

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
City of Oakland, California
Wednesday, November 8, 2006 - 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, November 8, 2006 at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, California. Chairperson Webb convened the meeting at 4:40 p.m. Audree Jones-Taylor, Secretary to the Commission, conducted roll call. A quorum was present.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Valerie Abad, Osagie Enabulele, Michael Hammock, Howard Matis, Susan Montauk, Brad Ricards, Jeffrey Taylor, Matthew Webb, Calvin Wong
Absent: Holly McClure, Junaid Mohiuddin
Staff Present: Joshua Amaris, Gilbert Gong, David Lao, Gail McMillon, Deborah Spaulding, Kip Walsh, Mary Perisic
Guests: Jim Donoso, Thomas Yang, Edward Loo, Evelyn Loo, Kathryn Porter, Kathy Kuhner, Ray Kidd, Peter Dintiman, Dick Wagner, Willow Rosenthal, John Gibbs, Andrew Gee, Momo Chay, Al Kanzaki, Shannon Way, Gillian Garro

3. DISPOSITION OF MINUTES:

A. Minutes September 13, 2006 meeting:

MOTION: Commissioner Wong moved approval. Commissioner Matis seconded the motion, which passed with six in favor and one abstention (Montauk).

B. Minutes of October 11, 2006 meeting:

MOTION: Commissioner Montauk moved approval with a request to investigate Chris Pattillo's representation. Commissioner Hammock seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. (Recorder's note: Chris Pattillo was representing PGA Design Landscape Architects. Correction noted on minutes.)

4. SPECIAL ORDERS:

5. DETERMINATION OF SCHEDULE—OUTSTANDING AGENDA ITEMS: No change

6. MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Items 10 and 12 moved up.

7. COMMUNICATIONS:

8. PRAC COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Fee Waiver/Vending in Parks policy: Gail McMillon gave an informational report. The PRAC sub-committee met the previous week to finalize the policy. All pre-qualified fee waiver requests (which have been reviewed by OPR staff and met the established criteria) will

need to come before PRAC for final approval. Commissioner Ricards added that the intent is to give fee waivers to groups that demonstrate a financial need or that have participated actively with OPR.

Commissioner Matis expressed concern about the insurance requirements for groups who are using OPR facilities, specifically that the City of Oakland be additionally insured. Director Jones-Taylor advised that the insurance requirement was established by the City's Risk Manager. Commissioner Matis asked about the requirement that organizations requesting fee waivers have 501c3 status. Commissioner Webb stated that the fee waiver policy can have flexibility to address all deserving community based organizations and non-profits. Commissioner Ricards stated that he would support that we have language on the application documents that state "501c3 or equivalent". Commissioner Webb stated that we want a policy in place that we can apply fairly and consistently for worthy organization who come before PRAC. Director Jones-Taylor encouraged the Commissioners to carefully read the draft Fee Waiver/Vending in Parks Policy before the next meeting so that PRAC can act on it.

9. **ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORTS:**

10. **CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS:**

- A. Madison Square Park – Minor CUP: Kevin Liao, Legislative Aide for Council District 2, reported that Councilmember Kernighan is looking for a location for a large group of tai chi exercisers who have been displaced, due to construction, from their former area at BART where they had been exercising for 20 years. Madison Square offers opportunities for use by the tai chi groups and families with children. Councilmember Kernighan's office held a large community meeting on September 30, 2006, and several meetings with City staff to develop an improvement plan for the park. To create space for tai chi users and families would require 4,000 square feet of lawn area to be asphalted and 4,200 square feet to be covered with decomposed granite. Part of the area would be for the exercisers and part would be for children to play games such as four square and hop scotch. Other improvements include picnic tables and tree plantings. Councilmember Kernighan has allocated \$75,000 for these improvements, and the exercisers and BART have pledged \$30,000 each for a total of \$135,000. These would be interim improvements until the master plan is developed and implemented. Councilmember Kernighan is taking steps to conduct a long term community process to renovate the park, and is committed to including more green space.

Commissioner Ricards asked why the turf needed to be covered with hardscape. David Lau of the Public Works Agency advised that they will be making the mounded area level so that it is more useable and that the turf is too soft for practicing tai chi. Mr. Lau also stated that there should not be a drainage problem and that the additional run off will percolate into the ground. Commissioner Ricards would like the master plan to consider removal of the current concrete square.

