

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
City of Oakland, California
Wednesday, July 12, 2006 - 4:30 p.m.
Lakeside Park Garden Center, Oakland, CA

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission was held on Wednesday, July 12, 2006 at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, California. Chairperson Webb convened the meeting at 4:40 p.m. Director Audree V. Jones-Taylor, Secretary to the Commission, conducted roll call. A quorum was present.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Valerie Abad, Osagie Enabulele, Michael Hammock, Holly McClure, Junaid Mohiuddin, Matthew Webb, Calvin Wong
Absent: Rosa Linda Armendariz, Howard Matis, Brad Ricards, Jeffrey Taylor
Staff Present: Audree V. Jones-Taylor, Gail McMillon, Dennis Flannery, Martin Matarrese, Marisa Arrona, Lyle Oehler, Kip Walsh, Mary Perisic
Guests: Anne Woodell, Diane Woloshir, Christine Cherdboonmuang, Stephanie Hamilton, Anna Yee, Leal Charonnat, Peggy Moore, Marsha Lee-Harrison, Holly Alonso, Rena Fischer, Terry Mitchell, Ellen Gierson, Nancy Rieser, Sean Menton, Margaret Brenner, Michael Sachs, Cheryl Troup, Judy Young, Sinsee Tran, Amy Glaney, Chris Shaw, Steven Malarnuth, Kathy Hofmann, Lihui Liu, E. Rutter, Mindy McGregor, Matt Ranney, Steven Monroe, Judi Bank, Shalonda Ingram, Carole Leven

3. DISPOSITION OF MINUTES:

A. Minutes of June 14 , 2006 meeting:

MOTION: Commissioner McClure moved approval of the minutes of the meeting of June 14, 2006. Commissioner Abad seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4. SPECIAL ORDERS: Welcome new Commissioners:

Michael Hammock – Former Recreation General Supervisor for the Sports Unit, Office of Parks and Recreation, retired after 34 years of service.

Junaid Muhiuddin – Hopes to bring perspective as a new resident of Oakland.

Calvin Wong – Has enjoyed Oakland Parks all of his life and wants to give back to the community. Retired after 32 years of service with the Community and Economic Development Agency

5. DETERMINATION OF SCHEDULE—OUTSTANDING AGENDA ITEMS:

6. MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Open Forum, Item 10 and 12 moved up.

7. COMMUNICATIONS:

8. PRAC COMMITTEE REPORTS:

9. **ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORTS:**

10. **CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS:**

- A. San Antonio Park Community Garden: Mr. Dennis Flannery, Recreation Center Director, gave a report. Staff recommends PRAC endorsement of an application for a minor conditional use permit for a 40' x 60' community garden. The purpose of the garden is to create a family-friendly, healthful environment at San Antonio Park. This garden would have plots available to the community and the two local schools. The East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC) has agreed to sponsor the garden for the community entirely, to provide two full-time people to upkeep the garden, and supply a four-foot high fence with gates on both sides. The key issue will be the upkeep of the Garden. From September through June two local schools will conduct science classes at the garden. During the summer months EBAYC will have interns working in the garden. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between EBAYC and OPR is being finalized. The MOU will state that if the garden is not kept up to the City's standards then EBAYC will return the site back to its original form. Commissioner Wong was concerned that the site may be located on too steep of a slope for a garden, and asked if the soil had been tested. Mr. Flannery has discussed this issue with several people who said that the slope should not be a problem. The soil has been tested and the results were clean. Mr. Flannery is getting another soil test to confirm that result.

Diane Woloshir, Director of Nutrition Services, Alameda County Public Health Department, spoke on their initiative promoting physical activities and healthy eating for families in the San Antonio Community. The community garden is a critical part of this initiative. The vision is for the community to participate in the gardening of organically grown fresh fruits and vegetables and to benefit from the physical activity and healthy food provided by the garden. Christine Cherdboonmuang, a program coordinator for EBAYC, stated that they have gathered much positive feedback from parents and teachers of the local schools regarding the gardening classes. San Antonio Park is a key site for the community. Stephanie Hamilton, a parent living in East Oakland, stated that the collaboration between OPR and OUSD is ground-breaking and very important. OPR is the hub of the community in the summer. Anna Yee, field intern from the local high school, participated in gardening classes at Garfield Elementary and believes that youth will appreciate a community garden in San Antonio Park, and that it will encourage them to live more healthfully.

