



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Parks and Recreation Commission



Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 3, 2014

Chair Merrilees called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Cooney, Merrilees (Chair), Enriquez (Vice Chair), Okelo, Pincus

Commissioners Absent: Ruehl (Youth Commissioner)

Staff: Finley, Bennett, Hallett, Lombardi, Arechiga, Herzberg, Schoof, Harris

Oral Communications

Mr. Michael Infusino, Peninsula Disc Golf Club, provided the Commission an update of his activities since speaking before the Commission under Oral Communications at the February 6 meeting. He said he and other Disc Golf Club volunteers were working with the community and had introduced the sport to local school physical education classes. He requested to have the Club's proposed plans on a Commission agenda for consideration. He said he would be ready for the June Commission meeting.

Agenda Amendments

There were none.

Consideration of Minutes

Commission Action: M/S Cooney/Enriquez to approve the minutes for the regular meeting of February 6, 2014 as presented.

Motion carried 4-0 with Commissioner Pincus abstaining.

Director's Report

Director Finley introduced Parks Natural Resource Manager Ramona Arechiga to the Commission and announced that Superintendent Lockman had retired. She said his position would be filled with a Management Analyst III classification with budget and office administration skills and experience. She presented several slides of Parks' activity highlights including the Devil's Slide opening celebration, Friendship Park playground installation, Upper Barn re-roof and renovation at Folger Stable, and Moss Beach playground. She announced Take A Hike first season hike at San Bruno

Mountain State and County Park, replanting of ferns at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, and the reporting of the Parks' annual performance reports.

Action Items

Review and Approve Proposed Plans for the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve Parking Lot

Park Superintendent Lombardi said the proposed parking lot project at the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve has been in process for two years and its primary goal was to meet stormwater compliance related to runoff from the parking lot and to meet American with Disabilities (ADA) accessibility requirements. He said the plan had been greatly reduced since the original proposal. He reviewed the features of the proposal including the stormwater settling pond outside the 50-foot riparian buffer zone of San Vicente Creek and an ADA compliant asphalt path on the west side of California Street linking to the California Coastal Trail.

Commissioner Okelo asked if there were any unresolved issues related to the request for a Coastal Development Permit. Superintendent Lombardi said that he believed everything had been addressed noting staff had been working with County Planning staff prior to this reiteration of the project proposal.

Commissioner Pincus confirmed with staff that this preferred project alternative proposal took into consideration all former discussions and actions on the project proposal consideration. In addition, Superintendent Lombard noted it was a vastly scaled back project and provided an opportunity for education about stormwater compliance.

Chair Merrilees said the plan seemed to be much the same as the existing parking lot and asked if there had been an idea to allocate bus parking differently. Superintendent Lombardi said at one point there had been a proposal to move the bus parking behind the dumpsters and closer to the restroom but that was determined to present an impact to the riparian buffer zone. Chair Merrilees confirmed with staff that existing asphalt would be slurry sealed and parking restriped.

Public Comment: Ms. Mary Larenas, Moss Beach resident, said her concerns with the proposed project related to the riparian corridor as there had been a previous plan for bus parking near that area. She said living nearby for 25 years that she and other neighbors have seen vehicles parked in southwest area near the stream in unpaved areas and creeping more and more into riparian corridor. She asked what was being done to bring that area back from the stream to where the riparian corridor should be. She asked if buses would be allowed to park along North Lake Street, along the willows and outside the parking lot area. She expressed appreciation for creating more ADA compliant parking spaces. She said the proposed parking lot improvements would in no way mitigate traffic. She requested more ADA compliant parking spaces noting the parking lot only minimally supplied parking for the Reserve and that overflow parking was along neighborhood streets, which was not reasonable for disabled visitors.

Superintendent Lombardi said bus parking would remain where it was currently. He said staff has consistently made obstacles to prevent vehicular parking along the willows area and were continuing to consider what would prevent vehicular parking

there. He noted there would be a San Vicente Creek restoration project. Natural Resource Manager Arechiga noted that staff could look at potentially including a bio-swale as part of the Creek restoration project but that was not currently included noting there was considerable vegetation in the riparian buffer zone and observing that runoff from dirt areas was not of same impact as that from paved areas.

