



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

**Special Work Session
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

Monday, March 9, 2009

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: The Park and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Longstreet at 5:06 p.m. at 620 Laguna Street.

ROLL CALL: Commissioners Present

Beebe Longstreet	Park & Recreation Commissioner
Daraka Larimore-Hall	Park & Recreation Commissioner
Ada Conner	Park & Recreation Commissioner
W. Scott Burns	Park & Recreation Commissioner
Daniel E. Hochman	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
Scott McGregor	Business Manager
Judith McCaffrey	Recreation Programs Manager
Santos Escobar	Parks Manager
Karla Megill	Executive Assistant

PUBLIC COMMENT - No one wished to speak

1. Overview of Department Budget and Preliminary Discussion of the Fiscal Year 2010 Budget –

Ms. Rapp provided the Commission with an overview of the Department Fiscal Year 2009 budget. She said the Creeks budget is not anticipating significant issues or problems with their budget. Ms. Rapp said that golf is having some challenges with reduced revenue, and the Department will have to face some tough decision depending on what rounds do this year and into next year.

Ms. Rapp talked briefly about the Fiscal Year 2010 City General Fund deficit, which is \$6.3M to \$8.3M. She said the mandated reductions for the Departments vary between 4% for the Police and Fire Departments and 8.4% for the other Departments. Ms. Rapp explained the logic behind this is that Police and Fire is

a priority for the community, and cuts to those services are more difficult for the community to sustain; therefore, the decision was made to divide the deficit into thirds and give public safety one third and the other Departments two thirds.

Ms. Rapp indicated that the Parks and Recreation Department mandated reduction is 8.4% or \$1,265,501. She said that if the Department were to do nothing but cut positions that would be about 23 positions. Ms. Rapp said that in addition to that amount, the Department has been asked to submit a list of additional prioritized reductions of \$403,755 that can be considered through the process.

Ms. Rapp stated that although the budget numbers that have been developed are considered to be conservative, Finance staff and the City Administrator are concerned that revenues might lower than expected, so the Departments have been cautioned to be prepared that the actual mandated reduction may be the higher number. She said staff will not know for sure until the City is closer to the release of the budget. Ms. Rapp said that the bigger challenge will be whether the community and Council will support the proposed reductions to Police and Fire.

Commissioner Larimore-Hall asked whether Ms. Rapp is suggesting that if those are reductions are not acceptable to the public and City Council, then there will be a push for higher levels of cuts in other departments.

Ms. Rapp said yes.

Commissioner Hochman asked whether there is any indication of how the public supports Parks and Recreation. Ms. Rapp said there is no statistical data other than general data on a National level. She said other than word of mouth, no.

Ms. Rapp said that staff is concerned that advocates for Parks and Recreation haven't always been folded into the process, and there needs to be a discussion about that. She said her experience is that it is all about who communicates and talks at meetings, who sends emails, what does the public think, etc. Ms. Rapp said that the decision makers need enough good information and strong reasons to support their decision-making process.

Chair Longstreet commented that often it is who gives the most money to the election campaigns; it doesn't matter how many people stand in front of Council within an election year.

Commissioner Hochman asked when the Union Contracts go through, commenting that there is not a great deal of flexibility. Ms. Rapp said negotiations are still in progress. She said this is going to be a very complex budget process, very political, more so than in a lot of years.

Ms. Rapp highlighted the budget process. Ms. Rapp said that the Department presented the proposed budget to the City Administrator on February 23rd; it was reviewed by Finance, and the Department made the final presentation to the City Administrator last Thursday. Ms. Rapp said that since layoffs are *proposed*, management have met with and informed affected staff.

Commissioner Hochman asked how many staff layoffs are proposed. Ms. Rapp indicated that she is not able to discuss that at this time, as the City Administrator has not made a final decision on the Department's budget proposal.

Ms. Rapp indicated that the budget will be presented to City Council on April 21st. She said staff proposes an in-depth budget work session Monday, April 20th, and then formally present the Fiscal Year 2010 budget at the regular monthly meeting on April 22nd. Ms. Rapp said that the Department is tentatively scheduled to make its budget presentation to City Council on May 4th. She said the Commission would typically formulate their budget recommendations to Council during the regular May meeting, and those recommendations would be forwarded to City Council on June 9th. Ms. Rapp said that Council would then adopt the budget on June 23rd.

