

**PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
May 28, 2020**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chair Leiberg called the meeting to order at 7:04pm

2. ROLL CALL:

- a. Present: Chair Miller, Vice Chair Leiberg, and Commissioners Costa, Jimenez, and Krogh
- b. Absent: Commissioner Singh
- c. Tardy: Commissioner Magana
- d. Staff Present: Brian MacDonald, Parks & Recreation Director; Richard Joaquin, Parks Planning and Development Manager, Thien Nguyen, Recreation Services Supervisor and Jolene Jauregui, Recreation Services Program Manager
- e. Recorded By: Andrea Pedigo, Executive Assistant

3. ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

Sarah Bai, Tracy CA resident stated she hoped to have a clearer understanding of the timeline. It was stated November 2020 until November 2022 and wanted to know what stage we would be at by 2022. Finally, Ms. Bai requested that the funding source be addressed. She would like to know if it will be City, State, or other sources funding this project. She also had concerns regarding library and cultural and historical dimensions of land.

4. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **REVIEW AND APPROVE THE TRACY NATURE PARK MASTER PLAN AND MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL**

Richard Joaquin, Parks Planning and Development Manager presented the staff report.

Mary Mitracos, Tracy Resident expressed her gratitude to everyone who has worked on this project and stated what an amazing job they have done and what an amazing project this will be. Ms. Mitracos also expressed that she hopes the city pursues the Grant Funding option in order to move the project forward. Ms. Mitracos also hopes that the soil analysis can proceed and not be part of phase O.

Lisa Roth, 1921 S Willow Creek Drive, a Tracy resident and Nature Park Advocate stated how excited she is that we are reaching this next step in the process of creating a Nature Park in Tracy.

Ms. Roth is grateful for the alternative meeting format and appreciates the Commission and the staff in all their efforts at keeping the community involved and able to contribute to the process.

Ms. Roth has included information for grant funding through the Urban Greening Program which was sent to Brian MacDonald, Director of Parks and Recreation. Ms. Roth stated that based on the information she has read, the Nature Park looks to be a prime candidate for this grant based on the requirement listed. She feels the City would be able to achieve their initial phases of 0 & 1 and possibly more should we be approved for the grant.

Ms. Roth encourages the Commission to take opportunity into consideration when making the recommendation to City Council.

Ms. Roth encourages the City Council and staff to take advantage of this opportunity as the deadline to submit is mid-July.

Ms. Roth feels the grant would especially be important to incorporate as part of our communities economic and public health recovery from the stay in place order and the pandemics impact on Tracy.

Ms. Roth expressed to please reach out as the Tracy Nature Park Advocates will assist in any way to help gain points for the grant by writing letters or submitting additional information.

Commission questions and comments followed.

Commissioner Krogh questioned the funding for the project with Prop 68 and if there is a set amount or if it will be determined what we get.

Richard Joaquin answered Commissioner Krogh's question and stated the ask will be approximately 5 million. Mr. Joaquin explained they are looking at other funds through Swenson Hawk Mitigation Fund with \$ 370,000.00 in that fund.

Commissioner Costa and Commissioner Magana in agreement with proposal.

Commissioner Miller expressed there are great elements to this project, however, he would like to focus on an area that needs change. Commissioner Miller feels that in terms of the phasing, the elements and recommendation are good, but he thinks it would be a mistake for us to make the step between phase 0 (now) and phase 1 so high. He explained that phase 0 (now) has low cost improvements to making the site better, however, there is a huge increase in cost between phase 0 (now) and phase 1 because we are adding a street intersection to access the park along with temporary trailhead restrooms. He feels it would be a much better strategy if we replaced phase 0 (now) with a phase A and phase B. He suggested to take the low cost elements from phase 1 and phase 2 and put them in phase A & B and fund that through fundraising and community funding in order to not delay the process while we wait for grant funding to be awarded. The elements he suggested move were the earth moving elements such as: wet meadow zones, habitat islands, hills, buffers, wind breaks, and ¼ mile trail loop with benches. Chair Miller expressed that he feels the above items can be achieved with local

fundraising and contributions and feels that if we move soft elements up to a sooner phase, that we will get more community investment.

