

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

City of Oakland

Wednesday, February 9, 2011 4:30 P.M.

Lakeside Garden, 666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA



CITY of OAKLAND  
OFFICE of PARKS & RECREATION

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER:

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission was held on Wednesday, February 9, 2011 at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland. Co-Chair, Commissioner Montauk, convened the meeting at 4:34 p.m. Audree V. Jones-Taylor, OPR Director, conducted the roll call.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Judy Belcher, Michael Hammock, Barry Miller, Susan Montauk, Brad Ricards, Jeffrey Taylor, Calvin Wong, Ellen Wu,

Excused: Osagie Enabulele

Absent: Benjamin Scott

Staff Present: Audree V. Jones-Taylor, Gail McMillon, Dana Riley, Diane Boyd, Stephanie Benavidez

Guests: Scott Oliver

3. DISPOSITION OF MINUTES:

**MOTION:** Commissioner Montauk, Co-Chair, entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes.  
**Moved by:** Commissioner Miller, **Seconded by:** Commissioner Hammock, **Motion: Approved.**

B. Retreat Minutes of January 22, 2011

**MOTION:** Commissioner Montauk, Co-Chair, entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes.  
**Moved by:** Commissioner Ricards, **Seconded by:** Commissioner Hammock, **Motion: Approved.**

4. SPECIAL ORDERS:

None

5. PRAC PENDING LIST:

A. Commissioner Report Update, Commissioner Taylor:  
Pending

6. MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA:

None.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Request for Permission for the Installation of Permanent Storm Drain markers and Temporary Watershed Interpretive Signage at Lake Merritt:

Stephanie Benavidez, OPR Supervising Naturalist presented the staff report. Requested permission for installation of permanent storm drain markers and temporary watershed interpretive signage on Lake Merritt in November. Open Proposal Program artist, Scott Oliver, is seeking the Park and Recreation Commissions permission to install. Temporary signs would be put in place for a period one year. Drawings of designs, location and maps have been provided. Naturalist staff, Storm Water and Watershed Management staff will work with the artist to develop appropriate language for the

temporary interpretive signs. Funds from the Open Proposal Program were released in November 2010. There will be no fiscal impact to the Office of Parks and Recreation. The grant funding is for the design, fabrication and installation of the signs and markers as well as the removal of the temporary signs. Temporary signs will be placed for a period of one year. Commissioner Mathis asked if the signs block pathways or walk ways. According to Stephanie Benavidez, they do not. Commissioner Mathis sited an issue with having black and white copies of a color rendering and suggested that it would be better for the Commission to better evaluate future submission if done in color. Responding to Commissioner Ricards inquiry regarding the temporary nature of the signs, staff noted that they are being designed in such a way that the City can replace content as needed. Dana Riley reminded the Commission that the project was listed as temporary to meet PRAC requirement that it not be permanent because there was no funding for it forever. The five year maintenance funding takes it thru the temporary life of the sign and then any ongoing maintenance after that would be up to the City to fund, possibly thru Measure DD or the signs could be removed.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Taylor entertained a motion that the installation of permanent storm drain markers and temporary watershed interpretive signage at Lake Merritt be approved.

**Moved by:** Commissioner Montauk; **Seconded by:** Commissioner Hammock; **Motion Passed.**

**B. Request Approval for Permission Collect On-Site Registration/Donation Fees for the Rhodes Race to Benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society at Lakeside Park on Sunday, April 3, 2011**

Gail McMillon, OPR staff presented request received from Ms. Claire Blaney, seeking approval for permission to collect on-site registration/donation fees for the Rhodes Race 5K Walk/Run to benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma society (LLS) at Lakeside Park on Sunday, April 3, 2011. This is Ms. Blaney's year third year hosting the Rhodes Race at Lakeside Park. She came before the Commission 2 years in a row. \$350.00 was collected in 2010. A post event report was provided and no changes were noted for this year's event. Commissioner Montauk noticed the difference between the two applications being presented for approval. Gail McMillon clarified that non-profit organizations have to apply for a charitable solicitation permit, were individuals do not. Commissioner Mathis sited San Francisco's issue regarding runner fatigue and asked what emergency contingencies are in place for these events. Event organizers will be contacted to that effect and asked to present provide their plan. Walk-a-thon event organizers are required to provide insurance and the City of Oakland is included as an additionally insured entity.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Montauk entertained a motion that the on-site registration/donation fees for the Rhodes Race at Lakeside Park on April 3, 2011 be approved. **Moved by:** Commissioner Wu. **Seconded by:** Commissioner Miller; **Motion Passed.**