Commission Comment: Commissioner Okelo asked in reference to Ms. Larenas' request for additional ADA parking if that was possible and if there was a way of monitoring visitor use.

Superintendent Lombardi said that there was one ADA parking space next to the pathway. He said they had two proposed ADA parking spaces at one point until the creation of ponding area. He said with the slope of the parking area it was very difficult to get the cross slope to meet the ADA requirement for the parking spaces. He said visitor use is monitored daily noting rangers make car counts and include numbers of visitors through reserved tours. He said this count was more difficult on weekends due to people parking on streets. He said on weekends the rangers do a general count of visitors on the bluff and visitors on the beach. Commissioner Okelo asked if the Commission could get those numbers.

Recognized by the Chair, Mr. Chris Boyle, DES Architects and Engineers, said accessible parking spaces by code cannot be any steeper than 2% in any direction. He said the current parking lot has a slope of 5-7%. He said for any accessible parking space there also has to be an accessible unloading space which has grade difficulties in achieving the code compliance. He said there is one existing ADA parking space and the proposed plan would create another two ADA parking spaces.

Chair Merrilees noted the long period of time related to the development of the proposed parking lot improvement project and suggested it would be good to get this pared down version accomplished while recognizing that more parking was desirable. He said some people have identified the north end of the Half Moon Bay Airport as an area where parking might be provided in the future. He said if that did occur then potentially grading could be done at the Reserve parking lot to accommodate more ADA parking spaces in a future project iteration.

Commissioner Cooney said he concurred with the Chair's comments, noting the proposed plan was quite good considering the site restraints. He said he supported approving the proposed project.

Responding to questions from Commissioner Pincus, Superintendent Lombardi said the project was scheduled before the County Planning Commission on May 14, 2014 and if approved the project would go out to bid with an expectation of the work being done by fall of this year.

Commission Action: M/S Pincus/Enriquez to approve the proposed plan for the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve parking lot.

Motion carried 5-0 with Youth Commissioner Ruehl absent.

Review and Adopt San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Commission Bylaws

Commissioner Pincus asked how this would impact terms of service for the Chair and Vice Chair. Commission Secretary Bennett said currently the officer term was February to February and this proposal would change the terms to December to December, which was more customary with boards and commissions.

Commissioner Cooney questioned the requirement: All Commissioners must attend all Commission meetings. Through general discussion, it was suggested that "shall" replace "must" and after "meetings" add "unless excused."

Chair Merrilees questioned Article 3, A. and the use of the phrase "shall adopt." Commission consensus was to verify ordinance language with County Counsel.

Commissioner Okelo suggested that "must" attend meetings should be kept as that should be the expectation for someone appointed as a Commissioner.

In response to a question from Chair Merrilees, staff indicated the document might be revised in Article 3 if needed to be consistent with County Ordinance regarding the duties and responsibilities of the Commission and in Article 4, 2nd paragraph to add "unless excused" after "All Commissioners must attend all Commission meetings."

Commission Action: M/S Cooney/Pincus to adopt the bylaws with the revisions as stated to Article 3 and Article 4 contingent upon County Counsel review.

Motion carried 5-0 with Youth Commissioner Ruehl absent.

Review and Adopt a Resolution Establishing a Meeting Schedule and Procedural Rules for Conducting the Business of the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Commission

The Commission discussed the meeting time and schedule as stipulated in the proposed resolution. There was consensus to expand the language to allow for meetings on odd-numbered months as needed.

Commission Action: M/S Pincus/Cooney to adopt Resolution 2014-01 with modification to add language allowing for the Commission to meet on odd-numbered months as needed.

Motion carried 5-0 with Youth Commissioner Ruehl absent.

Review and Approve Recommendations Related to Mini and Pocket Parks

Director Finley said upon her arrival as Director of San Mateo County Parks there had been a flurry of acquisition of smaller park playgrounds, including Friendship Park and Moss Beach playground. She said since then other communities in unincorporated areas had come forward requesting that County Parks replace playground equipment and maintain small parks in their communities. She said some of them have been

managed by homeowners' associations and others managed by neighbors. She said this caused her to consider what existing County policy was regarding the role of County Parks. She said her report reviewed documents relative to that including the General Management Plan for the County, the Midcoast Action Plan for Parks and Recreation, and the San Mateo County Parks Strategic Plan. She said information on the National Recreation and Parks Association's definitions for parks was included in the Commission's packets. She noted on page 3 of her report that current San Mateo County policies on size, location and purpose of County Parks was: "The County park and recreation system is presently oriented toward the preservation of natural areas because the majority of facilities are rural in nature, offering mostly low intensity types of activities. The system, however, in seeking to provide a balance group of facilities, does feature some sites for more activity types of recreation, such as Coyote Point Recreation Area."

