

**PARK AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, April 22, 2024**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Lieberg called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm.

2. ROLL CALL:

- a. Present: Chair Lieberg, Vice Chair Abercrombie and Commissioners Arbogast, Jimenez, and Shrout
- b. Absent: None
- c. Staff Present: Richard Joaquin, Parks Planning & Development Manager; Brian MacDonald, Interim Public Works Director; Jolene Jauregui-Correll, Interim Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director; Justin Geibig, Recreation Services Supervisor
- d. Recorded By: Andrea Pedigo, Executive Assistant and Norma Padilla, Administrative Assistant

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The pledge of allegiance was led by Vice Chair Abercrombie

4. ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

There were no public comments from the audience.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. **THAT THE TRACY PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION RECOMMEND, BY MOTION, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL, FOR THE AQUATIC CENTER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT 78054 (PROJECT), 1) REJECT THE USE OF DEVELOPER'S DESIGN DEVELOPMENT PLANS; AND 2) AUTHORIZE STAFF TO PROCEED WITH BASE PROGRAM – OPTION B WITH A \$55 MILLION PROJECT BUDGET FOR CITY-LED DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT**

Brian MacDonald, Interim Public Works Director presented the staff report to the commission.

Commission questions and comments followed.

Brian MacDonald, Interim Public Works Director answered the questions of the commission.

Chair Lieberg opened item 5.a. for public comment.

Alice English, Tracy resident addressed the commission. She thanked the staff for the report and started by mentioning she has been a community advocate for many years for the aquatic center. Years ago, they used to meet at the community center for workshops about the aquatic center and she proceeded to show the commission a t-shirt from that workshop. She stated that this is something the taxpayers have been waiting for. She remembered options A and B being presented in the numerous meetings, but the 165-million-dollar option had never been presented to the community. This is taxpayer money, their money and this is what the community agreed on, at the time 55 million and then adding 10 million to 65 million. She has staff books from previous meetings showing this information. She hoped the commissioners would think about the cost for taxpayers and be smart about our future and future developments. Her family has been a

Triton family, her kids, and her grandkids are now coaches. She suggested to the commission to make the best decision for the residents and recommended they look back to a meeting on November 5, 2019. That is when the residents went to speak on this concept on the agenda now. She mentioned the number of parking spots that should accommodate, anymore and that would affect infrastructure and the surrounding neighborhood. She recommended to the commission to follow staff recommendations, who should plan to stay within budget using the 55 million available now, and if needed going to 65 million is doable. She mentioned Ellis Development spoke about this project for years, but this is something for all Tracy residents to use. She agreed with one of the commissioners that 55 million is a lot of money, but costs have gone up, so it does seem reasonable. Again, she mentioned to go back to the November 5, 2019, meeting and see all the support this project has from residents.

Rosario Arulappan, Tracy resident addressed the commission. He mentioned this aquatic center is something Tracy residents have been waiting on for more than 16 years. He stated we should already be swimming in the pool, yet we are still in the discussion phases. He would like to know when we are going to start the project. He stated the land now belongs to the city, last month it was acquired from the county. He stated the city knows how to get designs and work with a budget to start the project now, but instead, the discussions continue and are furthering the delay. He stated we should be in action and no longer in discussions. After reviewing all the options, he would be ok with any option, even the 165 million if the developer were to be the one to pay for it, as long as the project started. He mentioned in 2018 there was a grand opening party about starting the project, and now years later the costs have increased so the budget has increased. He stated last year he brought a group of people on June 20th to try to get the council to approve the aquatic center, then again on June 27th more people came to get the item back on the agenda. He mentioned, again on July 5th more people came to the council to say they wanted the aquatic center and finally achieved acceptance. Now it is 8 months later, and the project is still under discussion and again the following week. He stated he does not have time to keep coming to these meetings, he has personal things and work. He suggested whatever the city suggests, option B, is okay as long as the project gets started. He asked staff if it is possible to add a phase 2 after this initial recommendation is built and that he would like further information on operational costs and estimated revenues.

