

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
City of Oakland, California
Wednesday, February 14, 2007 - 4:30 p.m.
Lakeside Park Garden Center, Oakland

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission was held on Wednesday, February 14, 2007 at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, California. Chairperson Webb convened the meeting at 4:35 p.m. Kip Walsh, Acting Secretary to the Commission, conducted roll call. A quorum was present.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Valerie Abad, Michael Hammock, Howard Matis, Junaid Mohiuddin, Susan Montauk, Brad Ricards, Jeffrey Taylor, Matthew Webb, Calvin Wong
Absent: Osagie Enabulele, Holly McClure
Staff Present: Kip Walsh, Gail McMillon, Dan Gallagher, Jennifer Koney, Melvin Landry, Frederick Morris, Mary Perisic
Guests: Kathy Raymond, Tim Little, Jan Schmitz

3. DISPOSITION OF MINUTES:

A. Minutes December 13, 2006 meeting:

MOTION: Commissioner Ricards moved approval. Commissioner Hammock seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Montauk stated that she would like to see a report from the Montclair Golf Course with the numbers of rounds played and youth participation. The MGC concessionaire is scheduled to make a presentation for PRAC in May 2007.

4. SPECIAL ORDERS:

5. DETERMINATION OF SCHEDULE—OUTSTANDING AGENDA ITEMS:

Kip Walsh stated that the budget presentation to PRAC will take place after the presentation to the City Administrator. The PRAC presentation is tentatively scheduled for April.

6. MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA: Item 12 moved up.

7. COMMUNICATIONS:

8. PRAC COMMITTEE REPORTS:

9. ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORTS:

10. CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS:

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

12. **NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. Appeal of Tree Removal Permit ND06-160, 3101 Lynde Street: Dan Gallagher, Tree Supervisor II of the Public Works Agency, gave a report. (Mr. Gallagher is also a certified arborist with 25 years of experience.) The property owner applied for removal of a redwood tree stating that the tree was damaging the house foundation and roof. The PWA Tree Services Division approved the removal of the tree because it was growing too close to the house, which conforms to the criteria of the Protected Tree Ordinance. The PWA Tree Inspector dug a small trench between the tree and the house and exposed tree roots under the foundation which will continue to expand and cause damage. Mr. Gallagher stated that in this case root pruning is not an option and no other reasonable treatment exists that would allow the tree to remain. Commissioner Montauk noted that according to the letter from the appellant, the structure is 17 years old, and that the tree was there when the structure was built. How did the property owner obtain a permit to build right next to a protected tree? Mr. Gallagher did not have information on building permit.

Mr. Tim Little, the appellant, spoke on the benefits of the tree, part of the urban forest in the neighborhood, which provides home to wildlife, clean air and shade. He moved to the neighborhood because of the trees, which add beauty, value and benefit the microclimate of the area.

The PRAC Tree Committee, Commissioners, Webb, Ricards and Mohiuddin, visited the site prior to the meeting. Commissioner Ricards advised that they looked very carefully for damage to the building but there was no evidence of damage. It may be premature to take a magnificent tree down. The Commission has a responsibility to uphold the provisional goals of the Protected Tree Ordinance. Commissioner Webb advised that he was distressed by this situation because of the beauty of the tree, a huge majestic tree that adds value to the neighborhood. The Tree Ordinance is in place so that we can preserve trees. However, Commissioner Webb stated that he sees potential for damage to the property due to the proximity of the tree with the existing structure. That the tree pre-dates the structure does not mean that the tree is entitled to stay. Commissioner Matis asked Mr. Gallagher if he could estimate when the tree could begin to cause damage, to which Mr. Gallagher replied that it is impossible to see into the future. Commissioner Matis asked if we deny the permit would the City be liable for damage. Commissioner Webb advised that the City has never been successfully sued for property damage related to trees.

The standing policy of PRAC with respect to tree appeals is that six affirmative votes are required to sustain the appeal. If the appeal does not receive six votes, it is denied and the decision of PWA staff is sustained.

