



**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, November 29, 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, Manish Doshi, Norman La Force, Tara McIntire, Robin Mitchell, David Zuckermann.

Absent: Ben Chuaqui

2. COMMISSION / STAFF COMMUNICATIONS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chris Jones, Recreation Director: The City received one bid for the Swim Center renovations. The bid given to the City was concluded as non-responsive for not providing all documents. The documents were subsequently provided. On November 21, 2017 staff asked Council to reject the bid as non-responsive but also to give permission to staff to negotiate with the one bidder on the project. The reason for doing that is the construction climate is uncertain right now. The City felt that since the one bidder did eventually provide what they were supposed to, and their references checked out, it was worth sitting down and try to keep the project on schedule. The bid was for \$620,000. City Council authorized an additional \$220,000 of Measure A funding for this project. The City is looking to bring the base bid down by about \$80,000. The contractor will go back and talk to get cost reductions from sub-contractors and the City decided to postpone some work that can be postponed. The City is hopeful to execute a contract next week. Optimistically, the start would be mid-late December, but almost certainly the Swim Center will shut down and work will be performed predominately in January and February. March 12, 2018 is the “drop dead date” given to the general contractor. This is when the Swim Center spring programming starts, and the City would need to have major construction completed.

At a meeting with Senior Center attendees, the City announced it is moving forward on the current plan for the new Senior Center locations. The plan is to have a couple portable buildings where the temporary City Hall used to be. The two buildings would roughly equal current size of the Senior Center. In addition to the temporary portable buildings, the City is very confident in a lease agreement with Eden Housing to utilize a 2,000-square foot space at the bottom of the building at a cost of \$1.00 per year. As a part of the agreement, the City would have to contribute to common basic maintenance and upkeep. The City is working diligently to get the Senior Center plans executed.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Cordell Hindler, Richmond announced that Contra Costa Civic Theater is now performing a very funny comedy, *Over the River and Through the Woods*. In August of 2017 Hindler shared his idea with the Park and Recreation Commission for a Teen Center at the old Nibbs restaurant site. Hindler shared that he also brought this idea to the Economic Development Committee who supported the idea.

Yan Linhart, member of the El Cerrito Urban Forest Committee. Some of the issues that the Committee is expected to pay attention to are the growth, maintenance and location of trees in the city, implementing and promoting the City's Urban Forest Master Plan and coordinating with the Public Works Department. Also, the Committee is expected to promote and foster public awareness and education interest and support in the urban forest. The Committee and this Commission have an overlap of interest specifically in the context of Urban Forest Management. Several members of the Urban Forest Committee also participated on the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan public meeting on November 18, 2017. There was a lot of interest from Committee members and others to discuss such things as recreational opportunities of the Hillside Natural Area and the Ohlone Greenway. We look forward to working together on these things. Linhart is here to get a better sense of the activities of the Commission and two to bring up the idea that it would be very useful to have an integrated approach to Urban Forest management. For example, it might be useful for us attending each other's meetings, and go from there.

4. **COUNCIL/STAFF LIASON ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS**

Chris Jones, Recreation Director, reported on matters of general interest to the Park and Recreation Commission, Council policies, priorities and significant actions taken by the City Council.

At the November 7, 2017 City Council meeting, the main topic was a discussion on what it would mean for El Cerrito to become a Charter City. Becoming a Charter City would enable the passage of a property transfer tax (closing costs) to help increase City revenue. Most cities neighboring El Cerrito including Richmond and cities south of El Cerrito already have this tax. It is estimate that this tax could produce over \$2 million per year into the general fund to use on City priorities. City Council also gave direction that the Charter Committee is not to consider this as a means of getting around minimum wages laws, public work contract law in California or, or collective bargaining agreements. The Council discussed, asked questions and moved a resolution to form a Charter Review Committee to decide what needs to be included in the Charter. Once the Charter is complete and the Council approves it would be put to a 50 plus one public vote.

November 21, 2017 City Council authorized staff to negotiate with Mar Con Builders Inc for Swim Center improvements.

