

MINUTES



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
April 22, 2003
Palo Alto City Hall
Council Conference Room
250 Hamilton Avenue**

Commissioners Present: William Garvey, Ellie Gioumousis, Jennifer Hagan, Edie Keating, Judith Steiner and Lynn Torin

Commissioners Absent: None

Others Present: Bud Kritzer, Clubhouse Restaurants LLC

Staff Present: Dan Williams, Greg Betts, Dawn Calvert, Paul Dias, Rob de Geus, Shia Geminder, Virginia Gibbons, Lester Hodgins

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order by Bill Garvey at 7:05 pm

ROLL CALL: Conducted by Virginia Gibbons.

AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS: Change Item #4 (Spring Registration Update) to Item #2, all other items will change accordingly.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: See Item #4 below.

BUSINESS:

1. **Approval of Draft Minutes of March 25, 2003 meeting.** Minutes were approved with one change to Commissioners Present list; Edie Keating was absent.
2. **Update: Spring Registration.** Rob de Geus gave an update on the new summer camp registration process. The majority of feedback has been positive. Out of 500 surveys sent out, 152 were returned (30%). Out of the 152 returned surveys, 89% were very satisfied or satisfied and 11% were dissatisfied. The satisfied customers liked the fact that there were no more lines, it was priority registration for residents, and that it was fair for all who participated. The dissatisfied cited the lack of control over the registration process as the primary reason for dissatisfaction. Other concerns residents expressed were: not enough programs to meet the demand, the registration form was a little

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confusing, is there a way to avoid the “All or Nothing” nature of the lottery and can we use the online registration system for summer camp registration.

Overall staff were very pleased with the results of the new registration

Commissioner Torin raised the question of were all customers reached? Rob responded that in the past 1100-1200 customers responded to register for summer classes, this year over 1500 responded. This would indicate that 300-400 more residents applied for camps this year. In addition, registration dollars were \$50,000 higher than last year.

Commissioner Hagan asked if Palo Alto camps are cheaper? Rob responded that compared to other cities our fees are equal or higher but compared to private sector summer programs our programs are significantly cheaper. Customers appear to be staying closer to home and finding summer activities nearby rather than traveling due to the economy.

Commissioner Torin expressed concern about the fairness of many registrations on one form and several forms in one envelope and asked if it would be possible to have a separate application for each class requested? It was explained that many families need to coordinate their children’s registrations for the summer and therefore this would probably not be feasible. Nevertheless the fairness issue is very important and staff will consider options to further improve the fairness of the process.

Commissioner Steiner requested that staff try to figure out a way to separate forms for a more fair distribution of classes.

Commissioner Garvey asked if the lottery could be done online next year? Rob responded that this may be possible by e-mail or regular mail.

Rob gave a brief update on online registration, explaining that 200 residents logged into the online system for spring registration within the first minute. Approximately \$100,000 in registration revenue (38% of total revenues) came in online, and this was considered a great kickoff. There is no perceived equity issue at this time since the 62% of registrations are still being processed using drop off, mail in or fax in registration methods. High demand classes are experiencing online registration at a rate of approximately 50/50, with drop off registrations. Nothing negative has been heard from customers regarding lack of a home computer to register and most are thrilled by online registration. Online and drop off started at the same time. It appears that drop off registrants had as good a chance of getting their classes as online registrants.

Commissioner Torin asked about the policy for mail-ins that are received early. How are these applications incorporated into the “first come, first served” process, and that if a customer has to work it is not fair to those who cannot make the deadline. Rob stated that he was unsure of the exact policy and would check into this issue and continued that

he believed these registrations were placed at the end of the “first come, first served” stack.

3. **Clubhouse Restaurant Building Improvement Presentation.** Paul Dias introduced Bud Kritzer who passed out a written proposal detailing the renovation plans for the banquet facilities and to make the facility more enjoyable for the general public. Mr. Kritzer explained that the plan is to improve the looks of the facility without expensive remodeling. The purpose for the renovation is to revitalize clubhouse, try to bring in more business, and to give back meeting room space to committees.

The Commissioners comments were favorable on the renovation concept and they agree that the facility is in dire need of facelift. Commissioner Torin would like to see more of a view from the meeting rooms and requested that a new window possibly be added to the corner section of meeting room to open the room and create more of a view. Mr. Kritzer said that LLC will take this change into consideration and will look into enlarging windows.

4. **Update: Golf Advisory Committee Recommended Approval of Golf Fee Schedules for 2004.** Paul Dias introduced Donald Hughes of the Golf Advisory Commission who began an oral communication. Addressing the Commission, Mr. Hughes gave a brief history of the golf course stating that many changes have been made since it’s inception, and that the golf course is now a major investment and should be treated accordingly. There is a putting green, the golf shop and the driving range, which creates 520 known hours of recreation at no charge to the City. In addition, the golf course takes kids off the streets giving them hours of entertainment. Mr. Hughes requested that staff to keep up the golf course should be not be cut since the program pays for itself and that the Commission reconsider the planned reduction in golf course staff.

Commissioner Garvey suggested that a previous idea to consider making golf course a separate entity be reconsidered. Commissioner Hagan questioned the fee schedule “off premise fee rental?” Paul Dias explained that the terminology has changed and that there are rentals for golf course use and club rentals that can be used at other courses. Commissioner Garvey asked about the “fees for driving buckets?” Paul explained that this gives the course the leeway to change rental rates as required. Originally, the City Council set the policy on the golf course and fee schedule has been developed on this policy. Commissioner Hagan commented on seniors over 62 being charged resident and non-resident fees, which is now on the schedule. Paul explained that this has not brought in any criticism from residents regarding rates, only from non-residents and that the golf course is using special rates to fill empty slots to bring in more revenue.

