



Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes

Zoom Webinar – Pleasanton, CA June 10, 2021 - 7:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Deckert.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was recited.

Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Steve Berberich, Joanie Fields, Mary Hekl, Ramesh Immadi, Michael Vickers, and Chairperson Chuck Deckert.

Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Sadie Brown

Staff Present: Heidi Murphy, Library & Recreation Director; Jenny Soo, Associate Planner; Matt Gruber, Landscape Architect; Giacomo Damonte, Parks Superintendent; Melinda Dennis, Planning & Permit Center Manager; Terry Snyder, Office Manager; and Edith Caponigro, Recording Secretary.

AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None.

MINUTES

1. Approve regular meeting minutes of May 13, 2021.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fields, seconded by Commissioner Vickers, to approve the regular meeting minutes of May 13, 2021, as corrected. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

2. Introductions/Awards/Recognitions/Presentations

None.

3. Public Comment from the audience regarding items not listed on the agenda.

Jeffrey Bryant – discussed the need for permanent pickleball courts in Pleasanton and the issues with court sharing for this sport at the Tennis Park. He advised that he and several other players have been going to Livermore to play because they have converted one tennis court into four dedicated pickleball courts. Mr. Bryant would like Pleasanton to consider converting a Pleasanton tennis court for pickleball use only.

Ms. Murphy advised this was an item on the City Council's Priority Projects list and would be being brought to the commission for consideration at a later meeting.

MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMISSION

4. Review and Comment on the Proposed Trails Associated with the Proposed 22-lot single-family Residential Development at Spotorno Ranch (PUD-138) located at 1000 Minnie Drive within the Happy Valley Specific Plan area.

Ms. Soo reviewed with commissioners a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed trails associated with the proposed 22-lot Single-Family Residential Development at the Spotorno Ranch (PUD-138) located on a vacant lot identified as Lot 98 by the Happy Valley Specific Plan (APN 949-16-6). Commissioners were advised that the proposal increases the trail within and outside of the development area and is the reason it is before the commission for comments and review.

Ms. Soo pointed out on the presentation the proposed location of the 22-lot development, the proposed Loop and Bypass Road trail areas, the Spotorno Flat trail, and the Callippe Golf Course trail location. She commented on the proposed widths for each of the trails, linking of trails to the existing trail system, a parcel within the project that is being dedicated for trail use near the church, and that these trails will be consistent with the Happy Valley Master Plan.

Commissioner Fields questioned who would be funding the trail on Alisal Street connecting to Sycamore and how a Right-of-Way would be acquired. Ms. Soo advised that this is a CIP project and a final decision on funding will be made by City Council. She also advised that staff would be working with the County on Right-of-Way matters and the trail would meander so it will not be necessary interfere with property-owners land. Ms. Soo noted that because of this the trail will need to vary in width in some areas and a second trail would go to the back area of the church. And be on the Spotorno property.

Commissioners were informed by Ms. Soo that the 22 single family residential lots will each be a minimum of 1-acre with a dedicated maximum home size that will be built by the lot purchaser and will include an Accessory Dwelling Unit.

Commissioner Fields was informed by Ms. Soo that the trail within the development will be a sidewalk trail and will be maintained by the City of Pleasanton because it will be a trail accessible to the public. Commissioner Fields felt the developer should be paying for the trail enhancement. Ms. Soo provided information about maintenance within the city limits and county area. Mr. Gruber advised that all trails shown on the presentation are within city limits except for the one detailed in purple.

Commissioner Immadi was advised by Ms. Soo that all the trails within the proposed project would connect to existing trails. Mr. Gruber provided information about the existing Callippe and Alisal trails and how the project trails would connect to them. Ms. Soo also noted the proposed project conforms to regulations and that City Council had recently approved another project in this area with trail dedication. Mr. Gruber also provided details about future connections to the Lund Ranch Trail.

Commissioner Vickers asked for cost information pertaining to the trails and felt it was important that such be provided to the commission, so they are better informed when making recommendations pertaining to projects. Ms. Soo advised that such information was not available and that the county will need to be involved in the trail construction.

Commissioner Vickers commented on the Callippe pedestrian trail and recent talks about it being made into a bike trail as well. He discussed the constraints of many trails and questioned whether some of the trails being discussed would be for both pedestrians and cyclists and whether correct signage would be provided.

Commissioner Berberich was informed by Ms. Soo that all the trails would be paved. He also indicated that he agreed with Commissioner Fields regarding the developer being responsible for some of the costs involved. Ms. Soo suggested this was a recommendation commissioners could make to City Council.

Commissioner Berberich felt the developer should be required to set aside some land for a park area. Ms. Soo advised that there will be a wetland open area with some amenities but as a required retention area, it cannot be touched. Mr. Gruber noted that there are no parks in the area. Commissioner Berberich stated he was troubled there are no parks in the area and Chairperson Deckert advised that this area used to be in the county. Ms. Soo provided information about the open area and Commissioner Berberich questioned if this could be made into a park.

Chairperson Deckert was provided information about the possibility of moving the curb along Westbridge Lane to make the trail safer for pedestrians to walk and about other possible changes that may be required. Mr. Gruber provided additional details.

Mr. Spotorno provided a presentation for commissioners on the Lot-98 area project, the rural density overlay, and the hundreds of acres that will be available for open space, cattle grazing, etc. He noted that a portion of the 33-acre project site is within the urban growth boundary line and advised that the project proposes 35' lot set-backs for houses that will be on one-acre minimum lots with shared driveways and hopes to receive a confirmation from the commission for the project meeting the existing Trails Master Plan requirements.