The City Council conducted public hearing on a Commercial Cannabis Ordinance and did approve an ordinance that would allow two dispensaries in town. The approval does not include delivery service. Recreational marijuana sales become legal in the State of California on January 1, 2018.

The former Guitar Center building has been picked as a project site to build housing. The former Orchard Supply Hardware store may also become solely housing rather than an earlier plan for development of a car dealership or a mix-use of a car dealership with housing. The Ohlone Greenway signage project is moving forward within budget. Staff will find out whether it was below budget and report back.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** Exhibit 1: Meeting Minutes from October 25, 2017

Approval of the October 25, 2017 Regular Meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes.

Action: Moved, Seconded (La Force /McIntire) and carried unanimously.

6. **PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION 2017-18 GOAL SETTING AND WORK PLAN FORMULATION**

Speaker Cordell Hindler of Richmond, envisioned a beach club in El Cerrito, until he realized the cost of purchasing commercial sites was too high. Hindler advocated for a teen club at the old Nibbs restaurant location. He is here to solicit support from the Commission.

Chair Lubcke suggested that Hindler to bring the idea and interest in a teen club to the El Cerrito Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan process. Teen programming and a teen center is in the Master Plan survey and has been discussed up in the first public meeting and possibly in future public meetings. Typically, teen centers are subsidized as opposed to a revenue generator. The old Nibbs restaurant was recently purchased by an unknown buyer.

Goal/Objectives

1: *Engage the public to participate in the Master Plan process.* Commissioner Mitchell is in favor of keeping this as a priority of the Commission. Commissioner Doshi announced that the Soccer Club is asking members to come to the second public meeting. Mitchell would like to strategize to get a broad cross section of the community. There was a discussion about what the city has done to publicize the process, public meetings and the plan itself.

2: *Improve relationship between City of El Cerrito and WCCUSD with the goal of improving transparency and reciprocity.* Proposed activities are to attend a school district board meeting and to invite the school district to a Commission. There was a debate as to whether this goal should be in the ongoing section of the work plan, keep it where it is, or possibly in both places. Commissioners cannot represent themselves as an official of the City. Commissioners can represent yourself as a resident of El Cerrito and the West Costa County Unified School District. Commissioners discussed what information and topics they would like from hear from the School District. There should be a role that the school district takes for needs throughout El Cerrito and the district that the City does not. Commissioner Mitchell suggested that the bike park idea is a good example of something that the school district should sponsor as opposed to the City or as a partnership between the District and the City. There was also discussion about costs of using WCCUSD facilities. Zuckermann suggested commission agrees that this needs to be a part of the plan and the Commission concurred. It was decided that one of the goals is to develop a recommendation for City Council of how to improve relationship with WCCUSD. A proposed activity is to invite someone from the school district to a Park and Recreation Commission meeting. If commissioners would like to attend an alternative to a large WCCUSD board meeting, there are smaller subcommittee meetings that are open to the public.

3: *Encourage, promote, and/or facilitate park and recreation events in El Cerrito to encourage economic activity with emphasis on local sports groups.* The Commission does not feel able to take on this goal or the proposed activities- help establish volunteer group to organize events and improve cooperation between various user groups. Perhaps instead, a goal could be to further

develop or refine co-sponsor group activities or requirements. Mitchell thinks that this goal may be outside the scope and expertise of the Park and Recreation Commission. Some commissioners are interested in learning more about co-sponsorships and the contract between the City and co-sponsor groups. It was decided to include this goal, knowing that later the goals will be prioritized.

There was a discussion about what is important to each Commissioner. Chair Lubcke brought up going through the top three interests for each commissioner.

