



**ALAMEDA RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING**

DATE: Wednesday, January 11, 2012
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: City Hall Council Chambers

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Joe Restagno, Vice Chair Lola Brown, Commissioners Bill Delaney, Bill Sonneman and Ann Cooke

Absent: None.

Staff: Dale Lillard, ARPD Director

Chair Restagno took a moment to introduce new member Ann Cooke, welcoming her to the Recreation Commission.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approve Minutes of December 8, 2011 Recreation & Park Commission Regular Meeting

M/S/C SONNEMAN/BROWN (unanimously approved)

"That the minutes of the December 8, 2011 Recreation & Park Commission Regular Meeting are approved."

Approved (5): Restagno, Brown, Delaney, Sonneman, Cooke

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS, AGENDA

Chair Restagno announced that he had received an e-mail from the Mayor's office saying that in February, they will be looking to reduce the number of Recreation Commission members from 7 down to 5. This would mean that if 3 members were in attendance at a meeting it would constitute a quorum.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. City of Alameda Paratransit Taxi Service Modification (*Information Item*)

Director Lillard noted that this item was placed on the agenda at the request of the Public Works Department. Lillard introduced Transportation Coordinator, Gail Payne, who gave the Commission a presentation on the Paratransit program's recommended modifications to one of their taxi programs called MRTIP (Medical Return Trip Improvement Program).

The Public Works Department manages this program in conjunction with the Mastick Senior Center. The program's funding is run at the County level with the ½ cent sales tax for transportation they collect. The basic services of the Alameda program are the Paratransit Shuttle, two taxi programs, group trips and a scholarship program.

The MRTIP program is available to eligible individuals who receive 5 vouchers per month to use to get a ride home from medical appointments. These vouchers are currently free, but due to budget issues, the Public Works department is proposing that a fee of \$2.50 per voucher be instated. Ms. Payne asked the Commission if there were any questions she could answer regarding the program and the proposed change.

Commissioner Delaney had reviewed the documentation and had seen that current users surveyed responded that they would pay \$3.00 for this program. He also noted that other Cities surveyed were charging more. He wondered if Alameda's program foresaw rates rising in the future, and would it be feasible to begin by charging \$3.00 now instead of the \$2.50 proposed. Ms. Payne responded that she does expect to come back next year, still faced with budget issues, and raise the cost a little more.

Commissioner Cooke asked if there had been any abuse of the program, i.e., people using these vouchers who were not eligible. Ms. Payne responded that they do have restrictions and checks in place, and really don't experience problems of that kind. Commissioner Brown asked if someone received or purchased more vouchers than they ended up needing for the month, whether those vouchers could still be used at a later date. Ms. Payne said that the vouchers expire within a year of issuance, so do have a limitation in that respect.

Chair Restagno saw that about 80 trips were averaged in a month, which would equal approximately \$3,000, and wondered if that was the shortfall they were looking to make up. Ms. Payne said usage is very stable right now, but if everyone in the program starting using it all the time, there would definitely be a budgetary issue. By instituting this fee, they would keep the usage down to a manageable level.

Commissioner Sonneman asked Ms. Payne if the \$2.50 would cover the shortfall and she responded that it would for this coming fiscal year. Sonneman asked if she would consider charging the \$3.00 now, and she said most definitely.

Director Lillard asked if there needed to be a formal motion from the Commission in support of the fee, or was this more just an information gathering exercise. Ms. Payne was interested in getting the opinion of the Commission as a whole, and each member agreed that the fee should be instituted at \$3.00.

B. Friends of the Parks Proposal to Fundraise Money to Put Exercise Equipment in all the Parks (*Discussion/Action Item*)

Shelley Russi gave a presentation opening with her goal for the night, which was to get an endorsement from the Commission for a project to make Alameda either the "most fit city in the nation" or the "first fit city in the nation". This is a new designation that was created by an equipment manufacturer who is currently having Halifax, Nova Scotia designated as the most fit city in Canada. The manufacturer reached out to Alameda when he found out about their interest in purchasing exercise equipment for the parks.

The overall goal is to have 13-15 parks within the City equipped. Director Lillard asked for more clarification on how this works, how it will be funded, and how the equipment itself will be maintained over time. Ms. Russi stated that the Friends of the Parks would like to lead this initiative, and through private donations, raise approximately \$400,000. The initial amount would cover equipment purchasing, shipping and installation, with \$50,000 of that total going towards maintenance. The cost per park is approximately \$25-30,000. The equipment manufacturer has committed to contributing some pieces of equipment at no cost to help them accomplish their goal.

