

MINUTES



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 17, 2002
Baylands Interpretive Center
2500 Embarcadero Rd.**

Commissioners Present: Richard Beckwith, William Garvey (partial attendance), Ellie Gioumousis, Jennifer Hagan, Edie Keating, Lynn Torin

Commissioners Absent: Judith Steiner

Others Present: Jack Morton

Staff Present: Dawn Calvert, Paul Dias, Amy Johnson, Lester Hodgins, Daren Anderson

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order by Lynn Torin at 6:05 pm

AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS: None

BUSINESS:

1. Approval of November 26, 2002 draft minutes. Minutes of November 26, 2002 meeting were approved.
2. Santa Clara Valley Water District, Park Amendment Ordinance for the Matadero Creek project.

Oral Communications:

- Ms. Libby Lucas, a resident of Los Altos, stated that she was concerned about the center of the channel no longer being usable for recreation or vegetation and the loss of habitat by the project. She stated that there are other options and alternatives that have not been considered. She concluded by stating that the project was not a good one, because it was not scoped accurately.
- Mr. Rick Johnson, a Palo Alto resident stated that Palo Alto has a great flood control problem. He asked that another hydrologist review the project and concluded by stating

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that Adobe Creek also has flooding problems that should be reviewed and considered part of the project.

- Mr. Larry Ciardella, President of Ciardella's Garden Supply stated that he was being forced to leave because his business resides on the land that is being mitigated. He stated that his business has been there for 37 years and he doesn't want to move out of Palo Alto, because it is where his customers are. He does understand how important this project is to solving Palo Alto's flooding problem, but he is one of the Top 10 recyclers in Palo Alto. Santa Clara Valley Water District has offered to assist him by relocating his business to Campbell, where they have land available for him to use, but he would prefer to stay in Palo Alto.

Council member Jack Morton asked if the land opposite of the creek, which is currently owned by the city could be traded for the mitigated land, which might allow Ciardella's Garden Supply to remain where it is. Santa Clara Valley Water District Staff stated that this idea had not been discussed as a possible option.

- Mr. Ryan Wiegel, a Palo Alto resident, requested that no chemicals be used in the creek during the project, because of the Steelhead trout living in it.

A brief discussion ensued. Commissioner Garvey stated that he had to leave the meeting and he gave his vote, via proxy, to Commissioner Torin.

Commissioner Hagan made a motion that the Commission recommend to City Council to approve the Flood Control Plan submitted by Santa Clara Valley Water District with a request that the City Council look seriously at alternative mitigation land so that the business of Ciardella's is not destroyed. Seconded motion, Commissioner Beckwith. FOR: 4 (Beckwith, Garvey who was absent voted by proxy, Hagan, and Torin); AGAINST: 2 (Keating and Gioumouis); ABSENT: 1 (Steiner)

Commissioner Beckwith made an amendment to the motion that other potential land swaps be considered (i.e. Adobe Creek), and included in the mitigation section of the Flood Control Plan. Seconded the motion to amend, Commissioner Hagan. FOR: 6 (Beckwith, Garvey who was absent voted by proxy), Gioumouis, Hagan, Keating and Torin); AGAINST: 0, ABSENT:1 (Steiner)

Commissioner Keating wanted to state for the record that while she was satisfied that the habitat and recreation impacts of the project were acceptable, she felt that the Commission would need more study to comment on the flood control aspect of the project.

There was further discussion regarding the proposed habitat and recreation aspect of the plan, as well as additional review of the project by an independent hydrologist.

3. **Community Garden At Cameron Park.**

Oral Communications:

- Ms. Ute Engelke, a resident of Palo Alto, spoke in support of a community garden in College Terrace. Ms. Engelke showed the commissioners a petition of signatures that she had collected from the neighborhood showing support. She stated that there is a growing demand for additional community gardens and that the existing gardens only exist in north Palo Alto.
- Ms. Holly Welstein, a resident of Palo Alto and Secretary of the College Terrace Resident's Association, stated that she was also in support of a community garden located at Cameron Park. She suggested a public meeting be held in order to hear the comments from the residents in the neighborhood.
- Ms. Patricia Becker, Manager of Common Ground, located in College Terrace. Common Ground is a nonprofit organization that educates the public in organic gardens. She stated that there is the possibility of a partnership with the city to teach methods of non-pesticide usage, which would help the City meet its goal. Ms. Becker also stated with regards to the city memo written by Paul Dias, Director of Parks and Golf, she thought the project could be done with less money.
- Ms. Susan Stansbury, employee of Foundation for Global Community, stated that she appreciated the work that Mr. Dias put into the memo. However, she recommended fewer plots and stated that she didn't believe there was any need for an access road. She also recommended that a soil test be conducted in order to determine whether soil replacement was necessary, and that if the city recruited volunteers to do the labor to establish the community garden, it would save money.
- Mr. Paul Dias, Director of Parks and Golf, commented on the speakers' requests and made the following remarks/recommendations:
 1. Liked the idea of collaborating with Common Ground.
 2. Part of the park would need to be kept for soccer usage in order to accommodate the need for athletic fields in Palo Alto.
 3. Plot sizes of 5 feet by 20 feet would be too small because the plot sizes in the other gardens were larger than that.
 4. The access road is necessary in order for the trucks to enter in order to pick up debris.
 5. The grass currently growing in the park must be excavated down deep; otherwise it will continue to grow back up into the plots.
 6. The demolition and construction is necessary and is estimated to cost anywhere from \$3,000.00 to \$5,000.00. Better soil needs to be brought in because the current soil is mostly clay.

