

MINUTES



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 25, 2004
Palo Alto City Hall
Council Conference Room
250 Hamilton Avenue**

Commissioners Present: Ellie Gioumousis, Jennifer Hagan, Edie Keating, Paul Losch, and Judith Steiner

Commissioners Absent: Anne Warner Cribbs and Jeanette Marquess

Others Present: Jim Burch, Council Liaison

Staff Present: Dan Williams, Greg Betts, Paul Dias, Deborah Bartens, Virginia Gibbons

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order by Chairperson Edie Keating at 7:00 pm

ROLL CALL: Conducted by Virginia Gibbons.

AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS: None

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None

BUSINESS:

1. **Approval of Draft Minutes of April 27, 2004 Meeting.** Unable to approve the minutes as there was not a quorum of Commissioners who attended the April 27, 2004 meeting. This item will be placed on the June agenda.
2. **Naming of SOFA Park and Renaming of Arastradero Preserve.** Greg Betts provided a brief background on the park naming policy and the role that City Council established for the Parks and Recreation Commission. The PARC is requested to review the names suggested by the Palo Alto Historical Association (PAHA), determine if any of the names are incompatible with the intended use of the park, and to make a motion to forward the Commission's recommended name to the City Council for final consideration.



APPROVED

The Commission reviewed the PAHA's list of preferred names and after a short question and answer session made the following decision.

MOTION: *Commissioner Losch made a motion to accept the name Palo Alto Heritage Park. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Steiner. FOR: 5 (Gioumousis, Hagan, Keating, Losch and Steiner). AGAINST: 0*

Oral Communications – Item #2 Renaming of Arastradero Preserve in favor of Enid Pearson Arastradero Preserve

1. **Betsy Allyn, Willmar Dr., Palo Alto:** Ms. Allyn spoke in support of renaming the Arastradero Preserve to include the name Enid Pearson. Ms. Allyn gave the Commission a detailed account of Ms. Pearson's community involvement background, support of conservation and her major contributions to the City, including the City's park dedication ordinance.
2. **Tom Jordan, 474 Churchill Avenue, Palo Alto:** Mr. Jordan also spoke in support of including Enid Pearson's name in the name of the Arastradero Preserve, detailing Ms. Pearson's dedication to park preservation, her importance to the community, and that her contributions need be recognized. Mr. Jordan cited the fundamental role of Enid Pearson is setting the planning and policy structures, which have made today's Palo Alto such a desirable city for both business and residents.

Greg Betts provided a brief background and asked the Commission to review the name recommended by PAHA and the historical rationale that was used to support the recommendations, determine if there is a compelling reason to rename the preserve, and if so, determine whether the name is deemed compatible with the intended use of the preserve.

After a short discussion and wording clarification, the Commission reviewed the PAHA recommendations and made the following motions.

MOTION A: *Commissioner Hagan made the motion that the Commission accept the name Enid Pearson – Arastradero Preserve recommended by the PAHA. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gioumousis. FOR: 5 (Gioumousis, Hagan, Keating, Losch and Steiner). AGAINST: 0*

MOTION B: *Commissioner Hagan made the motion that the Commission agree that there is a compelling reason to rename the Preserve because of Enid Pearson's monumental impact on green space heretofore not recognized, her contributions to Arastradero Preserve, and for being instrumental in the Park Charter initiative. The Motion was seconded by Judith Steiner. FOR: 5 (Gioumousis, Hagan, Keating, Losch and Steiner). AGAINST: 0*

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MOTION C: Commissioner Hagan made the motion that the Commission find that the name is compatible with the intended use of the Arastradero Preserve. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Losch. **FOR: 5** (Gioumousis, Hagan, Keating, Losch and Steiner). **AGAINST: 0**

3. **Discuss Possible Projects to be Funded by Park Impact Fees.** Paul Dias provided the Commission with a brief background regarding the use of park impact fees and the basic criteria for which they are to be used. The fees are intended to maintain existing service levels, add to facilities to accommodate community growth, but cannot be used to cure existing deficiencies. The following outlines steps and ideas for the use of fees.

I Where do the fees come from and how can fees be used?

II What is the process?

III Value of prioritization.

IV Potential use of impact fees:

- a. Park restrooms
- b. Community garden
- c. Greer Park unfinished lot
- d. Artificial turf - parks/school sites
- e. Mitchell dog park expansion
- f. Skate park
- g. Tennis court lighting

Commissioner Losch discussed the need to develop criteria for potential use of impact fees. Paul Dias responded there needs to be further clarification made by the Attorney's Office regarding the exact use of the fees and Paul Dias will follow-up on this issue as there needs to be a sound basis for selective criteria for using the money. Commissioner Losch stated that it is important to reach all interest groups and encouraged staff to advise on the process. Examples of questions for the city attorney included: Could impact fees be used to enhance an existing facility, such as adding artificial turf or better drainage to a soccer field. Could impact fees be used for staff, for example to enhance or add to recreation classes provided? This subject will be added to the June agenda, after clarification is received from the City Attorney.

4. **Discussion of Opportunities for Community Outreach / Community Support of Parks.** Paul Losch presented the following outline, which was created by the sub-committee meeting assigned to review this issue.

A. Objectives

1. Get various interest groups involved in the welfare of Palo Alto's parks and open spaces. Groups can include neighborhood associations, service organizations, athletic leagues, among others.

