

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
Wednesday, December 14, 2005 - 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, December 14, 2005 at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, California. Chairperson Webb convened the meeting at 4:45 p.m. Ms. Audree V. Jones-Taylor, Secretary to the Commission, conducted roll call. A quorum was present.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Valerie Abad, Larry Magid, Theresa Nelson, Brad Ricards, Jeffrey Taylor, Matthew Webb
Absent: Rosa Linda Armendariz, Alex Hahn, Mario Juarez, Holly McClure (excused), Mary Ellen Tong
Staff Present: Audree Jones-Taylor, Gail McMillon, Mary Perisic, Ethel Howze, Lyle Oehler, Dan Gallagher
Guests: Jerry Huff, Anne Woodell, Eva Paul, Laura Casey

3. DISPOSITION OF MINUTES:

A. Minutes of November 9, 2005 meeting:

MOTION: Commissioner Nelson moved approval of the minutes of the meeting of November 9, 2005. Commissioner Magid seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4. SPECIAL ORDERS:

5. DETERMINATION OF SCHEDULE—OUTSTANDING AGENDA ITEMS:

A. PRAC Pending List - No change

6. MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Item12 moved up.

7. COMMUNICATIONS:

8. PRAC COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Commissioner Ricards attended a meeting regarding the 9th Avenue Pier, part of the Oak to 9th project. He advised the Commission to look at this project carefully before taking action.

9. ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORTS:

10. CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS:

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

12. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Renaming of Poplar Community Recreation Center to Willie Keyes Community Recreation Center: Recreation General Supervisor Ethel Howze stated staff's support on renaming the center, and introduced Mr. Jerry Huff of the West Oakland Neighbors who gave a report. Mr. Keyes was a founding member of the West Oakland Neighbors community group. His commitment and contributions to the West Oakland community were extensive. He was instrumental in the building of Poplar Center, worked with the City and the community to obtain funding and have the center designed and built, and he visited the site daily to make sure it was built without cutting corners. For the last 15 years he had an office at Poplar Center and was involved in programs for youth. He was dedicated to improving the lives of youth at the Poplar Center community. Ms. Howze advised that funding has been identified for new signage. Councilmember Nancy Nadel supports the renaming. Ms. Anne Woodell, former chair of the PRAC, stated the Willie Keyes was known as Mr. West Oakland and was a conscience of the community. She added that Poplar Center was built from bond measure funds and Mr. Keyes was involved in the planning process. Commissioner Nelson asked whether the renaming proposal process had been followed. Staff had followed the process as per Council Resolution on Naming Facilities. This item will return to the Commission in January and staff will bring a letter of support from Council and a petition showing community support.
- B. Biking in Joaquin Miller Park: Deferred
- C. Capital Improvement Projects at Lakeside Park: The Commission was asked to review, make recommendations and endorse the various designs of the current projects at Lakeside Park. Mr. Lyle Oehler, CIP Projects Coordinator for the Public Works Agency, gave a presentation. The current projects include work along Lakeside Drive near the Municipal Boathouse, renovation of the Municipal Boathouse, the full reconstruction of 12th Street with park expansion, and park and roadway improvements along Lakeshore Avenue and at El Embarcadero. The projects are funded by Measure DD funds, and the 12th Street Project is also funded by a Coastal Conservancy grant. The Lake Merritt Master Plan, which was adopted by Council in 2002, provided a basis for the planned improvements at Lakeside Park. During the planning process, the full range of stakeholders have been involved. There are five objectives to the improvements: Expanding the park; enhancing amenities such as drainage, lighting, restrooms, fountains; improving estuary connection; improving park programs; improving park maintenance including an urban forest management plan. There will be no net loss in parking spaces.

A presentation was given on each project, and the general scope of work described:

Lakeside Drive/ Municipal Boathouse

- Seismic retrofit and historic rehabilitation of the Boathouse. Conversion of office space to restaurant and boathouse.
- Addition of bike lane on Lakeside Drive, and reduction of traffic lanes from four to three.
- Reconstruction and reconfiguration of Boathouse parking lot.
- Relocation and reconstruction of restroom building.

- Construction of improved pathways including multi-use trail and jogging rail.
- Renovation of the 4.1 acres of park landscaping.

