



**City of Santa Barbara
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

**Park and Recreation Commission
Special Joint Meeting With
County of Santa Barbara Parks Commission**

Thursday, April 6, 2006

Minutes

The Special Joint Meeting of the City of Santa Barbara Park and Recreation Commission and County Parks Commission was called to order by Chair Forsell at 7:03 p.m. at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara, CA.

ROLL CALL: City of Santa Barbara Park and Recreation Commissioners Present

Steve Forsell	Park & Recreation Commissioner
Ada Conner	Park & Recreation Commissioner
Arnoldo Gonzalez	Park & Recreation Commissioner
Beebe Longstreet	Park & Recreation Commissioner

City of Santa Barbara Park and Recreation Commissioners Absent

Daraka Larimore-Hall	Park & Recreation Commissioner
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County of Santa Barbara Parks Commission Present

Suzanne Perkins	1 st District
Darlene Chirman	2 nd District
James Hickling	3 rd District
Gene Peterson	4 th District

County of Santa Barbara Commissioners Absent

Bailey Hudson	5 th District
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City of Santa Barbara Staff Present

Nancy L. Rapp	Parks & Recreation Director
Allyson Biskner	Associate Park/Natural Areas Planner
Karla Megill	Executive Assistant

County of Santa Barbara Staff Present

Jim Isaac	South County Deputy
Terri Maus-Nisich	Assistant to the County Executive Officer
Claude A. Garciacelay	ASLA, Park Planner
Sharon Foster	Administrative Secretary

1. **JOINT MEETING WITH SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION REGARDING FRONT COUNTRY TRAILS – FOR INFORMATION**

a. Welcome and Introductions:

Commissioner introductions were held. Ms. Rapp introduced City, County, and USDA Forest Service staff.

b. Purpose of Meeting:

Chair Forsell reviewed the purpose of the meeting. He indicated that the Commissions will receive a background report from staff on the management and multi-use issues of the front country trails; hear a presentation on the proposal developed by the Front Country Trails Working Group; and receive comments from the public regarding the matter. He stressed that the Commission will not be taking any action on the matter at the meeting.

Ms. Rapp reiterated the purpose of the meeting. She further stated that there are issues related to the front country trails which include maintenance, safety, and multi-use. Ms. Rapp stated that the meeting is multi-jurisdictional because the City of Santa Barbara, County of Santa Barbara, and the Los Padres National Forest Service share jurisdictional oversight of Santa Barbara's front country trails. She said that the City, County, and Forest Service require different review processes to receive public input. Ms. Rapp indicated that this is the first meeting of several to take place on the matter, and it is expected that after this meeting, each commission will hold separate public meetings for further discussion, public input, and deliberation. She said that staff is trying to create a structure where there will be consensus. Ms. Rapp further stated that recommendations from each Commission will be provided to the Forest Service, which is working directly with the various trail-user groups.

Ms. Rapp indicated that staff has received a great deal of written public comment in the form of letters and emails. She said that those comments have been shared with each agency and the Commissioners.

Ms. Linda Riddle, USDA Forest Service, Santa Barbara District Ranger, expressed appreciation for the work of the City, County, Forest Service, and Front Country Trails Working Group in putting this meeting together. She said that she looks forward to working with the City and County to develop positive solutions to the issues regarding the front country trails.

Ms. Terri Maus-Nisich, Assistant to the County Executive Officer, commented that parks, recreation, and trails cross all boundaries in the community. She expressed the hope that as we go through the public

review process that we will find a true model of interregional cooperation, because that is so important for parks and recreation in our community. Ms. Maus-Nisich stated that she is confident that as we move forward there will be a good, strong partnership as we continue to work through the issues facing the front country trails.

- c. Park and Recreation Department, Santa Barbara County, and USDA Forest Service, Los Padres National Forest staff will provide a presentation regarding Front Country Trails:

Allyson Biskner, City of Santa Barbara Associate Park Planner, and Kerry Kellogg, USDA Forest Service Wilderness Manager, provided a presentation regarding the front country trails.

Ray Ford, Santa Barbara Trails Alliance, presented the Front Country Trails Working Group proposal.

City Park and Recreation Commissioner Longstreet asked whether there will be restrictions for horses during the trial period. Ms. Biskner indicated there would not be any restrictions on horses during the temporary trial period; the restrictions would be on bicycle use only. Ms. Longstreet commented that the conflict still exists then. Ms. Biskner indicated that many of the equestrians have decided not to use the front country trails any longer. Ms. Biskner said that the committee is trying to give a little breathing room because of the high speed of the downhill bicyclists.