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2. Provide individual commissioners the opportunity to gain deeper knowledge of particular user groups and for them to serve as the “go to” persons for such groups on matters that are part of the commission’s scope.
3. Enable the Parks and Recreation Commission, outside its formal meetings, to get input, feedback and suggestions from the public about how the City’s recreational programs, parks and open spaces can best meet the interests of Palo Altans as a whole, as well as the various specific interest groups that utilize these Palo Alto resources.

B. Considerations.

1. Must adhere to Brown Act requirements in developing this program.
2. Community involvement activities should be as “hands on” as possible. Examples could include “Adopt a Park” programs for neighborhood associations, with periodic efforts to keep up or enhance the conditions at a particular location.
3. Some prioritization is needed of which groups to involve in this program and what specific City programs and facilities can most benefit from this effort. A “trial phase” with no more than three selected organizations should be carefully considered before attempting to roll this out in a more comprehensive way.
4. Commissioners will need to actively participate in meetings and activities of groups to which they are assigned.
5. Input to Commissioners via these programs should be provided to staff, so that staff can incorporate the input into its planning and activities as appropriate.

Commissioner Hagan stated that she had a major concern with Commissioners being actively involved in meetings and activity groups, and that this involvement could violate the Brown Act, or that statements made by one Commissioner could be construed as the “voice” of the entire Commission.

Commissioner Keating mentioned her concerns of favoritism arising from any liaison role with selected groups, but did express interest in outreach to encourage groups to take on small projects that community volunteers could handle.

Commissioner Losch proposed that the subject discussion cease for now, and that the sub-committee meet at a later date, after more information regarding the dynamics of the Commission has been obtained.

The discussion went on to the question of how much involvement should a Commissioner have when attending community meetings and when it was appropriate for a Commissioner to publicly express their opinions. Council Liaison Jim Burch interjected that

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Commissioners attending meetings must stay objective, that advocating a position is not appropriate, and that generalizations are acceptable.

Both Commissioners and staff felt that this discussion was extremely informative and that a protocol on this subject should be written and included in the guidelines. Dan Williams will work with the Commission to create a protocol.

5. **Modifications/Changes to Park Regulations.** Greg Betts explained that the intent of the revisions is to supplement the ordinance of the Palo Alto Municipal Code that deal with more serious infractions pertaining to the manner in which park visitors use the facilities and appropriate behavior for park and open space use. Greg went on to explain that education is in line with the ranger's goals and that the revisions were intended for flagrant and repeat offenders.

The photography regulations were discussed and it was clarified that permits would be expected for significant projects such as filming a commercial (currently not allowable), and are not intended to limit individual nature photography or photography involved with weddings or other events at city facilities. After a brief discussion on wording, the following motion was made.

MOTION:** Commissioner Steiner made the motion that the Commission endorse the revisions to the City of Palo Alto Park Rules and Regulations and recommend the revisions to the City Council. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hagan. **FOR: 5** (Gioumousis, Hagan, Keating, Losch and Steiner). **AGAINST: 0

6. **Non-native Spartina Control Program at the Baylands Nature Preserve.** Greg Betts introduced Deborah Bartens, who passed out an overview and diagram of the problem at the Baylands. *Spartina alterniflora* (spartina) is an extremely invasive non-native plant that chokes sloughs and channels and completely covers mudflats, which destroys feeding areas for migratory birds. Since 1997, the Palo Alto High School students have been working on surveying the wetlands and have been extremely helpful in collecting data on the spartina in the Baylands.

As part of the Invasive Spartina Project, which is targeting 69,000 acres in the San Francisco Estuary, the City of Palo Alto has hired Aquatic Environments to apply approved herbicides to the original clone site at the Baylands. There is a restricted window of time in which to work in the area because of Clapper Rail breeding and nesting cycle (2/1 through 9/1).

AGENDA FOR JUNE 22, 2004 MEETING

1. Approval of Draft Minutes of April 27, 2004 and May 25, 2004 Meeting – Action Item – (3 min.)
2. Chili Cook-off Update – Information Item - Shia Geminder (5 min.)



APPROVED

3. Infrastructure Status Update – Information Item – Paul Dias (5 min.)
4. El Camino Real Phase II, Mitchell Park Phase II, SOFA Park, and Reviews – Information Item - Chris Rafferty (15 min.)
5. San Antonio Median Design – Information Item – Kate Rooney (15 min.)
6. Environmental Service Center Update – Information Item - Glenn Roberts (20 min.)
7. Park Impact Fee Legal Criteria – Information Item - Paul Dias (5 min.)
8. Community Outreach – Information Item – Paul Losch (15 min.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Commissioner Gioumousis informed the Commission that the Santa Clara Water District is giving grants and that the Preservation Society is apply for a grant to use at the Baylands. Commissioner Gioumousis noted that this grant could help fund a management specialist.
2. Commissioner Steiner spoke regarding an e-mail she received from a concerned citizen regarding concerts being held at Foothills Park and the effects on wildlife. Greg Betts noted that this has been considered and that the upcoming Acterra event is using more restrictions than used previously. The number of visitors are being restricted by using advance purchase tickets only. Visitors are being limited to the front section of the park, to keep the event from being labor intensive and to ease parking/traffic issues. Greg also noted that some concerns are unfounded, such as a pride of mountain lions living in the center of the park.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.