7. Mr. Dias wanted to advise the speakers that there are approximately 50 people on the current wait list and he does not know if the residents of College Terrace would actually be the ones to get a garden plot initially.

- Mr. Dias stated that the city will need to develop a Park Improvement Ordinance as a standard operating procedure and that the City is not taking on new projects right now because of the current budget issues. He did recommend a neighborhood meeting and for the residents of College Terrace to investigate fund raising options before this proposal goes to the City Council for approval.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the comments by Mr. Dias.

Commissioner Beckwith made a motion to move forward and schedule a community meeting at College Terrace and for the residents of the College Terrace neighborhood to present a preliminary plan at the meeting. Seconded motion, Commissioner Gioumouis.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the need for field usage in Palo Alto and what the impact of a community garden would have at Cameron Park.

Commissioner Keating amended the motion to encourage community members to work with Mr. Dias to develop a preliminary plan that would include a site option, preservation of soccer uses, costs, and public/private funding options. Seconded motion to amend, Commissioner Gioumouis. FOR: 5 (Beckwith, Gioumouis, Hagan, Keating, and Torin); AGAINST: 0; ABSENT: 2 (Garvey and Steiner)

4. **Online Registration Update.** Mr. Rob de Geus, Recreation Program Supervisor, reported on the results of the new online registration process. He gave the example of one popular class “Marine Biology for Preschoolers” had 30% of it’s participants register online. He also commented on previous concerns shared by the commissioners:

- The Bar Code terminology has been changed to User I.D.
- Libraries will be open during summer camp registration for residents that do not have access to the internet and Library Staff will be available to assist them.
- With regards to online security, for more information call the City’s Chief Information Officer Glenn Loo at 650-329-2492.
- With regards to equal access, free tutorial sessions will be held at the Cubberley Community Centers computer lab on 3 Saturday’s for those individuals who would like to receive training prior to summer camp registration. Residents will continue to have the ability to do “drop off”, “mail in”, and “fax in” registration.

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5. **Resident Vs. Non-Resident Registration.** Mr. de Geus stated that in past surveys conducted, Palo Alto residents have requested, for quite a while now, they be given priority over non residents at registration. Staff has suggested that Palo Alto residents could be given a one-week priority over non-residents, and can begin this, with the Spring 2003 session.

A discussion was held regarding a possible issue for non-Palo Residents who are employed in Palo Alto not being able to enroll their children because classes might be full before they have an opportunity to register. Mr. de Geus agreed that this could be an issue because some programs for example, at the Palo Alto Art Center and the Palo Alto Junior Museum and Zoo do experience up to 50% non-resident participation at times. City Staff will evaluate the impact, if any, in the future.

Commissioner Gioumouis made a motion that City Staff adopt a policy allowing residents to register one week in advance of non-residents for Community Services Department classes and camps. Commissioner Hagan seconded this motion. FOR: 5 (Beckwith, Gioumouis, Hagan, Keating, and Torin); AGAINST: 0; ABSENT: 2 (Garvey and Steiner)

Commissioner Beckwith made a request for a future agenda item to evaluate resident vs. non-resident participation in sports/league programs.

6. **Reflections/Comments On 12/9 Meeting With City Council.** Commissioner Torin asked for comments on what went right and what needs to happen the next time. A brief discussion was held. Comments were made that the meeting was a success and how open and receptive the council was towards the efforts and goals of the commission.

CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS

- Status of the Bay Ridge Trail agenda item was reviewed.
- Appointment of a new chair and vice chair for 2003.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- On January 13, 2003, the City Council will appoint three candidates to this commission.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