For the benefit of the new Commissioners, Ms. Rapp highlighted Advisory Committee fees and charges review and input process.

Commissioner Burns suggested the Advisory Committees be provided a more detailed presentation about the budget and what could happen if they don't go before Council to advocate for their programs. Ms. Rapp concurred that was a good suggestion.

Ms. Rapp discussed FY 2010 Budget planning guidelines, the Department Mission, and the budget strategy. She highlighted the key proposals and service impacts.

Chair Longstreet asked how flexible the Department is if, for example after the budget is passed, it is determined that a program is not performing and it is necessary to make staffing cut. She asked if the matter will need to go back to Council again. She said that if a cut is going to be done that involves a position lay off; it must go to City Council. Ms. Rapp said she has been talking to the City Administrator about that, and because Recreation revenue is uncertain, as part of the package, staff will put together options, which state that if by a particular date (not yet determined), revenue for Recreation and Golf revenue is less than anticipated, then staff will propose a number of reductions that may include staff reductions; but, she said that will be approved as part of the budget when the FY 2010 budget is approved.

Commissioner Burns suggested staff show past years' budgets to reflect the cuts the Department has taken over the last seven to eight years, for example, to show that the Department has already taken reductions, if that is the case.

Ms. Rapp said she is not sure the numbers would reflect that, but staff will look at it.

Commissioner Hochman said another way to look at it historically is to look at the level of the FY 2010 budget, to see what past year it is equivalent to and what the programming was at that time as a comparison.

Ms. Rapp said staff will put some comparisons together.

Commissioner Burns commented that there are some buildings that are not being used at Sheffield, and asked whether it could be rented out for storage.

Ms. Rapp said it is not usable because of asbestos. She said it is cost prohibitive to make it habitable even for storage.

Commissioner Hochman asked whether if there are facilities that are not usable for Parks and Recreation, could those assets be transferred out of Parks and Recreation and just become a General Fund obligation.

Ms. Rapp responded saying it would not be a resolution if it remains in the General Fund. She said if the asset moved, the funds to maintain it would move also.

Ms. Rapp commented that Mr. Escobar suggested that the Police Department and Library Department pay our Department for grounds maintenance. She said it would not help the budget because they are part of the General Fund.

Mr. Hochman said that he thinks they should reimburse the Department for that service because, in particular, the Police Department is only being asked to reduce their budget by 4% while Parks and Recreation is being asked to reduce 8.4%. He said they should bear some of the cost of their own maintenance.

Commissioner Burns commented that many of the non-profit organizations that the City provides very low rent for, will probably be asking for reductions, and he wonders how the Department will handle that. He said the City needs to find a way to bring more money into the system.

Commissioner Hochman stated that in times such as this, there are ways to make investments that actually increase revenue, and finding those things will be incumbent upon the Commission. He expressed his assumption that the Commission will be discussing looking at shifting some of the budget into different kinds of marketing and advertising in the City and community. He also

suggested that there are some partnerships to be had, specifically the YMCA. Mr. Hochman said the YMCA is a big group that has been hit in the same way; they are one of the only other groups in town that subsidizes. He said they have very similar goals and some of the programs overlap. Mr. Hochman stated that his experience has been that by the time the budget gets to this point, there is not a whole lot they are going to have any affect on by advocating in front of Council or the City Administrator.

Chair Longstreet commented she doesn't think the budget will turn around for at least three years, maybe five.

Commissioner Hochman said we are looking a paradigm shifts, and he believes that it might be up to the Commission and staff to envision new kinds of partnerships, programs, etc., that will reinvigorate and change what has been up to now a pretty steady path.

Ms. Rapp agreed and said this budget year is the first year; she believes there will be budget reductions again next year and, if revenue does not come in as expected, it will be sooner rather than later. She said, however, that staff has identified some things to work toward that will help in out years, and the Commission needs to discuss those things and which ones to pursue that have the most promise.

