

**PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**Wednesday, March 9, 2005**  
**Marsha Corprew Lakeside Park Garden Center, Oakland, CA**

**MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

A regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission was held at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, California. Chairperson Webb convened the meeting at 4:40 p.m. Ms. Gail McMillon attended on behalf of OPR Director Audree V. Jones-Taylor. Mary Perisic, Recording Secretary to the Commission, conducted roll call.

**2. ROLL CALL:** (one vacancy)

Present: Valerie Abad, Rosa Linda Armendariz, Alex Hahn, Mario Juarez, Larry Magid, Brad Ricards, Jeffrey Taylor, Mary Ellen Tong, Matthew Webb  
Absent: Theresa Nelson  
Staff Present: Gail McMillon, Mary Perisic, Brooke Levin, Jeanne Zastera, Gerald Smith  
Guests: Brenda and Vasco Bigoniar, Julie West, Lucy Lequin, Aengus McGiffin

**3. DISPOSITION OF MINUTES:**

A. Minutes of February 9, 2005 meeting:

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ricards moved approval of the minutes of the meeting of February 9, 2005. Commissioner Armendariz seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**4. SPECIAL ORDERS:**

**5. DETERMINATION OF SCHEDULE—OUTSTANDING AGENDA ITEMS:**

A. PRAC Pending List  
• Add: Ground Trust Proposal

**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. Request from Center for Dance to sell tickets for a dance event at Woodminster Amphitheatre on July 23, 2005: Ms. Gail McMillon gave a report. The Center for Dance, a for-profit organization, wishes to sell tickets for \$16 at the event. Producers Associates, the

concessionaire at Woodminster, has approved. PRAC approval is also required since this is not a Producers Associates event. Ms. Brenda Bigoniari, Director of Center for Dance, stated that the money from the tickets will help to pay for their instructors, rent, costumes, etc. The sale of tickets will take place at a table near the entrance. Commissioner Ricards was concerned that the ticket price was too high for many Oaklanders.

**MOTION: Commissioner Tong moved approval. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion, which passed with eight in favor and one opposed (Ricards).**

- B. Request from the American Lung Association of the East Bay, "Blow the Whistle on Asthma" to collect registration fees and to have a silent auction at a fundraising event at Lakeside Park on Saturday, September 24, 2005: Ms. Julie West Head Coordinator of the American Lung Association of the East Bay gave a brief description of the event. This is the first time the event will be held in Oakland, the first three years being held in Emeryville. They are expecting 750-800 in attendance. Most of the registration fees will be collected prior to the event, but there will be some on-site registrations. The silent auction will be held on the grassy area across from the Rotary Nature Center, will include about 15 items and take about half an hour. Participants will be encouraged to use public transportation.

**MOTION: Commissioner Magid moved approval. Commissioner Tong seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

- C. Presentation by Brooke Levin, Assistant Director of the Public Works Agency, on the PWA reorganization: Ms. Levin summarized the re-organization of the PWA which included the moving of parks maintenance from OPR to PWA. The equivalent of 168 full-time employees were transferred, including 88 gardeners and grounds related positions, 25 tree division staff, and 42 custodians. The Director worked on a plan to absorb the new functions and figure out the best way to improve service delivery. Three new departments were formed: Design and Construction, Infrastructure and Operations, and Facilities and Environment. One of the reasons that Parks was moved to PWA was to have all of the volunteer activities consolidated under one department. Jim Ryugo coordinates volunteers in the parks and Leslie Estes coordinates creek cleaning. Also under PWA are Keep Oakland Beautiful, Adopt a Park and Adopt a Creek programs. Earth Day will be April 23 and it is our first opportunity to work together on this event as a new team.

Commissioner Webb asked how do we advocate for more gardeners. Ms. Levin advised that when Park Services was transferred to PWA there was a \$1.5 million deficit in the LLAD (Landscape and Lighting Assessment District). The LLAD is funding all of parks, the tree division, electrical services, and other. In the upcoming budget cycle the deficit is up to \$3 million. There is no other funding source available to PWA. Staff has been looking into a number of different options to increase revenues. Commissioner Webb asked about volunteers becoming more active in parks and whether that would cause a conflict with the employees that look at this as a job threat. Ms. Levin advised that PWA is ensuring that additional volunteers will not mean fewer jobs and that volunteers work to enhance what we are doing. Regular maintenance is only done by staff.