County Park Commissioner Chirman asked for clarification regarding the odd even proposal. She said there have been two different descriptions of the proposal: one is that all trails are on the same cycle, and the other is that different trails are on a different system, so that on any given day there are trails that could be ridden by any user. Ms. Chirman asked which proposal is accurate. Mr. Ford answered saying that the idea was not to create a program that institutionalized this, but to create a period of time that allowed hikers and equestrian users, who felt disenfranchised, to feel there was a period when they could use the trails safely, while the other problems were being worked on.

County Park Commissioner Perkins asked for clarification regarding the agency performing the trails maintenance, saying that some of the pictures in the presentation were the same ones she saw in 2005 at the Montecito Trails Foundation Annual Fundraising meeting. She said that her impression is that the Trails Alliance was the organization doing all the work, yet when she was at the Montecito Trails Foundation meeting, that the work was being done on behalf of Montecito Trails Foundation. Ms. Perkins said that the Montecito Trails Foundation did the GPS, trail designations, trail maps, and identification. She asked whether the Trails

Alliance is taking over maintenance of the trails. Mr. Ford responded that there was a period of time when the Trails Alliance started coordinating maintenance with the Montecito Trails Foundation. He further said there were several slides in his presentation that represented Montecito Trails Foundation work. Mr. Ford said that Alliance was coordinating efforts with the Montecito Trails Foundation so that there was no duplication of efforts.

Ms. Perkins stated that she has been on the County Parks Commission for 14 years, and before that she served on the Montecito Trails Foundation, and before that she served on CRAHTAC. She said that until this past year, she had never heard of the Trails Alliance. Ms. Perkins agreed that all of the groups need to work together.

- d. Public comment regarding the management of Front Country Trails and the Working Group's proposal.

The following individuals spoke during public comment. An audio copy of their comments are on file at the Parks and Recreation Department.

Dave Everett from the Multi-Use Trails Coalition, Cort Flinchbaugh, Thomas Flinchbaugh, Flemming Bertleson, Dorothy Littlejohn, James Jackson, Susie Thieldmann, Edward Easton, Jim Childress, Tony Biegan, Tammy Maromonte, Kristin Kiley, Philip Kirst, Chris Orr, Paul Herning, Jeff MacFarland, Lynn Sherman, Kat Post, Steven Dougherty, John Venable, Bonnie Chavarria, Daryl Abrams, Sarah Jenkins, Bill Davidson, John Bolton, Maxi Decker, Laura Fildey, Maureen Masson, Sean English, Shawn Hill, John Berberey, Jeff Tinnon, Robert Mesick, Gloria Hall, Jaime Goldstein, Allan Doyle, Dan Gira, Kristina Thorpe, Robin Cederlof, Kalon Kelley from CRAHTAC, Si Jenkins, Nik Blaskobich, Ada Babine, Joshua Rebol

- e. Discussion and comments from the Commissions.

Ms. Rapp stated that she and Ms. Maus-Nisich suggested each body consider appointing two liaisons to work with staff, the Forest Service, and the Front Country Trails Working Group, representing the Commission during the process. She said that each liaison could then attend the other's Commission meeting and report on the progress, which would enable the sharing of information between the City and the County. Ms. Rapp indicated that the Commissions could not take the action during this meeting, but they could at their next regular meeting. Ms. Rapp said the Forest Service would like general feedback on the proposal. Ms. Rapp suggested they look at each of the four main elements of the proposals and provide input.

County Parks Commissioner Chirman asked what a trail break-in is. The County Sheriff responded saying that trail-users park at the bottom of the trail and their cars get broken into. Ms. Chirman said she is pleased to see the process moving forward. She stated that she believes it the odd even proposal would be difficult to enforce. Ms. Chirman said that in terms of fairness and whether it would be workable is questionable. She said that the bell use seems easy, but it seems that only a small number of bikers are using it, so whether or not there would be cooperation with respect to the odd even proposal is very questionable.

City Park and Recreation Commissioner Conner said she would like to see a comparable trails study from another area where something like this has been initiated. She asked staff look into the matter. Ms. Conner said there is hope, citing the work done at the Douglas Family Preserve Off-Leash Dog issue and the Skateboard Park. She said she feels positive that a reasonable solution can be reached. Ms. Conner agreed that establishing an advisory committee to work on the matter is a good idea, and the Commission might consider that. Ms. Conner said that safety is an important issue. She said she liked the comment one public speaker had about this issue being comparable to snowboarding and skiing, saying that we could look at it that way, if designing trails, maybe we could have extreme trails, etc., so we can facilitate this. Ms. Conner referred to a comment made by another public speaker who said "We aren't going away", saying that is true. She commented that as much as the Commissions want to make trail use as safe as possible, recreation needs to be provided for everyone. Ms. Conner pointed out that there are many mountain bikers out there, and if it is true that bikers are coming from out of town, for a business, that needs to be looked at. Ms. Conner said that she is not in favor of the odd even days.

