



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

**PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
Regular Monthly Joint Meeting**

Wednesday, October 25, 2006

**Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER** – The Park and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Forsell at 4:00 p.m. at City Council Chambers.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL**

**Commissioners Present**

Steve Forsell	Park & Recreation Commissioner
Ada Conner	Park & Recreation Commissioner
Beebe Longstreet	Park & Recreation Commissioner
Daraka Larimore-Hall	Park & Recreation Commissioner
Laura Spracher	Park & Recreation Commission Intern

**Commissioners Absent**

Arnoldo Gonzalez	Park & Recreation Commissioner
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**Staff Present**

Nancy L. Rapp	Parks & Recreation Director
Sarah Clayton	Recreation Programs Manager
Judith Cook	Recreation Programs Manager
Santos Escobar	Parks Manager
Billy Goodnick	Landscape Architect
Randy Fritz	Street Tree Inspector
Karla Megill	Executive Assistant
Mitch Jan	Police Sergeant
Dave Whitham	Police Sergeant
Sue Gray	Community Development Prog. Supervisor
Cindy Leyva	Office Specialist II
Joan Kent	Assistant City Administrator

**CHANGES TO THE AGENDA** – None

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS** – None

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – No one wished to speak.

**COMMISSIONER COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT REPORTS**

Commissioner Longstreet reported on the activities of the Douglas Family Preserve Technical Advisory Committee. She indicated that the Committee is moving forward with the interpretive signage. Ms. Longstreet also reported that she attended the Creeks Week Presentation, "What's in the Water". She said it was very interesting and well-attended. Commissioner Longstreet also indicated that she attended the Upper State Street project walk, and it was interesting to see and hear comments regarding the Community Development Planning process.

Commissioner Conner thanked Commissioner Longstreet for attending the Upper State Street project walk on her behalf, as she was out of town attending regional games.

Commissioner Larimore-Hall thanked staff for organizing the special meeting the Commissioners had at Franceschi Park on October 4<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Larimore-Hall said that he found the tour and presentation very informative, particularly as a new Commissioner. He further thanked members of the community for contacting him and voicing some of the concerns of the neighbors regarding the project. Mr. Larimore-Hall said that he now feels very well-informed, which is always good when making decisions.

Chair Forsell reported on the activities of the Tennis Advisory Committee. He said that the Committee discussed improvements that have been made to some of the tennis facilities lately and registration for the Fall Tennis Tournament. Mr. Forsell also talked about a new sport called beach tennis, which is a combination of volleyball and tennis. He said it was played during the summer and the Committee is looking into the possibility of having some kind of recreational use for the sport. Mr. Larimore-Hall expressed interest and asked to review the information brochure on the sport.

**YOUTH COUNCIL REPORT** – Intern Spracher provided this report. Ms. Spracher briefed on the Haunted House of Horrors. She said that the Youth Council in concert with Teen Programs is presenting its annual Haunted House on Friday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, and Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 – 10:00 p.m., at the Carrillo Recreation Gym. Ms. Spracher said that the entrance fee is \$5.00, and all ages are welcome. She said that the Youth Council is seeking volunteers to help with the Haunted House, and volunteers will be awarded community service hours. Ms. Spracher advised that representatives from the Youth Council will be attending the Sister Cities United Nations Youth Forum on Global Citizenship on Thursday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, at 3:30 p.m., at the Cabrillo Pavilion Arts Center, and there is still room for interested teens to attend. Ms. Spracher talked about the activities of the Teen Center Subcommittee. She said the tentative date for the grand opening of the Teen Center is March 17, 2007. Ms. Spracher advised that representatives from the Youth Council were able to sit in on the interviews for the Teen Center Coordinator, and were pleased to be able to ask questions of the applicants. Ms. Spracher said that the Youth Council is seeking a junior high school representative. Lastly, Ms. Spracher said that the Youth Council will be assisting Teen Programs in a Youth Forum with special guests Father G. Boyle of Homeboy Industries, who will speak about youth issues, creating jobs for at-risk youth, and other positive topics on Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m., at Casa de la Rasa. She said this is a free event for the public.

1. **Summary of Council Actions:** There were no comments.
2. **Approval of Minutes:**
  - A. Regular meeting of September 27, 2006; and
  - b. Special meeting of October 4, 2006.

