



**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**Wednesday, October 20, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.  
700 Alma Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025  
Burgess Recreation Center**

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**CALL TO ORDER at 6:32pm**

**ROLL CALL** – (Chair) J. Tooley, K. Breisch, C. Carlton, J. Cebrian

**ABSENT** – K. Blythe, N. Naclerio, A. Kirkpatrick

**Others Present** – Cherise Brandell, Community Services Director  
Starla Jerome – Robinson, Assistant City Manager  
Margaret Roberts, City Clerk  
Katrina Whiteaker, Community Services Manager

**A. PUBLIC COMMENT #1**

There were no public comments.

**B. CONSENT CALENDAR**

1. **Approval of the Minutes dated [July 21, 2010](#)**

**Motion/second (Cebrian / Breisch) to approve the minutes of July 21. Motion passes with the following amendment:**

- Jim Tooley was not present at the meeting. Kelly Blythe was present.

**C. REGULAR BUSINESS**

1. **Presentation by Anna Zara, Chair Library Commission, on Belle Haven Demographic Study**

Anna Zara, chair of the Library commission, gave a brief history of the Demographic Study. She explained that the study was completed in 2010 and the most of the data is from the 2000 census. In 2005 the Library commission made a project proposal to better assess the library needs and to involve the library services in Belle Haven community. The presentation shows that Belle Haven community is ethnically different from the rest of Menlo Park. The data shows that the age distribution is another difference as this part of the city has more of younger people than the rest of Menlo Park. Anna explained that a library is a necessity as a resource that the children do not have in school. The statistic shows that the school test grades are below average. Positive side of having the branch library is that the school district has the library staff and some of the reading programs are located at Onetta Harris. Starla Jerome-Robinson pointed out that the City School district could not afford to staff the library, therefore the City shifted it's staff to keep the program running. The District is supposed to contribute \$40,000 for the materials per year and hasn't been able to contribute in the last 4 years. All of the operations came out of the city's general fund. The library is now equipped with 11 internet-ready computers and is mostly utilized on weekdays during the lunch hours. Most of the patrons are coming in for internet use and are not affiliated with the school. There is a potential to relocate the library into the police substation on Willow Road which may have more space than the current allocated - 5000 square feet - 2 rooms and restrooms. Kristi Breisch pointed out that the proposed location is not convenient for children as there is a geographic division between the east and west sides of Menlo Park. Kristi also suggested that City partners with the literacy programs, such as the one funded by the Friends of Menlo Park Library. Kristi would like to see the adult English literacy classes and story time for children at Belle Haven.

**2. Approval of Bedwell Bayfront Park Use Policy**

Katrina Whiteaker presented the draft policy and explained that the number of requests for park use had increased, therefore the staff decided to put down general parameters for usage approval. The document presents the procedures and guidelines for the renters as well as for the review process. All external project requests for installations, park improvements, or volunteer projects require city approval and require a minimum of 90 days notice. All requests shall submit a written proposal describing the scope of the project.

All requests for Bedwell Bayfront Park will need to follow the general guideline on open space park usage that is listed on the reservation form. James Cebrian felt that some criteria might limit the recreational activities in the park. Katrina explained that the general idea is to keep the people on the paved paths for their safety. Also, there are some areas and signs to alert the people where they shouldn't be. Katrina added that the document is meant for the rentals and events.

Comment from public:

Chris MacIntosh, with the Friends of Bayfront Park spoke in favor of document. Ms MacIntosh is interested in having the park stay as it is now. Ms MacIntosh also mentioned that Belle Haven community uses the park heavily and enjoys the nature, therefore urges the commission to approve the usage policy. Ms MacIntosh invited the commission and the community to visit the park and join the birdwatchers this season, second Saturday of the month early in the morning.