Commissioner Abad arrived at 5:00pm.

Gilbert Gong, Lincoln Square Recreation Center Director and President of Lincoln Elementary School, advised that his facility is three blocks from Madison Square. The community conducted a survey two years ago. The people of the community desire increased play area for children and quiet park spaces for entire families to enjoy. Children in that area have very little useable open space for physical activity, and the interim improvements at Madison

Square will provide more space for them to play. Within the next five years, there will be a greater need for recreational space since 2,000 condominium units have been approved to be built in the community.

Edward Loo and Evelyn Loo, longtime tai chi exercisers, stated that before they started using Madison Square, it was primarily used by the homeless. Now that the exercisers are there, children are again using the park. The Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, Family Bridges, Veteran's Memorial Park and the Asian Health Center have endorsed the interim improvements.

MOTION: Commissioner Taylor moved to approve interim improvements with the condition that the long term plan include accommodations for families. Commissioner Hammock seconded the motion with passed with six in favor and two opposed (Ricards, Matis).

- B. Proposed Community Market Farm at Fitzgerald and Union Plaza Parks – Minor CUP: Joshua Amaris, Community Gardening Program Coordinator with the Office of Parks and Recreation, gave a brief report. City Slickers Farms contacted the City with a proposal to convert underused parks in West Oakland, Fitzgerald and Union Plaza Parks, which are now used primarily by the homeless, to a community market farm. This conversion would require a minor conditional use permit from the City's Planning Department, which requires PRAC endorsement. The proposal has the support of Councilmember Nadel. Mr. Amaris introduced Willow Rosenthal, Founding Director of City Slicker Farms, who currently operates five community market farms in West Oakland. City Slicker Farms has met with community organizations and together developed a preliminary design.

The community market farm would be supervised by a full-time City Slicker Farms employee five days a week. That person would manage, do farming activities, provide leadership for children's and school groups and work with the community, including the homeless population. The farm would be open to the community to participate in gardening activities. The produce would be available to the community for a donation or free. A primary goal is to provide fresh, organic produce to low income families and individuals. The garden plots would not be individually assigned, but cooperatively maintained, and the crops would be culturally appropriate to the community. An attractive fence around the perimeter with espaliered fruit trees is proposed. Ms. Rosenthal stated that the cost would be between \$80,000 to \$100,000 to build and would take about eight months time. They intend to have the project fully funded before moving ahead. The site has been checked for lead contamination and it is clean.

Commissioners Ricards and Matis expressed concerned about the fence blocking views across the intersection and into the parks. Ms. Rosenthal advised that they will consider the fencing and view concern in the final proposal. Commissioner Wong asked about what would happen if the community market farm fails. The City does not want to inherit the problem. Ms. Rosenthal will address this possibility in the agreement.

Commissioner Ricards expressed concern about the plots not being assigned to individuals, as they are with OPR's community gardens. Ms. Rosenthal advised that the structure they are using has been successful at their five urban farms in West Oakland. Commissioner Taylor stated that he supports the City Slicker Farm structure and not have individually assigned plots because they are often neglected.

Ms. Rosenthal stated that the homeless do not want to be displaced, so City Slicker Farms will be doing outreach with the homeless to involve them. They are projected to produce 15,000 pounds of food per year, with some going to emergency food programs.

Commissioner Ricards would like to see a very deliberate effort to invite children into the program by going to the recreation centers.

Director Jones-Taylor stated that when Councilmember Nadel brought this proposal to OPR, she saw this as an opportunity for a model program. This is a great way to get the homeless population actively engaged and involved. It is important for OPR to look at these blighted lands and to create good use of them.

Commissioner Enabulele arrived at 5:15pm.

Public Comment:

- Catherine Porter – Owns and manages a 6,000 square foot community garden. She knows the City Slicker Farms structure works. There are many experienced gardeners in the community who will help work on the community market farm.
- Shannon Way – Has volunteered with City Slicker Farms for three years. She would not be able to garden if she was required to maintain her own plot.
- Kathy Cuner, West Oakland Neighbors Group – The Group unanimously supports the proposal. There has not been any positive use of the two parks for years.
- Ray Kidd – Supports the proposal.
- Peter Dintiman – Oakland has great climate for gardens. Supports proposal.
- Dick Wagner – Strongly supports the proposal.

