



PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 28, 2009
El Cerrito City Hall
Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito

1. Roll Call:
Commissioners Present: Manish Doshi, Sarah Reed, Chair Margo Takemiya, Margaret Wolfe
Commissioners Absent: Steve Lipson
Staff Present: Gerry Bradshaw, Chris Jones, Monica Kortz, Lori Teachout
Councilmember Abelson present.

2. Commission/Staff Communications/Announcements: None

3. Oral Communication from the Public:

Leigh Marrymore, 1400 Pinnacle Court #405, Pt. Richmond, stated that there is a conflict between the petroglyph and the City's non-native tree planting, which he believes is a threat to the site. He requested no further planting of trees without consultation with Jim McKissock. There needs to be boundaries of a native landscape garden, and a mechanism for volunteer/City communication.

Barbara Thompson, 9 The Uplands, Berkeley, asked for respect and protection of the Indian Garden.

Carol Thornton, 1427 Derby, Berkeley, did not see the need to plant more oak trees. She requested a copy of the tree planting plan for Canyon Trail Park.

Kathy McKissock, 516 Richmond St., El Cerrito, is distressed when the City comes into a park, and does whatever it wants.

Charles Graper, 2216 Arlington, El Cerrito, would appreciate recognition for the Canyon Trail Park volunteers.

Zelda Holland, 5924 Fern St., stated she lives adjacent to the park, and asked that the City please contact the Canyon Trail volunteers before doing anything.

Jim McKissock, 516 Richmond, El Cerrito, thought that there was a plan for Canyon Trail Park and suggested putting it on the City website.

Kevin Brown, 6135 Buena Vista, Oakland, a proponent of skateboarding, advocated the need for a skateboard park.

Rosemary Loubal, 6502 Morris, El Cerrito, suggested asking the Urban Forest Council for literature. She advocated the planting of trees.

Seth Kaplan, 7670 Terrace Drive, expressed support of a Huber Park renovation. He was not in favor of a “cookie cutter” play structure. He asked for assurance there would be a process for neighbors to have input.

Ernest Holland, 5924 Fern Street, thanked the Canyon Trail volunteers.

4. Council Liaison Report: Councilmember Janet Abelson

The Council took action to extend the time period from January 23 to April 30, during which time the City could acquire the Target property. The City still owes Target money and has the first right to buy the property. The Council at its next meeting will be looking at applicants for boards and commissions.

5. Approval of the Minutes:

The minutes from the previous meeting of January 28, 2009 were approved by unanimous consent.

6. East Bay Regional Park District Grant funds: Review input from staff and the public on candidate projects and/or programs, and develop a recommended expenditure plan to go forward to the City Council for approval: Jerry Bradshaw

At the last Park and Recreation meeting, staff received direction to solicit information from the public for a recommendation on projects to be funded through this grant. The suggestion was an internet survey and as well as a paper survey. There was a list of about fifteen projects, to be rated of high, medium, low rating, and a description of the projects. Staff’s consideration for project recommendation is cost, safety issues, maintenance, and readiness of projects. Some of the projects under consideration may need CEQA review. Staff would like a priority project list to take to Council for authorization.

Commissioner Doshi asked whether the rehabilitation for Cerrito Vista was just for the main ballfield or the entire field? Bradshaw replied that it is for the entire grass area. He asked if the proposed batting cage is to be open to the public or just for El Cerrito Youth baseball or El Cerrito High School? Kortz replied that it was requested by El Cerrito Youth Baseball and high school, but would be open to the public.

Chair Takemiya asked if it is \$1,065,840 for one year or the life of the fund? Commissioner Doshi asked if there were any opportunities for matching funds? Bradshaw replied that the \$1,065,840 million is for the life of the fund, and the only matching fund option is at Central Park, part of which is in the City of Richmond.

Commissioner Reed noted that on page 19 of Parks Project Survey, that Creekside Park lighting seemed like it should be listed in the medium cost range and not high price range. Bradshaw agreed.

