



2226 Santa Clara Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 747-7529

MINUTES OF RECREATION & PARK COMMISSION MEETING OF MARCH 12, 2009

DATE: Thursday, March 12, 2009
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: Room 360, City Hall, Santa Clara Avenue and Oak Street, Alameda, CA 94501

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Terri Ogden, Vice Chair Joe Restagno, Commissioners Lola Brown, Mike Cooper, Jo Kahuanui, and Gina Mariani

Staff: Dale Lillard, Director
Jackie Krause, Senior Services Manager

Absent: Commissioner Bill Sonneman

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The approval of Minutes:

- February 12, 2008 Recreation & Park Commission Meeting

M/S/C KAHUANUI/OGDEN (approved)

“That the February 12, 2008 Recreation & Park Commission Meeting Minutes be approved as written.”

Approved (6): Ogden, Restagno, Brown, Cooper, Kahuanui, Mariani
Absent (1): Sonneman

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS, AGENDA

(Any person may address the Commission in regard to any matter over which the Commission has jurisdiction or of which it may take cognizance that is not on the agenda.)

Commissioner Kahuanui stated that a fundraiser for St. Joseph Notre Dame was held at the O' Club. One of the event planners has a portable light business and they used portable lights in the parking lot across the street from the O' Club. This made a big difference and participants were very appreciative of having the lights.

She feels that we need to act responsibly before something bad happens in the parking lot. We should try lighting the parking lot now. Staff has talked to the Reuse Authority and they

do not even have lights that work out there any more. They do not have lights (not working) to be able to offer them to the patrons. Commissioner Kahuanui would like staff to look into finding out how much it would cost to make it an option for those renting the O' Club to use/rent lights.

Commissioner Restagno asked if the parking lot was available for anyone to use. Director Lillard stated that the parking lot is not included in the lease that ARPD has with ARRA. We have the parking lot behind the O' Club. Patrons can use the parking lot across from the O' Club by getting a permit through ARRA. Staff can offer patrons the option of bringing/renting lights into the parking lot. It would be difficult to require patrons to have the lights and it would be cost prohibitive. Staff can do some research but ARPD cannot require that patrons rent lights because we do not control the property.

Commissioner Kahuanui stated that having it as an option would be good. Most people who are renting the O' Club are just assuming that they can use the parking lot.

Director Lillard stated that a report will be provided to the Commission once the research is completed.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion of Alternative Uses for the Mif Albright Golf Course – (Discussion/Action Item)

Director Lillard stated that Council directed staff to close the short course at the Corica Complex in November 2008. At that time they also requested that staff come back to them with some alternative uses for that area. Information for alternative uses was given to the Council at their meeting on February 17, 2009 (Council Report was included in the Commission packets). During that same meeting a question was raised regarding some property located in Harbor Bay. This area is currently zoned as commercial and office space which there is not a market for at this time. The developers are now looking at the possibility of arranging some sort of exchange between the short-course property and the Harbor Bay property.

The Council is now asking the Recreation and Park Commission and Golf Commission for a recommendation on what to do with the space. They are also asking the current operator at the golf course to look at the area and determine alternative uses.

Director Lillard stated that there are two options. One of the options offers three soccer fields together which is something the City does not currently have and would allow us to have tournaments. We could also move things that are currently at other parks off of them which would open them up for other uses and rotating the field use to allow the fields to rest. On the Harbor Bay property there is a potential to have three soccer fields and one smaller baseball field which could possibly be a field for Miracle League or Little League.

Council is looking for a recommendation on what to do with the 12 acres that used to be the short course (Mif Albright). You could put fields on the short course but the problem is that there are residential properties right up to the property line. The benefits of the Harbor Bay property is that there is less residential, more parking, and the area could possibly have lights installed. Commissioner Cooper asked for the size of the Harbor Bay property. Director Lillard stated that he thought it was approximately 14 acres (a little more than the short course).

Chair Ogden stated that she felt the Commission was getting way ahead of themselves with the swap issue. There is Measure C (passed in 1997) which states that we cannot sell, swap, or do anything else with public park land without the vote of the people. Director Lillard stated that the Council would have to address that issue.

Director Lillard stated that Council is asking for (aside from the Measure C), if we could do anything we want without Measure C or money being an object, what would we like to do. Chair Ogden stated that in her opinion the area should stay a par three course. Commissioner Restagno stated that the par three was a cash drain. Chair Ogden stated that baseball is also a cash drain. Commissioner Restagno stated that there is a cash drain either way. Obviously there will be maintenance but the value created there versus a par three seems like we are pretty constrained.

Chair Ogden stated that it is always about the team sports. What about individuals. Individuals with kids who want to go out and golf. Commissioner Restagno stated that there are courses for golfing. Chair Ogden stated that the par three is a learning course. Director Lillard stated that family tees have been added to the other courses. Chair Ogden stated that the family tees are slowing down play for the regular golfers out there.