Director Finley said typically small and mini-parks were more expensive to operate and maintain as they have facilities that wear out and have to be replaced and more frequent maintenance for trash and other waste. She said the opening and closing of park gates also had to be considered. She said she provided a partial list of existing and proposed neighborhood parks. She said her suggestion was that a possible role for County Parks might be to help in securing grants and outside funding for playground structures and ball fields but that the areas would be operated and maintained by local communities, whether a school, special service district, or homeowner's association. She said also to be very clear about the costs involved in accepting these types of parks within the County system. She said if neighborhood parks become part of County Parks portfolio that the General Plan be amended to have a solid policy foundation for that type of management. She said also any neighborhood parks should be phased in to give County Parks an opportunity to assess the department's ability to operate them and that included visitor satisfaction.

Commissioner Okelo said he expected County Counsel to be at this meeting at least regarding the bylaws and noted he had questions. He said the County has municipal authority over unincorporated areas and was expected to provide services. He said his question was what the County's responsibility for providing services was and what those services were to the unincorporated areas. He said he also needed a description of the unincorporated areas and their demographics. He said most cities have a standard of how much park space to provide to their residents. He said typically it was three or nine acres per 1,000 people. He said he would like to know what the County's standard was as that would determine how much space the County was legally obligated, if it was obligated, to provide.

Director Finley said she found no policy on acreage per population and found no policy on County Parks' responsibility for unincorporated areas though there were references in the back of the Midcoast Action Plan that were typical parks and recreation standards of number of acres per thousands of population but nothing legally adopted by the County in our records.

Commissioner Cooney said in his experience each area has different services provided by a number of arrangements.

Chair Merrilees said that he did not think a standard would fit all unincorporated areas noting the diffuse population of the midcoast on one hand and the thousands of visitors to the area on the other hand. He said much of the parks land on the midcoast was regional serving with few local parks and playgrounds for residents. He said the Director's report on this topic made sense. He said the County should look at costs and where there was the greatest need. He said he thought the County thus far has done a great job providing park lands to unincorporated areas. He said he thought that these smaller parks would need to be considered on an individual basis.

Commissioner Pincus asked regarding recommendation 2) whether there was an expectation of reimbursement for the improvements by the local community that would subsequently operate and maintain the facility. Director Finley said that there was a risk management requirement for a certain level of maintenance for any County Park but she would like to see agreements developed with community associations sharing the responsibilities.

Commissioner Pincus asked if the County paid for the preparation work for the playground installation at Friendship Park. Director Finley said she did not think Parks would have to do that but they did, noting that Parks was not brought in early on, and found they needed to help at the last minute as there were things the community groups just could not do. Commissioner Pincus asked if there would be reimbursement from the community. Director Finley said it was really difficult to get reimbursement unless there was an agreement in advance or a reimbursable grant. She said staff were able to do this but with other groups now requesting similar assistance that was beyond the Department's capacity.

Commissioner Pincus said he did not recall anything about Friendship Park coming before the Commission and he was frequently surprised by a number of activities that occur that should have considered by the Commission but weren't and he found that objectionable. Director Finley said she agreed and that was why she had brought this report to the Commission for consideration. She said she wanted to bring such big things to the Commission to review and provide advice and recommendations to take to the Board of Supervisors.

Commissioner Okelo said the report indicates the demand for mini- and neighborhood parks was continuing to grow and County Parks had to prepare itself to deal with the demands. He suggested holding off on any action until getting an answer as to what the County's legal responsibility was in the provision of services to the unincorporated San Mateo County and whether County was legally required to provide parks and recreation services in unincorporated areas.

Commissioner Cooney said that unincorporated areas have chosen to not be incorporated into a municipality and he did not think taxpayers in incorporated areas owed anything to those residents.