Tom Panas, 7245 Fairmont, Historical Society, gave a presentation on Joaquin Murietta Rock. The owner of that property grew up in the area, and cannot build on the property because it is a historic landmark. He requested that this property be considered should the City be interested in land acquisition. He said that he did not officially represent the opinion of the Historical Society, but as a private citizen.

Zelda Holland, 5924 Fern, asked about the prospect of the petroglyph designated as a historical landmark. Panas agreed that the petroglyph should be considered.

Kortz stated that this Commission's recommendations must go to Council in March, otherwise projects will be on hold for a year. Bradshaw stated the deadline is March 30.

Commissioner Doshi stated that this would be a good way to stimulate the economy. Some of these projects would be good jobs.

Commissioner Doshi said that his recommendation would be for projects that receive heavy use, such as pathways. He also stated that there may be some economy in grouping projects at a site with Cerrito Vista Park, with a playground, turf area and pathway. He also sited Huber Park because of safety with its circa 1922 playground equipment.

Commissioner Reed expressed a major concern that the acquisition of open space has received the greatest support. Her recommendation is that this request be acknowledged and that this Commission at least advocate to do more research on open space acquisition. Funding and land may become available later.

Commissioner Wolfe agreed with the concept of a need for acquisition for open space, but with limited funding, questioned how much land the City could purchase. Her recommendation would be the Creekside Park lighting. Her next recommendation would be Cerrito Vista Park improvements. Commissioner Doshi agreed land acquisition was a good idea, and suggested looking at Portola Middle School when it becomes available.

Commissioner Reed recommended projects be distributed around the City. She noted that some of the areas with the greatest population density, have the least number of parks.

Commissioner Doshi stated that sharing the cost of Central Park with the City of Richmond renovation is an important consideration, and thought it would be a good site for a skateboard park.

Chair Takemiya suggest the "readiness" of projects be a consideration.

Commissioner Doshi listed his recommendations in order of priority: Cerrito Vista ballfield, path, and playstructure; Central Park; Huber Park; Creekside Park lighting, and Tassajara stairs if funds are available. He added that the lighting at Creekside Park needs more research.

Commissioner Wolfe's recommendations were: lighting at Creekside Park as a safety issue; Cerrito Vista ballfield, playground and pathway; Central Park and a skate spot with cooperation with Richmond; Huber Park; and Tassajara Park stairs and small path.

Kortz suggest public meetings accompany park renovations to ensure that the improvements are what the neighborhood wants.

Commissioner Reed noted that in the survey, the Ohlone dog park only ranks #6 in the projects of “high” support but in the discussion section of the survey, the subject comes up frequently.

Bradshaw stated that the survey, a sampling of 200 results, yielded some interesting results. It will prove a base document that will help us as we move forward over the years.

Commissioner Doshi moved that the Measure WW park improvement funds be presented to City Council recommended by the Park and Recreation Commission be considered in order of priority: 1-lighting Creekside Park; 2-Cerrito Vista ballfield/playground; 3-Central Park, playground/skate spot; 4-Huber Park; 5-Tassajara Park stair path.

Commissioner Reed seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

7. Staff Report: Monica Kortz
 - a. At the December 2008 pancake breakfast, \$2000 was raised for the scholarship fund.
 - b. Summer Camp information is currently available.
 - c. Bruce King announced that the El Cerrito Garden Club is planning a dedication ceremony for the Blue Star Memorial at Arlington Park.
 - d. A portable pitcher mound has been purchased by ECYB to accommodate different league needs, since field lines are different for different age groups.
 - e. Bill Driscoll reported that there has been a big volunteer effort at Cerrito Vista and Tassajara Park/Ballfield in an effort to get ready for the baseball league.
 - f. Kortz reported on the Community Center face lift: new skylights, refurbishing of the hardwood floor, new sod for the courtyard, and new paint.

8. Items for Next meeting:
 - a. Status report from park bond.
 - b. Commissioner Doshi invited the Canyon Trail volunteers attend future Park and Recreation meetings. Commissioner Reed suggested that a liaison, possibly and adopt a park maintain a relationship with the Canyon Trail Park volunteers.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Submitted by Lori Teachout