**Commissioner Conner moved, seconded by Commissioner Longstreet, and passed 4/0 that the Commission approve the minutes of the regular meeting of September 27, 2006.**

**Commissioner Longstreet moved, seconded by Commissioner Forsell, and passed 4/0 that the Commission approve the minutes of the special meeting of October 4, 2006.**

**VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION** - None

#### **COMMISSION AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

Ms. Rapp advised that the Purchase Order has been completed for the contract for the Teen Center, and construction will begin on Monday, October 30<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Rapp provided an updated on the position vacancies within the Department. She said that three permanent part-time positions were added to the Recreation Division: one in Adapted Programs, one in Active Adults, and one in Teen Programs. She said there have been two appointments made already, and interviews are underway for the Teen Center Coordinator position. She further indicated that the Department is in final interviews with three candidates for the Sports Supervisor position, which has been vacant for several months. Ms. Rapp advised that the recruitment has opened for the Assistant Director position, and she hopes to have the individual in place the first part of 2007. She said that the recruitment process for the Urban Forest Superintendent, formerly known as the Arborist, will begin shortly. Ms. Rapp said that Mr. Escobar has had success in filling some of the vacant positions in the Parks Division, and final testing is underway for the position of Senior Grounds Maintenance Worker. Ms. Rapp stated that the Department is also recruiting for the Associate Planner position. She said that no applications have been received, so the recruitment has been extended. Finally, she stated that staff has been working diligently to fill these positions so the Department gets up to a full staffing levels as it affects programs and services.

Chair Forsell asked whether the City is having difficulty finding applicants due to the low unemployment rate in California. Ms. Rapp responded saying it depends on the level of the job. She said that one of the greater concerns is the cost of living in Santa Barbara.

4. **Street Tree Advisory Committee Recommendations**
  - A. Approve the following Street Tree and Set Back Tree removal requests.

STREET TREES

1. 565 and 572 Arroyo Ave. – (2) *Caesalpinia spinosa* - Mechtilde Kleinhans

Justification: The committee recommended removal of both trees based on declining health and lack of aesthetic value. The committee recognized an opportunity to change the tree designation for Arroyo because the current trees are not doing well and there is an opportunity to plant trees that provide greater contributions to the neighborhood.

2. 1512 Chino Street – *Eucalyptus ficifolia* – Amber McCoy

Justification: The tree has a significant lean which creates a potential hazard to vehicle traffic. There is no alternative method to remedy this situation other than removing the tree. Tree will be replaced with a New Zealand Christmas Tree.

**Commissioner Larimore-Hall moved, seconded by Commissioner Longstreet, and passed 4/0 that the Commission concur with the recommendations of the Street Tree Advisory Committee and approve the tree removal requests identified in items 3A (1 & 2).**

#### SETBACK TREES

3. 2138 Saint James Drive – *Quercus agrifolia* – Linda Van Buren

Justification: The committee and staff determined that the tree had poor form and that the surrounding landscape would benefit from the removal of this tree.

4. 222 W. Alamar – *Pinus halepensis* – Kevin Fewell

Justification: The committee and staff determined the tree should be removed because the tree has a history of losing limbs and a damaged root zone that may compromise the stability of the tree. Any future development will likely have a negative impact on the health of the tree.

5. 334 W. Figueroa St. – *Phoenix canariensis* – Brian Nelson

Justification: The committee approved the removal of this palm tree to allow for the development of this project. The committee requested the applicant explore the option of saving the palm by

transplanting and relocating it off-site as an alternative to demolition.

**Commissioner Conner moved, seconded by Commissioner Forsell, and passed 4/0 that the Commission concur with the recommendations of the Street Tree Advisory Committee and approve the tree removal requests identified in items 3A (3, 4, & 5).**

**B. Deny the following Street Tree and Setback Tree removal requests.**

**STREET TREES**

**6. 255 San Rafael Ave – Eucalyptus polyanthemus - Jeffrey Davis**

Justification: Tree is healthy and does not have a history of losing large limbs. Best management practices would not be served by removing this tree.

Jeff Davis addressed the Commission regarding this matter. He said he is concerned with the safety of his and the neighborhood children. He said that he disagrees with the statements of the Street Tree Advisory Committee members that the tree is healthy and does not have a history of losing large limbs. He said the tree has lost large limbs and, in fact, a large limb from the tree fell on top of his vehicle, causing damage. He urged the Commission to approve the removal of the tree. Mr. Davis further said that several of the branches of the tree extend over his property. He said that based on his recollection, the tree has not been pruned since the tree limb fell.

Chair Forsell asked when the limb fell. Mr. Davis said it was close to a year ago.

Mr. Fritz said that the Street Tree Advisory Committee felt the tree could be managed to mitigate limb loss by regularly pruning the tree. He said that this tree, relative to the other trees in the area had been trimmed more recently, as a result of losing a tree in the past. Mr. Fritz said that the opinion of the Committee is that the tree is safe. He said the tree does have some weighted limbs that could use pruning at this time.

