



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

**Wednesday, November 17, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.
100 Terminal Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Onetta Harris Community Center**

CALL TO ORDER at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL – (Chair) J. Tooley, (Vice Chair) K. Blythe, K. Breisch, C. Carlton, J. Cebrian, N. Naclerio (arrived at 6:40 p.m.)

ABSENT – A. Kirkpatrick

Staff Present – Cherise Brandell, Community Services Director
Katrina Whiteaker, Community Services Manager
Todd Zeo, Youth and Adult Sports Program Coordinator
Margaret Roberts, City Clerk

A. PUBLIC COMMENT #1 - None

B. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of the Minutes dated [October 20, 2010](#)

Motion/Second (Breisch/Tooley) to approve the Minutes of October 20, 2010 with the following amendment:

C.3 Continue working on the Commission Work Plan (p. 2), sixth bullet, is amended to read: "To discuss the potential for disc golf in Menlo Park."

Motion voted and passed 5-0-0.

C. REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Field User Group Presentations

Katrina Whiteaker reminded the Commission that they approved a new Athletic Field Use Policy in the spring. Potential Field User Groups are now required to submit written applications to the Community Services Department and to make short presentations (about five minutes) to the Parks and Recreation Commission once a year. Field User Groups must be validated/approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission before requesting field space.

Katrina identified the information that should be contained in the Field User Groups' presentations to the Commission. She explained that at the end of the presentations the

Commission will be asked to approve, conditionally approve, or deny each of the Field User Groups status as valid.

The following Field User Group applicants made presentations to the Commission:

CYSA

- The MP Strikers FC is a Menlo Park-based competitive soccer organization. It has been in Menlo Park for about seven (7) years.
- The age range for players is 8 to 17 years.
- Out of a total of 298 active players, 195 are Menlo Park residents.
- An average of 25-28 teams utilize Menlo Park fields for training and games year-round.
- Currently, teams are allocated approximately 1/4 to 1/6 of a normal soccer field.
- Currently utilizes the following Menlo Park fields: Lyle, Burgess, and Willow. The Strikers would also like to utilize Kelly Park (perhaps at times to relieve pressure at Burgess and Lyle).
- The club distributed over \$10,000 in scholarship funds in 2010 to assist players who otherwise could not afford to play competitive soccer.

AYSO

- AYSO is a soccer organization/club that is less competitive than CYSA. Its philosophy is "everybody plays."
- Is an established Menlo Park Field User Group.
- Players range in age from under 5 to 19 however most players are concentrated in the younger age groups.
- The club had 1,660 players making up 145 teams this past year. 78% of these players live in Menlo Park. The club expects to have up to 1,700 players in a year or two.
- The club uses City of Menlo Park, Atherton, and Los Lomitas fields. It lost some fields this year due to field improvement projects.
- Practices are held twice a week. Most games are held on Saturdays.
- Coordinates with CYSA to meet mutual field space needs.

Menlo Atherton Adult Soccer League

- The league is for adult women. Players are ages 23 and above. Three players are turning 69 this year. There are currently five (5) teams and a total of 90-100 players.
- The league is a non-profit organization and incorporates all level of play. It has been active in Menlo Park for thirty (30) years.
- In the spring, 27.5% of players were Menlo Park residents; this fall, 22.4% are Menlo Park residents.
- They do not practice, they just play games. Field use alternates between Willow and Burgess. They are very happy with how things are with the City regarding field use.
- In response to a question from the Commission, the speaker indicated that the league would be willing to play late games with lighted fields at Kelly Park.

Association of Futbol

- The Association of Futbol is a new user group. It does not currently play at any City fields.
- There are 17 people in the group, 60% of whom are Menlo Park residents.
- They usually play on Sundays between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

C.D. Jaguars

- The C.D. Jaguars would be a new user group.
- The C.D. Jaguars is a kids' soccer team. The team plans to play teams from other areas/cities.
- 20% of team members are Menlo Park residents. There are ten kids on the team.
- The team only needs City of Menlo Park fields for practice, not games.
- The group was unsure of its specific needs

Menlo Atherton Little League

- M-A Little League (M-A LL) was founded in 1949 and is an existing Menlo Park Field User Group. Players/participants include boys and girls ages 5-16.
- The league serves half of Menlo Park (east of El Camino to 101) and all of Atherton.
- It is board-run and most of the board members are parents of current participants.
- In 2010, 62% of players were from Menlo Park.
- There are several levels of play including T Ball, Machine Pitch, Majors, Jrs/Srs, and Challengers.
- The only eligibility requirements for participants are age and geography. Scholarships are available. Everyone plays; no one is denied a spot on the team.
- M-A LL currently uses City of Menlo Park fields at Burgess, Willow Oaks, and Nealon. Most field use is in the spring. Practices and games are weekly.
- They do utilize school fields but they are not always maintained as well. This can negatively impact player safety.
- Invested in Burgess Park with the following: \$12,000 in 2009 for new infield; \$9,000 in 2010 for perimeter fence, including sun shades for players and spectators; new snack shack vendor provided food option for league families and other park users.

