



**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

Wednesday, February 25, 2015

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 (arrived at 4:04 PM)
Commissioner Nichol Clark
Commissioner LeeAnne French
Commissioner Jim Heaton
Commissioner Beebe Longstreet
Commissioner Mark Rincon-Ibarra
Youth Intern Andrew Rodriguez
Parks and Recreation Director Nancy Rapp
Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Jill Zachary
Parks Manager, Santos Escobar
Executive Assistant Karla Megill
Recreation Manager Rich Hanna
Associate Planner Kathy Frye
Animal Control Officer Jeff Deming

City Councilmembers Present

Cathy Murillo

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS: None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Speakers: Kenneth Loch

YOUTH COUNCIL REPORT: Youth Intern Rodriguez provided this report.

COMMISSIONER COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT REPORTS:

Commissioner Longstreet reported on the activities of the Neighborhood Advisory Council. She also briefed that she attended the Parks and Recreation Community (PARC) Foundation and talked about the fundraising event, "Magic on the Urban Wine Trail", which is scheduled for Sunday, April 19th, at the Carrillo Recreation Center.

Commissioner Clark advised that she attended the PARC Foundation meeting and provided a brief report.

Commissioner Casebeer reported on the activities of the Arts and Crafts Show Advisory Committee and briefly spoke about the Cabrillo Bridge Replacement Project.

Chair Wiscomb reported on the activities of the Street Tree Advisory Committee. Ms. Wiscomb reported on the Fund Development Committee of the PARC Foundation, and briefed on the status of the "Magic on the Urban Wine Trail" event, which is scheduled for Sunday, April 19th, at the Carrillo Recreation Center. She said it will be an incredible event. Ms. Wiscomb further reported on the activities of the Golf Advisory Committee.

COMMISSION AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

Ms. Rapp advised that, although the "Magic on the Urban Wine Trail" event is being held on the weekend of Earth Day, the Parks and Recreation Department and other City Departments will be very well-represented at Earth Day events, and will have information on all of the different programs. She further said there will be information available on the Youth Council and those activities, but a Youth Council representative is not normally present at the event.

Ms. Rapp briefly spoke about the Cabrillo Bridge Replacement Project and advised the Commission that staff is scheduling the item for the March Commission agenda, along with a report on the Arts and Crafts Show 50th Anniversary.

Ms. Rapp highlighted the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget timeline for the Commission.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. Summary of Council Actions – For Information

The Commission received this item and their questions were answered.

2. Approval of Minutes – For Action

Recommendation: That the Commission waive the reading and approve the minutes of the special meeting (site visit) of January 28, 2015, and regular meeting of January 28, 2015.

Commissioner Longstreet moved, seconded by Commissioner Casebeer, and passed 7/0 to waive the reading and approve the minutes of the special meeting (site visit) of January 28, 2015, and regular meeting of January 28, 2015.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND STAFF REPORTS

3. Junior High Afterschool Sports Leagues – For Information

Recommendation: That the Commission receive a presentation on the Junior High Afterschool Sports Program.

Documents:

- Staff Report dated February 25, 2015
- PowerPoint presentation prepared and made by the Santa Barbara Unified School District

Speakers:

- Staff: Recreation Manager Rich Hanna
- Members of the Public: Santa Barbara Junior High School Principal Lito Garcia

The Commission unanimously received the report and their questions were answered.

NEW BUSINESS

4. Draft Off Leash Dog Areas Feasibility Study – For Action

Recommendation: That the Commission receives a presentation on the Draft Off Leash Dog Areas Feasibility Study and recommends further evaluation of Dwight Murphy Field, Ortega Park, MacKenzie Park, and the Sheffield Open Space for off leash dog facilities.

Documents:

- Staff Report dated February 25, 2015
- PowerPoint presentation prepared and made by Staff

Speakers:

- Staff: Assistant Parks & Recreation Director Jill Zachary; Associate Planner Kathy Frye
- Members of the Public: Bob Cunningham

Chair Wiscomb acknowledged receiving emails from Sebastian Aldana Jr., Sharon Dirlam, Robin Theriault, and Mary Lou Sodomka.

The Commission unanimously received the report and their questions were answered.