MOTION: Commissioner Enabulele moved approval. Commissioner Wong seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

11. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- A. Joaquin Miller Park Dog Play Area Fencing: The JMP Dog Play Area was initially presented to PRAC in March 2006 and returned to PRAC in May, when it was approved as a 12 month pilot project. At the March meeting the issue of fencing was discussed, and there was concern that the four foot high fence, which is often used for dog parks, should be raised to 6 feet to prevent dogs from leaping the fence to chase wildlife. The Joaquin Miller Dog Group would like to install a four foot fence, which is a change from what PRAC had approved. Martin Matarrese, Park Supervisor with the Public Works Agency (PWA), spoke regarding the reasons for a four foot fence. First, they have to devise a system to open up the area for parking during events. Staff feels that a six foot high gate for an opening wide enough for cars would be unwieldy for volunteers and staff to open and close. Secondly, a six foot fence would be more esthetically obtrusive in the park. The volunteers who are helping to manage

the area have explained that dogs want to be in the play area and there is little chance that a dog will jump the fence. Mr. Matarrese advised that he has not heard reports of dogs chasing wildlife in the park in general. Most of the dog parks surveyed in the North Bay have fences four feet high and only one is six feet. After the twelve month period this item will come back before PRAC for review. If it does not work, OPR will look at another area.

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

12. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Request for Sistahs Steppin in Pride for permission to have one food vendor and seventeen community merchants at the 5th Annual March and Walk festival at Snow Park on August 26, 2006: Gail McMillon, OPR Central Reservations Supervisor, gave a brief report. This will be the fifth annual event, and this year they are one of Oakland's featured summer festivals. Peggy Moore, festival coordinator, stated that the vendors will be local artists selling hand crafts.

MOTION: Commissioner McClure moved approval. Commissioner Wong seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

- B. Request from Starbucks Coffee Company to collect funds at the East Bay AIDS Walk at Lakeside park on Saturday, September 9, 2006: Ms. McMillon reported that Starbucks is working with local non-profit organizations and that this request complies with our criteria for collecting funds in parks. The funds raised will help local non profit AIDS organizations.

MOTION: Commissioner McClure moved approval. Commissioner Mohiuddin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

- C. Request for the United Negro College Fund, Inc. (UNCFI) to collect donations and pledges at the 22nd Annual Walk-a-thon and Health and Educational Fair at Lakeside park on Saturday, September 16, 2006: Ms. McMillon advised that their previous events have gone well. Ms. Marsha Lee Harrison, Assistant Director for Northern California Chapter of UNCFI, stated that this event is supported by several major corporations and will include a health and education fair. The funds earned will help 800 students.

MOTION: Commissioner Enabulele moved approval. Commissioner Mohiuddin seconded the motions, which passed unanimously.

- D. Request from the Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park for permission to have up to ten vendors at the grand opening celebration of the new park construction at Peralta Hacienda Park on October 15, 2006: Ms. McMillon reported that this event is co-sponsored by the PWA and OPR. Holly Alonzo, Director of the Friends of Peralta Hacienda, stated that this is a celebration of indigenous peoples, and will include contributions of Native Americans and the opening of the native plant garden. There will be Native American crafts and two food vendors.

MOTION: Commissioner Abad moved approval. Commissioner Enabulele seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

- E. Lakeview Dog Park – Approval for 12 month probationary period: Mr. Lyle Oehler, Capital Improvement Project Coordinator with PWA, gave a report. A team has been put together to make the dog park happen, comprised of the Lakeview Park Dog Owners Group (LPDOG) headed by Nancy Reiser, Marisa Arrona, Policy Analyst for Councilmember Nadel, and Mr. Oehler, who is the facilitator. The proposed dog park has the support of Councilmembers Nadel and Chang. LPDOG would be responsible for the design, construction and operation of the park.

Since 1998 residents have expressed interest in a dog park in the community. Over the years the dog park has been included in two master plans: the Lake Merritt Park Master Plan that was accepted by Council in 2002, and the Adams Point Urban Design Plan that was accepted by the City's Community and Economic Development Agency in 2002, during which time there was a lot of public interaction. There have been two community meetings in 2005 and 2006, for which there was extensive notification.

Marisa Arrona stated that Councilmember Nadel has been committed to developing the dog park since its inception eight years ago, and has committed \$35,000 from her paygo funds, along with \$1,000 from Councilmember Chang. The project is very much community driven and supported, and facilitated by Councilmember Nadel's office. The attractiveness and thoughtfulness of the design lends to how beautiful it will look, how useful it will be, and open to all the users in the area. There are a core of dedicated volunteers who will ensure the success of the park.