Chair Forsell asked Mr. Fritz whether the Committee was aware of the incident Mr. Davis talked about where the limb fell on his car. Mr. Fritz responded saying that the Committee was not aware of it. Mr. Davis commented that the incident was described in the letter he wrote when he requested removal of the tree. Chair Forsell

clarified then, that the incident was not taken into consideration by the Street Tree Advisory Committee when they recommended denial of the removal request. Mr. Fritz said that it was not.

Commissioner Longstreet asked that this matter be continued to the next meeting, and in the mean time that the Street Tree Advisory Committee be provided with the additional information and re-examine the tree removal request. She further asked for a tree pruning history on the tree.

Commissioner Conner concurred with Commissioner Longstreet.

Commissioner Larimore-Hall asked what the designated street tree is for this street. Mr. Fritz said that from that there is a combination of street trees on that street. He said that from that section to Cliff Drive going north on San Rafael Drive there are this type of Eucalyptus trees. He said that going south, there is a combination of bottlebrush trees and a variety of other trees, but the majority of trees on the street are Eucalyptus trees.

Ms. Longstreet asked that the Street Tree Advisory Committee look at officially designating a tree for that block. Mr. Fritz said that would be done.

**Commissioner Longstreet moved, seconded by Commissioner Conner, and passed 4/0 that the Commission refer this item back to the Street Tree Advisory Committee with the recent information and ask that they re-evaluate the removal request.**

7. 683 Calabria Dr. – Schinus terebinthifolius – Dee Allen

Justification: Tree is healthy and contributes to the neighborhood forest. The tree is located in an area with relatively few shade trees and the likelihood that future sewer line damage will occur is not likely due to recent repairs.

8. 2532 Borton Dr. – Cupaniopsis anacardioides – Geraldine Thompson

Justification: The tree is healthy and contributes to the neighborhood.

9. 322 East Arrellaga St. – (2) Syzygium paniculatum – Jenna Berg

Justification: The removal of these trees would not accomplish the goals of the Applicant nor serve to benefit the surrounding

neighborhood. The committee recommended removal of Eugenia hedge in applicants' front yard to help alleviate allergies.

**Commissioner Larimore-Hall moved, seconded by Commissioner Longstreet, and passed 4/0 that the Commission concur with the recommendations of the Street Tree Advisory Committee and deny the tree removal requests identified in item 3B (7, 8, & 9).**

## **ADMINISTRATIVE AND STAFF REPORTS**

### **4. Annual Contributions Report**

Ms. Woods provided this report. She reviewed the four categories of contributions the Department receives. She highlighted the amounts received for Fiscal Year 2006 and provided a comparison over previous years for each category. Ms. Woods indicated that overall the Department had an 80% increase in the amount of donations received, which is attributed to the amount of grants received.

Chair Forsell said he appreciates receiving this report each year.

Commissioner Longstreet said that to see the general increase in outside funding coming into the Department is very important. She commented that you get a grant one year, and often times, all your staff is devoted to expending that grant and making it happen, which is very cyclical.

### **5. Fiscal Year 2006 P3 Annual Report**

Ms. Woods provided this report. She said that the Department achieved 76.3 % of its objectives, and that of the 119 objectives achieved, staff exceeded the target in 54% of their objectives. Ms. Woods reviewed the P3 highlights and challenges of each division and discussed the areas needing improvement.

Ms. Rapp interjected that staff uses the P3s extensively throughout the year and invests a lot of time in making sure the right things are measured in the right way. She encouraged the Commissioners to read the P3s if they really want to know what is going on in the programs and services of the Department.

Commissioner Larimore-Hall congratulated staff for meeting their objectives. He asked what the methodology is for coming up with some of the performance measures and further, what levels of staff are involved with setting these performance measures.

Ms. Rapp responded saying that, in general, when a program owner is asked to develop performance objectives, they are asked to make sure that those objectives reflect at least 60% or more of what their program does, and what is measured, has to be reflective of that. Ms. Rapp said that in terms of determining how it is measured, we have to have that documentation. She said that when the program was initiated, the City Administrator's Office had staff

complete backup documents to demonstrate how we were going to count those numbers, so they are legitimate numbers. She said that in terms of setting targets, staff looks at the previous year, and will weigh whether we are in a growing mode and can challenge ourselves. Ms. Rapp said that staff like to challenge themselves, which is why we have achieved fewer objectives than we would have like to. She said that staff has been asked to be more objective and conservative in terms of what they think they can achieve. She further said that a few of the measures are to maintain the status quo, because the performance measure program is based on the budget; if the budget is not going up, it is very difficult for staff to increase the number of services, but not always. Ms. Rapp said that the program owners meet with management, who ask a lot of tough questions when developing the performance objectives.