Commission Comments:

Commissioner French commented regarding the Ortega Park area that the corner is used by wide diversity of people on a drop-in basis, e.g., the elderly, backgammon games, etc., but they could probably be relocated. Ms. French suggested that there might be other sites in the same neighborhood that are not part of the Parks and Recreation Department, but are centrally located for both the Eastside, Westside, and the downtown area. She proposed the National Guard Armory as a possibility, saying it is a large space that is not used. Ms. French said she sees a lot of dog owners using the high school field that is in that same area, which is not a great use for dogs given the fact that there are children there. She said that she likes the Ortega park area, but doesn't think that pigeon-holing it into that small corner is optimal. Ms. French agreed with Mr. Cunningham, who spoke at public comment, saying it would be nice to have a better beach area that can be reached during both low and high tide; she referred to the email regarding Hendry's beach, and said she would suggest that, even if it is only during specific hours in which there would be less impact. Ms. French commented that Sheffield Park has potential, but expressed concern about accessibility and parking and said there are budgetary concerns if the City needs to accommodate parking in that area. Ms. French said that MacKenzie Park is interesting, but it seems like there is a corridor from MacKenzie Park down; that section of Santa Barbara is pretty well-served for off leash access with Elings Park and the Douglas Family Preserve (DFP). She said that travelling up Las Positas to State Street is a corridor that has quite a bit of dog opportunities. She said, however, looking at it east to west, there is not as much potential.

Ms. Zachary advised the Commission that it is highly unlikely that the Department would get a permit from the Federal government to allow dogs off leash on East Beach. The Western Snowy Plover is a Federally protected bird under the Endangered Species Act. She stated that the Western Snowy Plover is designated critical habitat, and to propose having off leash dogs in that location, the Department would have to obtain a permit from US Department of Fish and Wildlife. Ms. Zachary said that the other location that was suggested is unincorporated County; staff would be happy to forward the suggestion to County Parks.

Commissioner Heaton stated that he prefers fenced in off leash opportunities; with 305 acres of existing off leash areas it seems that there are ample opportunities available. He said that some of the recommendations are good and would work with the fenced in option. He expressed concern about spillover effects with some of the other existing park opportunities. Mr. Heaton said he is hesitant to take on the additional maintenance, particularly if it is unknown, but he would really like to see a partner or third party sponsor it. Mr. Heaton said the study is an initial step and gives staff something to point to if someone does come forward. Mr. Heaton, commented that although it was excluded, he thinks that Plaza Vera Cruz is worth considering; it has a playground, but also has a lot of green open space and is under-utilized. He said the uses he does see there are those that are typically discouraged and negatively impact other uses. Mr. Heaton said he does not see where a fenced in area would work and be compatible. He said there may be parking opportunities and is walkable and centrally located. Mr. Heaton said he thought most of the examples were good. Mr. Heaton stated that MacKenzie Park seems like a good opportunity; he said he is curious to see if there was a way to redevelop a portion for compatible use like dog washing station or something of the like. He said that Dwight Murphy Ballfield corner seems like a decent option, but more outreach is needed; finding an alternative location for the exercise equipment would be part of the solution there. Mr. Heaton expressed that he is hesitant about the Ortega Park location because of the trees, terrain and picnic tables. He said he is not sure it would be the best option; many people use it, although some of the uses may be those we would want to discourage. Mr. Heaton said he is least likely to consider this as an option.

Commissioner Longstreet said she was surprised that there was not more of a public response. She concurred with comments Ms. Zachary made regarding DogPAC and promises they made but did not fulfil with respect to monitoring. Ms. Longstreet said she is interested in taking the pressure off of the DFP, both the physical location and the neighborhood as well. She said that if there were an area at Sheffield, it might draw some folks to that location. Ms. Longstreet expressed concern with Ortega Park due to traffic; the intersection with the Junior High is a nightmare, every school day. She said there are two developments going in at that location and she does not know if that area can accommodate traffic from the addition of any intense use. She said she agrees the corner needs to be redeveloped, as there have been chronic problems there over the years. Regarding MacKenzie Park, Ms. Longstreet suggested adjusting the lines and adding the grassy area. She said she thinks it is an absolutely perfect location. Ms. Longstreet commented that it looks like there is a perfect corridor of dog use up Las Positas, but there really is nothing in the north of the City to handle dogs. She said MacKenzie Park is walkable for neighbors, and would provide a different terrain. Ms. Longstreet stated she would like Sheffield for the more rustic terrain to take the pressure off of the DFP and a grassy area for more refined dogs. She said MacKenzie would have a less intense use that should not impact the hotel. Ms. Longstreet said Dwight Murphy could be a good location for another small dog park. She said she would really like to see more response from the dog-owning community; she said there was not much

considering it was on the news last night. Ms. Longstreet said she sees it moving forward if we got more community response.