Commissioner Pincus said that all residents can vote for the members of the Board of Supervisors and that was where he saw the involvement of supervisors in meeting the needs of residents in unincorporated and incorporated areas.

Public Comment: Ms. Laura Caplan said she was a resident of North Fair Oaks, which was the largest unincorporated area of the County with high density, and there was not a lot of room for parks. She said she was a member of the North Fair Oaks Council, an advisory council to the Board of Supervisors and the Fair Oaks Beautification Association (FOBA), which had built and maintained a neighborhood park for the past 15 years. She said she was also on the Parks Workgroup that was established under the North Fair Oaks Community Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors, which had some identified lands potentially viable for neighborhood parks. She said she agreed with the basic concepts of the staff report. She noted that the County's resources and stability were needed for long term maintenance of neighborhood parks. She said with a core dedicated group of local volunteers that cost should not be very high for the County. She said their group spends about \$6,000 per year for basic needs for the playground related to insurance, water, and upkeep. She said that FOBA would be a good resource for the Commission.

Commission Comment: Chair Merrilees suggested that this might be a good topic for a Commission subcommittee and to convey that to the Board of Supervisors.

Commission Action: M/S Okelo/Enriquez to not take action on this item until after a subcommittee of the Commission work with staff and community members to develop an action plan and to inform the Board of Supervisors at some point on what the action plan was for neighborhood, mini-and pocket parks in unincorporated areas of the County.

Motion carried 4-1 with Commissioner Pincus opposing and Youth Commissioner Ruehl absent.

Commissioner Pincus said he did not think action on the Director's recommendations should be postponed.

Commissioner Cooney moved that Chair Merrilees and Commissioner Okelo had the interest and requisite knowledge for this proposed subcommittee. Chair Merrilees noted that he was involved with Moss Beach playground and would continue to be in the future. Commissioner Enriquez seconded the motion.

Commission Action: M/S Cooney/Enriquez for Commissioners Merrilees and Okelo to serve on the neighborhood, mini- and pocket parks for unincorporated San Mateo County committee.

Motion carried 5-0 with Youth Commissioner Ruehl not in attendance.

Director Finley asked if the Commission could include Ms. Caplan, the public speaker on this item, in the subcommittee.

Chair Merrilees said that would be great. He also requested that a Parks staff person meet with the subcommittee as well.

Ms. Caplan said she was happy to serve and noted there were others on the Parks Workgroup for the North Fair Oaks unincorporated area they might want to involve.

Commissioner Enriquez left the meeting at 6 p.m. due to another commitment.

Review and Approve Recommendation to Amend the County Parks Scientific Permit Process

Natural Resource Manager Arechiga said there has been some confusion about County Parks scientific permit process, noting part of that was inconsistency in the name of the permits. She said the current ordinance refers to the collection of vegetation or materials. She said historical materials from 1998 indicate they were intended to be collection permits. She said the Parks' website indicates scientific collection permits but those were applied both to collection and observational research. She said additionally they have been applied to access issues. She said her recommendations highlight an opportunity to build collaboration, create a clearer process, and outline opportunities for the County to get important data to manage resources. She reviewed the current process and proposed process for the Commission.

Commissioner Cooney said he supported the recommended changes.

Responding to questions from Commissioner Okelo, Ms. Arechiga said she was proposing tightening the language to bring it into alignment with California State Parks and established processes that other land agencies currently have. She said additionally it would be removal of an arbitrary fee imposition for strictly observational research and providing that access where it benefited Parks' mission and further staff's abilities to manage the resources. She said she could present application materials and a modified fee proposal to the Commission at its June meeting.

Chair Merrilees noted the state has a take fee and asked what the County's take fee covered. Ms. Arechiga said that was to make sure all of the documents were in order.

Commissioner Pincus asked if the \$75 fee was the same as the current fee being applied. Ms. Arechiga said that was correct and that had been applied to Scientific Collection Permits and Scientific Observational Permits similarly but now as recommended would apply to Scientific Collection Permits. Commissioner Pincus said the fee as indicated would be applied for staff time between two and four hours, which equaled about \$25 per hour, and asked if that was full cost recovery for staff time. Ms. Arechiga said she would review the materials and did not think that would be full cost recovery and welcomed recommendations. She noted other agencies fees for this range from \$35 to \$50 but these amounts were considered by those agencies to not be a sufficient fee. She said the value of the benefits for County Parks of the data collected should also be considered.