Commissioner Larimore-Hall said he is interested in how much participation there is by non-management level staff. Ms. Rapp said that the program owner is down to the supervisor level, and the expectation is that the staff working in the program area are aware of and help to develop the performance measures, so there is that greater level of understanding.

Commissioner Conner suggested that staff provide Mr. Larimore-Hall with the initial Performance Measurement document. Ms. Rapp indicated that Ms. Woods would do that.

Chair Forsell recognized that Golf has continued to have no reportable safety incidents for 25 months. He said that is astounding. Ms. Woods said that, unfortunately, the golf course just recently had an incident, but it was very minor with no one injured.

## **OLD BUSINESS - None**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **6. Santa Barbara Zoological Gardens Master Plan – PR Zone Findings – For Review and Comment**

Mr. Goodnick advised the Commission that they are being asked to provide comments to the Planning Commission regarding the PR-Zone findings for the Santa Barbara Zoological Gardens Master Plan as required by the Municipal Code. He stated that the master plan will return to the Park and Recreation Commission to make the PR-Zone findings after the Planning Commission adopts the environmental document.

Mr. Rich Block, Executive Director, Santa Barbara Zoological Gardens, provided a presentation on the Santa Barbara Zoo's Master Plan.

Commissioner Longstreet expressed concern about the name of the Wave. She asked to see a picture of how that fits in. Mr. Block said that what they are trying to convey is that the profile is low; it is not any higher than the existing buildings. He said that the trellis is roughly the same height as the existing trellis. Ms. Longstreet asked how high the building is. Ken Radkee, Blackbird Architects said that the digital drawing of the elevation has compressed it horizontally, therefore also changing the proportion so it looks taller. Mr. Radkee said that the entire structure is approximately 12 – 15 feet tall. He said it is actually the same height and location as the existing plant covered trellis. Ms. Longstreet said that she was concerned that there was going to be a sculptural image on the top of the hill, which would not be acceptable to her. Mr. Block said that this project has gone through HLC review, and changes were made based on that review. Ms. Longstreet asked whether the restrooms will be available during the day. Mr. Block said yes that whole site is available all of the time, as will the kitchen.

Chair Forsell asked whether there are 200 species and 500 animals. Mr. Block said yes. Mr. Forsell commented that it seems that there are fewer species and animals now than there was years ago, however the area given to particular animals is larger, and asked if that is accurate. Mr. Block said that is extremely accurate. He further said that over time, the animal care staff has more than doubled, but the collection size has actually shrunk. He said that increase in numbers is in response to what has been learned about caring for the animals. Mr. Block said there will be a reduction in the number of animals as the quality of the space used by the animals is improved, which is a national trend. Mr. Block said that across the country, zoos are building exhibits that are much more suited to the needs of the individual animals rather than trying to pack in as many animals as they can.

Chair Forsell said he was taken aback when Mr. Block said the AZA would withhold accreditation because of the structure of one building. Mr. Block said that the building supports a number of different species, especially non-human primates, which is a very sensitive area. He said the lemurs and the langurs are all part of that facility, and the support space used by that animals does not meet where he knows the standards will be in 2009, when the visiting team will come to assess the zoo. Mr. Block said that the zoo is accredited every five years. He said that the federal agency that inspects the zoo every year is the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He said they look primarily at animals and those things that come under the provisions of the animal welfare act.

Mr. Goodnick highlighted the findings that the Commission will be required to make.

*A. That the proposed park and recreation improvements are appropriate or necessary for the benefit of the community and visitors.*

- The Zoo has operated since the 1960s and provides important educational and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.
- The Zoo is committed to maintaining the highest standards in animal care, grounds maintenance and visitor experience.
- The exhibits are necessary for the Zoo to provide current American Zoo & Aquarium Association recommended standards for lion exhibits.
- Consolidation of facilities for staff makes better use of the land and more efficient operations.

*B. That the proposed park and recreation facilities, including lighting, play areas, parking facilities, and associated landscaping, will be compatible with the character of the neighborhood.*

- Night lighting will be for emergency/security purposes only, consistent with existing Zoo exhibits.
- Transportation staff determined the improvements would not generate a need for additional parking.
- The construction of the exhibit spaces will be of the same nature as existing facilities, using black mesh, rockwork, and will require minimal grading.
- The Discovery Pavilion will be designed to match existing buildings in the immediate vicinity, and the service yard will not expand beyond the current location.
- The Wave will be situated in the same area as the existing arbor.