MOTION: To sustain the Appeal of Tree Removal Permit ND06-160, 3101 Lynde Street. The motion failed, with two in favor and seven opposed.

- B. Request from Harbor House Ministries to collect pledges at an event at Lakeside Park on Saturday, April 21, 2007: Gail McMillon, OPR Reservations Supervisor, stated that Harbor House Ministries has paid the rental and deposit fees. Staff recommends approval for the collection of pledges at the event, and will request a report on the distribution of funds collected. Ms. Jan Schmitz of Harbor House stated that the organization provides

educational, spiritual and economic information for the community, as well as emergency food programs, summer camp, English as a second language, youth reading and math programs, and other services to the community. The programs are open to all. Commissioner Ricards advised that PRAC tries to lower the visibility of the exchange of money in the parks and encouraged having donations received prior to the event. Harbor House has been receiving donations on-line.

MOTION: Commissioner Taylor moved approval. Commissioner Matis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

- C. Raimondi Fundraising Program – Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation: Kathy Raymond, Executive Director of the Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation, gave a presentation. The FOPR will be returning to PRAC in a few months to go forward with the current Raimondi master plan and to request a Major Conditional Use Permit. They are planning to go forward with phase one this year. In the meantime, they are working with a number of partners within the City, community and private entities to raise funds. FOPR is looking at a fund-raising campaign of selling inscribed bricks, similar to those at the Splash Pad Park, to be installed at the entry way and near the baseball area. The bricks would sell for \$500 each and include the name of the donor. Donations can be made by individuals and groups, and donations under \$500 will be accepted and acknowledged. They are hoping to raise \$500,000 before the ground breaking, a portion of which would come from the sale of bricks.

Ms. Raymond provided information on some of the highlights of the project, which include artificial turf, lighting, moving the baseball diamond, and creating a community area which will include a large tot lot, picnic area and pathway. FOPR is working with the Public Works Agency to make the park easy to maintain, and is looking for maintenance funds. Phase one should be breaking ground in late summer.

- D. Master Fee Schedule: Melvin Landry, Acting Recreation General Supervisor for the OPR Sports Unit, provided an update on the Master Fee Schedule as it relates to ballfields. At this time there are no proposed increases in fees. Staff conducted a comparison on field rental rates with other nearby cities, and Oakland is similar. Commissioner Matis stated that the MFS was different from the previous one. Mr. Landry responded that the fees were the same but a few words were changed for clarification (“session” was changed to “practice”). Commissioner Matis expressed concern regarding the fees, that it is an outrageous increase, and stated that the fees do not include lines and goals. He urged that the practice sessions be removed and stated there is no reason for an extra cost for a league game. Mr. Landry advised that the fees have not increased since 2004-05, and that Oakland youth leagues are not charged for practices. Commissioner Matis also stated that the Fee Schedule is too ambiguous. Commissioner Webb directed that this item be scheduled for the March PRAC meeting.

Commissioner Ricards asked if OPR has considered charging for youth leagues, considering that all other cities charge and Oakland can use the revenue for maintenance. Mr. Landry stated that Oakland has never charged for Oakland youth leagues as mandated by City Council. Commissioner Ricards requested more information on charging for youth leagues.

Commissioner Matis stated that the non-resident fees should be raised and be more consistent. He stated that too many non-residents are using Oakland fields.

Ms. McMillion reported on the Master Fee Schedule related to OPR enterprise facilities. OPR is proposing to increase the rates for the Garden Center, Sequoia Lodge, Leona Lodge and the Sailboat House. The biggest increase will be 20% for the non-resident rates. Staff has done price comparisons with other Bay Area cities and Oakland's rates were substantially lower. It has been seven years since the rates have increased. Kip Walsh stated that she and Gail worked together on the proposed fee increases, but they did not submit it in time for this budget cycle. It is the department's intention to make a uniform increase. At this time the revenue is about one half of what it costs to maintain the facilities and operate the reservations unit.