Alpine West Menlo Little League

- The league is an existing Menlo Park Field User Group. It was established in 1958-59 and is a non-profit organization.
- Players/participants include boys and girls. Last year the league had 725 players.
- The league is open to everyone regardless of ability to pay.
- The league currently uses City fields at Nealon Park. The league also uses fields at La Entrada quite heavily and is inquiring about using fields at Sequoia.

Mid-Peninsula Athletic Association

- Mid-Peninsula Athletic Association is a youth football organization based in Menlo Park.
- There are no weight restrictions for players/participants. This allows kids to play who would normally be turned away because they exceed typical weight limits. The association is trying to fight childhood obesity by encouraging bigger kids to get out there, be active, and play.
- There are no tryouts – everyone can play. Registration/enrollment is grade-based.
- The association's first season was fall 2010 with 69 players. There are four levels of play: Starts, Rookies, JV, and Varsity. Approximately 50% of players are Menlo Park residents.
- Games are played against teams from other cities/areas.
- This past season they played at Kelly Park and they would like to play there again. There will be spring and fall seasons.

Ravenswood Youth Athletic Association

- Ravenswood Youth Athletic Association is a non-denominational faith-based organization serving Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood and East Palo Alto.
- The association has soccer, flag football, and wrestling programs. There are 600 kids in the soccer program alone. Of all participants, over 100 are from Belle Haven. At this time, the majority of participants are from East Palo Alto.
- Players/participants range in age from 4 to 18 years.
- The association is an existing City of Menlo Park Field User Group. In the past it has used Kelly Park. It also uses fields at Caesar Chavez School.
- Registration and other fees are kept to a minimum. For kids/families that can't afford to pay the fees, they have a work-to-play program (rather than a scholarship program). Under this program, kids can do things like coach, referee, and help set up, and the time they spend is credited toward their fees. From this, the work-to-play program has grown into something of a youth development program.
- Kelly Park has worked well for the association. There is not enough space at Caesar Chavez. Also, because Kelly Park is in Belle Haven it reduces the transportation challenge that many local kids/families face. The field space at Kelly Park will also help attract more kids from Belle Haven to the association.

Menlo Atherton Youth Lacrosse

- Menlo Atherton Youth Lacrosse is not currently a Field User Group. It requests field space for spring 2011.
- The club is new and will be the first lacrosse club based in Menlo Park/Atherton. Currently, Menlo Park and Atherton residents must go to Palo Alto or Redwood City to play lacrosse (that isn't affiliated with a school). Although Menlo Park and Atherton have a lot of high schools with lacrosse teams, there aren't many clubs for younger kids that feed into these high school teams.
- The club is for both boys and girls.
- For its first year (spring 2011), the club is hoping to have 30 to 40 players. It plans to have two teams: one for kids under age 9 and one for kids under age 11.
- The club needs a field (or fields) that is/are about the same size as a soccer field.
- The club is a parent and volunteer-run organization.

Bulldog Sports and Fitness

- Bulldog Sports and Fitness is a for-profit organization that is owned and operated by Lawrence McNeil. It is not a current Field User Group.
- Bulldog Sports and Fitness is based in Menlo Park and currently serves the Menlo Park area by providing the following services: personal training, fitness classes for children and adults, adult boot camp, flag football classes for kids, and kid's birthday parties.
- Although the City of Menlo Park has contracted with Bulldog Sports and Fitness in the past to provide classes through the City's Recreation Program, Bulldog would now like to become a Field User Group in order to expand its flag football program.
- Coach McNeil said there are no similar flag football programs for youth in Menlo Park.
- Bulldog Sports and Fitness has hosted many children's flag football birthday parties in the Menlo Park area. The number of children who have participated so far is approximately 300. Many of these children and their families have expressed interest in playing flag football on a more regular basis. Bulldog has tried to accommodate this interest but has been unable to secure a dedicated field space.

- Of the approximately 300 kids who would like to play flag football with Bulldog, 80% are Menlo Park residents.
- Ideally, Bulldog would like one field Monday through Friday for young kids to play flag football. They are projecting to have maybe 30 kids a day.

The Commission discussed whether or not it is appropriate for a for-profit organization to become a Valid Field User Group and, if so, how its application for field space should compare to non-profit Field User Groups. Cherise Brandell said that for-profit groups may not get priority over the non-profit user groups. In the case of Bulldog, she explained, the City is already working with them as a potential outside provider of recreational services.

The CYSA rep commented that existing Field User Groups and those whose programs are populated by over 50% Menlo Park residents should get priority over new user groups.

Katrina Whiteaker said there are three applicant Field User Groups that have not submitted complete application information to staff. The three groups are: Menlo Atherton Little League, Mid-Peninsula Athletic Association, and Menlo Atherton Youth Lacrosse. Katrina also identified the new applicant Field User Groups: Association of Futbol, C.D. Jaguars, Menlo Atherton Youth Lacrosse, and Bulldog Sports and Fitness.