Commissioner Burns commented that the PARC Foundation needs to be rejuvenated. He also said that last week he received calls from the YMCA and several other organizations soliciting money. He asked why the Department does not do that.

Commissioner Hochman said he is not sure it would be appropriate for the City to go out and ask for money, but suggested more community events to raise awareness and have opportunities to raise funds.

Ms. Rapp said that is the relationship the Department has with the PARC Foundation, you seek funds through the PARC Foundation.

Commissioner Larimore-Hall said that because we are facing a multi-year economic crisis in public funding, things we are doing that are just staving off the bleeding by bringing in a little more money here and there, or anything done that just moves the accounting from one pot to another, it is quite likely that in the next budget, the cuts will still be expected to be about the same percentage – that the bar will continue to be moved. He said that what he thinks is important about helping to reorganize and reinvigorate the PARC Foundation, having public events that raise awareness about what PARC does, increase marketing there frankly has to be a political cost to disproportionate cuts to Parks and Recreation. He said the people who ultimately make those decisions have to readjust their

thinking about what percentage of cut that is going to be expected from Parks and Recreation versus other departments.

Chair Longstreet, referring to Commissioner Burns' question about why the Department does not go out and solicit money, said that we need to get over the fact that we are a public entity, because we have afterschool programming free to children, and it should be sponsored. She said those programs should have help from the community.

Commissioner Larimore-Hall said he wants to caution that every dollar the Department brings in is going to be seen by other people as a dollar less needed from the General Fund. He encouraged staff to be aware of that and to seek those partnerships in very careful ways. Mr. Larimore-Hall said the Department needs to spend the funds in an equitable way that fills community needs.

Commissioner Hochman expressed that he sees the economic situation he refuses to accept we are in for a three to five year economic woe. He said he is favor of preparing for the worst, but we need to plan for better times. He said the ones that are successful in the end are the ones that managed this time very well and took their resources and reallocated them and make them strong so that when the first signs of coming out happened, were positioned to come out of it.

Commissioner Conner concurred, but said the only way people will make it is if they have a plan. She said playing it smart, collaborating, and looking towards the future, we will come out on top.

Ms. Rapp highlighted the strategic reductions, and discussed the key budget proposals.

Regarding the Neighborhood and Outreach Services, Commissioner Hochman commented that in difficult budgetary times, it is not common for a Department to take on a program or service that does not generate revenue, or to take on a program or service from another area. He asked whether the Department is taking on someone else's workload at the expense of one of our programs.

Ms. Rapp said two current work units will be combined by changing their focus and philosophy.

For the benefit of the new Commissioners, Ms. Rapp and Chair Longstreet briefly talked about the history of the Community Centers and their past and present focus.

Chair Longstreet stated that the Department is positioning itself for the future to be necessary; it is not necessary for children to play soccer. She said that is necessary for the community to bring itself up to be a safe and healthy community, and that is where the Department is positioning itself within the City

organization to be valued along the same lines as the Police Department, in the area of prevention.

Commissioner Hochman agreed, but expressed that soccer is just as important in the same way. He said there are ways soccer programs can address youth violence from a community standpoint. Mr. Hochman reiterated that if this program is being added or being made more efficient, it seems that there should be some cache with it, and maybe it is not being used effectively.

Ms. Rapp said that when more details can be released, Commission Hochman will see that his reservations have been addressed. She said it is more of a slight change in focus for the resources. Ms. Rapp said staff is looking at this as a community priority, and the role of this Department has been working with the neighborhoods doing the outreach, and this refocuses that in a stronger way.

Commissioner Larimore-Hall stated his understanding that there is no increase in expenditures, just a reorganization of structures that have been put in place to advise policy. He said there could be a soccer program supported by the City that does nothing to address at-risk youth, or you can have one that does; how do you get this information to determine this. Mr. Larimore-Hall said that right now, there is a slightly dysfunctional way of supposedly doing that, and this program, by providing the services in a better way, will hopefully do that. He further stated that if people grab hold of this, it could be a paradigm shift in terms of how the City is governed, and if that process is borne out of Parks and Recreation, it cannot help but strengthen our position of how people see what happens under the broad auspices of the Department.

