

APPROVED

MINUTES



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
May 31, 2005
Council Conference Room
250 Hamilton Avenue**

Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Anne Warner Cribbs, Ellie Gioumousis, Jennifer Hagan, Edie Keating, Paul Losch, Jeanette Marquess, Judith Steiner

Commissioners Absent:

Others Present:

Staff Present: Catherine Bourquin, Paul Dias, Greg Betts, Rob de Geus, Don Piana, Steve Sims, Robert Ward

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order by Chair Anne Cribbs at 7:00 pm

AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS: Item #4 will be presented by Paul Dias, Greg Betts, and Rob de Geus. Business item #5 deferred until next scheduled meeting.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: Betsy Allyn, item #2 Greer Park

BUSINESS:

1. **Approval of Draft Minutes of April 26, 2005.** The Commissioners approved the minutes, subject to three changes. *Motion Keating, Second Marquess 5:approved 2:abstention*
2. **Greer Park Committee update**
 - o Commissioner Marquess informed committee and staff that they haven't had a meeting. They will have their next one on June 24th.



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- Citizen Betsy Allyn spoke on an article from the newspaper on the use of the land at Greer Park. Reminding the city of the intended use of dedicated park land.
- Commissioner Keating directed a question to Staff Dias on a similar issue on land use at Terman. Staff Dias said “No, there was no use issue.” The city hasn’t responded as of yet, but the County Grand Jury basically said the City Council should not have authorized a land swap for Hays School/Rinconada Park, as was recently done. The City should be following up on this in the next month or so.

3. Park Maintenance Service Levels

- Presentation of park maintenance given by park staff Don Piana, Steve Sims, and Robert Ward.
- Commissioner Steiner inquired on the public awareness on the priorities given to areas in the budget. Staff Piana answered that the budget document goes into a little more detail.
- Commissioner Cribbs made a suggestion on possibility adding something in the Enjoy catalog or in Utility bills informing residents of Park standards.
- Commissioner Losch asked if we have both Capital Improvement dollars and Operating dollars. Staff Piana answered, “Yes, but the projects are managed by Public Works with CSD’s input.”
- Commissioner Losch inquired on a highly detailed problem with turf at the soccer fields in town. A constant deterioration of turf around soccer goal areas. Staff Ward answered by explaining that they have been trying a new procedure to combat this problem. This includes using Bermuda grass and a loam fill. This seems to have been improving the problem. The only down side to this, is in the winter, the grass goes dormant and appears to look like dead grass.
- Commissioner Losch was wondering if we could involve some of the user groups, i.e. Little League, Babe Ruth to assist with lining of fields that the city currently does. Staff Piana answered, we might have to enlist their assistance. We will be loosing temporary dollars in the upcoming fiscal years and this might be something we will need to cut back on.
- Commissioner Keating asked if we provide weekend coverage at the parks. Staff Piana responded “No, Open Space contracts with California Land Management who maintains the reserved parks such as Rinconada and Mitchell.”
- Commissioner Cribbs asked if we would consider leaving extra garbage bags at parks to alleviate the garbage issues. Staff Piana responded that they are looking into different ways to help this problem, as an example, we are looking at strategically placing the dumpsters at the newly renovated Mitchell park and adding more recycling bins.
- Commissioner Hagan inquired that after a busy day at a park; do you have a higher level of staff to restore the parks to an acceptable level again? Staff Piana responded, “No, on a typical Monday staff is working the park to bring it up to a

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safe standard, then they work on the playgrounds, picnic areas this will take the majority of the day. This is taken care of before any watering issues, etc. can be addressed.”

- Commissioner Cribbs wanted to know if we had a hotline number for citizens to call to report problems. Staff Piana responded, “Yes, the number is 496-6962.” Commissioner Cribbs wanted to know how our relationship with PAUSD is. Staff Dias responded we have a good working relationship with them. We are continually educating them. Commissioner Cribbs asked if we were getting reimbursed for the work done at the utility substations. Staff Dias responded, “Yes.” Commissioner Cribbs inquired on the two vacant positions in parks. Staff Piana answered, “We have two park maintenance person positions posted and we expect to fill them right away.” Staff Dias mentioned, normally we would have had them filled right away, but with the layoff situation it was delayed.
- Commissioner Gioumousis wondering about the tennis court washing and if there could be a way to have court maintenance kept in the budget. Staff Dias said, if we do, something else has to be given up. Unfortunately, during this economic hardship something had to be given up.
- Renata Falk, City Auditor, spoke on the current Audit of the Parks department. The Auditor’s office was given direction by City Council to complete an audit of the CSD department. They will be looking at Parks and Recreation class fees. A brief overview of what will be looked at is:
 1. Assessing the efficiency of the distribution of workload.
 2. The cost of providing services, in-house vs. contracting out
 3. Assessing the maintenance effectiveness – standards and conditions
 4. The impact of CIP on maintenance dollars. Are we spending more or less?

Auditor Falk informed the commission that any input or comments would be welcomed.

- Commissioner Cribbs asked if they would be comparing Palo Alto with other cities. Auditor Falk commented that they would be reviewing the National standards set, but that comparing other cities was not a specific objective.
- Commissioner Keating asked about the timeframe for the audit. Auditor Falk said they should have a preliminary report ready by mid-summer.

4. CSD Proposed Budget

- Review of Community Services Parks and Golf, Recreation, and Open Space proposed division budgets.
- Recreation Resource Level changes: Fee increases, Elimination of a Office Specialist, Elimination of funding for the Dog’s Best Friend Run, reduction in

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custodial services at Mitchell Park Community Center, and the reduction in temporary salaries for 2 low enrolled summer camps.

- Open Space: New day use permits at Arastradero, Foothills, and Baylands Preserves; fee increase in community garden, fee based programs
- Parks and Golf: Increase golf fees
- Commissioners would like an update at next meeting on the outcome of proposed budget.

COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Upcoming Joint meeting with Council on July 25th, 6pm – 7pm
- Park restrooms policy decision
- Mayfield approved – 100 day groundbreaking clock started. Should be started by mid-late September.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 9:25pm

