



REGULAR MEETING OF THE
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, July 26, 2017
7:00 pm

**El Cerrito City Hall
Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Recreation Department at 510-559-7000. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28 CFT 35.102-35.104 ADA Title II).

1. Roll Call

Present: Chair – Glen Lubcke, Ben Chuaqui, Norman La Force, Tara McIntire, Robin Mitchell, David Zuckermann.

Absent: Doshi

2. Commission / Staff Communications / Announcements

Informal reports on matters of general interest which are announced by the Park and Recreation Commissioners and City Staff.

None

3. Council/Staff Liaison Announcements and Reports

Staff and/or Councilmember Quinto may report on matters of general interest to the Park and Recreation Commission, Council policies, priorities and significant actions taken by the City Council.

Councilmember Quinto reported on the City's Centennial weekend plans. On Saturday, September 16, 2017 there will be a parade from Safeway to Cerrito Vista Park. All are invited and Council hopes for Commissioners to attend. On Sunday, September 17, 2017 there will be a special Gala at the Mira Vista Country Club. Tickets are available online and a sellout is anticipated.

Councilmember Quinto reported that the El Cerrito Open House Senior Center was given one year (until June 30, 2018) to relocate from its current location at Fairmont Elementary School. The City requested additional time, possibly two or three years, from the West Contra Costa County School Board but, unfortunately the request was denied. Staff is looking at other locations including temporary Senior Center at the empty lot next to the Public Safety building. Staff Christopher Jones commented that the City is looking at other sites and all possibilities. This process will continue for a few more months before the City forms a recommendation.

Councilmember Quinto reported that there are options for a new El Cerrito Library location. BART and the City Council are in support of the possibility for a new library at the El Cerrito Plaza BART location.

The topic of the amount of time the Senior Center would be at the temporary location/structure. Councilmember Quinto does not think that it would take a long time considering the City's needs for a new Senior Center, library and public safety building. These City needs will be actively met. The location the City is looking at for the library is the current BART parking lot at Fairmont and Elm Street- which will have parking and stores at the floor level. The mix use library site is projected at 20,000 square feet. The senior center is currently 6,000 square feet. The preferred site chosen by council would have had enough programming space between the community center and library to house all of the Recreation Department programs and needs.

Staff Jones announced the application process is there is a letter and application being distributed widely to solicit residents or business owners to participate in a Citizen Advisory Group for the Park and Recreation Master Plan. Applications are due August 18, 2017 and the first Citizen Advisory Group meeting on Thursday, August 31, 2017. The application is also available online and staff will forward the application to anyone who may be interested. City is seeking a diverse knowledge and expertise for the group. Commissioners will be a great asset to the Group. The Commission will receive regular updates of the Plans progress and will ultimately make a recommendation for approval.

4. **Oral Communications From The Public**

All persons wishing to speak should sign up with City Staff. Remarks are generally limited to 3 minutes per person. Please state your name and city of residence for the record. Comments related to non-agenda items will be heard first. Comments related to items appearing on the agenda are taken up at the time the Park and Recreation Commission deliberates each item.

Tom Gehling: Announced that on Friday, August 18, 2017 at 5:30pm there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony for the steps that lead to Motorcycle Hill. Gehling expressed appreciation to the Park and Recreation Commission for approving funding for this project and extended an invitation to anyone who would like to attend.

5. **Approval of Minutes:** Exhibit 1: Meeting Minutes from May 17, 2017

Approval of the May 17, 2017 Special Meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes.

Commissioner Chuaqui moved that the minutes be approved. Commissioner Zuckermann seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

6. **Presentation and Discussion of Schematic Designs for Fairmont Park**

Melissa Tigbao, Senior Engineer, Ana Bernardes, Associate Engineer and Bob Berklin from Restoration Design group present the first schematic design concept for Fairmont Park based on feedback received from the public. Audience question and answer period will be followed by questions and comments from Park and Recreation Commissioners.

Tigbao presented the introduction, goals, public outreach (design charrette and online survey), project budget, project cost, and project schedule. Berklin presented park context, park history, and site analysis including pavement, seating and adjacencies. The analysis concluded that

removing trees from the park is problematic to opening day and the budget. At the community workshop on June 3, 2017, residents were presented three different potential designs. Each design took entry, play, gathering, open space and a community garden into consideration. The three concept designs were: (a) restore, (b) central community garden and (c) big open space. The workshop participants preferred (c) big open space. The online survey summary included favorite spots, big attractions, improvements, and visitors. The early plan did not fall into the new budget. Berklin presented the current schematic plans including site furnishings, play equipment, and cost estimate with future phase ideas.

Public Questions & Comments:

Q: How are volunteers solicited for a project like this and how could one (or a group) sign up to volunteer? What would the process be?

A: Groups usually approach the City. The City will incorporate improvements based on volunteers, donated time, material and work. The City will work with volunteer groups and not disturb the construction process.

Q: How many phases are involved in the current design?

A: There are two phases for the current design.

Public Comment: It was suggested that flashing lights on Eureka Ave be added, because safety is a concern from fast traffic in that area, should it become the main entry way to the park. The second concern is the expansion of the school yard with the fence that is being constructed. It does not look like there is a gate. The community would like to have a gate from school yard to park for after school hours. Art and Culture Commission was asked last fall to do fundraising for a mural on the mural wall by Fairmont Park. This was to be in the Art & Culture Commission 2018 Work Plan and painted in the summer of 2019 as a part of phase two.

