



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

**Special Work Session
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

Monday, August 5, 2009

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chair Longstreet at 3:35 p.m. at the Carrillo Recreation Center Meeting Room, 100 E. Carrillo Street.

ROLL CALL: Commissioners Present

Beebe Longstreet	Park & Recreation Commissioner
Ada Conner	Park & Recreation Commissioner
W. Scott Burns	Park & Recreation Commissioner
Daniel E. Hochman	Park & Recreation Commissioner

Commissioners Absent

Daraka Larimore-Hall	Park & Recreation Commissioner
Diego Torres-Santos	Park & Recreation Commission Intern

Staff Present

Nancy L. Rapp	Parks & Recreation Director
Jill Zachary	Assistant Parks & Recreation Director
Sarah Hanna	Recreation Programs Manager
Judith McCaffrey	Recreation Programs Manager
Santos Escobar	Parks Manager
Karla Megill	Executive Assistant
Rich Hanna	Sr. Recreation Supervisor
Jason Bryan	Sr. Recreation Supervisor
Antonio Velasquez	Sr. Recreation Supervisor
Joan Kent	Assistant City Administrator

PUBLIC COMMENT - No one wished to speak

1. Prioritization of Department Services in Light of Additional Budget Reductions for Fiscal Year 2010 Budget and Anticipation of Fiscal Year 2011

Overview and Objectives for Worksession:

Ms. Rapp provided an overview of the meeting and reviewed the objectives for the worksession.

Status of Anticipated Fiscal Year 2010 and Fiscal Year 2011 Reductions:

Ms. Rapp reviewed the current budget target numbers and said the reductions are beyond what the Department and Commission are accustomed to; this time we are to the point where we must really make difficult cuts.

Chair Longstreet commented on the Commission's purpose stressing that they are the voice of the community and provide advice to City Council; but do not make final decisions. She further stressed that when it comes to position reductions and employee layoffs, employment rules must be complied with.

Department Approach to Fiscal Year 2010 Reductions:

Ms. Rapp reviewed the Department's strategy for the Fiscal Year 2010 reductions. She indicated there are two Parks Division vacancies and one vacancy in the Aquatics section. Additionally, she advised that Scott McGregor is no longer with the City, and the Business Manager position is vacant. She said those vacancies along with equipment reductions will equal approximately \$300k in reductions. Ms. Rapp said she hopes that number is close to what the Department will ultimately be asked to achieve in reductions for the year.

Department Mission Statement:

Ms. Rapp briefly talked about the Department mission and said that the Commission may ultimately decide to revisit the mission statement.

Commissioner Hochman commented on the Department mission indicating his focus on the words "diverse" and "varied". He further asked what is meant by "Promote Stewardship of Resources".

Ms. Rapp explained the reasoning behind the use of the words "diverse" and "varied". There was some discussion about the statement "Promote Stewardship of Resources".

Ms. Rapp reiterated that the Commission may decide they want to revisit the mission statement.

Review of Draft Proposal for Prioritized Levels of Service:

Ms. Rapp reviewed the draft proposal for prioritized levels of service.

Comments regarding Level I:

Chair Longstreet commented that parks can become a public nuisance if they are not maintained. Commissioner Hochman said the parks could be closed.

Chair Longstreet commented that some parkland could be sold, but several years ago, the City tried to sell parkland and it was a very contentious issue.

Commissioner Burns stated that instead of selling property, property could be leased, and let the leasee be responsible for maintenance. Chair Longstreet said for facilities that is true, but for parkland, public land is for community use.

Ms. Rapp indicated that the City is in the process of identifying properties that could be sold, understanding there are a couple of park properties that would require a vote of the people. She said there are some other options, and commented that Elings Park is a very good example; it is operated by a nonprofit foundation; it's a public park, and it serves the community needs.

Commissioner Hochman said that if the Department only provided Level I services, it would not be consistent with the mission. He further suggested that the mission could be changed and a vision statement added.