Public Comment: Mr. Tom Ciotti, President of the Friends of the Fitzgerald Marine Preserve, said for the record that he lives in unincorporated San Mateo County and he was glad someone was looking out for him, but that he was not volunteering for the subcommittee. He said there was no legal basis to require observational materials be provided to the County. He said at the Reserve the State has jurisdiction for below the high tide line and that the County has required permits for intertidal work. He said that issue went to the San Mateo County MPA and a decision was made there that only State Fish and Wildlife (F&W) has permission to grant a scientific collection permits for the intertidal area. He said what staff was proposing did not apply to the intertidal area of the Reserve. He questioned the requirement to post \$1,000,000 in insurance with the County named as an additional insured for these permits, and that was imposed on experts but not the general public.

Ms. Arechiga said she was researching that requirement. Mr. Lombardi said this insurance requirement was also applied to special events held in the parks and of contractors coming into the parks to do any kind of work.

Director Finley said they should look at dropping the fee for observational permits and look into the insurance.

Commission Action: M/S Cooney/Okelo to accept staff's recommendations, and continue reviewing insurance requirements.

Motion carried 4-0 with Youth Commissioner Ruehl not in attendance.

Consideration of June Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Location

Director Finley suggested the Carriage House as the location of the June Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

Commission Action: M/S Cooney/Pincus to host the June Parks and Recreation Commission meeting in the Carriage House as Wunderlich Park.

Motion carried 3-1 with Commissioner Okelo opposing and Commissioner Enriquez and Youth Commissioner Ruehl not in attendance.

Commissioner Okelo said his concern was the public would not be aware of the change in location. Ms. Bennett reviewed the public notification process for the Parks and Recreation Commission meetings and that the Commission has met numerous times in other locations without any impacts to the public's abilities to attend the meeting.

Commissioner Okelo said he would change his vote to support.

Motion carried 5-0 with Youth Commissioner Ruehl not in attendance.

Reports

Harbormaster's Report

Harbormaster Hallet reported that Dock 29 was expected to be completed by the end of the month.

Commissioner Okelo asked if costs were recovered for rescue efforts. Harbormaster Hallett answered in the negative noting in this instance it was staff time. He noted that they were acting on a good Samaritan model when they did rescues and if they were going to do rescues commercially that would increase the liability significantly.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Lombardi said he had no additions to his report.

Natural Resources Management

NR Manager Arechiga said she had no additions to her written report.

Commissioner Okelo asked about dog policy. Ms. Arechiga said there was a County policy prohibiting dogs in County Parks and staff was reviewing park and dog policies domestically and internationally.

Superintendent Lombardi said there are certain County Parks in which dogs on leash were allowed: Bay Trail at Coyote Point Recreation Area, Pillar Point Bluff, Quarry Park, Coastal Trail, the Dardanelle Trail at the Reserve, and Devil's Slide Trail. He said in other park areas here people gather for picnicing, hiking, or camping, dog policy would be looked at within the contexts of health and safety.

Parks and Recreation Foundation

There was no report.

Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Pincus said he would prefer to receive minutes of Parks Commission meetings within two to three weeks of the meeting rather than in the packet for the next meeting. He said the parking along Highway 35 for the southern end of Crystal Springs Trail on the right had a large culvert that caused parking alignment and safety issues. He asked if they could ask whoever was responsible for that roadway to look into some solution. He said the Devil's Slide Trail was very successful but the parking was limited. He said something needed to be done to advise people where to park if the lots were full or what to do to access the Trail.

Commissioner Okelo said a person he knows was stung by a bee or wasp at Wunderlich Park and asked about a phone number or person to report such things.

Superintendent Lombardi said persons who were stung if they did not know their medical history should contact 911 which would alert County Control to contact ranger staff. He said if they want to make a report to the main phone number or the park itself. He said the brochures at every park kiosk and signage usually has a number posted. He said staff wants to know about such incidents as staff want to eradicate stinging

insect nests noting they were not a good combination with horses. He said staff would also look at the signage.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.