The fee schedule approval will be agendized for the next meeting as an action item for the Commission’s approval.

5. **Update: Special Events May Fete.** Shia Geminder passed out May Fete t-shirts to the commissioners and gave a brief presentation on plans for this year's parade. This is the 81st year celebration of the parade and any commissioner planning to participate should be at Emerson and University at 9:30 am. There are presently 3,200 participants, the planned route has been extended this year to end at Addison School, and the All Schools Fund is hosting a town fair with guest speakers, music, bands, games at no cost and food and drinks for everyone continue to enjoy festivities after the parade. The fair will continue until around 1:00 pm. We have a TV sponsor this year, NBC11 who are airing public service announcements advertising May Fete. Parade footage will be recorded and they will have a float for the Grand Marshalls Lisa Kim and Allen Denton from TV11.

Commissioner Torin would like to see a revitalization of children's involvement in the parade and requested that staff encourage individual children's participation with pets, bikes, and vehicles as was done in the past. She commented that each child should feel that they are free to join in the parade without being part of an organized group. May Fete is not advertised in Enjoy and that it should be incorporated in next year's catalog.

6. **Update: Matadero Creek Project.** Greg Betts addressed the Commission's concerns regarding the project. Mitigation is not always in-kind and that Santa Clara Valley Water District representatives are working with Fish and Game to save Ciardella's. Rather than cutting through parkland, they are exploring options of a diversionary canal. As part of the motion, they have asked for a phased in buffer and build the canal later. Recommendations will go with the PAO to City Council but no date is scheduled at this time.

Commissioner Gioumousis commented that at a prior meeting they said they had to vacate the Ciardella's leased property to plant willows, then said willows could not be planted and that they were going to use oaks. If they can't do either, she felt it is another reason to look at alternatives sites. If they do Emily Renzel's plan, the canal is not needed. She also questioned who makes policy on land usage and changes. Greg responded that he cannot speak to the issue due to the hydrolics and although it is not mandated, the intent is to keep Ciardella's in its present location. The Planning Department is responsible for land use/change policy. Commissioner Steiner questioned the mitigation and the general policy on mitigation. Greg stated that the ARB will look into how the project will look and that the ARB will take into consideration the impact of the project and that any change must be mitigated.

7. **Update Arastradero Trail Maintenance Plan.** Greg Betts introduced Lester Hodgins who passed out copies of his presentation of maintenance plan. The presentation detailed work that had been done according to the maintenance plan and the effects of the rains and customers on the trails.

The commissioners asked several questions regarding the amount of work and staff required to maintain the park. Suggestions were made to post page #23 of Ranger

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Hodgin's presentation for public view to explain the reason for closing the trails. It as recommended that this feature also be added to the open space website.

Commissioner Torin asked how cuts will affect staff work? Lester replied that seasonal staff will be reduced \$8,000 in next year's budget. This cut will eliminate free nature hikes and programs led by hourly naturalists and seasonal rangers. Dan Williams explained that cuts are proposed in the budget are for a two-year period.

Commissioner Hagan asked about the trail between Gate B and the Portola Pasture Trail (formerly known as the Perimeter Trail). She reported that poison oak in this section is really bad. She also noted that old barbed wire fencing along the Portola Pastures Trail is dangerous. Lester replied that because this old trail is difficult to maintain, is redundant of other parallel trains, and is located in environmentally sensitive habitat, the trail is slated to be abandoned and restored to riparian habitat.

Commissioner Hagan asked what happened to construction of a proposed ridgeline trail? Greg replied that this proposed trail was not incorporated into the final Trail Master Plan adopted by the Commission and City Council because it is parallel to a nearby exiting trail.

Commissioner Hagan asked about the very muddy and wet area of the Redtail Loop Trail and what was proposed to remedy this section. Greg replied that a low wooden structure would be built to cover the bog. Work is scheduled to be completed by late summer. He said that earch work would be done first, while the grounds is still pliable, rock work would be done second, and wood structures would be built towards the end of spring. The reroute of the Redtail Loop will be built by volunteers under the direction of non-profit Trail Center in Palo Alto. This reroute is slated to be completed by next fall, or the following spring, when the ground is soft.

Commissioner Keating suggested posting a map detailing these changes for the benefit of equestrians.

Commissioner Hagan commented that exposed rebar pieces on the De Anza Trail are a hazard to horses and cause horses to slip on occasion. Lester replied that more base rock has been installed across the surface of the trail in the area where rebar is exposed that that stall will continue to monitor the area for safety.

Commission Torin asked what plans the City has to buy the 13-acre former Bressler property from the Peninsula Open Space Trust. Greg replied that the City has a three-year option to purchase the property and that seeking grants for the acquisition of this parcel would be one of his personal key plans for FY 2003-2004. Greg mentioned, however, that before work on grant writing was started, soliciting bids for the construction of the proposed 1,100-foot gateway facility would need to be completed so that we would have an idea of how much money will be needed to finish this project. If

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the building is too expensive, a policy decision could be made by the Arastra Fund Board of Directors to spend the money on the purchase of the 13-acre parcel instead of on the building. The Gateway facility is ready to go out for construction bids and bids should be received by June.

AGENDA FOR MAY 27, 2003 MEETING

1. Approval of Golf Fees for 2004 – Action Item – Paul Dias (5 min.)
2. Approval of Proposed Park Improvement Ordinance for Terman Park/PAUSD Improvements – Action Item – Paul Dias (1 hr.)
3. ESC Update – Information Item - ?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The PAJMZ bat habitat is now open. Opening 5/28, 6-8:00 pm.
2. Happy Earth Day.
3. There will be a reception to celebrate the completion of new exhibits at the Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center on Wednesday evening, May 28, 6:00 to 8:00 pm. All Commissioners are encouraged to attend.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:16 pm.