Intern Rodriguez commented that there is a lot of traffic on State and De la Vina, and commented that staff should take into consideration traffic if they consider MacKenzie Park. He concurred with Commissioner Longstreet's comments regarding Ortega Park and suggested the opposite side where the picnic tables are.

Commissioner Rincon commented that he likes all of the sites selected by staff; they are all viable, and there is nothing that would preclude one or the other. He said he likes the idea of separating large dogs from small dogs. Mr. Rincon commented that he concurs with Commissioner Heaton about revisiting Plaza Vera Cruz Park. He said he does not see parking as an issue there or at Ortega Park because many downtown people walk in that area. Mr. Rincon said he does not want to forego any site at this point in time; since it is still being developed for budgetary purposes, he does not think any site should be stricken.

Commissioner Clark stated that if it is a question of whether or not to move forward with evaluating these four sites, regardless of the lack of people present supporting it, we need to look at the users at the DFP, Tuckers Grove, Hendry's Beach—everyday there are dogs there; it is never empty. She said it is a community need and the City owes it to the community to add an urban dog park where people can walk to. Ms. Clark said in terms of design, she does not think that a dedicated park is the only way to go to minimize risks and user conflicts. Ms. Clark said, in terms of sites, she concurs with Commissioner Longstreet regarding Sheffield and MacKenzie. She said she does not know if budgetary concerns warrant a limitation; so she would say why just one park, why not two. Regarding MacKenzie Park, Ms. Clark, expressed her belief that a dog park would help eliminate some of the undesirable uses, and it would also become a safer place with more structure and less napping. She said that parking would not be as much an issue at Mackenzie or Ortega because dog owners would walk to the parks. She concurred with Mr. Cunningham's comments about noise, saying that she does not hear a lot of noise. Ms. Clark summed up by saying that she likes Sheffield, Mackenzie Park, and Ortega Park.

Commissioner Casebeer cautioned the Department to prioritize dog parks, athletic facilities for the underserved, and lots of big picture kind of items before we micromanage. He said he would like the Department to keep in mind the big picture and the fiscal ongoing responsibility; he said if we build it, we have to maintain it. Mr. Casebeer suggested that the upper end of Oak Park on the Tallant Road side and/or the other side of the creek or a combination of both of those could be alternatives. He asked if there is surplus land around the golf course as another alternative. Mr. Casebeer said we have a mission to serve the people, and a majority of them live downtown; Plaza Vera Cruz, Ortega, and Mackenzie Parks all fit in where people can walk to go exercise their dogs. He said Sheffield allows people who have the luxury of time and an automobile to drive to exercise their dogs. He encourages staff to focus on the urban downtown areas rather than in the suburban areas, because Tuckers Grove and Elings Park serve that need.

Chair Wiscomb said that she takes her dog to Elings Park; she has found that the DFP does have problems at times. She said she prefers grass; she hopes staff finds something closer to 1 acre. Ms. Wiscomb commented that a fenced dog area is definitely needed, particularly if it is in one of the more heavily populated areas. She encouraged staff to add water and shade to the design and style of the dog park. Ms.