Knowing Ms. Russi had talked to the hospital and other businesses, Chair Restagno asked what their level of enthusiasm was for the project. Ms. Russi stated that nobody has been negative about the proposition. Everyone from volunteer organizations who might want to do programming around this, to businesses that might want to contribute to the effort financially is very enthusiastic. As to how they will raise the money, the Friends are still in the process of determining what the best avenues to do this would be. They would like to start initially with Lincoln and Washington Parks. They are probably the most used parks in the city, with one on the East End and one on the West End. By installing at these parks initially, they hope to build enthusiasm in residents and businesses for equipment to be placed in other parks.

Restagno then asked about people who might contribute to this effort. Would they be able to advertise "this equipment sponsored by" their organization or business? Director Lillard said that they do have ways of doing this, such as where you can apply a small sticker to an apparatus and people can use an android or i-phone app to read it. Sponsors could also be listed in Recreation's activity guide.

Director Lillard advised that procedurally what Ms. Russi needs in order to take this to the Council, is a formal motion from the Commission endorsing the program. Commissioner Sonneman made a motion to highly endorse moving forward with fundraising efforts to get exercise equipment put in the parks. Commissioner Cooke seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

M/S/C SONNEMAN/COOKE (unanimously approved)

"That the Friends of the Park move forward with fund-raising efforts to put exercise equipment in the parks."

Approved (5): Restagno, Brown, Delaney, Sonneman, Cooke

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Krusi Park Batting Cage Proposal (*Discussion/Action Item*)

Director Lillard stated that at the last Commission meeting, the AGSA (Alameda Girls Softball Association) submitted a formal plan which included a permanent location near the tennis courts for a batting cage in Krusi Park. It was reviewed and recommended that they seek an alternative site. The newly proposed location is along the Otis Drive side of the park. Lillard's professional opinion is that the batting cage does not belong at Krusi because it would be a single use facility in a multi-use park.

However, should this be approved, there will be a list of conditions that come with the approval. AGSA would have to agree to assume all the costs of construction and obtain all applicable City permits. Any on-going repairs and maintenance would have to be assumed by AGSA as well. The proposed location is very near the EBMUD pump station, so a meeting would have to be held with them to ensure there would be no issues with the proximity of the batting cage. Also, any construction that would occur would have to be carefully done so as not to damage any existing underground EBMUD equipment. The cage will be locked when not in use. AGSA would have use of the cage when in the softball season, but ARPD would like it to be available to other groups in the off-season. This would provide use opportunities for the entire community instead of just one group. There would be a written agreement as to the hours of use, and of course, AGSA would have priority use of the cage. If the batting cage would ever have to be relocated, AGSA would have to bear the cost.

Commissioner Sonneman stated that he really appreciated AGSA making the change because the original plan had the batting cage next to the tennis courts. The new location along Otis Drive is much more unobtrusive. He believes that AGSA would adhere to the guidelines that Lillard had laid out, and is comfortable with the proposal. Lillard said that the neighborhood areas had been noticed about the meeting so if anyone had concerns they could come and voice them. There was one person in attendance, and Lillard explained the batting cage location and that there would be no associated lighting as it would be a daytime use only facility. Commissioner Delaney said his biggest concern was the possible noise and the neighbors being disturbed by it. Commissioner Brown asked if the AGSA knew of the stipulations laid out and how they feel about them. AGSA said they were fine with what they had heard and didn't see any reason why they could not abide by the requirements. The batting cage would be constructed of black cyclone fencing just like what is on the fields there now. It would be daytime use only, so no lighting would be involved.

Commissioner Delaney made a motion to allow the AGSA to install a batting cage at Krusi Park as defined in Director Lillard's memo and in AGSA's plan. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

M/S/C DELANEY/BROWN (unanimously approved)

"That AGSA be allowed to install a batting cage at Krusi Park as defined in Director Lillard's memo and in AGSA's plan."

Approved (5): Restagno, Brown, Delaney, Sonneman, Cooke

B. Provide Direction to Staff on the Issue of Non-Profit Field Rates for Adult (18-22 year olds) Use (*Discussion/Action Item*)

Director Lillard explained that this was an item from the previous meeting that needed further clarification. The existing field rate structure is more focused on school and non-profit group use. There are a number of teams that have evolved over the years that are comprised of 18-22 year-olds which don't fit into any existing category. Surveys of other cities were performed, and a sliding scale type fee is being proposed. The rate is fair and based on residency, and fees can be paid either by cash or for services in-lieu-of payment. For instance, Little League buys a lot of dirt for the field, so they never pay any cash.

Commissioner Delaney had a comment to do with the value of being a resident of Alameda. Delaney believes that the charge for non-Alameda residents may not be high enough. He proposed that the \$10 an hour rate be charged for resident teams (teams consisting of 75-100% residents), move the second group (teams with 50-74% residents) to \$20 an hour, and the third group (49% or less being residents) to \$25 an hour. This would not only bring in a little more money, but it would also let the people of Alameda know that the Commission is doing well by them. Director Lillard said that it would not be a problem to administer the fees that way.