**C. Request Approval for Permission to Collect On-site Registration Donation Fees for the Running Is My High Fun Race at Lakeside Park on March 12, 2011.**

Gail McMillon, OPR staff presented request received from the Native American Health Center. This is their fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) year hosting Running is My High at Lakeside Park. The fees collected will be used to support the event and to purchase t-shirts to provide scholarships. In 2010 event organizers collected \$2,000.00 on-site. Commissioner Montauk requested that additional recycling bins made available. Upon reviewing the post report it was noted that they were not provided in 2010. Gail McMillon will work with the Public Works Department and Waste Management to ensure that there are additional bins provided. The issue of parking was also raised and can be made available at the weekend rate of \$5.00. A photocopy of each applicant's driver's license was noted and will be redacted.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Montauk entertained a motion for approval to the request to collect on-site registration fees for Running Is My High.

**Moved by:** Commissioner Wu. **Seconded by:** Commissioner Hammock; **Motion Passed.**

**D. An Informational Report on the condition of the City's Parks: Prepared and presented by Commissioner Susan Montauk.**

The Oakland Parks Coalition does a yearly survey and gathers information on the survey on the conditions of parks and some medians and writes a report. Copies of the report submitted to City Council were made available to the Commission. There was a Power Point presentation at the Public Works Committee on January 11. The survey of the City's parks was made in September and on October 2, 2010, by a group of about 35 volunteers. The results show the condition of parks have somewhat declined. Oakland was ranked by the Trust for Public Land as the American city with the highest density of park acres to every 1000 residents. Staffing for maintenance for the parkland has decreased by half since records keeping began in 1968-69. There were 176 full-time employees and now there are 88.2 FTE's. When the City's revenues declined in 2008-2009, City Council cut the budget for park maintenance by 21% from 116 to 90.9 FTE's. It was cut again by 3% in 2009-2010 to 88.2. This year OPC surveyed 98 parks. There are 130 parks, so all were not surveyed, but, plazas and medians were for a total of 117 areas. There are nine categories on the survey; litter, picnic areas, restrooms, park scape furniture and signage, drainage and irrigation, greenery, recreation centers (exterior only) outdoor sports areas, children's play areas and a park overall rating. The interior of the recreation centers are not surveyed because they are often locked. The surveyors rate each question 1 to 4, 1 being the best score and then there is an overall rating for the park at the end. This year the overall rating for all districts was 2.18 which fall into the satisfactory category. The district with the best score was district 6 and the district that had the most problems was district 7. District 7 is the area where the parks have the most problems most likely due to fewer volunteers. Recreation Center exteriors got the best scores all three years. For the prior two years restrooms got the lowest scores due to their closures. Greenery got the highest score. It requires constant maintenance. In District 4 most of the trash receptacles are rarely used. The consistent problem with the trash receptacles is that they are cardboard and are susceptible being tipped over or blown over windy weather. With staffing cuts about two thirds of the parks were designated as "No Routine Maintenance Parks. Signs were posted in those parks and the trash receptacles were removed. Fallen branches and dead grass was reported at several sites. Irrigation equipment is a general problem throughout the park system due to break down and repair costs. Splintering and breaking bleachers and decaying basketball courts were observed. Aluminum bleachers are being substituted when replacements are made. Commissioner Mathis noted his concern regarding lead paint and wooden bleachers. Commissioner Montauk will make inquiries into the issue. Water fountains are reported to be plugged and not draining. Children's play areas are reported to have missing or broken slides and ladders and rubber surfaces full of holes. Restrooms were reported to be closed on weekends. Some found open had no paper products.

Survey Conclusions: Conditions are on the decline, but, the park system is still intact. The signs placed in park where maintenance has been discontinued read partially as follows: *"This park will receive little maintenance due to a shortage of funding. We need your help to keep this park clean, etc."* Further information is given on how to volunteer. Public Works is responding to complaints. Calls or complaints placed at the call center are followed up by a site visit. The biggest problem mentioned are the worn playing surfaces for the kids, broken furniture, water fountains and irrigation equipment. Some of these may present dangers to user. There is a need to find resources to fix these problems. It may mean that at some point Public Works may have to think about revisiting its policy of keeping all of its parks open. Examples are given of park volunteers efforts to maintain local parks. At Dover/Martin Luther King in District 1, volunteers built a community garden where they weed regularly, open, close and patrol the park. In District 3 St. Andrews Plaza, the San Pablo Corridor group survey West Oakland because they want to get to know the area and adopt a park. They adopted St Andrews Plaza at 32<sup>nd</sup> and San Pablo where there is a high homeless population. Every two weeks they engage the locals to participate in clean-up efforts. Individuals, groups and business districts are engaging in activities to keep their parks and their medians clean. It was suggested the Business Districts need assistance making it easier for them to do the work, because they encounter labor problems with the City when they want to pay for services. Last year, OPC made a recommendation that a position for parks coordinator be created for volunteers which was subsequently approved. However, the City Charter has language that says entities cannot hire people to give services for jobs the City is already providing services for. The Public Works Agency is forming a committee to try to