Nancy Reiser, community outreach representative for the North Lake Neighborhood Group, and co-founder of Oakland Dog Owners Group (ODOG), provided a brief description from a neighborhood perspective on how the concept of a dog park came to be. They have done extensive outreach to the park user groups and the nearby residents, who support the idea of a dog park in that location. The location selected was as far away from Lake Merritt's wildlife habitat as possible so the dogs do not frighten the birds. Signage will be posted stating that dogs cannot be taken inside the park.

The Iron Worker's Union has made a commitment to create and install the wrought iron fence around the park and the Brick Layers Union will install brick footings for the fencing. The fence will be four feet and will be surrounded by a butterfly garden. Lakeview School plans to use the Butterfly Garden for science projects.

The LPDOG will be making several improvements to the park, including the soccer field. For the last few years, water has been seeping under the soccer field from the lake during winter, creating bogs that dry up to become holes during the playing season. The soccer players have not used the field for two years, but have migrated to the area that had been identified for the dog play area. LPDOG will upgrade the soccer area by lifting up irrigation and putting in fill so that the water drains off to the Grand Avenue gutters. The Cleveland Wrecking Company has made a commitment of donating soil, which will be tested to adhere to State and US standards, to re-grade the field. Irrigation work will be donated by the Plumbers Union.

Commissioners' concerns:

- The proximity to an active children's play area:
Nancy Reiser's response: Linda and Hardy Dog Parks are close to schools and children's play areas and have been successful and without incident. The children's play area is further away from the proposed Lakeview dog play area than is the one by Hardy Park. When people approach the park their dogs will be on a leash. The entrances will be on MacArthur Boulevard and not in the park.
- Pedestrian safety and vehicular traffic around Lakeshore, MacArthur and Grand Avenues:
Nancy Reiser's response: The park users will walk their dogs on leash on the sidewalks. The traffic is controlled by stop signs and lights.
- Parking – Where will the users of the dog play area park their cars?
Nancy Reiser's response: Drivers will park under the freeway and use the sidewalks to walk to the park. Signs will be installed stating that dog park users cannot park in the library parking lot. Many park users live in the area and will walk to the park.
- Reduction in size of the soccer field adjacent to proposed dog play area. Dog park too big, encroaching on other park activities.
Nancy Reiser's response: A representative of the soccer players was a part of the steering committee. The soccer players want to return to the original area and look forward to the renovations by LPDOG. The length of the soccer field will not be shortened and the field will have fencing to keep balls from going into the street.

Marisa Arona's response: Community comments have been coming in since the June 29th meeting. There have been no comments about encroachment of the dog park by the other park user groups.

Lyle Oehler's Response: They looked carefully at the other users' needs and worked with them to decide what size areas they can work with.

- If LPDOG does not comply with the MOU.
Nancy Reiser's response: The MOU is based on the Joaquin Miller Dog Play Area MOU that PRAC approved the previous month, with the exception of the hours of operation, which would be from dawn until 10:00pm. The Lakeview Dog Play Area would have a 12-month probationary period.
- Who would be responsible for restoring the park back in the event that it is not successful.
Marisa Arona's response: She will recommend to Councilmember Nadel that MOU state that she will use paygo funds to bring the park back to its original state.
- Will there be any additional general liability insurance?
Lyle Oehler's response: The existing ordinance states that dog owners are liable for the behavior of their dogs throughout the city, which would be the same for dogs in parks.
- Four foot fence vs six foot near children's play area:
Leal Charonnat, member of LPDOG and designer of dog play area, responds: In the dog parks in the East Bay Area, there are no examples of dogs in dog parks leaping over four

foot fences. Dogs want to be inside the dog parks. In the draft MOU, it states that there will be signage that all dogs in the park must be licensed and tagged. The butterfly garden around the dog park will be between 5 and 16 deep which will soften the image of the dog park. The two entrances will be on the opposite side of the children's play area.