Commissioner Hochman commented that from a more immediate point of view, grant sources for at-risk youth programs are probably more readily available than they are for soccer programs alone. He said he is hopeful than in marrying Fund Development with Neighborhood and Outreach Services and talking about how to do better fundraising and grant writing, this is a key component,

Ms. Rapp said that another aspect is collaboration, and there are some very specific expectations for collaboration building. She said the City does not have to be the provider; the City can be the facilitator. Ms. Rapp said staff believes it has a lot of potential for the Department and the City to do a better job of making sure the resources we currently putting towards it are more focused and more effective. She said that we are about prevention, but in the community right now there is a real focus about the youth who are most at risk and the families who are most at need, and this program is about trying to balance that out.

Commissioner Conner expressed that she thinks it is a good well thought-out plan. She said the trends are shifting, she has seen it in every foundation that is giving money. Ms. Conner said it will be the new system for the future.

Ms. Zachary reviewed the Proposed FY 2010 Capital Program Budget.

Chair Longstreet said she would like to be able to see how many people we have maintaining the areas. Ms. Zachary said when we discuss the budget in more detail, we will have that information available.

Commissioner Burns asked if the Department is trying to get the Waterfront Department to take over any of the functions of the Parks and Recreation Department and whether anything is happening with it.

Ms Zachary responded saying that the Department has at the request of the City Administrator put together single program budgets for different activities in the Waterfront, whether it is maintaining the restrooms at the waterfront at the bottom of the Wharf, the Garden Street Parking Lot, Beach Maintenance Program, Beach Lifeguards, maintenance of the Dolphin Fountain, etc., and he will determine what, if anything will be transferred, and how that transfer might occur.

Chair Longstreet commented that the Department has many facilities at the Waterfront, the Cabrillo Pavilion, Chase Palm Park Center, Los Baños Pool, that generate the revenue for the Waterfront Parking Lots, and the Department gets none of that revenue.

Commissioner Burns commented that many of the people who patronize the merchants on Stearns Wharf use the restroom at the foot of Stearns Wharf, yet, the Waterfront get 10% of the profits from the merchants. He said the Department needs to get some of that revenue.

Ms. Rapp said that one of the factors is that slip fees are not set at market price. Council has considered in the past the additional revenue if slip fee rates were increased.

Chair Longstreet commented that in Parks there is no reduction of parks, the land is there and the need must be met. She said they are historic in many cases, jewels in the community.

Chair Longstreet commented that the Parks and Recreation Department is one of the bigger employers in the City of hourly employees, and with that being greatly reduced that is another impact on the economic spiral we are in.

Ms. Rapp said that with the changing economy, we are likely to see older, more mature, educated, and experienced people in jobs they would not have taken before. She agreed with Chair Longstreet that historically, the Department is the first-time employer for many young people, and as some of the programs get smaller there will be fewer opportunities and it will have an impact.

Ms. Rapp advised the Commission that if there is a report on a particular program the Commission would like, she would like them to let her know, and staff will provide that report at the regular March meeting.

Chair Longstreet commented that she is proud of the way staff has come forward with ideas and she looks to this budget process as an innovative time that will position the Department to be better in the future. She said the Commission has the opportunity to talk to the Advisory Committees and to educate them on what is happening. She said she does not want to see the budget get politicized, but that the decisions are well thought-out.

Chair Longstreet said that the Commissioners need to talk about the budget, the reorganization, and how the community can participate, and said that the Commission needs to listen to what they want.

Commissioner Hochman asked what the Commission's role is in the budget process. Chair Longstreet said the Commission makes recommendations and advocates for what they feel strongly about and against what they are opposed to.

Commissioner Hochman said that the Commission's most direct way of having influence is partnering with staff.

Ms. Zachary stated that in the last four budget years the Commission has played a significant role in advocating for IPM Program funding; they stood up and said it was important, and City Council listened. She said the same was true for youth programs with all the additional programs added two years ago. Ms. Zachary said support for those programs came from the Community Centers, but they were also thoroughly backed by the Commission.