Richard Joaquin, Parks Planning and Development Manager thanked Chair Miller for his comments. Richard went on to explain the process in how they strategically phased the project and explained these are recommendations or guidelines that are not set in stone and as funding comes available these phases can be changed.

Commissioner Costa feels we should keep the phases as they were presented to us in the plan from WRT, LLC.

Commissioner Magana feels we should secure funding first and leave the phases as they were presented to us from WRT, LLC.

Vice Chair Leiberg stated where funds are available he's an advocate for the building of amenities.

Commissioner Jimenez emphasized the caller Ms. Bai that indicated should would like to see the Cultural Native History and staff stated it was under page p – Nature Lost. Commissioner Jimenez stated if you refer to that, it does not give great detail on the Indigenous Tribes that lived on this land. Commissioner Jimenez would like to consider information be added to the Nature Center such as a plaque or something that shows or identifies who the original tribes were on the land. She feels this is important for historical purposes.

Commissioner Jimenez continues to page 26 were it talks about the Interpretive Nature Center and building that out but no further details. Commissioner Jimenez feels that we need to decide what we need in this center other than staff such as wildlife or educational programs.

Commissioner Jimenez continues to pages 45-47 where it discusses the phase development of phase 3 that a driveway entry and parking lot in conjunction with Larch Clover Community Center that we know is a county facility/park. Commissioner Jimenez mentioned a possible conversation with the County for shared cost if feasible.

Commissioner Jimenez's final concern was regarding the habitat and wildlife that was stated on pages 71-74 where is states this land is not suitable for certain species. Commissioner Jimenez suggested we look at a plan to talk with a Naturalist to come up with a method on how to get these species to return to the land.

Lastly, Commissioner Jimenez addressed the questions regarding the benches and stated we would continue with the guidelines when placing the benches along the pathways.

Commissioner Miller made a comment that if there is not support for the restructuring the phases, he suggested we add verbiage to council along the lines that improvements to the park not be defined by what's in each phase but to occur as funding becomes available.

ACTION: Motion was made by Chair Miller and seconded by Commissioner Magana to approve and recommend to City Council the Nature Park Master Plan with the addition on page 51 that states phases identified in this report are a guideline but park improvements could occur as funds become available without regard to specified phases. Roll call found Chair Miller, Vice Chair Leiberg, Commissioners Costa, Krogh, and Magana all in favor; passed and so ordered. Commissioner Jimenez was not in favor.

For the record, Commissioner Jimenez stated she approves and recommends the Nature Park Master Plan as presented by WRT, LLC to City Council, but does not approve the added verbiage that was motioned by Chair Miller.

b. **REVIEW AND APPROVE THE PARK BENCH AND PLAQUE HONORING MR. PARMJIT SINGH IN GRETCHEN TALLY PARK AND MAKE RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL**

Thien Nguyen, Recreation Services Supervisor presented the staff report.

Sarah Bai, Tracy, CA resident is in support of this motion especially that it incorporates community members into the landscape as well as adding a layer of history in the park. She feels it will also bring us together and increase the history in the park.

Pete Mitracos, Tracy, CA resident had a question in regards to the material of the bench. Is it resin or concrete and do we have these types of benches elsewhere in Tracy?

Thien Nguyen, Recreation Services Supervisor responded that they chose this bench as it matches the existing benches at Gretchen Tally Park.

Richard Joaquin, Parks Planning and Development Manager responded to the material and stated that this will be a pre cast bench and there are several of these benches throughout our Parks.

Elessia Davis wanted to thank the commission and staff for hearing and considering the request for the placement of the plaque and bench honoring Mr. Singh. She stated she is in full support and it's a wonderful thing to do to show solidarity throughout out City.

Vice Chair Leiberg read the comment from Richard Holbrook. Richard Holbrook asked if this material will be hot during the summer?

Richard Joaquin, Parks Planning and Development Manager stated that the concrete material will get hot in the summer, however, we will strategically place the bench under a shade tree will be used to lower the risk of it heating up in the summer.

Commissioner Krogh is in full support and feels this is a great way to recognize Mr. Singh. He also wanted to state that he was pleased to see that a developer, Taylor Morris stepped up to help fund this and feels this will help bring it to fruition.

Commissioner Costa is in full support and feels it is a great idea.