Comments on Level II:

Commissioner Hochman asked whether when the Department states that, beach lifeguard services are a high priority for the public; how do we know that. Ms. Rapp replied that staff is operating strictly on what they know from experience and hear; no surveys have been done. Ms. Hanna stated that if there is a drowning, it will be the number one priority, so it is prevention. Commissioner Hochman asked whether beach lifeguards are a City Council priority. Mr. Hanna commented that it is a public safety priority in other cities. Commissioner Hochman suggested "public safety" be added to Level II as a bullet point. Ms. Rapp said staff will add something related to public safety to Level II.

Commissioner Hochman questioned what is meant by "vulnerable" population. After some discussion about Spanish-speaking and how the language barrier between parents and youth cause a greater risk of those youth becoming involved in gangs, and the senior community, it was decided to add "low income" before the word "vulnerable".

Chair Longstreet commented that Level II is the area where you spend money to make Santa Barbara nicer community, an appropriate place to live, and a place tourist want to visit. She said safety is important.

Commissioner Hochman advised that "Park and Recreation Commission" is mandated by City Charter; therefore, should be listed under Level I.

Commissioner Hochman commented that he believes that under Level I should be the programs that generate revenue, since they provide services that supplement the General Fund subsidy.

Chair Longstreet commented that when they are looking at cutting something, she is looking at programs and services that are not provided by other agencies.

Ms. Rapp said that under Level I the Department is operating Tennis Courts, Los Baños Pool; there are recreational activities, they just are not program specific at this time.

Commissioner Hochman commented that in Level II, it indicated some parks will be bumped up to MSL 1 -2 due to unique features, and that serves the mission that stated diverse open spaces, parks, etc. He asked whether in Level II if they want to give a nod towards trying to get to the second half of the mission which is varied recreation and community services.

Ms. Rapp agreed and said other services will be added to all of the categories.

Commissioner Hochman said he would not favor one over the other, and if a nod is being given toward diverse open spaces, he would feel comfortable giving a nod towards something that was varied recreation.

Ms. McCaffrey clarified that Level II is high community priority and Level III is medium community priority.

Commissioner Hochman asked whether youth and teens are really a higher priority than adults; if adults come in at medium, which is what the Levels of Service list reflects.

Ms. Rapp commented that it may have something to do with which levels have a higher degree of subsidy. She said that adults should be paying full bore, and limited General Fund monies should go to the vulnerable population or subsidized programs.

Tour of Carrillo Recreation Center: Mr. Bryan took the Commission on a tour of the Carrillo Recreation Center.

Ms. Rapp commented that the Levels of Service will determine priority for General Fund subsidy.

Chair Longstreet commented that the list is helpful in that it enables the Commission to see what they have traditionally done in the past and why. She further said that much of what is done are City Council priorities.

Commissioner Hochman asked whether it would be valuable for the Commission to come up with their list of priorities and develop spending guidelines that City Council endorses, similar to what the Creeks Advisory Committee has done. Ms. Rapp said they could develop a policy document such as that, which could be

used when making decisions on services. Chair Longstreet stressed that they would not want to do it before the election. Commissioner Conner concurred.

Commissioner Hochman asked who the Council liaison is to the Park and Recreation Commission. Ms. Rapp advised that Councilmember Williams is the liaison. Commissioner Hochman asked whether he attends the meetings and whether he was invited to this meeting. Ms. Rapp said Councilmember Williams does sit in on the meetings and is sent meeting notices and minutes.

Comments on Level III:

Commissioner Burns commented that there is not a level for “Low Community Priority Services” and asked whether staff does anything when there are programs offered that are not being used. Ms. Rapp replied that if there are programs that are experiencing very low participation, the Department should not be offering it; that is good management; it should not require a level.