Ms. Rapp added that the second Commission budget work session will be Monday, April 20th, at 5:30 p.m., at the Parks and Recreation Conference Room. She said the Commission will have the budget presentation at the regular meeting on Wednesday, April 22nd, and the Department makes the presentation to City Council on May 4th. Ms. Rapp advised that if between the Monday work session and the presentation on Wednesday, there are things the Commission has discussed that they would like to explore, there is time for staff to do so, and at least when staff goes to Council, staff will have the information available. She expressed that the budget is in flux until the end of June.

Chair Longstreet said the first step is getting the information out to the Advisory Committees and getting input from them.

Commissioner Burns asked if the Commissioners could get a one-page fact sheet that they can give to the Advisory Committees. He asked if there is a

process in place to get the information to the Advisory Committees. Ms. Hanna said the fact sheet is a good idea.

Ms. Rapp explained how it was done in the past, but said we should maybe talk about doing it a little differently this year. She said that all of the Advisory Committees submit written recommendations to the Commission regarding the budget, and the Commission incorporates whichever of those recommendations they see fit, into the Commission's recommendation to Council.

Commissioner Hochman agreed that it is important to get input from the Advisory Committees, but going to the people that actually use the services is more important.

Commissioner Conner asked if staff posts notices of these types of meetings in the various facilities. Ms. Rapp said yes, but the postings are limited.

Chair Longstreet agreed that could help and suggested civic groups like Santa Barbara Beautiful, Cottage Hospital Group, Arts Groups, neighborhood associations, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Organization, Realtors, Santa Barbara Rental Property Association., etc.

Commissioner Hochman commented that if the population for youth sports is growing, that is a place to advocate support; because this is a service they have become accustomed to having. He suggested the Commission advocate organizations with the highest percentage to reach people to go to Council to speak.

Commissioner Conner stated that all of the Commissioners belong to various groups, and if they had something to hand out and share.

Chair Longstreet reminded the Commissioners that they are advocating maintaining what the Department currently has.

Commissioner Hochman said the need is to simply make people aware of what is happening.

Ms. Rapp said that once the budget is proposed through the end of June, there is a greater risk that the political decisions will be made that will dig deeper into what we have proposed so that other City services are not as impacted. Ms. Rapp said staff can develop talking points for the Commission. She said it is appropriate for staff to make a presentation to the Advisory Committees, and to have someone from the Commission there to talk to them about the role of advocacy. Ms. Rapp said it is not appropriate for staff to make presentations to the outside organizations; that is a job for the Commission. She suggested the Commission work with staff to identify who are the most important organizations to approach.

Commissioner Larimore-Hall said the list of who is outreached to needs to be refined when we know what we are asking. He said it does not make sense to generate a list of everyone they know, because, for example, it could be something that only impacts art, in which case, we would think carefully about who has a stake in art etc.

Chair Longstreet expressed that it is important for each one of the Commissioners to advocate personally every day.

Commissioner Larimore-Hall said he thinks it would be smart to reach out to employers to provide scholarships for children of their employees for Parks and Recreation activities in exchange for advertising. He said it would be helpful to have a formalized program around that—a flyer, a form, etc. Mr. Larimore-Hall said that for some of the larger employers in the community it is not much money at all and he thinks there are a lot of employers who would do that, if all it means it they are thanked in the program. He said it is for the Department to decide, and the Commission could help to get that information out into the community.

Commissioner Larimore-Hall also suggested that the grocery stores and the unions might be willing to go in half on the cost of scholarships, and he believes there could be many opportunities such as that, but he would need to be able to provide these agencies with a flyer which shows them what they could expect in return.

Commissioner Larimore-Hall asked staff for the overall budget picture including what is happening to the other departments, because the advocacy role that the Commission has to play, they can't make recommendations about what should happen to other Departments, but as they are talking to members of the public that information is going to be crucial.

Ms. Rapp said the City is looking at creating a brief overview of what the budget means for City Services, and for the Budget Document, there is discussion about adding a section for each Department that outlines highlights and major changes. She said staff will be able to provide that document to the Commission sometime in April.

