



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: October 26, 2016

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Director's Report

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive a presentation on the status of the various Parks and Recreation Department initiatives and activities.

DISCUSSION:

Drought Response

Given the ongoing severe drought and significant concern regarding the City's potable water supplies, the Department is updating its 2014 Drought Response Plan. Key considerations include the effects of drought on City Street and Park trees, maintenance of active playing fields, and the operation of the Santa Barbara Golf Club. The Department is working with Public Works Water Resources to provide the City Council with an update on the impacts of drought for trees throughout the city as well as opportunities to educate community members on maintaining trees while drought conditions persist. The City Council will receive the drought update on November 1, 2016. The Commission will receive a status report on the Department's response to the drought at the Commission's regular meeting on December 14, 2016.

Park and Recreation Facility Safety

Park and recreation facility safety concerns related to illegal, threatening and destructive behavior and activities have been a key issue for the Department for well over ten years. These issues are largely present in parks in the City's beach front areas (Andrée Clark Bird Refuge, East Beach, Cabrillo Ball Park, Dwight Murphy Field, Chase Palm Park, Plaza del Mar, Pershing Park, Leadbetter, all downtown beaches) but also present in downtown and upper State Street parks such as Ortega Park, Plaza Vera Cruz, Plaza de la Guerra, Alameda Plaza, Oak, and MacKenzie, as well as creeks and open space parks including the Douglas Family Preserve. In addition, Department staff in Parks and Recreation facilities, including the Municipal Tennis Center, Cabrillo Pavilion and Bathhouse, Louise Lowry Davis Center/Spencer Adams, and Carrillo Recreation Center, are routinely faced with addressing the impacts from transient populations. In addition to

regular transient camp cleanups, the Department has implemented a number of measures to manage these concerns through staff safety training, facility closure rules, removal of vegetation, closures of restrooms, fencing, increased programming, revised park rules, park redesign, and other measures. In recent months there has been an increased focus on the issues at Ortega Park. A neighborhood meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 26, at 6 pm. The Department will be providing the Commission with a comprehensive assessment of park and recreational facility safety issues at the regular Commission meeting on November 16, 2016.

Smoking Ordinance Update

On October 4, 2016, the City Council directed City staff to work with the Ordinance Committee to prepare amendments to the smoking ordinance and expand areas where smoking is prohibited. Last updated in 2002, the City's smoking ordinance is no longer consistent with State laws that now include more areas where smoking is prohibited and address electronic smoking devices and medical marijuana. Under State law, smoking is currently prohibited within 25 feet of playgrounds. In addition, the City prohibits smoking in open space parks, including Franceschi, Hale, Parma and the Douglas Family Preserve. Ordinance changes could lead to smoking prohibitions in other parks, beaches and recreation facilities. Led by the City Administrator's office, this is a multi-departmental effort of Parks and Recreation, Library, Airport, Waterfront, Police, and Fire.

Creeks Restoration Projects

The Creeks Division is actively engaged in the development of creek restoration projects for Las Positas Creek, Arroyo Burro and Barger Canyon (tributary of Arroyo Burro). The Division has \$1.5 million in grant funding for the restoration of Las Positas Creek from Las Positas Place to Veronica Springs. Final design of the project will begin in early 2017 and construction of the first phase in summer 2017. The Division is developing creek restoration plans for the section of Arroyo Burro in the newly acquired 14.7-acre open space park and in full construction mode for the restoration of Barger Canyon.

The Creeks Division is also wrapping up its latest Low Impact Development/Permeable Pavers Project which included Plaza Vera Cruz, sidewalks around Alice Keck Park Memorial Gardens, and the sidewalks and roadway of two blocks of Quarantina Street. A ribbon cutting ceremony for the Quarantina location is scheduled for November 16, 2016, at 11 a.m.

Hale Park Access Improvements

In early September, Department staff met with Hale Park neighbors to discuss options for developing access to and from the park from Eucalyptus Hill Road. The park boundary along Eucalyptus Hill Road is enclosed by a stone wall that is original to the Peabody

Estate. Over the years, neighbors installed wood ladders to scale the wall and exit the park. The most recent wood ladder was removed due to safety and liability concerns. Since the Department does not have funds for the project, neighbors present at the meeting indicated a willingness to fundraise to support the development of a permanent solution. Department staff is evaluating the access options as well as developing the scope for engineering design services.

Facility Holiday Marketing

To increase bookings of Parks and Recreation Facilities, the Department has launched a "Book Your Holiday Party with Us" Promotion. The Department operates a number of excellent event spaces in the beach front as well as downtown that are ideal for private, corporate or non-profit gatherings. With the Holiday Season approaching, the Department launched a program that provides \$100 off for events held prior to December 31, 2016. The promotion is advertised online with Edhat, Facebook, City News in Brief, the City Quarterly Newsletter, and *The Independent*. Each location is also displaying posters for the campaign.

Sunrise – New Facility and Program Registration Software

The Department is negotiating with a software provider for new facility booking and program registration software due to the sun-setting of the current system CLASS. The new system will dramatically improve and modernize the way in which customers can access and browse programs, facilities, and services on demand. The system will result in a more efficient booking, and improved customer experience. The new system also seamlessly integrates with social media and mobile technology, providing more flexibility. It is anticipated that negotiations will be complete in the next few weeks and the contract for services will be considered by City Council in November.

Tentative Commission Agenda Items

November 2016: Agenda items tentatively scheduled for November include the Department's six-year (2018-2023) Capital Improvement Plan and Park and Recreation Facility Safety Considerations.

December 2016: Agenda items tentatively scheduled for December include a presentation on the Department's Playground Program, a status report on the Department's Drought Response Strategy, and an update on the renovation options for Franceschi House and Park.

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