



Park and Recreation Commission Meeting

Wednesday, March 29, 2006

7:00 p.m.

Council Chambers Garden Room,
Community Center
7007 Moeser Lane, El Cerrito

1. Roll Call:
Park and Recreation Commissioners: Ann Cheng, Ken Lerch, Greg Lyman,
Chair; Rosemary Loubal, Sarah Reed, Michael Sommers, Margo Takemiya
Staff Present: Jerry Bradshaw, Chris Jones, Monica Kortz, Lori Teachout
Guests: Bill Savidge, Marcia Vallier, Ken Berndt
The meeting called to order at 7:10 pm.

2. Oral Communications:
Chair Lyman attended both Senior Center public meetings last week about the
new Senior Center. He estimated 25 senior citizens attended. He noted that the
comments from the two meetings were completely different.

He also reported that the construction drawings for the Gilman Sports Field are available. Bids will be solicited, and the target date for completion is November 1, 2006. There will be two artificial fields, which will be available for use in December.

Ken Berndt, 916 Kearney Street, met with Rich Bartke about Tony Santarelli, whom they feel should be recognized by the City. Tony attended El Cerrito High School, worked for City for 25 years, installed the putting green and bocce ball court, and installed and maintains Cerrito Vista ballfield. They were proposing naming the ball diamond after Tony Santarelli. Kortz said she would research the City's naming policy. (Attachment 1: Letter re: Tony Santarelli)

Berndt also wanted to propose that the City adopt a heritage tree ordinance. He said that currently there is no way to prevent someone from cutting down an old oak tree. Berkeley and Oakland both have heritage tree ordinances. Commissioner Cheng stated that Contra Costa County has one. Commissioner Loubal stated this item has been discussed at the Tree Commission.

Mayor Janet Abelson arrived at 7:20 p.m. She reported that this is a very exciting time for the City. There are plans to improve the business community, for e.g., a graffiti abatement plan and street banner program. Dwayne Dalman was recently hired to work with businesses in El Cerrito. At a visit to the Guitar Center, he found that they wanted a curbside loading area. The Mitsubishi Dealership

requested more signage, and Dalman researched the sign ordinance to see if the request was in compliance. Commissioner Sommers asked if there were any common issues among the city businesses. Mayor Abelson answered that the issues were all different.

The City has hired another Resource Officer to be stationed at El Cerrito High School. He is also working at Portola Middle School and the elementary schools as needed. Commissioner Cheng asked if anyone mentioned street scaping or landscaping. Macaroni Grill would like more landscaping. Commissioner Lerch asked if freeway access was an issue. Mayor Abelson said no, nor were there comments about how City facilities and parks impacted businesses. Commissioner Loubal noted significant work being done at Madison Avenue and San Pablo Avenue. Commissioner Cheng asked if consideration or attention was being given to small businesses and minority/women owned. Mayor Abelson answered that so far only large businesses have been solicited, and she did not know what the protocol is. Commissioner Lerch asked how many businesses there were along San Pablo Avenue. Mayor Abelson stated that there were hundreds of business licenses.

Mayor Abelson was congratulated for her Woman of the Year Award. She was selected by Loni Hancock for the 14th Assembly District.

3. Approval of the Minutes:
The minutes of March 29, 2006 were approved by unanimous consent, with two abstentions, Commissioners Sommers and Lerch.
4. Discussion Regarding School District Construction: Bill Savidge, Engineering Officer, West Contra Costa Unified School District; Marcia Vallier, Vallier and Associates.

Savidge explained that 17 elementary schools in the school district are being renovated. Madera Elementary School is one of the first finished and has newly installed grass, new playground, and new striping. At Harding work continues on the landscaping components using Measure J funds. It has been a challenge to find ways to maintain community access to playground, playfields and parks, and reduce vandalism.

With Measure D, the secondary school bond, ECHS renovation project began with a budget of over \$100 million. They have started grading, and bidding will begin on the first phase of buildings. Because of the size of the Performing Art Center Project, the project will be bid separately. The football field still exists behind the portables. It has been a real challenge having to accommodate the issues of running a temporary campus. After the buildings are finished, the temporary campus will be demolished, then work will be done on the soccer field, and football stadium.