Wiscomb stated that neighborhood compatibility is a big issue for her; she lives on the Mesa and walks her dog by the the DFP; neighbors suffer a lot during heavily used periods; mostly because dog owners allow their dogs to run off leash from their vehicle to the DFP. She said that adequate parking is a huge issue and needs to be addressed. Ms. Wiscomb expressed concern about management enforcement; she is not in favor of special hours because they require greater staff enforcement and people tend to stretch the hours. She encouraged staff to recommend areas that can be open all the time during park hours. Ms. Wiscomb commented that Plaza Vera Cruz is interesting, although the report indicated that limited street parking is available on Cota Street, and it would also not be feasible to fence off sections of the lawn to provide an off leash area. She said that she likes Dwight Murphy; it has good parking, restrooms, water, fencing is possible, and it is in a great location. Ms. Wiscomb said she is concerned about MacKenzie Park because of the parking—people will park in the neighborhood and walk, and crossing State Street is dangerous. She said the parking lot is mentioned in the feasibility study, and there is adequate parking there, except when there are ballgames on Sundays, and it is quite a long way from the proposed area, so people will park in the neighborhood and walk and will have to cross the street. Ms Wiscomb said regarding Ortega Park, that she heard lot of negative comments from the Commissioners about using that site; she said it is a great location, but is worried about the comments made by the other Commissioners. Regarding Sheffield, Ms. Wiscomb said it is a great location, but she is a little concerned about parking there; it will be more of a drive-to location. Ms. Wiscomb said she thinks she is hearing from the other Commisisoners that they would like more study on Plaza Vera Cruz, and asked Ms. Zachary if that is possible.

Ms. Zachary responded that staff did briefly look at Plaza Vera Cruz, and while the report does talk about it being a small space, it partly has to do with the playground and trying to determine the distance away from the playground the fenced area would need to be. She said, however, that staff can re-evaluate Plaza Vera Cruz as an off leash location. She added that staff needs to look at options for changing the way that park is used; maybe it is a fenced off leash dog area or maybe it is something else that would bring more people to the park that would allow them to enjoy it and discourage the type of activity that is currently there. Ms. Zachary added regarding Ortega Park that staff realizes it is a constrained site, but the uses that are currently there are ones staff would like to redirect as well; that is part of the reason staff is looking at that location. She said it does receive drop-in use, but that use is by a very limited group of people.

Commissioner Longstreet asked the possibilty of limiting the number of dogs a person can take into an off leash or other area.

Animal Control Officer Deming said there is a limit of three dogs per residence in Santa Barbara. He said that dog walkers, trainers, etc. commonly walk more than that. He said that as far as enforcing something like that, he is not quite sure how they would do that; it may require City Council action to implement a new law. Officer Deming suggested the posting of signage.

Commissioner Longstreet asked staff to consider, in moving forward with the off leash dog areas, investigate signage informing residents/visitors of the restrictions on the number of dogs a person can take into an off leash or other area that would give some basis if there was an issue.

Officer Deming commented that there is a Dog in Public Ordinance part of which pertains to the off leash areas incase there are incidents where a dog owner is not in

care or control of their dog and there is an issue (dog bite), etc., the dog owner can be cited for that in the off leash park.

Chair Wiscomb said that she and most of the other Commissioners agree that looking at other locations would take some pressure of the DFP and the neighborhood. She further said she does hear from dog owners who say they wish they did not have to drive all the way over to the DFP. Ms. Wiscomb stated that in terms of priorities, location was one of the top ones.

Commissioner Longstreet moved, seconded by Commissioner Clark, and passed 7/0 that the Commission receive the presentation, recommend further evaluation of the presented parks and Plaza Vera Cruz, and look at this for the future budget cycles.

OLD BUSINESS

5. Advisory Committee Liaison Appointments – For Action
(Deferred from January 28, 2015, meeting)

Documents:

- Staff Report dated January 28, 2015

Speakers:

- Staff: Parks & Recreation Director Nancy L. Rapp

Recommendation: That the Commission review and consider advisory committee liaison appointments.

The Commission reviewed the advisory committee liaison appointments. The list below reflects the updated appointments. Changes are reflected in italics.

| Advisory Committee | Liaison |
|--|--|
| Arts and Crafts Show | <i>Leeanne French</i> |
| Creeks Restoration & Water Quality Improvement Program Citizen | Jim Heaton |
| <i>*Front Country Trails Task Group</i> | <i>Beebe Longstreet/Jim Heaton</i> |
| Golf Course | Lesley Wiscomb (Interim) |
| Integrated Pest Management | Nichol Clark |
| <i>Neighborhood Advisory Council</i> | <i>Beebe Longstreet/Mark Rincon-Ibarra</i> |
| Park & Recreation Community (PARC) Foundation | Beebe Longstreet/Lesley Wiscomb |
| Street Tree | Lesley Wiscomb |
| Youth Council | Chris Casebeer |

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:42 p.m., with no further business to be addressed by the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Rapp
Parks & Recreation Director