Sandi Taylor, Tracy resident addressed the commission. She thanked the commission for the opportunity to speak and stated she was disappointed to be there to speak on something she has cared for many years. She stated she has been actively involved in the aquatic center discussion since 2005. She indicated she wanted to correct a few things on the staff report; the plan staff recommended to reject as Surland's plans are not Surland's plans but the community's plans. She mentioned up until the summer of 2022, the city, the residents, and Surland were all working together to build the aquatic center. She assured the commission that what was in those plans was not 165 million dollars, she did not understand where the city received that information. She stated during the summer of 2022, the city stopped communicating with the residents and Surland, right about the time all the design documents were being completed; for the report to state that Surland did not consult with the city during the development of their plans is untrue. She stated everyone was working together, and everyone, the city included, was excited to see the plans become reality. She confirmed the report is correct that the design development package has been developed over a period of time, during that time, the city, residents, and Surland were all working together to move the project forward. The plans which the city currently has are a result of almost 20 years of the aquatic task force working collaboratively with the city and Surland. She indicated to correct the staff report, in 2005 council appointed the aquatic task force which was never officially disbanded. She stated Tracy tomorrow and beyond in 2005 was asked to help the council-appointed aquatic task force develop a needs assessment and report back to the council in October of 2005, and that is all Tracy tomorrow and beyond did. She

assured the aquatics task force were a stand-alone task force appointed by the city and were not disbanded; Tracy tomorrow and beyond was disbanded in 2007. She clarified the Tracy concerned citizens for an aquatic center, which she is a part of, was established when the city asked for help to pass Measure V, which happened to be failing. She explained the task force transformed into the Tracy concerned citizens for an aquatic center which walked precincts, knocked on doors, and asked neighbors, family, and friends to pass Measure V and it was passed. She wanted the commission to know that the 334-page design development package happened because of collaborative effort and the willingness of people to work together. She wished the city was willing to do the same, then amazing things could happen. She asked the commission to recommend rejecting option A and B and allowing the aquatic center project to move forward using the community's plans which will best serve the 100,000 residents of Tracy.

Anne Langley, Tracy resident addressed the commission. She stated she was a part of Tracy tomorrow and Tracy tomorrow and beyond; she was 40 years old when she began working on this project and she is now 77 and it hasn't moved forward from a wonderful plan that was designed by the community and is complete and was given to the city when the city asked for it. She indicated it was done in collaboration with the city, she has worked on many projects for the last 40 years for the city. She wished the commission could see the book of plans she had in her car. She believes we should be collaborating again, and she doesn't believe that the best things happen in the community without the community's input. She agreed with all the speakers there, it's really high time, but asked not to reject the work of 20 years, the numbers in the staff report are simply not correct. She stated if there was collaboration with the committee, they could give a report happily and then perhaps an accord could be reached.

Roy Hawkins, Tracy resident addressed the commission. He stated the two options being proposed by staff are a classic example of over-promising and under-delivering. He indicated the residents of Tracy have been promised an aquatic park for the past 20 years; they have all read about it in the Tracy Press, and talked about it at parties, so it is nothing new. He stated an aquatic park has features designed to entertain people of many different facets, lap pools, slides, play areas, lazy rivers, options for everybody, including food options, plenty of shade areas etc. that is why it is called an aquatic park, not a swim center. He indicated the city's proposal strips all the park features and narrows it down to a couple of lap pools, a slide, and maybe a lazy river and this is not what the residents of Tracy were promised and asked for, the list with all the features. He stated this was not the vision, if the city's intention is to only build a 50-meter pool and a rec pool then all the work that has been done together through the community meetings, design plans, all that wasn't necessary; then it's been 20 years of just kicking around as they say in the city council meetings kicking the can down the road for nothing. He really hopes the commission thinks strongly, relooking at Surland's plans, and if nothing else maybe get together with the Surland group and the city and conjoin both proposals and build this the way people wanted it to be.

Richard English, Tracy resident addressed the commission. He stated he was at one of the first workshops they had at the community center; then jumping forward he had a meeting with some people from the Ellis community and they showed him a beautiful brochure of the aquatic center that Ellis was presenting when they were buying the homes. He indicated he had never seen anything like the designs Ellis was presenting, it was like a fantasy world. He mentioned of the three designs he has seen; the first design didn't even include an Olympic-sized pool. He mentioned this was like a bait and switch thing, it was presented as a great center but how would it be sustained; once this aquatic center is built, it will be built from tax dollars, and going to be maintained by the city. He would love to see a beautiful fantasy land, but being realistic we can't afford it. He believes we should start in stages, with the basics, a water slide or two, and definitely an Olympic-sized pool. He stated Ellis always said they were going to build a pool, but here it has

