



**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

Wednesday, January 22, 2014

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m. at City Council Chambers.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chair Wiscomb

ROLL CALL:

Commissioners & Staff Present

Commissioner Lesley Wiscomb (Chair)
Commissioner Chris Casebeer
Commissioner Nicolas Ferrara
Commissioner Jim Heaton
Commissioner Beebe Longstreet
Commissioner Olivia Uribe
Youth Intern Andrew Rodriguez
Parks and Recreation Director Nancy L. Rapp
Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Jill Zachary
Parks Manager Santos Escobar
Urban Forest Superintendent Timothy Downey
Executive Assistant Karla Megill
Creeks Manager Cameron Benson
Administrative Analyst Mandy Burgess
Water Resources Specialist Tim Burgess
Marketing and Communications Coordinator Summers Case
Library Director Irene Macias
Library Services Manager Scott Love
Associate Planner Marck Aguilar

City Councilmembers Present

City Councilmember Gregg Hart

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS: Chair Wiscomb welcomed and introduced the new commissioners.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: Ms. Rapp recommended that Item 5, Low Impact Development Permeable Paver Parking Lots Project Review be addressed prior to Item #4, Advisory Committee Liaison Appointments.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS: Ms. Rapp called the Commissioners attention to the memorandum provided to the Commission by Mark Sherman, Recreation Specialist, Subject: Many Thanks and Good Wishes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No one wished to speak.

YOUTH COUNCIL REPORT:

Youth Intern Andrew Rodriguez provided this report.

COMMISSIONER COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT REPORTS:

Commissioner Longstreet reported on the activities of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee and the Parks and Recreation Community (PARC) Foundation.

Commissioner Ferrara reported on the activities of the Creeks Advisory Committee and the Integrated Pest Management Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Casebeer reported on the activities of the Arts and Crafts Show Advisory Committee.

Chair Wiscomb reported on the activities of the Golf Advisory Committee. She also reported on the activities of the Street Tree Advisory Committee and the PARC Foundation.

COMMISSION AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

Ms. Rapp briefed that she has invited Mike Nelson, Elings Park Foundation Executive Director, to the meeting today to briefly talk to the Commission. Mr. Nelson addressed the Commission.

Ms. Rapp briefed the Commission on the Special City Council meeting scheduled for Monday, January 27th, 5PM, regarding one-time monies for Capital Projects. She said that meeting has been moved to City Council Chambers. Ms. Rapp advised that the Department has two projects for consideration Cabrillo Ballfield (\$455,000) and Kids World Renovation (\$250,000). She encouraged Commissioner to be present to speak in favor of these community projects.

Ms. Rapp advised staff is starting to work on their budget recommendations that will go forward to the City Administrator. The Commission will review the budget over the next few months.

Ms. Rapp addressed the County's drought conditions and advised that the Commission will be hearing more about this in the future.

Ms. Rapp advised that staff is continuing to work with community stakeholders regarding the skatepark and will be coming back to the Commission with ideas and for further input.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. Approval of Minutes – For Action

Recommendation: That the Commission waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting of December 18, 2013.

Commissioner Ferrara moved, seconded by Commissioner Longstreet, and passed 4/0 to waive the reading and approve the minutes of the regular meeting of December 18, 2013.

Abstentions: Heaton/Uribe

OLD BUSINESS

2. Draft Concept Design for the Library Plaza Improvement Project – For Action

Recommendation: That the Commission review the draft concept design for the Library Plaza Improvement Project and provide comments to the Historic Landmarks Commission.

Documents:

- January 22, 2014, report from the Library Director
- PowerPoint presentation prepared and made by Staff

Speakers:

- Staff: Irene Macias, Library Director; Scott Love, Library Services Manager; Marck Aguilar, Associate Planner;
- Members of the Public: Trish Allen, Museum of Arts; Doug and Regula Campbell, Consultants; John Glasso, Library Board

Commission Comments:

Commissioner Longstreet asked if there will be a separate access point for the children. Ms. Macias said there was a lot of discussion about it, but in the end, the options proved to be cost prohibitive. She said that at this point, it is strictly an internal remodel.

Commissioner Longstreet asked if there is a reason to retain the Camellias. Commissioner Longstreet expressed concern that the Camellias seem to be a high maintenance plant to put in where we know we have no maintenance. Ms. Campbell replied saying that the Camellias need pruning and feeding. Ms. Campbell said they would include soil regeneration in their working drawings. She said there are a number of materials they use to provide for the soil structure and soil organisms. She said that really helps the Camellias. Ms. Campbell said the Camellias are historic; they were put in with the building, and were very popular during the period. Ms. Campbell stated that the Camellias are also very drought adaptive when they are that size.

Commissioner Longstreet asked if the water feature is a reflecting pool or fountain. Ms. Campbell said it is both; it will have a very small amount of water, but it serves as a reflecting pool. She said it will have a dark bottom. Commissioner Longstreet asked who will maintain it. Ms. Macias said that currently, the fountain that is in place is owned and maintained by La Arcada. She said they are going to look to that model and look for someone to adopt it and provide an endowment to keep it going. Commissioner Longstreet said she does not like to see the City put in things that cannot be maintained, and end up being an embarrassment.