Chair Miller had a question regarding the plaque and where it will be located.

Commissioner Costa responded to Chair Miller stating that Attachment A states it is a 9in x 6in cast iron plaque that will be placed in the bench.

Commissioner Miller commented that he wanted to make sure the plaque would be in a visible location and he feels the staff has accomplished this by placing it in the bench. Commissioner Miller supports this idea and stated it is a great way to memorialize Mr. Singh.

Commissioner Magana supports the idea and feels this is a great way to honor Mr. Singh. She stated she likes how it will blend with all the other benches in the park and that the plaque will be visible. She also stated she would like to see it in the shade so the community can come and sit to honor Mr. Singh.

Commissioner Jimenez is in agreement and is delighted we are moving this forward to Council.

Commissioner Leiberg conquers.

ACTION: Commissioner Miller made the motion and Commissioner Krogh seconded the motion to approve the park bench and plaque honoring Mr. Singh and make a recommendation to City Council.

5. PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR REPORT

Brian MacDonald, Parks and Recreation Director presented the directors report.

Commission questions and comments followed.

6. ITEMS FROM COMMISSION

Commissioner Krogh thanked the staff for supporting the Commission during the Webex meeting. He also thanked the Parks staff for all their hard work in having to make difficult decisions of closing the parks during this time and he is happy to see that the parks are beginning to reopen.

Commissioner Magana thanked the staff for all their hard work. She stated she has heard a lot of feedback from the community during these hard times and feels the city has done a good job. Commissioner Magana commended everyone for all their hard work and it proud to be part of a city that goes above and beyond for their community.

Commissioner Jimenez thanked the City of Tracy IT and the staff for establishing a method for the Commission to meet and allow the public to have access. Commissioner Jimenez thanked those of the community who participated via phone or email as the Commissioner is here to serve them. Commissioner Jimenez thanked Mary and Pete Mitracos, Lisa Roth and other members of the community for their participation in tonight's meeting. Commissioner Jimenez also encourages the community to continue to participate in future meetings.

Commissioner Jimenez thanked Vice Chair Leiberg for leading tonight's 1st WebEx meeting and stated he did a great job.

Commissioner Leiberg thanked the staff for all their efforts in getting us back in a meeting. He thanked the staff for maintaining and reopening of the parks. Commissioner Leiberg thanked the citizens for their participation in tonight's meeting.

7. ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Alice English, Tracy CA resident, thanked the Commission and the staff for all their hard and support that was put into getting us the Nature Park and also for the bench and plaque honoring Mr. Singh

Ms. English stated that in November of 2019, Parks was always a priority and for some reason has since been taken off the priority list. Ms. English supports the swim center, however, encourages that our Parks Commission gets Legacy Fields back on the priority list as she feels it should have never been removed as Legacy Fields is shovel ready. Ms. English went on to state that Legacy Field needs restrooms especially now in light of the pandemic and feels that we can fit this into our budget even though there is a deficit she feels we can work around it to finish before spending 60 million on the Aquatics Center.

Ms. English stated that she was going to ask this be agendized but feels it is too late now that it will be going back to council in July. Ms. English encourages the Commission and the audience to support this as it should have been done. She stated that the soccer and baseball fields need a parking lot and restrooms for sanitation purposed with the pandemic and we need to get this done.

Ms. English ended with she understands we need to get the Aquatics Center going but not at the expense of Legacy Fields.

Lisa Roth, Tracy Nature Park Advocate thanked the Commission for their vote and gave an extra thank you to Chair Miller for initiating the idea of a Nature Park.

Commissioner Jimenez respectfully requested to reopen Item 6: Item from the Commission so Commissioner Miller can speak now that his audio has returned.

Commissioner Miller thanked Commissioner Jimenez for coming back to him, but he stated no comments and moved to close the meeting.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

Time of Adjournment: 08:48 p.m.

ACTION: The motion was made by Commissioner Costa and seconded by Commissioner Magana to adjourn at the said time of 8:48p.m. Roll call found all in favor, passed and so ordered.

The above agenda was posted at Tracy City Hall on May 21, 2020. The above are action minutes. A recording is available at the Parks and Recreation Department.



Brian MacDonald, Staff Liaison