been 20 years and no designs have looked like the brochure. He stated he cannot prove it, but some of the people in Ellis said they paid a premium to have their homes built by the aquatic center. He doesn't know what Ellis was promising the people, but everybody wants an aquatic center, and he doesn't live far away so it would be perfect for him too. He stated his grandkids are all grown now, he does have a 13-, 9-, and 4-year-old, but the original ones that were excited about it while they were in Triton swim are now grown up and away at college. He mentioned every time we get close to starting, something comes up, somebody has a lawsuit going, and to him it is just crazy. He mentioned how difficult it was for the city just to accept the land, 20 years and we didn't even have the land yet and you can't do anything without the land. He indicated, let's get this thing done, the 165-million-dollar fantasy is way out of our budget, and the citizens of Tracy aren't going to pay for it. He stated they don't even know how much it is going to cost to get into the place, is it going to cost like going to Disneyland or Six Flags, how many times can you afford that; in hot weather to go swimming a family of 4 could not afford that. He would like to see it built, it would be good for Tracy, but keep it real and later expand, rather than build something big and no one shows up.

Bernal Sholl, Tracy resident addressed the commission. She stated she has a problem with this whole thing, 165 million dollar is ridiculous, would it have paved streets of gold? She indicated her biggest concern is the upkeep, since we have the 55 million in cash, it should be used for the aquatic park that people will enjoy. She stated the maintenance of it, if it was 10 million dollars a year, where is that money coming from. She shared a story about when the Alameda Coliseum was going to be built, they went around to people to vote for it because Oakland was going to pay for it; later the person building the Coliseum went bankrupt, so the project was tabled and later given to someone else. She stated it was later built and the taxpayers received the bill. She indicated she doesn't mind paying for something small, but she does not want to pay for a 165-million-dollar project, where it could cost 1,000 dollars a day to go there, or even 25 dollars a day per person, it is not going to work because people don't have the money. She stated there is an elite crowd of people that have a lot of money, but there is also the crowd that doesn't have the money, that is trying to find food right now, so we shouldn't even think of the other part of Surland's idea. If Surland wanted to build that, it should have been built 20 years ago with his money and money set aside to maintain it. She stated we have to maintain whatever we have; the taxpayers should not continuously get stuck with the bill. She stated she is a single, elderly person that has a budget she has to live by; she no longer has an income where she can go and make money. She stated she would like to stick with the 55 million plan and reject the developer's plan of 165 million. She mentioned people should pay attention to what has happened to Six Flags and a few other places like these that are going under, do we want to do the same thing or stay within a budget we can afford, maybe 2 dollars a year won't affect taxpayers too much, but 1,500 hundred dollars a year we cannot pay it. She is not only speaking for herself but for a lot of people in Tracy, give Tracy something to be proud of just once. She believes we should bite the bullet, get it done, let the kids go out there and play and see how it works. She stated it probably won't be done in her lifetime, but she would like to see it; she thought it would be done when her kids were young, and they are all grown and married now.

Chair Lieberg checked if there were any representatives from Surland that would like to speak on what staff presented on their behalf.

Public comment was closed, and commission comments followed.

Vice Chair Abercrombie stated he had a flash back from the t-shirt Mrs. English showed about his time on council when they were deciding between a sports park or an aquatic park; that was back in 2006. He stated the sad part about this, is that we have lost the ability to communicate with each other, he doesn't really support either one. He believes we can come up with something

better for the community, he would like to see what Mr. Hawkins suggested, a collaboration. A decision however needs to be made for council in 8 days, were unfortunately a council member will have to abstain because of conflict of interest and where it can end up with a 2,2 and still be nowhere. He stated sadly we don't have the staff to do things, there is a simple BMX pump track project that is pretty simple, a million dollars, we have the land, so he understands everyone's frustration, he is also frustrated. It is just his opinion that he is not very happy with any of the options presented.

Commissioner Jimenez recalled attending the community meetings and the round tables to decide what they wanted and there was a lot of community input. She wanted to confirm her understanding of option B, 55 million, and everything that is included and what is reduced.

Richard Joaquin, Parks Planning & Development Manager answered the questions of the commission.

Commissioner Jimenez stated she does not see a need for a fitness center, and if we could save money, and wouldn't have to reduce the size of the cabana area, that makes more sense. She stated she did not recall the multi-purpose area, but overall agrees the cost of 165 million is too high and we need to be cost-effective. She stated similar to one of the speakers, she is also on a budget, and we have to think about our low-income community, they need an amenity they can afford to.