Commissioner Longstreet asked if there is the possibility of revenue from the rental of the plaza, and how does the museum fit? She asked if it is City property that will be shared or rented. Ms. Macias said yes, the Central Library has a fee structure for rental of the rooms, art gallery, and the walls. She said that there is a fee structure for rental of the front plaza, but it rarely is rented because of its configuration, but once there is a newly redesigned plaza the fee will be increased and will be a revenue generating plaza.

Commissioner Longstreet said she is pleased to see the renovations coming together. She said it will be lovely to see if rejuvenated. She said it is so important to have the access issues addressed, all the way across, especially from the parking lot; many people use the walkway to the Granada. She said to have it safer, more open, and more accessible to people with disabilities and strollers, is important. She said she is supportive of the plan and would love to see the project move forward.

Commissioner Ferrara concurred with the Street Tree Advisory Committee recommendations and said he has no issues with the tree removals or relocations. He said he is pleased with the plants and how they are laid out. Mr. Ferrara said he does have an issue with considering taller plants of at least two feet in height, around the planters that contain the Oaks. He expressed that he thinks it is important to have a straight line view with nothing to block the view from the street, for security reasons.

Commissioner Ferrara asked to where the bicycle rack will be relocated. Ms. Campbell said that it will be relocated in front of the library, not the entry way, between the pears along the sidewalk, in plain view. She said they added more bicycle parking along the Paseo between the Library Avenue and the parking structure. Ms. Campbell said the bicycle at the lower Library Plaza was retained, but made larger, as they anticipate increased bicycle transit.

Commissioner Ferrara commented that the Street Tree Advisory Committee mentioned they would like to see vertical elements, possibly trees against the museum wall to frame the space. He asked Ms. Campbell to address that. Ms. Campbell explained and said they had originally included Kentia Palms along the edge, but the museum asked that they be removed, so they were taken out. Commissioner Ferrara said it is a great project.

Commissioner Casebeer expressed support for the project.

Commissioner Heaton said he enthusiastically supports the project. He said he it is a great improvement to the area, recognizing the historic value, and yet creating some usable future for the Library. Mr. Heaton said he is sad to see the Cumquat trees go.

Commissioner Uribe commended the Library for working with the Museum. She asked why they went from a reflecting pool to a fountain and back to the reflecting pool; was it a logistical issue or a design issue? Ms. Macias said the existing reflecting pools were built in 1930, but at some point they were planted in, and actually removed in the 1980 remodel. She said her understanding is that there were funds available that needed to be expended in a hurry, so they came up with a quick design. Ms. Macias said that the fountain was given to the Library by Hugh Pederson and La Arcada has continued to maintain it. Ms. Macias said that the plan was to do away with the fountain, but public feedback, and feedback from the Historic Landmarks Commission was to bring back the original look.

Commissioner Uribe commented that she does not know how the proposed plants smell, but it would be nice to have plants that are pleasant to have around and have a nice scent during different times of the year. She suggested that if there are plants that have a particularly pleasant fragrance, they would be good to have because it generates good memories of coming home.

Commissioner Casebeer commented that if La Arcada does not have a use for the fountain can the Department use it in a park. Ms. Macias said the fountain is in decline.

Chair Wiscomb said she is very pleased to see the scope increased on the project on the standpoint of usability and accessibility of the space. She said that with the scope increase, a tremendous amount of the issues related to accessibility and grade and usability have been addressed. Ms. Wiscomb said she appreciates the enormous respect the project shows for trees. She said she would support the trees that are being removed, and the reuse of the trees is nice. Ms. Wiscomb expressed that she appreciates that the water feature is being brought back. She further said she appreciates the taking up of the lawn underneath the Oaks, and putting in the ground covers; if we can discourage foot traffic in that area it will help without decreasing visibility it will be good.

Chair Wiscomb commented regarding the museum wall, the STAC wanted vertical plantings to soften the effects of the wall. She said it came to their attention that the museum might use the wall to show movies. Ms. Wiscomb said the STAC understood that, but she still would like to see vertical plantings on the sides of where the screen would be. She said she agrees, and said it needs a vertical plant element, even it just off to the edges where the screen would be. Ms. Wiscomb stated that she appreciates the grading on the project, the 5% or less with no handrails gives it a more open feeling and will help the public use the space well. She said she likes the indoor/outdoor concept at the Faulkner; it will be a wonderful space and will probably help with rental of that space when you can flow people outdoors from the Faulkner. Ms. Wiscomb said she likes the introduction of the Nile Tulip tree and the plant selection. She expressed concern about the Camellias, but understands the intent, and said she hopes it will not be a maintenance headache for Parks staff. Ms. Wiscomb said she appreciates the removal of the calliandra for more light. Ms. Wiscomb stated that the plant pallet is great, the tree removals are justified, and in other areas trees are celebrated, which is great. She said the design will serve the public well; visibility is important, and the design is open and will help with safety. Chair Wiscomb said she hopes the project moves forward.