In response to questions from the Commission regarding the Valid Field User Group approval process, Katrina explained that once the Commission approves the Valid Field User Groups staff can begin receiving field requests and scheduling field space. Staff explained that through the process this evening the Commission is asked to approve Valid Field User Groups based on the following criteria: existing field user group; complete application information; demonstrated ability to follow field use policies; and is (it) an appropriate and intended use of athletic fields. It will then be up to staff to prioritize field use per specific Valid Field User Group requests and schedule actual field space/time.

Commissioner Naclerio made the motion to consider Bulldog Sports and Fitness separately because it is a for-profit business. There was no second so the motion failed.

Motion/Second (Blythe/Cebrian) to conditionally approve Valid Field User Group status for the following six user groups that are new and/or submitted incomplete application information: Association of Futbol, C.D. Jaguars, Menlo Atherton Little League, Mid-Peninsula Athletic Association, Menlo Atherton Youth Lacrosse, and Bulldog Sports and Fitness; and to approve Valid Field User Group status for the remaining applicant user groups as follows: CYSA, AYSO, Menlo Atherton Adult Soccer League, Alpine West Menlo Little League, and Ravenswood Youth Athletic Association. Motion voted and passed 5-1-0, with Commissioner Naclerio voting against.

2. Project Priorities and Continue Working on Commission Work Plan

City Clerk Margaret Roberts was present for the discussion. Commissioners Breisch and Carlton, members of the Commission's Project Priorities and Work Plan subcommittee, lead the discussion. Commissioner Breisch summarized the Commission's

recommendations thus far, which broadly include improving the infrastructure within the Commission and better communication with user groups and the community at-large.

The Commission discussed its draft priority list, which includes four priorities, as well as wording for a possible fifth priority. The Commission identified these priorities as broad and discussed the idea of forming subcommittees to take on their associated tasks.

The Commission asked staff whether or not it would be possible to provide the Commission with an annual report on cost recovery for Parks and Recreation services. Cherise Brandell said that staff can definitely do this. In response to a question from the Commission, Cherise said information is available that should allow the Commission/staff to identify programs that may be popular but losing money.

Commissioner Naclerio inquired if the Commission and/or the City has ever taken an in-depth look at the services provided to Belle Haven. Staff indicated that a service analysis was conducted last year in Belle Haven and is available to the Commission if desired.

Following a lengthy discussion, the Commission agreed to add a fifth priority addressing the development of policy to guide or determine allocation of use at City pools, gyms, and other facilities in which space/time is a scarce resource. The policy would use the new Field Allocation Policy as a guide.

Margaret Roberts also discussed next steps, including the possible formation of subcommittees after the work plan is approved by Council. The Commission and Margaret Roberts discussed Step 5 of the work plan, which involves prioritizing Commission tasks/priorities by their significance. Margaret Roberts said that all tasks/priorities can be categorized as “urgent” should the Commission wish.

The Commission approved the addition of a fifth priority by consensus. Margaret Roberts will update the work plan accordingly and present the Commission with a final draft at its December meeting.

D. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A written report was distributed.

Public Comment:

Five adults and nine youth spoke in favor of SOLO and requested that SOLO continue to be allowed adequate pool space at Burgess Pool, which under the current contract is operated by service provider Menlo Swim and Sport. Some commented that Menlo Swim and Sport makes it difficult for SOLO to display or provide information at the pool, which they said creates a disadvantage for SOLO Aquatics and its ability to outreach to the community. Erin Glanville, a SOLO parent and volunteer, submitted a letter to the Commission that represents the opinions of 45 SOLO parents. The letter supports the suggestion of a Menlo Aquatics User Group Advisory Board to “promote greater communication and cooperation between the user groups and with the public at large.” The letter also identifies three specific problem areas as perceived by the parents as follows:

- (1) The lack of accessibility of SOLO Aquatics information to the general public.
- (2) A perceived singling out of SOLO as a user group for reduction in lane hours.
- (3) Actions taken with regard to SOLO that appear to be divisive, which undermine community cohesiveness.

In total, the following fourteen (14) people spoke in favor of SOLO Aquatics: Holly Chen, Menlo Park resident; Celia Walker, residency not identified; Thibault Collignon, Palo Alto resident; Sofia Bergmann, Menlo Park resident; Riya Berry, Menlo Park resident; Robin Stewart, Menlo Park resident; Kevin Kogler, residency not identified; Sara Woodham, Palo Alto resident; Kobi Johnsson, Palo Alto resident; Nicole Zanolli, Menlo Park resident; Erin Glanville, Menlo Park resident; Maia Johnsson, Palo Alto resident; Ellie Rubin, residency not identified; and Laura Vaughan, unincorporated Menlo Park.

E. INFORMATION ITEMS – None

F. PUBLIC COMMENT #2 – None.

G. ADJOURNMENT at 10:00 p.m.

Submitted by Megan Nee.