see if there is some language they can insert or amend or see if there is something in the City Charter's language that allows business districts to pay for park maintenance. At the annual OPC meeting on January 26, five new stewards were signed up and two people expressed interest in joining the board. Commissioner Montauk concluded her presentation and entertained questions from Commission members. Commissioner Mathis inquired about the services of a statistician and suggested that a professional dealing with data analysis would be privy to systems and variables errors and further sited that surveyor's method of collecting or grading information could be problematic. Commissioner Montauk reminded the Commission that this was not a scientific survey and that they were trying to plan for a more scientific one in the future. Commissioner Miller agreed with Commissioner Mathis and thanked Commissioner Montauk for the report and asked what happens if Redevelopment Agency funds are cut. According to Madame Director, the Redevelopment Agency pays for parks projects. Commissioner Montauk noted that there will be a ballot measure coming up that will be more in line with what the mayor thinks citizens might be willing to pay. So there will be that and another parcel tax. Regarding park stewards, they have to sign-up and make a pledge to OPC. The new coordinator position will help make adopt-a-park a more active program. In addition to using OPC members to conduct surveys, Commissioner Ricards suggested that a duty of the new position would be to look at a broader pool of volunteers and volunteer organizations to support. Commissioner Montauk concurred and added that this was a request of Councilmember Schaaf. Commissioner Ricards raised the possibility of giving volunteers weed-whackers to perform their duties. Commissioners Taylor and Hammock repeated that this is a city job function and distribution of such equipment was not allowed. Commissioner Montauk noted that it is official City of Oakland policy to decline a volunteers request to use a power tool and added that volunteers use power tools in spite of the City's policy. Commissioner Ricards suggested that when an organization leases OPR property that maintenance of the grounds be made part of the agreement. Commissioner Hammock asked if the surveys were conducted on Saturday mornings. According to Commissioner Montauk, some surveys were made on Saturdays and others were made throughout the month of September. Commissioner Hammock suggested that the surveyor's observation of trash at park sites coincide with park attendance on Fridays and Saturday mornings. He further suggested that rain could be a factor in the lack of lawn maintenance and surveyors observations. Commissioner Ricards suggested shifting staff work schedules or extending the week to include Saturdays. Commissioners Taylor and Hammock sited this to be an overtime issue. Commissioner Montauk suggested that this issue be presented to another agency for consideration. Commissioner Wong requested that Brook Levin come to a meeting of the PRAC to discuss her strategy and the responsibilities of the coordinator position. Commissioner Montauk will follow-up. Regarding disapproving capital improvements projects from City Council, Commissioner Montauk suggested Commissioner speak with Council in their district. Commissioner Mathis recommended that an emphasis be places on the dangers of holes in some sports fields and the possibility of broken legs. Commissioner Montauk announced the conclusion of her report and that she would be leaving early. The meeting was turned over to Commissioner Hammock.

8. **COMMUNICATIONS:**

Commissioner Wong requests that minutes, administrative policies and other items adopted by the Commission be typed up and memorialized in a binder for future reference. As an example, he sites Commissioner Mathis' request that as necessary, color copies of renderings or photos be submitted. Madam Director noted the request.

9. **PRAC COMMITTEE REPORT:**

Recreation Advisory Council Manual

Commissioner Miller reported on the status of the Advisory Council's Manual presented at the January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 retreat. Comments made by Commissioner's Ricards and Mathis were incorporated along with staff work and then review for continuity and sent back to OPR on Monday. The manual will come back to the Commission for approval at the next meeting. Madam Director announced it will be on the upcoming agenda.

10. ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORTS:

Commissioner Ricards Noted the emerging Hispanic population near Ire Jenkins and the existing communications difficulty with the center's directors. It was suggested that skills development is needed and that staff be moved as necessary to address the new population trend. Madam Director acknowledged the issue and coming changes.

11. CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS:

None

12. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. Staff Gail McMillon distributed the ordinance for parks permits, Code 12.64 previously passed out at the January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 200 retreat. The requirements listed in the ordinance are event specific. Ms. McMillon entertained questions for the Commission. Commissioner Ricards inquired if changes to the ordinance could be made specifically as it relates to playing musical instruments such as guitars in Oakland parks. It is requested that the issue be placed on the pending list for future consideration. Gail McMillon noted that some elements of the ordinance are outdated and recommendations can be made to the City Attorney. She further noted the existence of separate permits for amplified and non-amplified events and that there are some parks where amplification is not allowed. Page 3 of 5- Item G of the ordinance was referenced regarding permits and amplification. Madam Director requested that Commission members review the code section titled "Park Permits" and further suggested they reference the online material for more detailed information and draft a list of questions for Commissioner Ricards and the future sub-committee to consider for amendment. It is also suggested that the issue be acted on soon rather than place it on the pending list and unspecified action.

B. Commissioner Wong advises the Commission that the Tree Committee will meet at 6:00pm on Thursday, February 10<sup>th</sup> at the home of Commissioner Montauk to address unfinished business from the January retreat.

C. Commissioner Wu referenced Item 7 & from the January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2011 PRAC Retreat minutes regarding the development of a master plan agenda for the Commission for Oakland.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Hammock, Co-Chair entertained a motion to form an ad hoc sub-committee to look at the idea of an overview for Oakland Parks and Recreation as to what is going on and to developing a broader vision.

Moved by Commissioner Wu Seconded by: Commissioner Belcher: **MOTION: Passed**

13. COUNCIL REFERRALS:

None

14. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

A. Review Staffing Committees and Liaison Assignments

Madam Director noted the importance for Commissioners to attend the meetings of committees or boards to which they are assigned. It was emphasized that the role of Commissioners with these assignments is to keep OPR abreast of the issues. Members were informed that the Jack London Aquatic Center (JLAC) will be returned to the Office of Parks and Recreation for management February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The Scotland Center, Osagie Enabulele - OPR is aware that the program is struggling and it could also have an adverse impact to the department should it close. OPR is considering having them pay toward utilities or rent; Children's Fairyland removed OPR from the board as their structure has changed in the last two years. OPR no longer has an automatic appointment. Oakland Zoo, Commissioner Mathis; Oakland Parks and Recreation, Susan Montauk with Commissioner Belcher as back-up; Jack London Aquatic Center, Commissioner Hammock; Joaquin Working Group, Commissioner Miller. Commissioner Wu suggested that committee and liaison assignments be reviewed. Madame Director agreed that revising the liaison list is an excellent idea and would allow OPR to redirect commission members to the areas

where additional oversight is needed. The committee and liaison lists will be revised and emailed to the Commission for feedback on area of interest. Afterwards, letters will be sent to the various entities advising them of commission assignments. Commissioner Wu requests a breakdown of PRAC committees and liaison committee assignments. Also to be included are liaisons to the recreation centers. Madam Director requested follow up with Gail McMillon regarding the Subsidy Committee

B. Introduction of New Staff and Commissioner

Mark Weinstein – present earlier – Program Director at Davie Tennis.

Peter Collier – Recreation Specialist responsible for community gardening addressed the commission. The program consists of 12 gardens, 3 are partnered with non-profits and 9 are standard gardens where individuals pay \$25.00 a year. Rates may be raised based on national research outcome. Participants receive an 8' x 4' plot. There are approximately 200 gardeners and their families. Contact for more information 238-2177 or [pcollier@oaklandnet.com](mailto:pcollier@oaklandnet.com) The Community gardening's office is located at the Lake Merritt Boating Center.

Wade Finlinson - candidate for the PRAC Commission, was introduced and is scheduled to go before the full City Council Tuesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> and is expected to take his seat in March. He will be replacing Commissioner Scott. Changes to committees will be held until Mr. Finlinson is officially on board.

C. Outstanding and Future Life Enrichment Committee Reports and Process

The Annual Life Enrichment Report needs to be completed.

OPR has completed its 1.9mil budget cuts. An additional 15% may be required of Agency Directors.

To clarify, OPR will not be providing additional programming services at the Jack London Aquatic Center other than what is currently provided. Dana Riley's and Gail McMillon's units will provide boating programs, reservations and specials events services. JLAC doors will not be closed. There are 5 tenants at JLAC and traditionally gross approximately 80k on the boat by rentals. There is a lot of community interest in renting space at the facility. Rumors have it that it was because of the City's subsidy that has caused the problem, when in fact it is because the organization tried to grow too fast and not having the financial capacity.

A request was made that a date to be established to tour OPR facilities. Dana will email the date selection.

15. OPEN FORUM:

None.

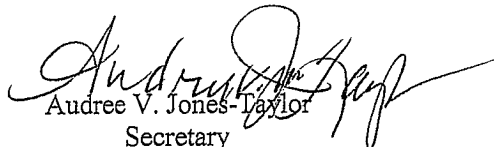
16. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None

17. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Audree V. Jones-Taylor  
Secretary

Diane Boyd  
Recording Secretary