



## **PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES**

**Wednesday, February 16, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.  
701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025  
City Council Chambers**

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**ROLL CALL** – (Chair) K. Blythe, (Vice Chair) K. Breisch, C. Carlton arrived at 7:00pm, J. Cebrian

Not Present – Jim Tooley, Nick Naclerio, Andrew Kirkpatrick

Staff Present – Cherise Brandell, Community Services Director; Karen Mihalek, Recreation Coordinator

Because of the lack of quorum, the meeting started with Item E1.

### **E. INFORMATION ITEMS**

#### **1. Staff presentation on Facilities**

Karen Mihalek, Recreation Coordinator, presented the areas of her program. Karen oversees the outdoor recreational facilities, Belle Haven Pool, Menlo-Atherton Performing Art Center, and coordinates the Community Services Department special events.

- Bedwell Bayfront Park – A former landfill site, Bedwell Bayfront Park was created after the landfill was closed and capped off in the mid-1980s. The City contracts with the California Land Management to employ the park rangers.
- Sharon Park – “the wedding park” is only rented out for weddings, it has picnic areas that could be reserved on first come first serve basis.
- Dog Parks – Nealon and Willow Oaks Park are open for off-leash walks are welcome at Nealon park Monday through Friday from 8am to 10am and at Willow Oaks from 7am to 9 am and 4pm to dusk.
- Skate Park – Popular among youth and highly utilized in the afternoons.
- Picnic areas – Available for reservation 8am to 8 pm at Burgess and Nealon Park on first-come first-serve basis.
- Tennis Courts – Burgess Park, Kelly Park, La Entrada School, Nealon Park, Willow Oaks Park have tennis courts that are open to the public. The keys are sold yearly, from January to January to Menlo Park residents for \$50 and non-residents for \$100.
- M-A PAC - The City currently has 55 days a year for programming the theater. This summer the City is offering a summer camp.
- Special Events – 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Halloween Hoopla, Breakfast with Santa, Egg Hunt, Kite day and Summer Concert Series

Commissioner Breisch suggested discussing the tennis courts in future. The Commission requested to re-visit the dog park questions before the Capital Improvement Plan is approved.

#### **A. PUBLIC COMMENT #1**

Steve Zanolli with Solo Aquatics believes that the pool contract negotiation is not going well. Mr Zanolli stressed the importance of the oversight, and that the Commission must make sure that the City's vision is carried out through the public-private partnership, referring to the contract between the City and Tim Sheeper.

Erin Glanville of Menlo Park believes that the draft contract recommendation is philosophical, without clear definition of the City's role in overseeing the operator's business. Ms Glandville believes that some of the recommendations brought at the special meeting on February 4<sup>th</sup> were not included in the draft.

## **B. CONSENT CALENDAR**

1. Approval of the Minutes dated December 15, 2010 and January 19, 2011.  
**Motion/Second (Blythe/Cebrian) to approve December Minutes with the following corrections:**
  - Item B 1 – “Possibly shortening the length of Commission meetings” was not an accurate statement.
  - Item D 3 – Correction of misspelled name: Kristi Breisch
  - Item D 3 – Coach Tom McRea**Motion carried and unanimously approved.**  
**Motion/Second (Blythe/Cebrian) to approve Minutes dated January 19, 2011.**  
**Motion carried and unanimously approved.**

## **C. REGULAR BUSINESS**

1. Discussion of an annual calendar for Parks and Recreation Commission meetings  
**Motion/Second (Blythe/Breisch) to move the item to March agenda. Motion carried and unanimously approved.**
2. Discussion of start time for Parks and Recreation Commission meetings  
**Motion/Second (Breisch/Blythe) to moved the item to March agenda. Motion carried and unanimously approved.**
3. Discussion on next steps for moving forward with the community process regarding the gender grouping policy  
The commission discussed how to approach the gender grouping policy issue. The main idea was to create a sub-committee.  
**Motion/Second (Cebrian/Carlton) to form a sub-committee that will work with staff on a draft policy change and a suggest community process prior to the March meeting. Motion passed and unanimously approved.**
4. Discussion of status of Aquatics Contract process  
On Feb 15 the report was presented to the Menlo Park City Council and public comment was taken. Council provided feedback that will be incorporated in the agreement and the staff is content they will be able to close the agreement in March.