- E. Partnerships: Jennifer Koney, Recreation General Supervisor, provided clarification on what constitutes a partnership as related to the use of recreation facilities: "A partnership is defined as a program or activity that is mutually beneficial to both organizations involved. This may include, but is not limited to, the use of space for a reduced or no fee in exchange for the offering of a no-fee program or activity to the community with OPR. This program or activity will be considered a co-sponsorship." Also, "Any outside organization requesting to collect fees or if fees are being charged for participation and fees are not going to OPR, then the activity or event is classified as a rental and a fundraiser." Commission Ricards stated that this addressed his concerns about the definition of partnerships.
- F. A Community Report Card on the State of Oakland Parks – Oakland Parks Coalition: Commissioner Montauk, Oakland Parks Coalition member, gave a report. In October 2006, OPC held the "Love Your Parks Day" event, where volunteers conducted surveys of 75 parks. The results of the survey were used to prepare a report to Council that was heard by the Life Enrichment Committee on January 16, 2007. The purpose of the report is to call attention to City Council of the need for retention of the core level of staffing and maintenance and to not cut the budget. The report can also be seen on the Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation website. Commissioner Wong stated that it would be helpful to know the quantity of park users at each facility, so that parks with higher use receive better maintenance. Commissioner Ricards stated that the report is a very useful and organized effort. He inquired about the statement on page 7 that Districts 1-4 have the greater share of volunteer caretakers. Commissioner Montauk stated that the OPC is working on getting more park stewards in all of the districts. Commissioner Ricards asked about elevating the gardener tasks and skill sets. Is it realistic for gardeners to repair sprinkler heads or do pruning? Commissioner Montauk responded that there are many broken irrigation systems and it is very expensive. Commissioner Montauk has met with Brooke Levin, Assistant Director of PWA, and they are consistently working on improving productivity. More staffing is needed but that won't happen until LLAD is passed. Kip Walsh stated that OPR Director Jones-Taylor wanted to say that the report emphasized one corner of Concordia Park and disregarded the recent improvements, which she felt was a misrepresentation. Ms. Jones-Taylor would like to see the next report show the more active parks. Commissioner Montauk stated that these ratings were made by a team of volunteers and each team had different priorities. Commissioner Matis suggested that OPC look to the field users to help for the next survey.

G. PRAC meetings in each Council District – Selection of meeting sites for 2007: Commissioner Montauk suggested asking each City Council member which OPR facility they would like to have the PRAC meeting. Commissioner Matis stated that if the meetings are further away he would like that the time be later. Commissioner Webb would like to spread out the meetings in Council districts over a two year period. Staff will follow up with Council.

13. **COUNCIL REFERRALS:**

A. Annual PRAC report to Council – Life Enrichment Committee - February 27, 2007: Commissioner Webb will present the report to the LEC and Council.

14. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Kip Walsh gave an update on the City Stables. A report went to the Life Enrichment Committee on February 13 with three recommendations: 1) to close the RFP process and reject all bids because the two organizations did not meet the requirements; 2) to authorize OPR to run programs at City Stables by partnering with equestrian organizations; 3) to re-adopt the Master Plan because it expires in April. The committee voted to accept all of the recommendations. Commissioner Montauk asked why MEPS was rejected. Ms. Walsh stated that it was a long process with MEPS, and that staff were in negotiations with them for seven months. Their bid was initially rejected, but the City decided to work with them because they were the only possibility. They were never able to substantiate specifically what the City was asking for in the financial plan. City Council has been very clear that they want to insure that inner-city youth programs will happen. There is a plan in place to partner with Tami MacKerracher to provide equestrian programs for youth at City Stables. Also, staff hopes to be able to get support from City Council to release the funds to do the improvements and be able to board horses. Staff are working on the details.

15. **OPEN FORUM:**

Commissioners Ricards and Wong will be attending the California Park and Recreation Society conference March 8-10 in Sacramento.

16. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Commissioner Mohiuddin announced that the Joaquin Miller Dog Play Area grand opening will be Sunday, February 18 from 11am-2pm. Commissioner Mohiuddin has volunteered as an event runner.

17. **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

KipWalsh
Acting Secretary

Mary Perisic
Recording Secretary