*C. That the total area of the site and the setbacks of all facilities from the property lines and street are sufficient, in view of the physical character of the land, proposed development and neighborhood, to avoid sufficient negative impacts to surrounding properties.*

- The Condor exhibit will occupy the area currently used for the original Bald Eagle exhibit, and the Langur/Lemur and Island Fox exhibits are renovations of the existing facilities.
- The Discovery Pavilion will occupy the location of existing one-story buildings, and is set back from the north property line.
- The Wave will be designed similarly to the existing arbor at the hilltop and will use the same trellis motif as the current structure.
- The service yard will not expand beyond the current location.

*D. That the intensity of park use is appropriate and compatible with the character of neighborhood*

- None of the proposed improvements are anticipated to create an intensification of current activities.

*E. That the proposed park and recreation facilities are compatible with the scenic character of the City of Santa Barbara.*

- The Discovery Pavilion will be designed to blend with existing buildings in the same area of the zoo.
- Landscaping will provide additional screening.
- The exhibit enclosure will be a mesh painted black to reduce visibility and blend into the background.

*F. That any proposed structures or buildings are compatible with the neighborhood in terms of size, bulk and scale or location.*

- The Island Fox, Condor, Langur/Lemur exhibits, and the service yard will not expand beyond their current footprint.
- The Wave will expand beyond the size of the current arbor, but will be located far from surrounding neighbors and will retain a one-story height.
- The Discovery Pavilion will be constructed along the northern property line of the zoo and abuts the railroad and Highway 101.
- The project has received positive comments from the Historic Landmarks Commission.

Commissioner Conner asked how the train runs and whether it is up to standards. Mr. Block provided a brief history of the train. He said it falls under the safety standards for amusement rides, and it is maintained up to state standards.

### **Commission Comments**

Commissioner Longstreet commented that she finds the project acceptable and a good improvement, and she would be happy to see all of the projects completed.

Chair Forsell, Commissioner Larimore-Hall, and Commissioner Conner concurred.

## **7. FY 08 - 13 Proposed Parks and Recreation General Fund and Golf Capital Improvement Program – For Action**

Ms. Rapp explained that every year, as a part of the budget, the Department develops its Capital Improvement Plan, and with the two-year budget, the six-year Capital Improvement Plan is being developed. Ms. Rapp said that staff has provided a report to the Commission which outlines detailed information regarding various park and facility improvement projects that are being recommended, both for the general fund and the golf program. She said that Ms. Zachary will present the Creeks Capital Improvement Plan next month for the Commission's review and approval. Ms. Rapp said that the staff

recommendations for priorities in funding are based on safety, required maintenance, renovation/replacement of older, outdated facilities, and protection of natural areas. She said that staff recommends nine projects for funding in Fiscal Year 2008. Those projects are:

- Los Baños Pool Replaster - \$240,000
- Annual Playground Replacement Project - \$270,000
- Bird Refuge Storm Sedimentation and Vegetation Plan (Phase I) - \$85,000
- Bird Refuge Weir Gate Replacement (Phase I) - \$65,000
- Kids World Refurbishment (Phase I) - \$60,000
- Front Country Trails Plan (Phase I) - \$10,000
- Irrigation Replacement and Landscape Upgrade at East Beach (Phase I) - \$25,000
- Mission Creek Lagoon Management Plan (Phase I) - \$45,000
- Oak Park Sycamore Area Restroom Refurbishment - \$280,000

Ms. Rapp said that staff recommends eight projects for funding in Fiscal Year 2009. Those projects are:

- Annual Playground Replacement Program - \$283,500
- Bird Refuge Weir Gate Replacement (Phase II) - \$210,000
- 1,000 Steps Replacement (Phase II) - \$70,000
- Lower Mesa Lane Steps Replacement (Phase I) - \$100,000
- East Beach Public Restroom Refurbishment (Phase I) - \$40,000
- Irrigation Replacement and Landscape Upgrade at East Beach (Phase II) - \$160,000
- Mission Creek Lagoon Management Program (Phase II) - \$75,000
- Alameda Park Gazebo Refurbishment - \$165,000

Ms. Rapp said that additionally, two projects will be submitted by Public Works on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Department, as part of the City's Intradepartmental City Services (ICS). Those projects are:

- Los Baños Boiler Replacement
- Tennis Lighting and Energy Upgrades

Ms. Rapp stated that two projects are being submitted as part of the six-year Capital Improvement Program, which are anticipated to be grant/trust funded. Those projects are:

- Parma Park Staging Area – Fiscal Year 2008 - \$310,000 – Parma Park Trust
- Front Country Trails Plan – Fiscal Year 2009 - \$175,000 – grants to be proposed

Ms. Rapp then highlighted the projects proposed for Fiscal Years 2010 – 2013. She said that staff recommends that the Commission support the staff

recommendation for the Fiscal Year 2008 through 2013 Capital Improvement Plan

Chair Forsell asked for a summary in the future which is easier to read. Ms. Rapp responded saying that Mr. Forsell is referring to the Projects Status Report, which staff does still provide. She further indicated that report would be provided in December.