- What is important to Lubcke is having a dog park, homelessness in parks and litter in all the parks.
- Commissioner Doshi initial interest was soccer fields for the youth in El Cerrito. The scope ended up being so much more: the growth of kids in El Cerrito and their future here. Current interests are field use, moving the Master Plan along, tree mitigation, open space and vacant properties.
- Chuaqui's interests are project oriented. He is interested in finding ways to implement City plans, a dog park (a different location than Bruce King Dog Park), trees throughout the city, recycling and trash collection. Chuaqui believes that waste is a real issue that should be looked at.
- Mitchell is interested in addressing trash in parks, open space, native landscaping in the parks (creating a pollinator pathway) in open space. Additionally, Mitchell believes that and the Dorothy Rosenberg Memorial Park- as an environmental educational center- should be a priority of the City. The National Fish and Wildlife foundation are accepting grant proposals that the City would qualify for if there is an educational component of the plans for Dorothy RMP.
- Areas of importance to Commissioner McIntire are the Hillside open space and how to improve the ordinance that currently says *No Bikes*. The Hillside is a great transportation access point. Also, important to her are the sustainability of the trails, better facilities, improved signage etc. As an arborist, McIntire feels trees are very important. She is also concerned with litter and making sure there are adequate receptacles (with a visual component). There are creative ways to assist in funding for accessibility which is also important to McIntire. Mitchell agrees that there should needs to be increased accessibility for wheelchairs.
- Zuckermann is interested in the management of open space ranging from accessibility, erosion concerns, fuels management, wildlife habitat, native plants and interpretive signage. Zuckermann is also interested in the broad area of maintaining facilities (including the landscaping and parks), the current condition of the facilities. Zuckerman is interested in what the City's plan and ability is to upgrade the facilities. For example, where do we need arrogated turf which is considered more ecofriendly? He is curious about environmental education, recreational programming and how can the Commission can be supportive in these areas.
- La Force is interested in the pool (making sure that it is a first-class facility), creeks and streams in El Cerrito (observing, enhancing, restoring, protecting), fuels management, and the Hillside Natural Area (restoration, native habitat and privately-owned property on the northern most chunk of the Hillside).

The main themes and topics of the Commissioners are open space, dog park, recycling and trash collection, trees, and restoration of native habitat. The Commission decided upon additional group topics for to address in the work plan:

- Open Space (including fuels management)
- Field Use
- Dog Park
- Waste Management/ Recycling (litter issues)

- Green Infrastructure/Natural Vegetation (landscaping, urban forest, fuels management)
- Environmental Education and Programming
 - Sustainability of trails
 - Signage
 - Etiquette
- Creek and Streams
- Swim Center
- Drone use and policy
- Expand and enhance park lands
- Homelessness in parks

There was discussion about the use and policy of drones in El Cerrito. At a future meeting, McIntire will give a drone presentation to the Commission (which was originally prepared for both the Commission and the Environmental Quality Committee). At the next meeting, the Commission could prioritize the items on their work plan or they could look to the Master Plan to see what the public views are more important. There are specific issues that have been raised in tonight's meeting that will be a part of the Master Plan. There are some things that are more specific, for example drones. Overlapping interests of the Commission and public could create an emphasis in the Master Plan. Issues that aren't going to be in the Master Plan could be addressed first or separate by the Commission. La Force brought up the possibility of a City tax measure, its impact and ability to pass. Part of the master plan is to formulate the funding strategy. From there, the City will look at possibilities. Staff will pass along La Force's sentiments regarding strategies for having a tax or bond measure approved.

7. Recreation Department Update

Sarah DiBenedetto, Recreation Management Analyst: The Winter Spring 2018 rECguide is now online and will be in mailboxes soon. The Parks and Recreational Facilities Master Plan first public meeting was held on November 18, 2018. There were approximately 40 members of the public in attendance, 8 (out of 10) Citizen Advisory Group members and staff from both Public Works and Recreation Department. To date, the online survey has 805 responses. The second public meeting will be January 18, 2018 at 6:30pm at the El Cerrito Community Center. The Recreation Department has two upcoming fundraisers, the Pancake Breakfast on December 9, 2017 9am-11am and the Crab Feed on January 27, 5pm.

8. Items for Future Agendas January 24, 2018

- Work Plan- Including Priority Ranking
- Drone Presentation by Commissioner McIntire (TBD)
- Ohlone Greenway Master Plan Overview (TBD)

9. Meeting Adjournment 9:12pm