



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: May 27, 2015
TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department
SUBJECT: Elings Park Foundation Annual Report Presentation

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive a presentation by the Elings Park Foundation on the 2013-2014 Annual Report for the Las Positas Tennis Courts and the 2014 Annual Report for Elings Park.

DISCUSSION:

The Elings Park Foundation has two long-term property leases with the City of Santa Barbara, one for the operation of Elings Park and another for the Las Positas Tennis Facility. The 230-acre public park is situated on 133 acres owned by the Foundation (South Park, which is largely open space with trails) and 97 acres of land owned by the City (the developed portion of the park including BMX, sports fields, and picnic/event areas). The Tennis Facility is also on City property. A requirement of each lease is that the Elings Park Foundation (Elings) submits an annual report to the City on the operation, programs, improvements, and financials. Mike Nelson, Executive Director of Elings Park, will provide a presentation to the Commission on the two reports and activities of the park.

Background

The City property portion of Elings Park was once the site of the City's landfill. In January of 1965, the landfill was deemed full and was subsequently closed. In February 1965, the conversion of the dump to a major sports and recreation area was proposed. The City's Recreation Commission recommended that City Council undertake development of a major recreation area on the site. The City Council formed a "Joint Park Development Committee" which among other actions, worked with a consultant to prepare a master plan for the site.

The City completed Phase I of the project, construction of the Las Positas Tennis Center in 1972, and the complex was incorporated into the City Parks and Recreation tennis system. However, faced with a lack of funding for park development, in 1975 City staff was instructed to pursue alternate uses for the proposed park area. This led to an effort led by several community recreation advocates, notably Jerry Harwin, Mike

Pahos, Caesar Uyesaka, Richard Johns, and others, to create a public private partnership whereby a non-profit organization would develop and operate the park without having to rely on City funds.

In 1977, the Parks and Recreation Commission(s) approved the development of Las Positas Park into a “major sports and recreation complex.” In July of 1980, the community effort, now known as the Las Positas Park Foundation, received official non-profit status. In November of that year, the City and Las Positas (now Elings) Park Foundation entered into a long-term lease whereby the Foundation would raise funds to develop and then operate a community park on the City land. The City would continue responsibility for monitoring and management of the landfill. In 1986, the park opened to the public, and to this day has operated on grants, donations and revenue generated from park activities without financial support from the City.

Las Positas Tennis Center

Over the years, Elings expressed interest in incorporating the tennis facility into the park as part of their master plan vision. The interest was driven by the fact that the tennis facility was immediately adjacent to the park, many people assumed the courts were operated by the park, and the Foundation was interested in enhancing the variety of recreation activities provided as part of the park. It wasn't until 2009 that the Parks and Recreation Department gave serious consideration to transferring the tennis facility to Elings Park.

In 2009, the City was responding to the great national recession and declining City revenues. The Parks and Recreation Department was especially hard hit over several years with mandated budget reductions of great magnitude due to higher General Fund priorities. In fact, from 2008 to 2012, the Department saw its General Fund subsidy decline by nearly a third and its workforce reduced by 25%. At the same time, the Department's capital program totaled over \$60 million in unfunded improvements to parks and recreation facilities, including a \$1.1 million rehabilitation of Las Positas Tennis Facility.

Faced with significant service reductions in all areas of the Department, staff was encouraged to pursue partnerships with community organizations to operate and maintain City recreation facilities as a way to preserve public recreation programming while relieving the General Fund of the cost. Two such partnerships were proposed and supported by the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council. The Police Activities League agreed to assume the operation and maintenance of the new Twelve35 Teen Center, and the Elings Park Foundation agreed to assume operation and maintenance of the Las Positas Tennis Center.

In December 2010, the City approved an 18-year lease whereby the Elings Park Foundation would operate and maintain the Las Positas Tennis Facility as a public tennis facility, with a \$1 per year compensation to the City, and a requirement to fund and

complete a capital improvement to rehabilitate the facility. Elings offers a variety of tennis programming to the public, completed several facility maintenance improvements, and is currently working through the City's design review process on a project to rehabilitate and improve the tennis complex.

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Elings Park Foundation Annual Report 2013-2014, Las Positas Tennis Courts, dated March 2015
2. Elings Park Foundation 2014 Annual Report, dated April 16, 2015

SUBMITTED BY: Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director