

MINUTES



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
October 28, 2003
Palo Alto City Hall
Council Conference Room
250 Hamilton Avenue**

Commissioners Present: Anne Cribbs, William Garvey, Ellie Gioumouis, Jennifer Hagan, Edie Keating, Judith Steiner and Lynn Torin

Commissioners Absent: None

Others Present: Steve Staigner (Historical Society) and Marilyn Latta (Save the Bay)

Staff Present: Dan Williams, Richard James, Greg Betts, Dawn Calvert, Daren Anderson, and Virginia Gibbons

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order by Bill Garvey at 7:00 pm

ROLL CALL: Conducted by Virginia Gibbons.

AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS: Jennifer Hagan requested that Items #7 (Naming/Renaming of Parks) and #8 (Parks Handbook Revisions) be moved to become Items #6 and #7 and Item #6 (Park Amendment Ordinance...) to become Item #8. This request was approved by all Commissioners.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None

BUSINESS:

1. **Approval of Draft Minutes of September 23, 2003 Regular Meeting.** The minutes of the September 23, 2003 meeting were approved without change.
2. **PARC/Council Meeting Update.** Chairman Garvey stated his impression of the meeting was that the Council is pleased and satisfied with the performance of the Parks and Recreation Commission and that the Commission's efforts have been beneficial to the Council. Chairman Garvey also noted the Council's instruction to the Commission regarding legal issues, which was that these issues should not influence the Commission's

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decisions and that the City Attorney, prior to Council decisions, would review all legal issues. Commissioner Torin suggested that the Commission keep an on-going list of topics to discuss at the next PARC/Council meeting. All the Commissioners approved this suggestion.

3. **Mayfield Fields.** Richard James gave the Commission an update stating that Mayfield Fields has not yet become a project. Stanford has offered 6 acres to the City and will build fields on the site, but negotiations with Stanford are not complete. Preliminary conceptual designs have been created. The EIR has been scoped by Council and requires more work, but should close around March. The City will provide input to Stanford, who will build the project, and it is expected to create 2 full size soccer fields and 1 practice field, with a restroom, storage space, and concession stand.

The City's plan is to add artificial turf at a cost of \$6-800,000. Commissioner Torin reminded the Commission that the more expensive artificial turf was favored due to its realistic texture. Artificial turf in addition to planned lighting will increase playing time (8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.) and greatly increase the amount of Palo Alto's playing fields. The question arose of "fumes" from the artificial turf. Richard stated that even though staff has done a great amount of research, there are no issues with fumes from the turf and because the fields are outside, he could not foresee this as becoming an issue.

Commissioner Keating questioned the hazardous material plume that exists under the field. Richard James explained that this would not be an issue as there would be no deep excavation and that no remediation is planned.

Richard James went on to explain that trees and landscaping will be planted around the field and a 5' high berm is planned with fencing as required for safety. A traffic circle is planned for drop-offs and a possibly a shuttle stop. Commissioner Gioumouis requested that landscape planting be done with native trees and plants, which would help with water usage.

Commissioner Torin asked about the status of the Fields Advisory Committee and was informed that the Committee is no longer an advisory to the Commission and is now more of a political committee working with staff to achieve new fields.

Commissioner Garvey requested that the Commission be made aware if the project "bogs down" or runs into problems.

4. **Arastradero Preserve Crosswalk.** Greg Betts informed the Commission of the recommended improvements by the Planning and Transportation Division and requested the Commission's approval of the changes.
 - The pedestrian/equestrian crosswalk that existed prior to repaving Arastradero Road will be restored. The crosswalk will feature a broad horizontal striping.

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- Advance signs will be installed in both directions of Arastradero Road advising motorists of the equestrian crosswalk. If possible the signs will be neon colored.
- Vegetation will be cleared from the Preserve (west side of the road to improve the line of sight of the area of the crosswalk.

In addition the trail tread of the Portola Pastures Trail near Arastradero Road has been raised so that prior to reaching the crosswalk, equestrian and pedestrians will be at the same height as Arastradero Road and visible to oncoming motorists.

Commissioner Hagan suggested clearing the vegetation as needed for better line of site from the crosswalk to Gate A, which was agreed to by Commissioner Steiner.