MOTION: Commissioner Montauk moved approval of the Minor Conditional Use Permit to convert the parks to a Community Market Farm. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

11. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

12. **NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. Request approval for plaque in memory of Elizabeth M. Yang to be installed on bench at the Morcom Rose Garden: Mr. Thomas Yang requested approval of memorial plaque for his daughter, Elizabeth Yang, who passed away recently. Mr. Yang is working with staff of the Public Works Agency to purchase and install the bench and plaque.

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

- B. Request approval for plaque in memory of Ardis Helen McKee to be installed on bench at the Morcom Rose Garden: Mr. Jim Donoso of the East Bay Rose Society requested approval of memorial plaque for Ms. Ardis Helen McKee, former president and long time member of the Society. Mr. Donoso is working with staff of the Public Works Agency to purchase and install the bench and plaque.

Commissioner Webb requested an update on what is planned for the Rose Garden for memorial benches, since the space for benches is limited.

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

- C. Groundworks Trust update: Gillian Garro, former chair of the Oakland Parks Coalition (OPC), gave a report. The OPC had an opportunity to apply for a Groundworks Trust through the National Park Service to set up an organization in Oakland. A Groundwork Trust is an independent, nonprofit environmental organization that undertakes cooperative projects to promote the environmental, economic, and social well-being of its community using staff, volunteers, and leveraged funding resources from both public and private sources. In the spring of 2006, the Oakland Groundwork Trust Steering Committee undertook a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a permanent Groundwork Trust in Oakland. While the benefit and need for a Groundwork Trust was established, there was not a sufficient commitment to form an active board at this time. Committee members hope that the programs and projects identified in the study will be implemented by existing community organizations in Oakland. The Feasibility Study and Strategic Plan is available for view on the City of Oakland Website, www.oaklandpw.com.
- D. Informational Report regarding the status of Oakland City Stables: Deferred to January, 2007.
- E. Status report on the Lake Chabot Golf Course: Deborah Spaulding, OPR Fiscal Manager, gave a report. On November 3, 2006, OPR issued the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the management and operation of LCGC. The responses are due by January 5th, 2007. OPR's plan in to have a concessionaire by Spring of 2007. When the agreement with the former concessionaire expired, the golf course was closed on October 31. It will be reopened on April 7, 2007. The City will build significant publicity around the reopening. During the closure, the City will be doing improvements, including some drainage work. There will be a skeleton crew doing maintenance. Commissioner Webb asked about the dangerous location of the road that bisects the golf course, and if there is a plan to reconfigure the golf course. Ms. Spaulding advised that the RFQ states that a redesign would be desirable.
- F. CAPRCBM Award Nominations: Commissioner Ricards encouraged PRAC to send in their nominations of parks and recreation professionals for this prestigious award.
13. **COUNCIL REFERRALS:**
- A. PRAC Annual Report to Council: Commissioner Webb is preparing the report, which will be going to the Life Enrichment Committee on January 9 and full Council on January 16.
14. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**
- Director Jones-Taylor gave a report. Both Montclair and Lake Chabot Golf Courses were visited during the last PRAC tour on November 4. Ms. Jones-Taylor wrote a letter to the Montclair Golf Course Concessionaire for an update on the status of the project, and requested that they provide a report at the December PRAC meeting. The PRAC Golf Committee will be meeting on Wed., 11/15 at OPR to discuss the City's golf courses. Ms. Jones-Taylor also distributed the National Golf Foundation Golf Trends.

Commissioner Webb acknowledged that the PRAC tour was great and hopes there will be another tour in the spring of 2007.

15. **OPEN FORUM:**

Commissioner Montauk stated that the Love your Parks Day on October 28th, went very well, with about 60 volunteers conducting surveys of the parks. There will be a report from the results, with good information.

16. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

17. **ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m. Commissioner Matis wished to formally thank Frederick Morris, OPR Fields and Sports Coordinator, for conducting a quality PRAC tour.

Respectfully submitted,

Audree V. Jones-Taylor
Secretary

Mary Perisic
Recording Secretary