Director Lillard stated that eventually the Master Plan recommendation was to reduce the course to three-nine hole tracks. Chair Ogden stated that has not been approved. Director Lillard stated that nothing has been approved, it is all pre-conceptual.

Chair Ogden stated that it is always about baseball and soccer and that is all that anybody thinks about in this town. It is time to start thinking about other things besides baseball and soccer. Commissioner Mariani concurred with what Chair Ogden stated. Ms. Mariani stated how many more soccer and baseball fields do we need. We should do something different or keep the area the same. It is unbelievable if you look at the amount of money involved. She feels that swapping the land is out of the question and we should not even think about it.

Commissioner Kahuanui stated we are basing this on a pipe dream/rumor that maybe we will swap land with the developer at Harbor Bay. She does not see it happening and feels that spending time to discuss the issue is too far out there.

Commissioner Mariani stated that they are desperate to do something with that land because it is zoned for something that is non-market so they are dying to do something with the property.

Chair Ogden suggested putting an amphitheater or a dog park in the area.

Commissioner Cooper stated that there is a reason that they closed the Mif Albright course.

There is a reason why there are hundreds and hundreds of people who are interested in having soccer, baseball, or softball fields. He did not like the closing of the Mif Albright, but if it is losing money Chair Ogden stated that since the new management company has been at the Corica Complex, play has been up and the facility has been busier. We should go to the management company to ask their opinion. Director Lillard stated that Council will ask for their opinion. They will look at it from the golf operation perspective. Council is asking the Recreation and Park Commission to look at it from the recreation aspect and the Golf Commission will be asked to look at it from the golf perspective. Chair Ogden stated that it needs to stay a recreation area. Director Lillard asked in what form, dog park, etc.

Commissioner Mariani stated that she would like it to stay a course. The area was not marketed and had not been marketed and maybe if a professional company was doing that it would help. Director Lillard stated that prices were cut and the Mif Albright was marketed. Chair Ogden stated that it was in terrible condition. She played the course and it was terrible. The course was not being taken care of and in good condition.

Commissioner Restagno stated that the north and the south courses are not different. Chair Ogden stated that there is a big difference.

Commissioner Brown stated that there are a lot of memorial trees out on the course. Are those trees going to be jeopardized or compromised? Commissioner Mariani stated that she felt that by no means should any of those memorial trees be removed, damaged, or torn down for a baseball or soccer field. Director Lillard stated that there are ways to work around that situation. They can design around a grove/tree, install plaques, etc. So there can still be a memorial grove.

Chris Seiwald, Alameda Soccer Club representative, stated that he felt that if fields were put out at Harbor Bay area or the golf course it would free up some of the other parks around the island that are in neighborhoods so people can walk their dogs, etc. That way team sports can be put in other areas where there is parking, etc.

Robert Todd, Alameda Humane Society, stated that the Humane Society would be in favor of having a dog park on Bay Farm Island. They are also in favor of enlarging the dog park at Washington Park.

Ron Matthews, Alameda Little League representative, stated that the youth in the community would be served by a small par three course like they used to be but he is not sure that is a viable alternative for the future. Going forward, if there is something that does occur with these properties, there are not enough 90 foot baseball diamonds in the City. There are a good quantity of softball diamonds which serve the purpose for Little League practice times. He feels that they are still short for the other leagues. Little League registrations are increasing. The Babe Ruth League is for ages 13-18 and there is a problem with having enough fields for that group.

Commissioner Cooper asked what the timeline was for Mount Trashmore and when the area can be used. Director Lillard stated that the area needs to sit for 25 years. The methane has not burned off of the area yet. There are restrictions regarding building on the property because of restrictions on puncturing the earth's crust, etc.

Director Lillard stated that the Commission could recommend that the area could be

retained as a recreation use and add several caveats (e.g., prepare a master plan, hold community meetings, Dog Park, bmx bike area, etc.).

Commissioner Kahuanui stated that she would also like to see what Kemper Sports recommends.

Commissioner Mariani asked who did the outside evaluation of the course. Director Lillard stated that there was an operational review which was done by the National Golf Foundation. Kemper Sports will be looking at the area from their perspective.

M/S/C KAHUANUI/RESTAGNO (approved)

“That the Mif Albright Course be retained for recreation purposes to be determined at a later date through a community process.”

Approved (6): Ogden, Restagno, Brown, Cooper, Kahuanui, Mariani
Absent (1): Sonneman

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

7. REPORTS FROM RECREATION COMMISSION AND RECREATION AND PARK DIRECTOR

A. Park Division

See March 2009 Activity Report.

B. Recreation Division

See March 2009 Activity Report.

C. Mastick Senior Center

See March 2009 Activity Report.

D. Other Reports and Announcements

8. STATUS REPORT ON ONGOING PROJECTS

9. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS, GENERAL

10. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Discussion of Recreation & Park Commission being members of the Friends of the Parks, Inc.

11. SET DAY FOR NEXT MEETING Thursday, April 9, 2009

12. ADJOURNMENT