Motion: *Commissioner Hagan moved to approve staff recommendations with the addition of the request that vegetation be cleared as needed for better line of site from the crosswalk to Gate A. Motion seconded by Commissioner Torin. FOR: 7; AGAINST: 0*

Commissioner Hagan will attend the Transportation Commission meeting on November 12th to convey the Parks and Recreation Commission's comments and recommendation.

5. **Arastradero Gateway Update.** Greg Betts explained to the Commission that the project has been under discussion for 6 years. The concept of a gateway facility near the preserve parking lot started when the Preserve neighbors and others donated funds to take down a former house and barn structure and move public facilities to the area closer to the existing parking lot. The proposed gateway building will incorporate straw bale construction and will be designed low in profile, consisting of no more than 1,500 square feet and will not duplicate existing interpretive structures in other open space parks. The plan is for a 10x10 workspace for medical supplies, ranger/volunteer notes, and a work space for the Preserve stewards, staff and volunteers. The concept is to keep the buildings low to follow the natural contours of the hillside and keep earth moving during construction to a minimum. The rustic design also respects the natural setting of the Preserve and mimics nearby ranch buildings.

There was extensive ARB review, the building permit has been received and the job went out to bid, with only one responsible bid being received. It is expected that it will take 18 months to complete construction and the completion date is expected to be around October 2005. Five items will be held off in order to keep back \$70,000 in contingency funds until the job has been completed.

Commissioner Steiner suggested having a higher contingency fund for the hay bale construction portion of the project from her experience in a similar project and that builders would be willing to pay to watch and learn about hay bale construction and earth pise (stucco) techniques used in the construction of this building.

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6. **Parks Handbook Update.** Commissioner Hagan introduced Steve Staigner, City Historical Librarian and representative of the Historical Associate who gave a brief introduction to the handbooks that have been created by the Historical Association over the past years. It was requested that a sub-committee of Commission members be appointed to work on revisions to the Parks Handbook, which is expected to take about 6-8 months. Chairman Garvey asked for volunteers for project volunteers. Commissioners Hagan and Gioumouis volunteered to work on this project with Commissioner Steiner volunteering to be an alternate. Commissioner Cribbs also expressed an interest but will not be available until after the first of the year (2004).

7. **Naming/Renaming of Parks.** Commissioner Hagan explained to the Commission that she received a request from a local group to consider asking that the Council rename a local park for a prominent Palo Alto resident. It has been requested that the resident remain unnamed at this time. Steve Staigner (Historical Association) explained to the Commission that all naming of parks, streets, and buildings must go through review by the Historical Association, as well as the Fire Department and that the City Council is responsible for the final naming/renaming of city-owned land or facilities. The Historical Association looks at suggestions, names appropriate for the site, and names not previously used. This is roughly a 6-10 month process.

8. **Park Amendment Ordinance for a Native Plant Potting Area at the Duck Pond.** Greg Betts summarized for the Commission, the staff report requesting a PAO for this project. The staff recommendation is for approval in concept plans for the modification of the Duck Pond maintenance area, which is restricted to the public, in order to create a native plant nursery structure funded by Save San Francisco Bay Association for the propagation of native plants, which will be planted by volunteers and staff in the city-owned Baylands and along the mouth of San Francisquito Creek.

Greg introduced Marilyn Latta of Save the Bay who gave the Commissioners a copy of the program partnership description. Ms. Latta then gave a short presentation of other Save the Bay sponsored plant nurseries and the benefits of the restoration program.

Commissioner Gioumouis stated that she is in favor of the project, but is not comfortable with the proposed location of the project due the site being a dedicated bird sanctuary. Greg Betts explained the reasoning for positioning the project in the proposed location within the fenced maintenance area of the duck pond. There was a short question and answer period after which the Commission was asked to vote on the recommendation of staff.

Motion: Commissioner Torin moved to approve staff recommendations. Motion seconded by Commissioner Steiner. ***FOR: 6 (Cribbs, Garvey, Hagan, Keating, Steiner, Torin); NO: 1 (Gioumouis)***

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Commissioner Hagan will attend the Council meeting when this items is agendized to transmit the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendation and recorded vote.

9. **December Meeting.** Due to the holiday shutdown, it was agreed that there would be no meeting in December 2003.

AGENDA FOR JANUARY 27, 2004 MEETING

1. Review of Comprehensive Plan Elements that Relate to Parks and Open Space.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Department of Fish and Game is accepting comments on the Tiger Salamander, which becoming rare, considered an endangered species and is in need of protection.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

