers Menlo Park lists five Atherton schools/parks with a total of 21 practice spaces for use by Menlo Park/Atherton players. Correcting this error would reduce the number of additional fields needed by another 50%.

It ignores that all youth need to play on adult-size field of 67,500^{sq}'. Not one Menlo Park game field is currently that big, but teams manage to play games regularly on 8 City fields. Adjusting for a per-player square footage number closer to current reality would reduce the number of needed fields significantly. Over the last several years, Menlo Park has spent a lot in Measure T funds on park improvement. The fact that significant funds have NOT gone toward adding soccer fields would indicate that there is no great shortage of space.

Steve Schmidt - suggested that the common land use practice of "Transfer of Development Rights" should be considered when looking for sites for fields. (For example, if a land owner has more than one parcel in Menlo Park or an adjacent jurisdiction, he or she might want to develop the more valuable site by asking for increased density or more lot coverage in exchange for providing another, less valuable site to the community for a playing field. The vacant auto dealers on El Camino Real sites which Stanford University now owns should not be turned into playing fields but instead left for retail purposes. However, Stanford might have other property in the City of Menlo Park that has less development potential that it could make available to the City in exchange for allowing Stanford to build a larger building on the El Camino Real property. Another example would be for the City to give David Bohannon an increase of his square footage entitlement on his property near the Bayfront Expressway in exchange for his providing the City with land for playing fields) As long as we are exploring all possibilities, this concept should be included. Mr. Schmidt also suggested that the subcommittee/task force of the Commission place its findings on the Commission agendas to that interested parties could familiarize themselves with the current thinking of the Commission before the meeting.

Brielle Johnck – commented that a list of potential sites that was distributed by the Commission. She asked that the Commission add to the list the closing of Alma Street between the skate park and Burgess Drive. Despite the years of political opposition to this street being closed and a field developed, it is time to set aside hard feelings and place this idea on the table for consideration.

3. Council Priority Projects

Curtis Brown, Community Services Director, asked the Commission to prepare a list to take forward next month. He explained the budget reduction strategies and the difficulties in making cut recommendations. He suggested the Commission make a unified stand and select a few high priority projects to recommend and not expand beyond a reasonable list.

G. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

None

H. PUBLIC COMMENT #2

None

I. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.