Commissioner Hochman agreed with Commissioner Burns that there should be a level for “Low Use or Participation”. He suggested dividing programs or services into the following areas: Have to do; costs money; Have to do; makes money; Do not have to do; costs money; and Do not have to do; makes money.

Commissioner Burns commented that another issue that needs to be decided upon is General Fund subsidy. He further concurred with Commissioner Hochman’s suggestion for dividing programs or services stated in the previous paragraph.

Commissioner Conner asked with what criterion the Commission should score the items with.

Ms. Rapp said that the Department has been putting together a list of all the activities and some quantifier of either how many people or participation each of the activities has, and in some way, some level of cost recovery, so the Commission can see the value of the program.

Chair Longstreet said it is important to keep in mind the impact to the whole community; how do they maintain the playgrounds and keep the basic service levels. She said that maybe other things that have less impact might not be done.

Ms. Rapp talked about the direct costs and allocated costs for park and facility rental and the three waterfront facilities and the revenue, saying that more analysis is needed -- perhaps a lot of work for the small amount of revenue they generate.

Chair Longstreet talked about facility rentals and said she is curious about how many of those rentals draw visitors to the City, commenting that those visitors spark an increase in the bed tax. She said she wants to make sure staff looks at everything and also that we look at where the Department is providing facilities for the community, and what it brings back to us.

Commissioner Hochman said that ultimately, the City is not looking at it in a holistic manner; for example, Fiesta -- Parks and Recreation does not make any money on that event, but the City, with the bed tax and sales tax makes a ton of money. He said, however, none of that gets allocated to Parks and Recreation, or credited to offset the cuts the Department is being asked to make.

Ms. Rapp commented that it has been frustrating for the Department staff who have worked so hard to generate money above their budget. She said that for years, Ms. McCaffrey has managed the waterfront facilities, and every year, they generated 15 to 25 percent above budget, but never got to use any of that money, because the Department always had to use it to balance the bottom line. Ms. Rapp said the Department has been limited in putting some of that money into the staff resources needed to support that operation or updating the restroom in the Cabrillo Pavilion. She said staff should be able to say that if they are going to continue to generate that kind of revenue, they have to be able to put those monies back into the facility.

Ms. Rapp commented that there are some communities that have, and said that the City Administrator has asked if maybe the Department wants to take a part of what it does and create an Enterprise Fund. She said the Commission might want to discuss that.

Chair Longstreet commented that many years ago, the Commission had designated that ten percent of every rental fee on every one of the facilities would go into a fund for that facility. She said it was directly related to the Cabrillo Arts Pavilion and being able to replace the carpeting; she said it was a jewel of a facility.

Commissioner Burns said that the Infrastructure Financing Task Force determined that the City needs \$2M annually so it does not become deferred maintenance and they were only putting in \$1.2M, and this year they are only putting in \$500,000.

Commissioner Hochman expressed that it is disheartening, that when the Department generates revenue, it is a shared pot, but when it has to reduce the budget, there is not any sort of connection to that shared revenue.

Ms. Rapp said that the Cit Administrator has always been very good about, if the Department generates revenue above its budget, it belongs to the Department and stays within the Department. She further said that the Department has also

had to increase its revenue by a certain percentage each year to cover the increased cost for salaries and benefits. Ms. Rapp said that there is more latitude that the Department exercises internally. She said that if there was a policy that ten percent of the revenues from those facilities go into a fund to support that, it can be done; it just needs to be made to work with the General Fund subsidy.

Commissioner Hochman questioned what Council would say if the Commission recommended that the Department drop landscape maintenance in non-department General Fund buildings, citing it does not do anything for the Department mission.

Ms. Rapp said the Department has raised that issue. She said an appropriate recommendation might be that the cost for Parks and Recreation to provide that service be charged to the respective department who owns the facility, for example if it is a Police Department facility, then the Police Department would pay the cost.

Commissioner Hochman asked why something that clearly does not address the Park and Recreation mission would be paid for out of the Park and Recreation budget. He further stated that it may be a City Council priority, but should come out of another Department budget that has that mission.