## **D. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. Aquatics Contract Negotiations  
Cherise Brandell, Community Services Director, did not agree with some of the comments from the public, as all of the recommendations were presented to the City Council. Cherise believes that the negotiation between the City and Tim Sheepar is going well and that a lot of flexibility, in terms of swim lane usage, was presented to Solo.

Commissioner Breisch feels that the City Council did not discuss the pool item deeply enough at their meeting on February 15. Kristi Breisch suggested that a commission member should represent the commission on City Council meetings She requested to see the five recommendations that were presented by the staff. Breisch spoke also

about the oversight and stressed that the City staff should have more power in it. She expressed her concern over the inconsistency in Tim Sheeper's statements regarding the water polo team being transferred to the Belle Haven neighborhood. In an overall resume of the process, Kristy Breisch pointed out questions that remain unanswered, for example: what could have the commission done to make the process better? Kristi Breisch also mentioned that the lane usage and the contract term need to be clarified.

Kelly Blythe pointed out that the City is on track to reaching the agreement with the pool operator, but disappointed with the process because there was no third bid to stand as a data point. Mr Blythe added that allowing the City to take charge of some programming would take the control of the issue with lane scheduling.

James Cebrian said that the City will save money by contracting out the poll. Mr Cebrian added that the City can direct Tim Sheeper, but he shouldn't be handcuffed from running the pool. Mr Cebrian is in support of creation of the oversight board. The sub-committee should have done a better job on informing every one of the process.

Catherine Carlton mentioned that the 5 recommendations should be re-presented to the City Council and emphasize what the commission wishes to accomplish. Ms Carlton would like the staff to come up with best practice for the future experience. Commissioner Carlton pointed out that a sub-committee should walk the commission through the steps of their decision making process in all future assignments.

Kelly Blythe presented the idea that a commission member represents the commission opinion in the Council meeting in March.

**Motion/ Second (Breisch/Cebrian) that Parks and Recreation Commission allow Kelly Blythe to speak at the City Council meeting to present the five recommendations created at the special meeting; to represent the commission's general opinion and answer any questions on behalf of the commission.**

2. Burgess Recreation Center Renovation  
The renovation is fully underway and looks amazing. The overall design allows an addition of 9000square feet and all of the upgrades will make the recreational program to function closer to full recovery. The most exciting thing was discovering a beautiful wooden beam within the ceiling structure and it will be kept in the lobby. The downturn was that the department needed to cancel around 20% of recreational classes. The staff were hoping to move back in the building by April 1<sup>st</sup>.
3. Kelly Park Renovation  
The project is on schedule. The turf is installed and the staff is going on training on how to maintain the artificial turf. The tennis court resurfacing will be delayed because of weather and may not be installed by April or May. At least 7 sunny days when we need are needed to lay out the surface. The Kelly park soccer field is completely booked. The opening ceremony will follow after laying the track surface.
4. Gymnastics Center Reconstruction  
The project will start after the Recreation Center renovation in early April.

## **E. INFORMATION ITEMS**

2. Commission Member Reports  
Commissioner Kristi Breisch spoke about an email that was circulated the week before meeting regarding the Flood Park. The email was not disclosed at this meeting. Cherise responded that the City staff is working on a response and mentioned that the Public

Works department estimated the cost of \$250000 annually to maintain the Flood Park, if annexed to the City of Menlo Park.

**F. PUBLIC COMMENT #2**

No public comment.

**G. ADJOURNMENT – the meeting adjourned at 8:21pm.**