Ms. Levin will attend future Commission meetings periodically to provide updates.

- D. Appeal of Tree Removal Permit ND04-198, 1800 Linden Street: Mr. Jerry Smith, Arborist with the PWA Tree Division, gave a report. The property owner requested a permit to remove four of nine redwood trees planted in a small area. The reason for the removal was that the trees are too large for the area, too close to structures and sewer line, and there is a possibility that the trees may cause damage as they grow. Ms. Lucy LeQuin, the adjacent property owner, appealed the staff decision to issue the permit. She indicated that her basis was that the trees were beautiful and add character to the property and beauty to the neighborhood. Speaking before the PRAC she stated that the trees cost to maintain but that they add value to the property. Commissioners Webb and Ricards of the PRAC Tree Committee met on site and reviewed the trees with the tree care company and Arborist Jerry Smith. The committee advised that the trees are not a good selection for the site, but that there is no evident damage to the structures. Mr. Aengus McGiffin of the Professional Tree Company representing the property owner stated that their intention was to thin the trees so that the remaining trees would be healthier. They have not prepared a professional arborists report on the possible threat to the property.

**MOTION: Commissioner Tong moved to grant the appeal and prohibit the removal of four trees. Commissioner Magid seconded the motion, which passed with eight in favor and one opposed (Webb).**

- E. Park Prioritization – PWA Project Management Team: Ms. Jeanne Zastera, Capital Projects Manager, gave a presentation. The PWA Project Management Team is working on a process for prioritizing park projects to prepare for grant opportunities when they come available. Previously, there was no process for prioritizing projects. They prepared a report to City Council: “Status Report on the development of a strategic plan and a prioritization list for City of Oakland parks capital improvement projects based on adopted Open Space, Conservation and Recreation (OSCAR) goals and request for Council direction on the proposed recommendations,” which was presented at the February 8, 2005 Life Enrichment Committee. Staff came up with a “best method” approach, with criteria based on what has worked for other cities. The draft “Proposed Park Prioritization Process” flow chart describes the process:
- a. Council Offices identify priority projects drawing upon OPR/PWA/community input.
  - b. PWA/OPR meets with each Council Office to narrow and select top priority projects/parks.
  - c. PWA conducts assessment; develops scope and costs of projects.
  - d. PWA ranks projects based on established criteria.
  - e. Present project list to PRAC and for Council approval.

The prioritized list would be reviewed every two years with the budget cycle. The list should include a wide variety of projects to apply for the various kinds of grants.

On a related issue, Ms. Levin added that since the OSCAR was approved by Council, the amount of acreage and areas of responsibility have increased substantially without an increase in staffing. Also, often bond measures have money for projects but no money for maintenance.

Ms. Gail McMillon, Acting for the OPR Director, gave a report on the planned Community Focus Group meetings, which will be held in each of the seven City Council districts. The

purpose of the meetings is to gather information from the community on how to improve their parks and recreation programs and what their priorities are for park projects. All workshops and flyers must be in multiple languages and each meeting will have equal access. The Director is requesting that a PRAC member be in attendance at each of the seven meetings. A confirmed schedule will be sent to the PRAC in the next few weeks, along with specific information about PRAC's role.

13. **COUNCIL REFERRALS:**

14. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

15. **OPEN FORUM:**

16. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- California Park and Recreation Society conference March 9-12, 2005
- OPR Brochures will be out this week.
- OPR staff transfers occurred this week, effective March 7, 2005.
- Budget presentation, March 21, 2005.
- Round Table Associates 20<sup>th</sup> National Forum and Training Institute will be hosted by OPR, May 4-8, 2005.

17. **ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail McMillon  
Acting Secretary

Mary Perisic  
Recording Secretary