Commissioner Conner asked regarding the 1,000 Steps, what they will be replaced with. Mr. Goodnick said that is not known at this time, but the most cost effective manner would be to leave them as is and float a stairway over it.

Commissioner Longstreet said that a lot of the projects are nuts and bolts kind of projects. She said that many of these projects won't really be seen by the public, but are necessary. She expressed that she would like to see some of the projects go forward more quickly, which means more money is needed. Ms. Longstreet said that a big concern is Los Baños pool, and she expressed she is glad to see it at the top of the list as it is the only public pool in the community. She said she hopes the projects get fully funded.

Chair Forsell said there is definitely a need to refurbish the restrooms.

Chair Forsell asked what is going to be done with the Parma Park Staging Area. Ms. Rapp responded saying that when the Parma family donated the land to the City, they also made a commitment to fund maintenance and improvements at the park through the Parma Park Trust. Mr. Goodnick briefly highlighted the project.

Kids World Refurbishment – community interest in fundraising – Chair Forsell said we could probably count on this.

Regarding the Los Baños Pool Replastering project, Chair Forsell asked whether \$240,000 is high for this project. He asked what the status of that project is. Ms. Rapp said staff has been discussing this project and stated that \$240,000 is a good price for what needs to be done.

Commissioner Larimore-Hall asked what is going on at Oak Park in terms of Capital Improvement. Commissioner Longstreet said it is the Bridge Replacement. Commissioner Larimore-Hall asked what the is the Oak Park Restroom Refurbishment to be changed to East Beach Pavilion, and how is that related to the Fiscal Year 2009 projected project of East Beach Public Restroom Refurbishment. Mr. Escobar responded saying that after reviewing these projects with Ms. Rapp staff decided the money would be better spent at East Beach because of the amount of people that use that restroom versus the Sycamore restroom. Mr. Larimore-Hall clarified that some monies are being

moved to start refurbishing the restrooms at East Beach. Mr. Escobar said that with the dollars that are currently funded, staff will get a design.

**Commissioner Longstreet moved, seconded by Commissioner Conner, and passed 4/0 that the Commission accept and approve the submittal of the FY 08 - 13 Proposed Parks and Recreation General Fund and Golf Capital Improvement Program.**

The Commission temporarily adjourned at 5:43 p.m. and reconvened at 6:00 p.m.

## **8. Oak Park Neighborhood Concerns – For Action**

Ms. Rapp briefed the Commission that over the past several years, the Police, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works Departments have noted increased problems and complaints from neighbors and park users related to Oak Park. She said that specific complaints have included transients living and hanging out in the park, unpleasant interactions with alcohol impaired individuals, feelings of being unsafe or uncomfortable in the park especially if children are involved, illegal camping, drug transactions, and burglaries in the neighborhood. She further said that there have been occasional complaints about noise from music in the park as well.

Ms. Rapp stated that in June 2006, the Department received a letter signed by 6 Oak Park neighbors, citing similar problems, and asking that action be taken to improve the situation. Ms. Rapp indicated that following a preliminary meeting with some of those neighbors, a Neighborhood Meeting was scheduled for September 21, 2006, and surrounding residents were invited to come and discuss neighborhood concerns regarding activity in and around Oak Park. Approximately 15 people attended the meeting with staff from the Police, Public Works, and Parks and Recreation Departments to provide information and answer questions. Ms. Rapp said that a number of recommendations were discussed, including:

- A. Increasing police and park ranger patrols in the area.
- B. Increasing street and park lighting.
- C. Eliminating access to electricity in the park by unauthorized individuals.
- D. Changing the park closing time from 10:00 p.m. to one-half hour after sunset.
- E. Designating Oak Park as a no alcohol park, except by permit.

Ms. Rapp advised that tonight, the Commission is being asked to concur with the recommendation to change the closure hours for Oak Park from 10:00 p.m. to one-half hour after sunset to sunrise the following day. She said that the Commission is also being asked to recommend to City Council that Resolution No. 99-120, regarding the consumption of alcoholic beverages in certain City-owned public areas, be modified such that Oak Park is designated as a park where alcohol is prohibited except where allowed by permit. Ms. Rapp highlighted the background

on the alcohol policy and said that prohibiting alcohol in the park is not the solution the problems, but it is a tool.