Lyle Oehler responds: It would be a real concern for the community to have a six foot high fence because of the view blockage and visual impacts. All of the dog parks in Manhattan and most in the East Bay are four feet

Public Comments:

- Rena Fischer – Dog parks are great community builders. People at dog parks educate each other about responsible dog ownership. Children are educated about dogs. She visits Alameda Dog Park four days a week and has not heard of any incidents where a dog has jumped the four foot fence. The Alameda Dog Park is also in close proximity to a children's play area.
- Terry Mitchell – Dogs don't want to escape from the dog park, but want to get into the dog park. Oakland needs a dog park.
- Ellen Pierson – She has no place to go in Oakland to let her dog run. Since she goes to the Alameda Dog Park, she does most of her shopping there.
- Sean Menton – He is a new resident of Oakland. One of the primary ways to meet other people is through dog parks. There are dog owners who are not responsible, but they don't take their dogs to dog parks.
- Margaret Brenner – She does not have a dog but appreciates dog owners because they make the neighborhood a safer place.
- Leah Charonnat – Dog parks are very essential to the socialization of dogs, where they can learn social skills.

MOTION: Commissioner Enabulele moved to support the project with the condition that alternative parking is looked into and that in the event the responsible party fails to comply with the MOU that they be responsible for the removal of the dog park. Commissioner Mohiuddin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

This item will come back to PRAC within twelve months to review any concerns.

Director Jones-Taylor asked which City staff would be monitoring the dog park on a regular basis, since this site is not staffed as is the Joaquin Miller site. Staff will meet to discuss this issue. Director Jones-Taylor also asked if the team had discussed the dog park with Carmen Martinez, the Director of the Library. They have included Library staff in the meetings but have not yet talked to the Director and indicated that they would do so.

- F. Request from City Attorney's Office regarding issuance of resolutions by PRAC: Kip Walsh, Assistant to the Director of OPR, gave a report. The City Attorney's Office submitted a request that PRAC create a process to document its actions on items for which it has authority (such as park hours). These documents would be more easily accessible as part of the public record. This item will be reviewed at the PRAC Retreat on August 19, 2006.

G. Nomination of Officers:

Commissioner Enabulele nominated Matthew Webb as Chair. Commissioner Wong seconded the nomination.

Commissioner Enabulele nominated Holly McClure as Vice Chair. Commissioner Mohiuddin seconded the nomination.

Commissioner Abad nominated Jeffrey Taylor as Vice Chair. Commissioner McClure seconded the nomination.

H. PRAC Retreat Date: The PRAC Retreat will be held on Saturday, August 19, 2006 from 9am-12 Noon at the Joaquin Miller Community Center.

13. **COUNCIL REFERRALS:**

14. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

- City Stables - Kip Walsh reported that this item went before the City Council Life Enrichment Committee on July 11, 2006 with a recommendation to authorize the City Administrator to negotiate a concession agreement with the Metropolitan Equestrian Preservation Society (MEPS). City Stables was closed in September 2004. Since then we have been trying to identify a concessionaire. City Council is adamant that a priority is youth programming which has made it difficult to identify a concessionaire. Council is concerned about how MEPS would finance the renovations, and asked for more specific information on the time lines for the renovations and the youth programs. We have been asked to come back with a supplemental report to City Council on July 18. Director Jones-Taylor stated if City Council decides not to move forward with MEPS our recommendation is to shut it down permanently and turn it in to an open space passive park. We have done extensive outreach including a national search. If the MEPS proposal fails, the Measure K \$400,000 set aside for the rehabilitation of City Stables may be allocated to another park project. There is not time to do another RFP process and preserve the funding.
- Director Jones-Taylor announced that July is National Recreation and Parks Month and invited the Commissioners to visit the open houses at the recreation facilities. Invitations have been sent to PRAC for the Intimate Evening which is Saturday, July 29, 6-10pm at the Garden Center.

15. **OPEN FORUM:**

- Anne Woodell had asked that City Stables be an item on the agenda, but it was left off by mistake. MEPS submitted a proposal to operate the concession at City Stables. The MEPS proposal went to the City Council Life Enrichment Committee on July 11, 2006 and they voted to have the proposal go before full Council the following week. Once the negotiations are complete and the date of the opening celebration is determined, the Commission will be invited to attend.

- Judi Bank of MEPS stated that they are looking at donations in kind, short term loans, grants, fundraising to finance the renovations at City Stables. The grading work is to be donated. They will take soil off the knoll and use that to fill in the eroded corrals. The corrals will be taken down. They will make pads and bring in new modular units for the horses. They will have a diversity of programs including OPR programs, and day camps. The neighborhood and the homeowners association are supportive of the City Stables plan.

16. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

17. **ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Audree V. Jones-Taylor
Secretary

Mary Perisic
Recording Secretary