Chair Lyman stated that on February 23, 2005, Savidge stated that construction would start on April 2006; and the buildings will be completed July 2008. Construction of the fields will begin the summer of 2009. Savidge seemed to indicate that they are on schedule.

Commissioner Lerch asked about the bidding process, and asked why there are two bids, and if they were separated because of funding sources. Savidge stated it was not a funding source issue. It was because the performing arts center approval was approved as a separate project and at a later date. He was actually hoping that it would be the same contractor.

Update on Portola Middle School: After a lengthy process, it has been determined that there is a historic landslide on the site that extends underneath Prospect Sierra and through Cerrito Vista Park. The application for renovating the building has been denied by the State. They have made an application to abandon the buildings because it is considered an unknown hazard. They are looking at relocating site to the lower portion, creating a setback of 50ft. They are waiting for a concurrence letter from the State architect and anticipate getting a decision within a month.

Commissioner Lerch asked about the possibility of building fields (rather than structures) on the slide area. Savidge reported that they are looking at some of the options, but one of the issues is that the area would still need to be accessible.

Castro Update: There is a site committee meeting to look at developing a master plan for that school for its renovation. One plan is to locate the temporary campus on the lower playground. Another option is to build the new school on the lower level.

Harding Update: The auditorium is almost done. There will be upholstered seating for about 200 people. Fairmont School and Nystrom School will be renovated this year. The tennis courts will be installed along Ashbury Avenue at the High School. The renovation at the track at Kennedy High School will start in summer, and the track at El Cerrito High School and at DeAnza High School will be done next year.

Harding field: Vallier explained that the ballfield behind Harding will be a fully skinned infield with no turf in the center, which can be used by both girls' softball and Little League. There will be picnic tables, bleachers, a par course, and track. Mayor Abelson asked about the drainage. Vallier stated that they are aware of the problem, and installed a catch basin and graded asphalted area. The grass areas will be seeded, and it takes fourteen weeks for grass to be usable.

5. Senior Center Program Overview: Ellen Paasch, Program Supervisor. Paasch gave a Powerpoint presentation on Senior Services programs.

Commissioners asked about volunteer possibilities and the 60+ Bulletin. Discussion followed about the two public meetings regarding the new Senior Center. Most of the comments at the meetings were regarding programming and not about the facility, with the exception of a request for more parking. The City is in discussion with the School District to purchase land south of the Senior Center.

Godbe Research: Kortz explained that the City hired a consultant, Godbe Research, to survey 15,000 seniors about their interests. There were 1500 replies, which indicated that physical fitness and trips were high interest. Chair Lyman said he would like the results of Godbe Research. Kortz reminded the Commission that the Senior Center is not self-sufficient and is subsidized by the General Fund.

3. Oral Communication: Commissioner Loubal stated that Friends of the Trees are requesting a \$3500 grant to manage their web site.

6. Capital Projects Subcommittee:

Commissioner Cheng reviewed her research on toilets and distributed a memorandum (see Attachment 2). She suggested installing portable toilets as an interim experiment. Commissioner Loubal relayed the findings of her research on toilets, sewers, sanitary storm drain sewers, and concluded that a “ballpark” cost of installation of a toilet to be about \$45,000. She attempted to speak with the Police Chief about safety concerns, but was re-directed to the Public Works Director. She suggested a site south of Target for a portable toilet, near the power junction. Chair Lyman suggested considering an interim toilet solution, such as a portable, and recommended tabling further discussion until the entire slate of proposed capital improvement projects was presented to see where toilets were on that list. Kortz concurred, suggesting installation of a portable toilet.

Commissioner Reed asked how did we decide to address the toilet issue and if it came up during public comment? Chair Lyman explained that it came out in the design discussion of the Ohlone Greenway.