Commissioner Hochman said it is risky to advocate for particular programs inside the Department. He said he thinks the message should be the value of the Department towards quality of life for the citizens of Santa Barbara.

Chair Longstreet said the budget that will be presented has been hashed out by among the professionals in the Department who know how the programs work and that made serious compromising decisions that should not be taken apart on a Tuesday afternoon because the softball people show up. She said she would

like the Commission to emphasize, as they are talking to people, the importance of the package.

Commissioner Larimore-Hall agreed overall with Chair Longstreet and Commissioner Hochman, but said they need to be prepared that there is some program that will not automatically generate a lot of community support that the Commission will have to advocate for.

Commissioner Burns asked how much the Department competes with City College. Ms. Rapp said City College does some things through Adult Education. She said that when the Department develops fees, staff does a comparison of market value. Commissioner Burns said that the more income you have the better, and this is an income generator. Ms. Rapp said that it is important for the Department to maximize opportunities to increase participation because that is where we make net profit, especially for those activities done by contract. She said it will be interesting to see what the effects the economy will have on people choosing to pay for recreation. Ms. Rapp said the other complication for the Department is that the Carrillo Recreation Center will close for a year for renovation in July, which has a significant impact on classes and programs because some will need to be discontinued until the Center re-opens; relocate as many as possible to other facilities; all that will affect revenue. She said the Recreation Division has done an excellent job in the last few years of increasing participation in activities through more creative marketing, programming, improved quality, and staff does not want to lose that momentum.

Commissioner Burns asked whether staff has been in discussions with some of the Churches or other gyms about moving some of our dances to those locations. Ms. Hanna indicated that most of the dance programs that occur in the evening will move over to the gymnasium, and the dance classes will move to the MacKenzie Park Adult Building. She said the more soft yoga type activities will move to the Davis Center. Ms. Hanna said that some of the activities will be suspended temporarily, but many of the strong participation activities have been relocated. She said maintaining and increasing a market share of recreation is a big focus of the managers and supervisor, because there is a great deal of competition. Ms. McCaffrey commented that the Department cannot compete in the area of Adult Education ceramics, because it is highly subsidized, so we do not attempt to. She said the Department offers ceramic programs to youth only, in which there is no competition.

Commissioner Hochman asked regarding user fees if there is an economic model available to see if it would be appropriate to lower fees. Ms. Hanna responded saying that when staff is developing the budgets they look at participation and revenue history and look at other offerings in the community. She said if participation is declining, they try to evaluate whether it is caused by competition or by the fee and make adjustments accordingly. Ms. Hanna said that staff did not feel this year was not the year to increase revenue by increasing

fees, although there are some areas that fee increases are proposed, for example, special events for large events (for-profit).

Commissioner Hochman commented that there are some studies nation-wide that show that during recessions, organizations that provide cheap or reasonably priced recreation actually boomed, because it is easier to spend a couple of hundred dollars to have your child do something fun for a week to take a family on a vacation.

Ms. Rapp suggested that when the Commission gets the Proposed FY 2010 Fees and Charges Schedule it might be worth having that discussion.

Ms. Rapp suggested a report on the sponsorships and partnerships we currently have and the volunteer program in March.

Commissioner Burns reiterated his request for staff to provide past years' budget information to reflect the cuts the Department has taken over the last seven to eight years, for example, to show that the Department has already taken reductions, if that is the case.

Commissioner Hochman said it would be interesting to see the revenue generation and General Fund contribution based on the level of budget we are going to be recommending, and what year in the past does that equate us to. Ms. Rapp suggested that maybe what percentage of the General Fund was Parks and Recreation for each of those past years might be the more revealing information. Commissioner Hochman suggested that information then be placed in comparison to the Police and Fire Departments, and maybe the Library Department. Chair Longstreet interjected that ten years ago, the Department had a lot more people and a lot more programs, and it has been pared down a great deal. Commissioner Burns said that alone might be something we want to show.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:33 p.m., with no further business to come before the Commission,

Commissioner Longstreet moved, seconded by Commissioner Burns, and passed 5/0 that the meeting be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Rapp
Parks and Recreation Director