Sue Gray, Community Development Program Supervisor, talked about the Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness throughout Santa Barbara, a new initiative in Santa Barbara County.

Chair Forsell commented that Ms. Gray's presentation is beyond the purview of the Park and Recreation Commission.

### Public Comment

The following individuals spoke in support of the change in hours and the prohibition of alcohol consumption in the park except under permit.

Mike Molyneu  
Dan Sullivan  
Dawn Brady  
Linnette King  
Craig Johnson  
James A. Smith  
Elaine Caldwell  
Annie Rizzoli

The following individuals spoke in opposition to the change in alcohol policy and beer gardens in Oak Park

Randy Langel – Greek Festival  
Charles Rice – Greater SB Events and Festivals Coalition  
Lance Wilhoit  
Julie McCloud – Executive Director, Santa Barbara Dance Alliance

Police Sergeant Dave Whitham, Beat Coordinator, said that Oak Park has been an issue for quite some time. He provided a brief background on the alcohol policy. Sergeant Whitham said that Oak Park is the last park where alcohol consumption is allowed. He said that officers have seen over the years that the transients and homeless people have gravitated to Oak Park because it is one of the last vestiges where they can openly and legally drink alcohol. Sergeant Whitham said that one of the things the no alcohol policy will do for the police is provide them with another tool to take care of issues that occur at the park. He said that laws in the penal code and municipal code are filled with laws that penalize the many for what the few do, and this would be no exception. Sergeant Whitham said that it has been their experience that restricting alcohol in the parks and in general, has made it easier for the police to manage and keep public safety up. He further stated that banning alcohol except by permit will give the police an additional tool of enforcement. Sergeant Whitham expressed that an alcohol ban in Oak Park is in the best interest of public safety.

Chair Forsell asked whether public drunkenness is a crime regardless of where you are in the City. Sergeant Whitham said certainly, and that is an objective standard in which the police are trained. He said that often times the problems are stemming not from those considered publicly drunk, but are alcohol related issues from drinking, but not necessarily being drunk.

Chair Forsell asked about changing Oak Park to a no alcohol park except by permit and do away with the beer gardens during the festivals.

Police Sergeant Mitch Jan, Patrol Division Administrative Supervisor, said that one of his responsibilities is to oversee the City Special Events Unit, the unit that reviews the special event applications in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Department. He said that what that unit does is work with event organizers to craft their events. Sergeant Jan said that an issue that comes up frequently is how the beer gardens are configured. He said the special event unit works with the event organizers to try to mitigate negative impacts that they perceive a beer garden might have on their event. Sergeant Jan said that they have worked with various event organizers to change the configuration and appearance of the beer garden to fit in with their theme while still assisting the event planners with monitoring or policing their events. He said that a big concern for the police has been issues regarding underage drinking, as well as, the service of alcohol to those who should not be served any more. Sergeant Jan said that one of the other issues that has been brought up that the beer gardens help prevent is that a lot of the organizers do not want alcohol brought in from the outside, and if there is an open area, it is easy for people to do that. He said that beer gardens really help the organizer manage their event better. Sergeant Jan said it is his office's responsibility to work with event organizers to draw a balance between control and the kind of things the police are looking for on the enforcement side and balance it with what they want to do in terms of the goals of their event.

Chair Forsell asked whether his understanding of the municipal code with respect to beer gardens is correct. Sergeant Jan said yes, the municipal code does require beer gardens. He said that it has been the Police Department's recommendation to have consistency with that beer garden requirement; one of the things they have run into is being consistent with what they require in the configuration of all beer gardens. Sergeant Jan said this is not unlike the bigger issue, which is the transient issue, and how a few irresponsible folks are causing a big impact on the masses. He said that there are only a handful of events that would become unmanageable without the beer garden requirement, yet to remain consistent and fair across the board, all events are required to have beer gardens.

Commissioner Longstreet said that she needs to know statistics, calls for service, arrests, crime rate, etc. She further said she would like to know what problems are related to the festivals and which are related to transients before any

changes are made. Ms. Longstreet further asked for the layout of the park with boundaries, landscaping, what physical changes will need to be made to make it work, etc. because the transients will simply be displaced. Ms. Longstreet said that she would like to know how often the homeless encampments are cleaned out. Ms. Longstreet said that she believes that increasing the positive use of the park will eliminate or decrease the negative activities in the park.