Chair Restagno was in agreement with the direction Delaney was going, and proposed a \$10, \$20 and \$30 fee respectively. Director Lillard said that since this was a brand new policy, they didn't want to make it too much or too little, but was amenable to making the fee one the Commission was comfortable with.

Audience member Erik Schuler, Senior League GM with Alameda Babe Ruth, came forward to speak on the fee issue. His youth teams are about 75-85% Alameda residents, and he runs the 13-year olds all the way up to the collegiate team which is endorsed and under the umbrella of Alameda Babe Ruth. When you get to the college level teams, the resident rate is actually lower. Even with the fees what they are now at the lower rate, Alameda Babe Ruth is over budget by \$10,000. Currently they charge \$500 for a season (much less than in other cities), and if the field fees increase, there are still other fees such as equipment, umpires, travel expenses, etc. to consider. There is a concern that they might have to start charging an exorbitant amount for kids to play baseball if the fees go up any higher.

Commissioner Delaney clarified with Mr. Schuler that currently, Alameda Babe Ruth is not charging enough in fees to cover their costs. Chair Restagno asked what amount of field hours would be used in a typical season. Schuler replied that each game is 2½-3 hours long. Restagno verified that even though they might not meet the 75% rule, they would always have more than 50% of the players be Alameda residents. Restagno then asked how many games and how many practices would there be within a season. Schuler responded on average, about 50 games are played a season and 50-65% of these games are played away. In looking at a number of about 25 home games that would be a total of about 75 field hours. The cost per season for field rental would be around \$750-\$1,500. Director Lillard said that you need to take into account that when you first start looking at the fee structure, it really doesn't matter if you are a resident or non-resident. The amount of wear and tear on the field, the amount of water it takes to keep the field in good condition, maintenance staff time, etc. are all taken into account. The monies Recreation is looking to re-coup from the fees would be to help cover these costs as about 60% of the General Fund budget is directly related to field costs.

After more discussion, Commissioner Delaney made a motion to adopt the 18-22 year old field rate fees as: \$10 for teams comprised of 75-100% Alameda residents, \$15 for teams comprised of 50-74% Alameda residents, and \$30 for teams with less than 49% Alameda residents. Commissioner Sonneman seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

M/S/C DELANEY/SONNEMAN (unanimously approved)

"That the Recreation Commission adopt 18-22 year old field rates of \$10 for teams comprised of 75-100% Alameda residents, \$15 for teams comprised of 50-74% Alameda residents, and \$30 for teams with less than 49% Alameda residents."

Approved (5): Restagno, Brown, Delaney, Sonneman, Cooke

7. REPORTS FROM RECREATION COMMISSION AND RECREATION AND PARK DIRECTOR

- A. Park Division
- B. Recreation Division
- C. Mastick Senior Center
- D. Other Reports and Announcements

Director Lillard noted that the activity reports were in each member's folder. All the holiday programs were big successes. Breakfast with Santa had 150 participants and most of the camps were full. The Elks Hoop Shoot was held the previous Friday night at the Alameda Point Gym. Junior Warriors basketball will be starting up the following week, also at the gym. The gym is in constant use this time of the year from 3 pm-10 pm almost every day, and on weekends all the time. All the revenue generated there goes back into upkeep of the facility. The floors and restrooms have been re-done in the last couple years, so it's slowly coming around. There was a problem at Krusi Park when someone drove through the fence on Christmas Eve, drove around inside the park for awhile, then somehow got out.

Commissioner Brown made a brief comment about the work at the Mastick Senior Center. The offices have just been renovated through funds raised by their Bingo program and sales in their thrift shop. The thrift shop is doing phenomenally well, and Bingo, which used to be the leader, is now the follower. They have been able to raise enough money to refurbish the front lobby, and the entire facility as well as the office is beautiful. Brown thanked Jackie Krause, Senior Center Manager. Director Lillard mentioned that Mastick did just receive a large bequest from William "Bill" Whittier, but none of that was used towards the renovations.

Chair Restagno asked what the status was of recruiting to fill Director Lillard's position. Lillard responded that they have not yet started the hiring process.

Commissioner Brown gave a final thank-you to Patrick Russi, Recreation Services Supervisor. She said the programs that were put on by his staff in the department over the holidays were incredibly well-done.

8. STATUS REPORT ON ONGOING PROJECTS

9. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS, GENERAL

- 10. **ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA:** 2012 Fee Schedule Review and Approval, Final Park Master Plan Review and Approval
- 11. **SET NEXT MEETING DATE:** Thursday, February 9, 2012
- 12. **ADJOURNMENT**