Chair Longstreet commented that all buildings are City buildings. Commissioner Hochman said the Department mission does not make reference to City buildings.

Ms. Rapp interjected that Parks and Recreation is part of the City team and it is part of what the Department does, just like medians and right of ways. She said that discussion is appropriate to have, but there will likely not be any budget savings to the General Fund.

Chair Longstreet commented that if the Department stops doing those things it will lose staff and the budget will go down. Ms. Rapp suggested this be discussed at a later time.

Ms. Zachary added that the Department is at a place with the Parks program where all the assumptions and actions we have been implementing for the last 16 years need to be examined. She said there is a whole history why we do many of the things we do; the thing that needs to be asked is whether that history is still valid.

Commissioner Hochman commented that maybe that is another department's tough decision. He said if the Department's discussion, for example, is closing the Tennis Courts, or stop maintaining medians, given the budget restrictions we have been handed. He said if the Tennis Courts support the mission and

maintaining medians do not, it is clear what he would do as a Park and Recreation Commissioner.

Commissioner Burns said he assumes staff will provide more information as to what is considered to be a low priority, or if something is going to continue to be done; the Department needs more funding, for example, to support the Children's Parade. He said it is such a tradition, if it is held, the City should have it co-sponsored. Commissioner Burns also talked about the Annual Youth Leadership Banquet, saying the Department should get sponsors for that event.

Commissioner Hochman said his goal is to get a handle on the assumptions. He said there are so many programs and services, staff is going to have to do the work, and the best thing the Commission can do is to affirm their priorities.

Chair Longstreet stated that staff's list makes sense and speaks to what is important to her—basic mandated service, things that have to be done to maintain what is the Department's, what the community expects, what keeps the community safe and healthy. She said she thinks Level II hits the target; some things could be removed, but everything in there is focused on preventing youth violence, giving kids who are most at-risk jobs – that is what will keep the community healthy enough for people to want to come here, give us the basis to do what we do, and make it a livable community. Chair Longstreet said those are her top priorities.

Commissioner Hochman suggested a parallel top priority to invest in and maintain programs that make money. He said that if they invested three years and reinvented the programs so they were really competitive, there would be revenue to offset General Fund subsidy.

Ms. Rapp said she hears Commissioner Hochman saying that the Department mission statement is different from the prioritization of how the General Fund subsidy is allocated. She said the list is not prioritizing Department services, it is being more clear about to what degree these activities are subsidized.

Commissioner Hochman suggested taking a high percentage of the operating budget and putting it towards programs that make money.

Commissioner Conner agreed with Commissioner Hochman and further stated that in these difficult times, the Department needs to make money and be self-sustaining. She said the Department needs to build a good business.

Ms. Rapp said the way you do that when you are a General Fund department is you have protected funds, saying you budget this money to spend, because you are going to make this much money. She again talked about the possibility of an Enterprise Fund for those programs that generate revenue.

Commissioner Conner agreed, but also said that we need to be stewards of the community while doing that.

Chair Longstreet said they are talking about parallel tracks: first, how to get through this year and next year determining what is important to protect and meet the needs of the community, and second, developing the strategy to move forward. She said that where they overlap is in keeping the staff that has the vision and skill to move forward.

Comments on Level V:

Commissioner Burns suggested additional beachfront or park concessions be explored to generate additional revenue.

Overview of Department Services:

Ms. Rapp provided the Commission with a handout depicting Department services. The Commission briefly discussed these services. Several Commissioners indicated they had prioritized their lists already. Ms. Rapp asked that they provide that information to her.

A discussion began regarding Park Maintenance. Ms. Rapp advised that item is a separate discussion that will require another meeting. She said staff would follow up with the Commission to schedule another meeting for a later time.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:22 p.m., with no further business to come before the Commission the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Rapp
Parks and Recreation Director