

PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
February 4, 2010

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Atkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **ROLL CALL:**
 - a. Present: James Atkins; Gene Birk; Tim Jayne; Linda Jimenez; Gloria Saltzman; Steve Winchell
 - b. Absent: Walter Gouveia
 - c. Staff Present: Mark Honberger, Recreation Services Supervisor; Kim Scarlata, Recreation Services Supervisor; Floyd Lewis, Recreation Services Supervisor; Kevin Tobeck, Director of Public Works; Don Scholl, Public Works Parks and Sports Fields Superintendent
 - d. Recorded By: Tish Foley, Executive Assistant
3. **ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE:** None.
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JANUARY 7, 2010:**
 - a. Motion: Commissioner Jayne
 - b. Second: Commissioner Winchell
 - c. Abstain: None
 - d. Vote: Passed by unanimous vote
5. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None.
6. **OLD BUSINESS:**
 - a. **Receive an update on Community Garden discussions with Fine Park residents; and approve support of staff recommendation to City Council regarding the Community Garden location:**

Kim Scarlata addressed the Commission. After exploring some other locations suggested by the Fine Park residents and Parks Commissioners, staff identified an area east of the Lolly Hansen Senior Center as a potential location that meets, and exceeds, the project's criteria. Staff explored several funding options and was able to submit a grant for CDBG funding to construct a pilot Community Garden behind the Lolly Hansen Senior Center. If approved by City Council, this site would be funded completely by the CDBG grant funds because it is in the qualifying Low/Mod high density housing area established by the County. Additionally, this location allows staff to keep a visual eye on the garden daily as it is next door to the Parks and Community Services Department and can be easily fenced and secured due to the Civic Center lighting and its location across the street from the Police Department. Therefore, staff is recommending the Lolly Hansen Senior Center location as the pilot Community Garden location. Next steps include an update to the City Council with the new location recommendation for their consideration as well as ongoing meetings with Public Works staff regarding construction.

Comments from the Commission:

 - Commissioner Jimenez: Asked if any neighborhood group showed an interest in participating. Kim Scarlata stated representatives from the Presbyterian Church

expressed an interest and staff will be meeting with them next week to gather more information.

- Commissioner Saltzman: Asked about the size of the new site which is smaller than Fine Park. She suggested Dr. Powers Park as a potential site and felt that being near a school would generate student participation. Kim Scarlata responded that staff initially looked at parks located near schools and selected North School and El Pescadero Park, but that location was found not to be feasible. Commissioner Saltzman added the Bowtie Area might also be a good location.
- Commissioner Birk: Stated he would prefer the Presbyterian Church location as he has seen their plans for a larger site.
- Commissioner Jayne: Asked for clarification of the location and is in agreement with starting out with a smaller site as a pilot project.
- Commissioner Winchell: Would hope staff would consider any potential partners in this project.
- Chairman Atkins: Agreed with Commissioner Jayne regarding the size of the pilot project and added that starting small generates interest and a good opportunity for staff to seek other locations as necessary. Chairman Atkins asked for clarification on the project budget. Kim Scarlata responded the grant request is for \$70,000 which would include storage facilities and perimeter fencing. Kim Scarlata added that additional garden sites can be developed if funding becomes available.

Comments from the Audience:

- David Weisenberger, representing First Presbyterian Church, asked staff to consider a supplemental location and potential partnership between the church and the City.

Chairman Atkins called for a motion to support staff's recommendation to City Council regarding the location. Commissioner Jayne made a motion which was seconded by Commissioner Saltzman and approved by unanimous vote.

- b. **Receive update on report brought to City Council regarding estimated construction and operational costs, and revenues for the proposed Community Swim Center, and approve a Special Meeting of the Parks Commission on February 8, 2010, at 6 p.m. at the Tracy Transit Station for review of the conceptual design:**

Floyd Lewis addressed the Commission and provided an update of the reports brought to City Council regarding the proposed project. Chairman Atkins asked if the conceptual drawings were currently available and stated he would like staff to provide information to the Commission in a more timely manner. Floyd Lewis responded that he was unsure of when the plans would be available. Commissioner Jayne stated he met with the City's Finance Director in December after the project costs were presented to Council, and wondered why the information was not made available to the Commission prior to now. Commissioner Winchell requested the Special Meeting be delayed to provide the Commission sufficient time to review the documents. Staff will email the design file to the Commission as soon as it becomes available.

Chairman Atkins called for a motion to set the Special Meeting date. Commissioner Jayne made the motion which was seconded by Commissioner Jimenez and approved by unanimous vote.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Review and approve support of staff recommendation to City Council regarding policy changes for the Financial Assistance Program:

Mark Honberger addressed the Commission and provided the history of the Financial Assistance Program. He stated that, for the first time in the history of the program, all of the Financial Assistance Funds were exhausted prior to the end of the last Fiscal Year. With funds exhausted in March of 2009, potential participants were left to wait for the new fiscal year to begin in July 2009. Already this year, while just half way through the 09/10 Fiscal Year (as of the end of December 2009), over 70% of the financial assistance funds have been expended. Staff again expects the funds to be completely exhausted prior to the end of the fiscal year and is recommending policy changes that might extend the period of time that funds are available.

