



## CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

### PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** January 25, 2012

**TO:** Park and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Recreation Division, Parks and Recreation Department

**SUBJECT:** Aquatics, Sports and Tennis Program Report

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission receive a presentation on recent program highlights and successes in the Aquatics, Sports and Tennis Sections.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Despite the challenge of declining budgets and a poor economy, the Aquatics, Sports, and Tennis Sections have continued to creatively manage popular community sporting facilities and increase participation in youth and adult sporting programs. This presentation will highlight recent facility improvements, participation increases, and positive partnerships that have provided alternative funding during a tough economy.

#### **Tennis Section**

After five years, the Municipal Tennis stadium finally received much needed repairs and a facelift in October 2011. The tennis stadium is a community jewel, but due to its wooden structure and its age, it has become increasingly more difficult to maintain and ensure spectator safety. Repairs were made to the stadium seating and walkways, and the project concluded with a fresh coat of paint for the entire stadium. These repairs will extend the longevity of the facility while a more permanent solution continues to be explored.

Despite a wet winter in 2011 and the transition of the Las Positas Tennis facility to Elings Park, participation in group tennis lessons and court rental hours are on the rise. At mid-year, group tennis lessons are up 6% due to three out of four tennis professionals moving their classes from Las Positas to Municipal. A total of 783 people participated in group lessons in Fiscal Year 2011. In addition to the increase for group tennis lessons, a private high performance tennis clinic has signed on at Municipal ten hours a week which at mid-year has increased fee based court rental hours by 466 hours or 44%.

#### **Sports Section**

Participation in free and fee-based youth and adult programs also continues to increase. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2009 through 2011, participation in the adult sport leagues (basketball, soccer and volleyball) has grown by 455 participants or 39%. 1,607

participants were served by these programs in Fiscal Year 2011. These increases are attributed to the popularity of these leagues as adult participants have found a weekly activity that provides both exercise and a social component. Due to the surge in participation the Sports Section, programs have increased from two to four game nights a week, and a second league season has been added.

Youth sports programs include those that are fee-based and those that are free to all participants. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2009 through 2011, participation in youth sport leagues (soccer, flag football, basketball and volleyball) has grown by 279 participants or 18%. In Fiscal Year 2011, 1,813 youth were served in these programs in. These increases are attributed to increased promotion, improved communication with parents, schools and local organizations, and adapting the programs to fit the needs of the community.

Participation in our free afterschool youth sports leagues has also grown dramatically. The free afterschool sports leagues include: flag football, basketball, and soccer. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2009 through 2011, participation in youth sport leagues has grown by 196 participants or 23%. During Fiscal Year 2011, 1,033 youth participated in these free programs in. These increases can be contributed to staff efforts to increase the level of coaching and officiating which has ensured competitive but fun sport programs that cater to individuals of all abilities.

Pershing Park softball field and the Cabrillo ball field are looking great thanks to funding from Santa Barbara City College combined with CDBG funding secured by the Parks Division. The improvements to both Pershing Park and Cabrillo ball field have enabled our adult softball contractor, Major League Softball, to rebuild programming and increase participation over 2009 and 2010 levels by adding an additional three teams per season, a 14% increase. A total of 262 teams participated in Fiscal Year 2011.

### **Aquatic Section**

Following a Pool Manager vacancy during summer 2011, the Learn to Swim program was experiencing a serious decline in popularity and participation. During this time, staff worked to increase swim programming at Ortega Park swimming pool and partner with the Santa Barbara Swim Club to provide lesson programming at Los Baños. Following the hiring of a new Pool Manager, the program was re-energized and completed one of its more successful seasons as participation grew by 159 participants or 50% over the previous year. A total of 657 youth were served in Fiscal Year 2011.

In December 2010, one of the two pool pumps required to operate the circulation system at Los Baños had a catastrophic failure. While only one pump is required to operate the pool, having two pumps assured there was always a back up and allowed the pumps to rest for two to three days a week. During this time, Los Baños operated

on one pump for six months while funding and energy efficient solutions were explored. Eventually, with help and funding from the Friends of Los Baños del Mar and energy savings from Edison secured by the Building Maintenance Division, it was possible to purchase two new energy efficient pumps. The new pumps were designed to save a minimum of 20% in electrical costs; however, when coupled with a Variable Frequency Drive system which operates the pumps at a lower speed during times when the pool is closed, it enabled the Aquatic Section to save \$14,175 in electrical costs in the first full year or 35%.

On Sunday January 8, 2012, the Friends of Los Baños del Mar, in coordination with the Santa Barbara Swim Club and the Aquatic Section, held a “celebrate Sunday” event at Los Baños to showcase all of the recent facility improvements and aesthetic enhancements. A combined project between the Friends of Los Baños and the Santa Barbara Swim Club for a total of \$12,100 in funding made it possible to replace dilapidated equipment including lane lines, wall clocks, reupholstered weight room benches, workout mats and refurbished storage boxes for swim equipment. These improvements gave the facility a well needed facelift. These positive partnerships ensure that the facility continues to operate at a high level and greatly enhances the swimming experience for all who swim there.

Despite ongoing budget challenges, the Aquatic, Sports, and Tennis Sections have managed to increase participation in existing programs while finding alternative funding methods to keep recreation facilities operating at a high level. These program highlights reflect the commitment and creative thinking by staff which continues to improve the recreational experience for residents in our community and visitors to Santa Barbara.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Rich Hanna, Senior Recreation Supervisor

**APPROVED BY:** Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director