7. Capital Projects Subcommittee: Chair Lyman and Commissioner Takemiya reviewed capital improvement projects and introduced a slate of items to prioritize. Chair Lyman reviewed the status of the capital improvement project recommendations of last year: roof and gutters (ongoing); playgrounds at Canyon Trail and Arlington and seismic upgrades.

Bradshaw explained that the cost of seismic upgrades of City facilities is steep, and would not be completed in 2005-06. The design of the air conditioning for the main hall has started, and the facilities are being painted. The Community Center roof does not need to be replaced, but the gutters need to be done at the Community Center and at the Arlington. The tennis courts at the Arlington will be resurfaced at the end of June, hand railing will be installed along asphalt on the

Greenway, near the Senior Center; replacement trees at Canyon Trail will be planted, and foyer floor in the Community Center will be replaced.

It was decided to combine the renovation of Arlington, Tassajara, and Cerrito Vista bathrooms together as a potential capital improvement project. Greenway planting and signage installation were not considered because they would be removed during the pending BART retrofit.

Discussion followed about Senior Center programming. Mayor Abelson noted that the senior population is expected to double in the next twenty years. It is important to build a new Senior Center that will last a period of time. Chair Lyman suggested considering expanding programming for seniors on the weekend. He stated that was one of the suggestions that came up during the public meetings. Kortz explained that the weekend group at the Senior Center, Sakura Kai, meets alternate Saturdays. They are an Adult Education Class and the City receives no revenues from them.

Suggestions for the Capital Improvement Projects and Programs for fiscal year 06/07 are:

1. Free recreation service at clubhouses for drop in programs/Proposition 49
Free Afterschool Recreation Programming Initiative
2. Urban forest plan
3. Rail for asphalt path near Senior Center
4. Tennis Court resurfacing
5. Backstops @ all sportsfields
6. Renovation of Arlington, Tassajara, Cerrito Vista Bathrooms
7. Ohlone Greenway: signage, emergency phones
8. Senior Service on weekend

Commissioner Lerch recommended forgoing the weekend senior program and the phones and signage on the Greenway. He endorsed the Urban Forest Plan and experimenting with bathrooms along the Greenway.

Commissioner Takemiya recommended remodeling the existing bathroom remodel and siting a bathroom on the Ohlone Greenway.

Commissioner Sommers endorsed the Urban Forest Plan, remodeling the current bathrooms, and try siting a bathroom on the Ohlone Greenway.

Commissioner Cheng recommended remodeling the existing bathrooms, installing a bathroom on the Ohlone Greenway, and the Urban Forest Plan.

Commissioner Loubal concurred with Commissioner Cheng and Sommers.

Chair Lyman reviewed the priorities: Urban Forest Plan with tree replacement; trial portable toilet on the Ohlone Greenway; renovation of the Arlington, Cerrito Vista and Tassajara toilets.

Commissioner Lerch moved to give direction to the City as the highest priority for the coming year those projects and to come up with operation and funding costs. Commissioner Cheng seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

8. Master Fee Schedule:

Staff surveyed other cities, and recommended fee increases comparable to the consumer price index. Any decreases in the fees were actually just corrections. Kortz gave a review of the expenses and revenues. For example, Administrative Services is at 72% in expenses; childcare is at 68% expenses and 65% in revenues; aquatics was at 76% expenses and 62% in revenues. The Senior Services is at 66% in expenses, and 71% in revenues. Overall revenues are up \$200,000.

Commissioner Sommers moved to accept the proposed fee schedule. Chair Lyman recommended rounding fees to whole dollars. Commissioner Takemiya seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

9. Staff Report

Update Tennis Meeting: We are continuing discussions

Egg Hunt: The Egg Hunt is scheduled for April 15, 2006.

Trash to Treasures is scheduled for April 22, 2006.

Maintenance agreement with the West County School District: The tentative agreement is in the hands of the school district attorney.

Spring/Summer Brochure will be delivered to residents' homes the first week of April.

10. Items for Next Meeting:

1. Heritage Tree

2. Urban Forest Item

Attachments:

Minutes from the Park and Recreation Commission Meeting of March 29, 2006

Memorandum from Ann Cheng