The Commission recessed at 5:35 pm and reconvened at 5:42 pm.

3. Urban Forest Management Plan – For Action

Recommendation: That the Commission

- A. Review the proposed Urban Forest Management Plan (Plan); and
- B. Recommend the Plan to City Council for adoption.

Documents:

- January 22, 2014, report from the Parks and Recreation Director
- PowerPoint presentation prepared and made by Staff

Speakers: Jill Zachary, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director; Amanda Burgess, Administrative Analyst

- Members of the Public:

Commission Comments:

Commissioner Uribe commented that the Ordinance addresses cutting down trees on private property, but it does not address planting trees on private property, yet in the actions and goals, there is the idea of planting more trees on private property. She asked whether, at some point, those guidelines will be created. Ms. Zachary said that the plan is largely focused on publicly-owned trees, but also has the element of how can the City work with private land-owner to encourage more tree planting—not require tree planting. Ms. Zachary said the City is looking at it more from a voluntary stand point, and not proposing any policy changes related to it.

Commissioner Ferrara expressed concern about climate anomalies and climate changes and the fact that we are in a drought situation. He said that if things change, this will not work. He said we need to look at that closely.

Commissioner Ferrara stated that the City needs to make a greater investment, money-wise in maintaining trees, plug in public resources to do that. He further said that interdepartmental coordination is absolutely necessary, as well as public participation in the urban forest preservation and enhancement.

Commissioner Ferrara said that the draft plan recommends holding an Annual Public Workshop to educate the public on policies, maintenance and care of trees; he suggested that should be done quarterly.

Commissioner Ferrara said he likes the idea about neighborhood adopt a block/adopt a tree programs. He said he thinks that will help educate the populace far more on trees.

Commissioner Ferrara said regarding the Management Plan Implementation Plan – he suggested adding that within 1st year, the Department should establish an interdepartmental community climate action team and/or committee with the power to make and take emergency actions city-wide, whenever necessary, to protect the urban forest from severe and unanticipated climate anomalies and changes. Mr. Ferrara said he thinks that is something the City really needs to consider; the City is in a drought now, and does not know what is going to happen in the future. He said he prefers that the City be more proactive rather than reactive.

Commissioner Heaton commented regarding partnering with nurseries and trying to establish an inventory. He said that we should work on making that available to the community as well, if it is not already a part of the plan. He said it should not be for just street trees, but for community members who are interested in contributing towards those plantings on their own private property. He said likes the idea of integrating edible fruit trees and nut trees; he said he knows there are maintenance issues, but there are opportunities for partnerships with organizations, for example, Back Yard Bounty or other non-profits that would work in certain circumstances. Mr. Heaton suggested that the Urban Forestry Team outreach with utility companies to inform and prioritize things like underground utilities to help identify those areas, if there are ever opportunities to do that.

Commissioner Uribe commented that in an early version of the plan from March 27, 2013, one key action she felt was important was “developing a comprehensive budget” as part of the City’s budget. She said that was dropped, but expressed that it is

important to keep it somewhere within the working documents. She said if we forget to have the budget present, some things do not get done, or it is harder to prioritize.

Chair Wiscomb thanked staff for their efforts on the plan. She said that she loves the part about the benefits of trees; underestimated and often not thought about. She said trees provide health benefits both physical and mental, and it is important to make sure that the benefit of trees is emphasized in the plan. Ms. Wiscomb said that the Urban Forest Management Plan Technical Advisory Committee spent a long time on the public education component and really emphasized that, so she would like to see that emphasized moving forward. She said it is important to get the public involved and will help make a lot of end roads into implementing some of the priorities in the plan. Regarding the budget, Ms. Wiscomb said she hopes the Department and City Council will take the document to heart and begin to fund the implementation of some of the top priorities. She said it is wonderful to have a document, but hopefully there is a monetary commitment made to moving the document forward and not just putting it on the shelf.

Commissioner Longstreet appreciates the work of staff and all members. She concurs with Chair Wiscomb regarding the dollar amounts. Ms. Longstreet said that here great concern is the park trees; that is where there are many of the beautiful specimen trees, and they have lived on their own for many years. She wants council to understand they are an important aspect of who we are as a city.

Commissioner Longstreet moved, seconded by Commissioner Casebeer, and passed 6/0 to recommend the Urban Forest Management Plan to City Council for adoption.

NEW BUSINESS

4. Advisory Committee Liaison Appointments – For Action

Recommendation: That the Commission consider advisory committee liaison appointments.

Documents:

- January 22, 2014, Staff Report from the Parks and Recreation Director

Speakers: Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director

The Commissioners reviewed and updated the advisory committee liaisons.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND STAFF REPORTS

5. Low Impact Development Permeable Paver Parking Lots Project Review – For Information

Recommendation: That the Commission receive a report on the Low Impact Development Permeable Paver Parking Lots Project.

Documents:

- PowerPoint presentation prepared and made by Staff

Speakers:

- Staff: Tim Burgess, Water Resources Specialist

By consensus, the Commission received the report and their questions were answered.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:41 p.m., with no further business to be addressed by the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Rapp
Parks & Recreation Director