Commissioner Larimore-Hall asked if there is a problem at Oak Park at the Festivals without the beer garden. Officer Jan said no there is not. Mr. Larimore-Hall said that with that in mind, he is inclined to agree with Ms. Longstreet. He said he is grateful for the restrictions put on Fiesta, but he said he would like to see at least one park in Santa Barbara where there can be events where responsible adults can drink alcohol in proximity to their children. He said there is a difference between the French Festival and the Greek Festival and something like Fiesta or even Solstice. Mr. Larimore-Hall said that he does not think that a one size fits all solution for all of these events is good, but at the same time, the Commission does not have the authority to change the municipal code. He further said that the Commission does not have the tools to be able to have a nuanced response, identifying different responses for each park; there is a one size fits all tool of having beer gardens, which he is uncomfortable with. He said it is uncomfortable to him in that it seems like there is an emergency situation in the Oak Park neighborhood and these acute problems need a solution quickly. Mr. Larimore-Hall said he feels torn in that the solution that makes the most sense to him is to have three categories for alcohol use in the park, which the Commission does not have the authority to do. He further stated that he does not want to kill the festivals because ultimately it is good for the neighborhood and Santa Barbara, but at the same time, there have been some break-ins, and people are afraid to use the park. Mr. Larimore-Hall said he is not able to vote on the alcohol ban at this time, but he is prepared to vote on the change in hours for Oak Park.

Commissioner Conner said she is troubled thinking that people cannot go to the parks any longer. She said it is difficult to understand why nothing has been done about this yet. Ms. Conner said she agrees that something needs to be done, and suggested that the group here talk and maybe set up a neighborhood watch program. Ms. Conner expressed that the Commission cannot change the Municipal Code and suggested the Oak Park neighbors take the matter before another body that has the power to do something about it.

Chair Forsell asked when the next festival is. He asked whether there could be an alcohol ban in the park for the period prior to the next festival and then have the matter come back to the Commission for reconsideration prior to that festival for consideration.

Ms. Rapp explained the process. She said that changes to the City Ordinance first go to the City Council Ordinance Committee. She said that should the

Commission have a recommendation to make changes to an existing ordinance, it would go forward to the Ordinance Committee where there would be more public meetings and discussion, then they would make their recommendations and the idea would move forward to Council or not. Ms. Rapp said that if the Ordinance Committee deemed that the item go forward, it would go forward to Council where it again, goes through a public process. She said that if Council took action on the ordinance, there would be thirty days before the ordinance became law.

Ms. Rapp said that staff will gather the information the Commission has requested and will bring back the data at the November Commission meeting. She said that City Ordinances get modified regularly, and if there is something the Commission wants to put out for discussion, they can do so. Ms. Rapp said this is just a part of a public process.

Chair Forsell suggested a trial period for having Oak Park as a non-alcohol park with a stipulation that the trial will end prior to first festival in spring.

Chair Forsell said that he understands the need to have consistency between the parks, but suggested the Ordinance Committee look at the possibility of changing the municipal code to allow the events at Oak park to have alcohol by permit, but without a beer garden.

Commissioner Longstreet would like to change the hours tonight and ask staff to bring back the other information before taking any action to change Oak Park to a non-alcohol park.

Commissioner Larimore-Hall said he appreciated the presentation Ms. Gray provided regarding the overall County and City Strategy Regarding Homelessness because he does not want to vote on anything that will displace the problem, which is essentially what happened when the alcohol ban was first implemented. He said the problems of substance abuse and behavior are linked in some fundamental way to overall societal problems and the problems of chronic homelessness. Mr. Larimore-Hall said he would be uncomfortable making any decision not knowing that there is some institutional or structural plan for dealing with the problems in a more systematic way. He said he wants to get to a place where we are not having the problems of the people getting wasted in the park and being a threat to the neighbors of the park, but not doing it with as blunt an instrument as saying that there has to be a beer garden. Commissioner Larimore-Hall said he agrees with Chair Forsell regarding a trial period to see if it has an impact on the problem, and work with the City Councilmember Falcone to talk about the feasibility of putting the ball in motion so that a more nuanced approach to the problem can be found.

**Commissioner Longstreet moved, seconded by Commissioner Conner, and passed 4/0 that the Commission concur with the staff recommendation to**

**change the closure hours for Oak park from 10:00 p.m. to one-half hour after sunset to sunrise the following day.**

Commissioner Conner expressed this is a process that will unfold.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

At 7:26 p.m., with no further business to come before the Commission,

**Commissioner Conner moved seconded by Commissioner Forsell, and passed 4/0 that the meeting be adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Rapp  
Parks and Recreation Director