12th Street Reconstruction project

- Reconfiguration of existing twelve-lane expressway to a six-lane boulevard.
- Addition of four signalized intersections for better pedestrian safety and access to Lake Merritt, Kaiser Convention Center, the Museum and Laney College.
- Removal of existing underground pedestrian tunnels.
- Construction of a new large park area with plaza, pier, restroom and landscaping.
- Construction of improved pathways.
- Improvements to the Lake Merritt Channel.
- Construction of vehicular bridge and separate pedestrian bridge over the Lake Merritt Channel.
- Construction of pathways to provide direct access from Lake Merritt to Lake Merritt Channel park.

Lakeshore Avenue/El Embarcadero project

- Expand park land along Lakeshore Avenue.
- Addition of bike lanes on Lakeshore Ave. and reduction of traffic lanes from four to two.
- Construction of improved pathways including a new multi-use trail and jogging trail.
- Renovation of the 9.2 acres of park landscaping.
- Reconfiguration of the traffic couplet at El Embarcadero.
- Construction of a new, formal plaza adjacent to the Pergola.
- Reconstruction of the historic East 18th dock structure.

Ms. Anne Woodell requested to speak. Lakeside Park is the jewel of Oakland. Unlike Golden Gate Park and Central Park, Lakeside Park never had a plan. Trees will need to be removed, but there will be a net gain of trees. This is an opportunity to create a beautiful park for future generations.

Tree Supervisor Dan Gallagher reported on the removal of trees for the projects. The Tree Division conducted a review of the trees proposed for removal, independent from the project management. Mr. Gallagher advised that the park did not have a design, resulting in a number of different species, or a hodgepodge of trees. Some trees are in an unsafe condition due to inappropriate care over the last 50 years, and many are diseased. The Tree Division has held several tree tours for the public and interested Councilmembers, with the next tour taking place on January 7. Most of the removals have to do with the park renovation. The 12th Street project has the maximum number of tree removals at 189, largely due to the widening of the channel. Staff is looking very critically to determine if more of the trees can be preserved. The new trees to be planted would be at least 24 inch box and about 12-15 feet in height. They include oaks, ginkos, copper beech, purple leaf plum, and other high quality trees. Native plants and trees would be used in the channel area. The existing eucalyptus near the Camron Stanford House would remain. All trees proposed for removal are red tagged. All appeals will come before the Commission.

Commissioners expressed the following concerns:

- Commissioner Abad stated that the traffic situation around the Lake that would be worsened by removing lanes and adding bicycle lanes. The park will become more attractive to visitors and bring in more traffic. Mr. Oehler advised that traffic studies were conducted and there will be a lower level of service. However, measures are being taken to help traffic flow more smoothly, such as left turn storage lanes. The area will be safer for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Commissioner Taylor expressed concern that the pedestrian crosswalks across 12th Street would not be safe.
- Commissioner Nelson stated that the impact on traffic would be tremendous.
- Commissioner Ricards stated that the six-foot buffer may not be sufficient for a barrier for kids and dogs that are using the multi use path.
- Commissioner Ricards expressed concern about the reconfiguration of the parking lot at the Henry J. Kaiser Convention Center and the removal of several mature magnolia trees.
- Commissioner Abad inquired whether the maintenance budget would be increased to pay for the increase in parkland.

MOTION: Commissioner Ricards moved to endorse the three (3) projects as presented (12th Street, Lakeshore Avenue/El Embarcadero, and Lakeside Drive/Boathouse) with the understanding that existing trees will not be removed before the new work is to begin; that healthy trees will be preserved to the greatest extent possible, including minor configurations of the path alignment; that reasonable steps be taken to ensure that replacement trees successfully reach maturity; and that sufficient funds be allocated for park maintenance services of the proposed additional park space. Commissioner Magid seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Webb encouraged all Commissioners to attend the tree tour on January 7, 2006. Mr. Oehler advised that they can schedule a private tour for PRAC if desired.

D. PRAC Attendance Report: Noted

13. **COUNCIL REFERRALS:**

14. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

15. **OPEN FORUM:**

16. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- OPR Holiday Party at Dunsmuir House and Gardens, Thursday, December 15th, 6:00 p.m.
- Brad will be attending the Groundworks Trust meeting on December 15th.
- City Stables meeting for prospective bidders on December 15th.

17. **ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Audree V. Jones-Taylor
Secretary

Mary Perisic
Recording Secretary