County Parks Commissioner Perkins said she knows that staff have put a lot of effort into this issue and commented staff for those efforts. She expressed concern about the public process. She said the trails are multi-use and it is critical that the public process be protected and that everyone be able to attend the meetings to have their voice heard. Ms. Perkins said that in the end the City Park and Recreation Commission and the County Parks Commission working in conjunction with the USDA Forest Service will make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and City Council regarding the policies put into place for the trails. Ms. Perkins said that it is not up to the Trails Alliance to determine policy, to determine if there is to be a master plan, and how it is going to be implemented. She said that if there is a master plan it will be up to the City Park and Recreation Commission and the County Parks Commission making recommendations to the Boards of Supervisors and the City Council. Ms. Perkins said it is not a matter of numbers. Ms. Perkins stated that she would like to see everyone work together, and the main idea is safety. She recommended

that staff establish an Ad hoc Committee sponsored by the City, County, and Forest Service and open to the public all the time. She further suggested that the Montecito Trails Foundation be involved in the process. She said that the Montecito Trails Foundation provide money to maintain the trails, and the County would not be able to get the trails cleared and the trail work done, or new trails if it were not for the Montecito Trails Foundation. Ms. Perkins said she is positive that we can reach a solution, but everyone needs work together. She said that if everyone cannot work together, then it will come back to the Commissions to make decisions. Ms. Perkins stated that not every person will be happy with the results, but there will need to be compromises. Finally, she said that she is not in favor of the odd even proposal

City Park and Recreation Commissioner Longstreet commended the working group for getting this far. She said she agrees with the first three items of the proposal. She said that she felt better about the odd even proposal after hearing about Gibraltar Road. Ms. Longstreet said that she likes the idea of having an alternative way to get down a trail. She said that times are changing and we need to make room for the Mountain Bikers. She said it is healthy sport. Ms. Longstreet encouraged users to act responsibly when using the trails. She said she looks forward to working on this issue at the Commission level and making recommendations regarding the front country trails.

County Park Commissioner Hickling thanked staff and the public for their efforts, but said there are too many proposals. He agreed that a Working Group should be established to work on the issue. He suggested a maximum of seven people consisting of *any* organized group who uses the trail, two Commissioners, City, County, and Forest Service staff to work together to make recommendations to their individual Commissions, so that recommendations can be made to the Board of Supervisors, City Council, and the Forest Service. Mr. Hickling commented that there is not enough of a concerted opinion here that would allow him to decide the path to take. He indicated that he would like to hear more articulate data in a public-faced manner.

County Parks Commissioner Petersen thanked the public for their participation in the process. He said that a lot of meaningful information has been provided, which will ultimately allow the Commissioners to make the decision and recommendations. Mr. Peterson said he has learned a lot about front country trails. He expressed concern over the short-term versus the long-term solutions, saying that we need to get from where we are today to a decision without any accident along the way. Mr. Peterson indicated that the odd even proposal may not be a workable solution, especially in the long-term. He said safety and education are the most important items that will guide them in determining a solution to the

problem before the Commissions tonight. Mr. Petersen said that we should not reinvent the wheel, and need to look at how other cities have approached the issue. He agreed that the working group is a good idea.

City Park and Recreation Commissioner Gonzalez expressed a need for more statistical information about the number of people using the particular trails. He said that the information the Commissions currently have is from 1989. Mr. Gonzalez said that once that information is known, a recommendation can be made,

City Park and Recreation Commission Chair Forsell stated he has been using the trails for 30 years, on and off. Mr. Forsell concurred that the odd even days is not feasible and is not enforceable. He asked that the matter be placed on the Commission's next regular agenda for further consideration and discussion. Mr. Forsell expressed he was impressed with the number of volunteers working on the trails over the past year.

Ms. Rapp suggested staff work with the Forest Service to develop a proposed working group composition for the Commissions' consideration, and perhaps even a timeline for how the public working group process might move forward, and share that recommendation with both Commissions for comment and action at a later meeting. Mr. Forsell concurred.

County Parks Commissioner Perkins suggested that the committee be given a different name than Trails Working Group to avoid confusion.

County Parks Commissioner Hickling said he would support that recommendation and that the committee be a public committee properly authorized by the Commissions with the authority to make recommendations. Ms. Rapp responded that any committee established by the Commissions would be governed by the Brown Act.

City Park and Recreation Commissioner Longstreet asked if we are starting over again, stating that staff has put a great deal of effort into the process. Mr. Forsell said that we will use the information provided tonight as a baseline and proceed from here.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:30 p.m., with no further business to come before the Commission,

Commissioner Gonzalez moved, seconded by Commissioner Longstreet, and passed 9/0 that the meeting be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Nancy L. Rapp
Parks and Recreation Director