Response: The school will be putting up classrooms and opening a play-area inside school. The City does not know if there will be gated access or not. The City needs more specific information about some of the School District's plan.

Q: What are the tradeoffs, input and feedback that were received about using concrete in Fairmont Park? Is it a necessary component? Is there another way to direct that funding?

A: Concrete is expensive, but there is no other viable surface. Anything else that would work does not meet ADA requirements or is more expensive.

Comment: Mitchell suggested that the City work with design team to produce a plan for the ideal, million dollar budget, Fairmont Park so that steps can be taken now to work towards the final vision rather than the design that is being proposed at a lower budget. Mitchell suggested to created phases from final ideal plan.

Response: Unfortunately, what is being suggestion are two separate plans which would essentially double the time to complete. The scope is set to develop a \$300,000 park project for the City. The design being presented shows how future elements could be included.

Comment: Chuaqui would like a plan that shows what other elements and improvements are going to be in the next phase.

A: There are limitations within the grant of design versus construction and 20% is given with Measure WW for design- which is already maxed out. The Urban Greening Plan and Ohlone Greenway Plan show other future improvements the City would like to implement. The design will concentrate on Eureka and edges if the City is looking for a phased design. Measure WW funds are 'use it or lose it' at the end of 2018. This means that the City does not have time to wait for additional money for a new design.

Q: Commissioner's asked for further clarification about the previous \$1 million budget that was being discussed.

A: The \$1 million budget came from the original \$600,000 Urban Greening Plan to have all the elements and include overhead, soft costs and new costs. Currently, the City does not \$1 million budget to complete the plan and this is why the city is moving in this direction.

Comment: Zuckermann is feels that the City is giving the community something they can enjoy right away with the current plan.

Comment: According to Berklin, there are two options. One, go forward with this plan and get community behind it. The City could embellish lighting drinking fountain shed, add new play equipment, landscape irrigation, picnic. Two, make a decision based the comments of the Commission: including building towards Eureka Ave, the whole western edge and leave construction access.

Comment: Chuaqui likes the park and the design.

Comment: Lubcke agreed that if this is the input from community, he suggests the City to move forward.

Comment: Landscape architect, Commissioner McIntire, suggested that from a design stand point, pull gathering space back to lessen footprint. Perhaps this would provide space and funding for a water fountain or additional play structure. She has received amazing feedback about the proposed play structures that were installed at a different park.

Action: Commissioner Mitchell moved that the City move forward with the current proposed design. Commissioner Zuckermann seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

7. **Consideration to Recommend the Renaming of Fairmont Park to Centennial Park:** Christopher Jones, Recreation Director
In recognition of the City's 100th Birthday as well as changes to the original Fairmont Park's boundaries, recommend that Fairmont Park, as defined by the current project along the Ohlone Greenway, be renamed Centennial Park. Discussion may include how to incorporate a Centennial theme into the park's design.

Most of the Commission responded in agreement to rename Fairmont Park, Centennial Park. Commission Mitchell initially did not like the idea, and thought it strange to now call Fairmont Park Centennial Park. Mitchell suggested new Fairmont Park signage instead.

Lubcke suggested a historical marker of Fairmont Park at the newly named and redesigned Centennial Park.

There was further discussion about Fairmont Elementary School, the clubhouse and park. To date, the City has maintained and scheduled the field and continues to have exclusive use over the clubhouse. Chuaqui thought that the unique name will help the park by making it distinctive and having an identity separate from the school grounds.

Action: Commissioner Chuaqui moved that the City move recommend rename Fairmont Park along the Ohlone Greenway as Centennial Park and to include a Fairmont Park historical marker. Commissioner Lubcke seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

8. **Review and Discussion of Parks Related Projects:** Christopher Jones, Recreation Director
Review Parks Projects Status Sheet of funded and unfunded capital improvement program projects related to Parks and Recreation.

There was a presentation and discussion about changes to the Park and Recreation Capital Improvement Projects FY 2017-18 Budget Cycles.

9. **Recreation Department Update**

Sarah DiBenedetto, Recreation Analyst will provide an update on items of interest in the Recreation Department.

The 4th of July Festival was very successful. The Recreation Department would like to thank all City staff, volunteers, worldOne, and community members for making it such great event. Eden O'Brien-Brenner was hired as the Recreation Department Childcare Supervisor, replacing Hannah Long. Eden has a strong youth services, state licensed childcare background, most recently with the YMCA. Childcare registration for the 2017-18 school year is open. There is currently a waitlist for after care at Madera Childcare. HASEP and MASEP class information will be available when school is in session. The new 2017 Fall rECguide is set to publish and distributed soon. Swim lessons will continue through October 2017. The Swim Center is projected to be under construction for about 2 months during the late fall/ early winter 2017. The City has been working on a new web design that is set to go live mid-August 2017. The Open House Senior Center needs to relocate by June 30, 2018.

10. **Items For Future Agendas**

- a. Park and Recreation Commission Work Plan (August)
- b. Ohlone Greenway Master Plan Overview (TBD)
- c. Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (TBD)

11. **Meeting Adjournment**