The proposed changes were: (1) Reducing the Per Person Allocation; (2) Instituting a Participant Match; and (3) Instituting a Delayed Release of Funds. Having completed the mid-year evaluation of the Financial Assistance Program, staff recommended Option 1, from the following options:

- **Option 1** – Lower the Per Person Allocation for Youth to \$250 per person, and implement a 10% Participant Match.
- **Option 2** – Lower the Per Person Allocation for Youth to \$150 per person, but do not implement a Participant Match.

Mark Honberger noted that the Commission, at its discretion, may provide staff with additional recommendations regarding methods of extending funds.

Comments from the Commission:

- **Commissioner Winchell:** Asked about last year's average and suggested a tiered household cap, rather than individual cap. He expressed concern over the possibility of decreased participation if a match was implemented.
- **Commissioner Jayne:** Suggested a delayed release along with Option 1.
- **Commissioner Saltzman:** Expressed concern about the economy and the participants' ability to meet the match. She would not want to see kids lost from attending and would otherwise get into trouble. She suggested staff consider this a temporary change to be reviewed again in the future.
- **Commissioner Jimenez:** Felt this would be a difficult situation for seniors and families struggling economically. She noted by the Rec Division Updates that there is a high number of youth involved in programs and does not support a 10 percent match. She added that the program should focus on youth and families only.
- **Chairman Atkins:** Asked if other funding opportunities were available to increase the fund. He supports the reduction to \$250 for youth, but doesn't like the idea of a match. He asked staff to consider exploring ways to track how the funds are currently spent and if participants are wasting funds by not attending the classes.
- **Commissioner Winchell:** Suggested a compromise where everyone gets \$150, both youth and seniors, and then anything above \$150 would require a match, leaving the caps at \$250 for youth and \$150 for seniors. Mark Honberger suggested that, at the end of the year, staff will be able to examine the impacts of the participant match.

Chairman Atkins called for a motion to approve staff's recommendation of Option 1 to Council. All Commissioners were opposed to this option. Commissioner Winchell

amended the motion to recommend a lower allocation of \$250 for youth and \$150 for seniors with the participation match taking place for any registration costs exceeding \$150 per person. Commissioner Birk seconded the motion and all were in favor of the motion as amended.

8. ITEMS FROM STAFF:

- a. Directors Report: Mark Honberger reported the playground improvement project has been delayed by the weather. Don Scholl added that El Pescadero's playground equipment has been installed and ground mulch will be going in next week.
- b. Recreation Division Update: Channel 26 will air an informative video presentation on the City's Youth Hoops program. The Commission accepted the report.
- c. Facilities Report: Tracy Transit Station is now open the meeting rooms are being made available to the public for rent. The Commission accepted report.
- d. Public Works and Parks Maintenance Division Report: Kevin Tobeck updated the Commission on the proposed parcel tax for landscape maintenance district for the entire city and the elimination of the Landscape Maintenance Division. A consultant will make a formal presentation to City Council on March 2nd when Council will decide whether or not to place this on the ballot. Don Scholl has been in contact with field users who recently posted letters in the Press regarding the City's field closure policy. He explained why it was implemented and provided them with a phone number where they can receive updated information on field closures. He stated the user groups are being cooperative. Also, Dr. Powers Park sod around the new restroom being has been restored and construction is close to completion.

9. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSION:

- a. Commissioner Jimenez: Would like staff to consider long-range fundraising options. Also would like more advanced notice when making important decisions on projects in order to be effective as a Commission to review, analyze and bring forth questions on these projects.
- b. Chairman Atkins: Encouraged the Commission to be proactive and contact staff with any concerns once they see the Commission's agenda. He also asked for the status of Veterans Park gates complaint. Staff will follow up with the resident and clarify the policy that the gates are to remain locked open.
- c. Commissioner Saltzman: Would like staff to consider fundraising options to continue to provide activities and services.
- d. Commissioner Jayne: Has grant opportunity information from Petco Foundation who would be interested in supporting building a new dog park or enhancing the current dog park. Would like staff to consider utilizing the Commission to actively pursue grants and other fundraising. He also stated he was impressed with how the recent subcommittee meeting was conducted and how the information was provided to the subcommittee. He encouraged staff to continue utilizing this process on future projects. He thanked Don Scholl and Floyd Lewis for their efforts. Don Scholl credited Janet Baniewicz for leading the design project and also Binh Nguyen.
- e. Commissioner Winchell: Thanked staff for the staff report on the swim center and said the comments he received from citizens were also positive.

10. ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE: None.

11. ADJOURN:

- a. Motion: Commissioner Jayne
- b. Second: Commissioner Winchell
- c. Vote: Unanimous
- d. Time: 9:00 p.m.