Chair Lieberg thanked the staff for the report. He stated he was disappointed Surland was not there to present the counter side and provide their input. He encouraged them to come to the council and present their figures, and their timeline so the council could make an informed decision. He stated the council has already approved 55 million, and that is as good as it is going to get right now. In his opinion trying to get more money from the council, is logistically challenging. He stated we have all wanted an aquatic center for 10, 20, 30, 40 years, depending how long each person has been involved in the process; in his perspective, an aquatic center is better than no aquatic center. He indicated whether it is the dream Disneyland version or the 55-million-dollar version, some aquatic center is better than none. He believes recouping the money is the wrong question, this is an amenity, not a revenue maker; when you build an amenity, you are not in it to make money, you are in it to provide a service to the citizens of Tracy. He stated as many of the speakers touched on it, we have to live within our budget, and we have the 55 million now we can use for the project. He indicated the dynamics of the swim community have changed in the last 15 years, both his children did Triton for an extended period of time, and for a short period of time they did year-long Ellis. He stated if you build the 50-meter pool, people will come, and year-long teams will develop and grow within the community. He stated we could use the entirety of Measure V to build the 165-million-dollar version, but this aquatic center is just one component of the overall park system, not the only one. To sacrifice every other amenity to the aquatic center is disingenuous to the citizens of Tracy as a whole. He indicated we have ball parks, soccer fields, multigeneration center that is going forward to try to give as many different resources to the community as possible and using everything on just component, he cannot support it. He stated his concern is, the longer we wait, the cost of the project will continue to increase, increase; in 2013 it was about 40-million-dollar project, couple of years later it was a 65-million-dollar project, then a 125-million-dollar project, now a 165-million-dollar project; all costs go up with time. His recommendation to the council will be to reject using Surland as the designer but use the community input.

ACTION: Motion was made by Commission Arbogast and seconded by Commissioner Jimenez to proceed with Option B and reject Surland's plan. Roll call found Chair Lieberg, Commissioner

Arbogast, and Commissioner Jimenez all in favor and Vice Chair Abercrombie and Commissioner ShROUT opposed. 3,2,0 vote. Passes and so ordered.

ACTION: Motion was made by Vice Chair Abercrombie and seconded by Commissioner ShROUT that Chair Lieberg represent the commission at the April 30th council meeting. Roll call found all in favor, passed and so ordered with 5,0,0 vote.

6. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION:

Commissioner ShROUT wanted to share his thoughts that this is a lot of money, and our community has changed over the last 20 years. He believes an aquatic park is good, but since joining the commission and hearing about summer programming, he has never heard we are sold out or turning people away at the door. He mentioned we do have one pool, but if a team wants to use a pool, they can also use the school pools. He stated we can't find people to work at the pool we have, and if we build this big pool, we have to find people to be lifeguards and that is going to be the tougher road. He indicated, he is not against the pool, but he is for the 55 million dollars being spread out a little bit; Legacy looks great, he wishes Ritter looked like that that is something people could use all year round. He wanted to clear that his "no" is because that is a lot of money, it would be great to have, but it's going to be used 6 months a year if that and it is a huge cost. He stated pools are finicky, a district employee in athletics, he has experience with this, one of the three school pools is always down for maintenance.

Vice Chair Abercrombie stated he is just disappointed we are at a standstill with a lot of stuff, he knows we are short-staffed and the different reasons for that. He wished people would talk to each other and come to an agreement or compromise.

Commissioner Arbogast stated he agrees to keep consideration of the cost and still try to bring variety to people. He indicated to start with what we have now, and we can always build onto it, people have waited 20 years for it.

Commissioner Jimenez thanked the staff for their work and efforts; she understands it has been a very long process, with many changes and she appreciates all the hard work. She looks forward to getting this done for the community and still being wise with our funds. She thanked the residents that residents that spoke and all their comments.

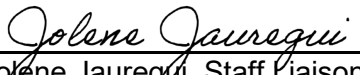
Chair Lieberg thanked everyone for coming and looks forward to seeing everyone at the next council meeting.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

Time of Adjournment: 6:14pm

ACTION: Motion was made by Vice Chair Abercrombie and seconded by Commissioner Arbogast to adjourn the meeting at said time of 6:14 pm. Roll call found all in favor, passed and so ordered with 5,0,0 vote.

The above agenda was posted at Tracy City Hall on April 18, 2024. The above are action minutes. A recording of the meeting is available at the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department.



Jolene Jauregui, Staff Liaison

Interim Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Director