**3. Continue working on the Commission Work Plan** – Margaret Roberts, City Clerk and Starla Jerome-Robinson, Assistant City Manager (Mission statement review and Project brainstorming)

Margaret Roberts, City Clerk, proposed to assist the commission in developing a two year work plan. The first step is to adopt a new or keep the existing mission statement. Next step is to locate the projects that the commission would be interested in taking part in the next two years. Margaret explained that this project is different from the capital improvement projects and it is about what the commission wants to achieve in terms of policies, evaluations, studies, etc. The adopted work plan would have to be in line with the City Council goals. The list of projects would be presented to the council for approval. Commission members agreed on keeping the current mission statement. The commission would like to look into the City's challenges that are linked to the budget.

Further discussion about possible projects:

- What are the current challenges within the Community Services Department and how are those challenges linked to the budget?
- To invite representatives from other community groups to speak at future meetings
- To develop a program to reach out the community
- To obtain a list of current major field users and invite them to present their programs and customer surveys
- To put a study of the future generation's activities
- To discuss a potential golf field in Menlo Park
- To get the understanding on how the schools and Community Services Department work together
- To get an update on Flood park

The commission shared the opinion to focus on one project and prioritize the list. Kristi Breisch and Catherine Carlton agreed to form a subcommittee.

**D. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**1. Report on status of Aquatics RFP process**

Cherise Brandell gave an update on the current Aquatics Request for Proposal status. The requests are being reviewed by the city attorney. The review committee will on October 25 and the members would send out the questions to the proposers. The contender will make a 50 minute presentation of their program. The committee will make a decision on November 1.

Comment from public:

Erin Glanville of Menlo Park, spoke for the SOLO Aquatics, as a parent of one of their users. Ms Glanville believes that the pool should be a community building space and that Menlo Park needs to have the best of both sides and make a win-win situation. The SOLO has the best coach, but the Menlo Swim has the best pool manager.

**2. Report on opening and program start up at Arrillaga Gymnasium**

The Arrillaga Family Gymnasium opened its door to public on October 16<sup>th</sup> with a well visited ceremony. The plan is to transfer the programs into the new gym on October 25. The gym is open Monday through Friday from 5am to 10pm.

**3. Report on status of gymnastics relocation and new Gymnastics Center**

Current strategy is to use a commercial size tent and place it on the outdoor basketball court along Alma Street. The power will be supplied from the Arrillaga Family gym. The tent will be slightly larger than the court. The layout will be available soon and the hope is to transition in March have the tent up and make the transition.

**4. Report on status of fall programming at OHCC**

Programming at Onetta Harris Community Center is about serving the Belle Haven neighborhood in the best way possible. It is a mix of a teen drop in activities and young /adult support recreational classes. The staff is conducting a data collection to assess the accomplishments. The operational hours changed in July to maximize the capacity. The center is open on weekends for rentals and special events. Katrina Whiteaker mentioned relatively new program, the power wrestling that took off this fall and filled up to 20 participants. The program was made successful in collaboration with Menlo Park Police Department and Beechwood School staff that coaches the team. The program has helped people feel more comfortable coming into the center.

**5. Report on test score gains at Belle Haven Community School**

Cherise Brandell reported that the Belle Haven Community School has raised their API scores from 632 in 2008 to 685 in 2010. The goal is 800 by year 2012. Kristi Breisch requested that community newsletter from the City Manager present the information to the community.

**E. INFORMATION ITEMS**

Catherine Carlton is the newly appointed commission member. Catherine has been a Menlo Park resident for eight years and resides in Sharon Heights neighborhood. Catherine has been involved with Hong Kong Chamber of Commerce.

**F. PUBLIC COMMENT #2**

Steve Zanolli spoke in favor of Solo Aquatics and acknowledged the Community Services Staff effort in conducting the RFP process. Mr Zanolli also mentioned that he will be present at the next meeting in the process.

**G. ADJOURNMENT at 8:20pm. Next meeting is scheduled for November 17, at Onetta Harris Community Center.**

Submitted by Jelena Gaines.