Commissioners were advised by Mr. Spotorno that how the project plan is laid out proposes to bisect the property differently than is envisioned in the Specific Plan so as not to affect existing neighbors. He provided details about street and trail alignments and confirmed Ms. Soo's comments regarding the retention basin needed to collect stormwater and the warnings received from agencies regarding not being able to make changes.

Commissioner Berberich asked that a caveat be included within any motion made that the developer be required to pay any required enhancements.

A motion was made by Commissioner Berberich, seconded by Commissioner Vickers, to approve the proposed trails associated with the proposed 22-lot single-family residential development at Spotorno Ranch (PUD-138) located on a vacant lot identified as Lot-98 by the Happy Valley Specific Plan (APN 949-16-6) with a caveat that the developer pay for the included enhancements.

At this time Chairperson Deckert was informed that members of the public wished to speak on this item and introduced the first speaker Robin Boggs a resident on Sycamore Road.

Robin Boggs – commented on the urban growth in the area and according to the 1998 Happy Valley Specific Plan the priority was for a bypass road. He indicated he has walked the area roads many times and finds them dangerous and was unsure about the trails and where people would be parking when using the trails. Mr. Gruber noted the trail area would be mainly sidewalk along Alisal and Westbridge and the plan is to improve the area to make it more feasible and provide additional parking along the street.

Mr. Boggs stated he had an overall concern about the impact of the bypass road and whether building a trail would interfere with what was originally promised. He expressed his concern for safety and difficulties being experienced now walking in the area. Mr. Gruber felt the trail would not interfere with the bypass road but that would need to be a discussion with City Council who would make the decision.

Mr. Boggs thanked Mr. Gruber for his comments and indicated he would continue to monitor and follow to see what takes place.

Steve Mix – also a resident of Sycamore Road. Thanked commissioners for their comments and discussed items within the Happy Valley Specific Plan, the original golf course project, the Alisal trail, and the bypass road. He commented on a trail designed back in 1988 and appreciates the pictorials of what is being suggested for this trail and thought it was important something be done on the old-style trail. Mr. Mix asked about funding for the trails and whether this would come from both the City of Pleasanton and Alameda County.

Mr. Mix agreed with Mr. Boggs on the dangers of the narrow Alisal Street especially when construction equipment will be in place in the area and felt improvements needed to be made to make it safe for children and families living in the area. He commented on families already in the area with young children who would love to have a park they would be able to go.

Commissioners were advised by Mr. Mix that he liked the Spotorno project for 22 homes and idea of getting the Alisal trail completed, and the road made safe to handle more traffic. He thanked the commission for taking his comments.

Chairperson Deckert asked commissioners for additional comments. Commissioner Immadi felt the commission should consider the recommendation made earlier to include a small park in the area. Chairperson Deckert indicated this was not an agenda item for the commission to consider but asked Commissioner Immadi to confirm if he was asking for a park to be included within the project being considered. Commissioner Immadi stated he would like for the park to be considered within the Spotorno project.

Ms. Soo questioned whether commissioners were asking for a park in the retention area or somewhere else. Commissioner Fields asked about the area size near the windmill and Ms. Soo advised she did not have an acreage breakdown but thought it would be possible to put some benches in the area. Commissioner Fields asked about adjusting one of the parcels near the windmill and next to the trail so that area could become a small park.

At this time Commissioner Berberich decided to remove his motion and stated he was a huge proponent of parks and would like for a park to be recommended by the commission.

Chairperson Deckert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Vickers, to accept the proposed trails associated with the proposed 22-lot single-family residential development at Spotorno Ranch (PUD-138) located on a vacant lot identified as Lot 98 by the Happy Valley Specific Plan (APN 949-16-6) with consideration being given to including a park near the windmill area if determined feasible by staff.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Commissioners Berberich, Hekl, Vickers, and Chairperson Deckert.

NOES: Commissioners Fields and Immadi

ABSENT: Commissioner Brown

ABSTAIN: None

Chairperson Deckert thanked members of the public for their comments.

5. Review and Discuss Parks Maintenance Division Report for January – May 2021

Mr. Damonte reviewed with commissioners the Parks Division Report for January-May 2021 and commented on the following items:

Val Vista Park

Repairs were made to the maintenance and storage sheds at the park.
Slide repair completed on the playground for 5–12-year-old children.
New trees were planted.
Three aging irrigation controllers were replaced with one new upgraded controller

Moller Park

Sixteen crape myrtle trees and six redwood trees were installed along Foothill Road.
Irrigation was modified.

Cubby's Dog Park

Self-closing gate hinges were replaced.

Heatherlark Park

New verbena installed in the park along Northway Road.

Hansen Park

The vandalized fire damaged playground was replaced.

Ken Mercer Sports Park

Twenty-four declining redwood trees were removed.
Playground replacement began at the eastern playground site.

Bernal Community Park

Parks staff worked with a local Boy Scout Troop on a mulch spreading project.

Library

30-flats of ivy ground cover installed.

Main Street

Color bowl plant rotation completed.
Broken color bowl repaired.

Augustin Bernal Park

Large fallen coast live oak removed and cleared from trail.
Four new signs installed to replace vandalized signs or address areas needing signs.

Medians

Irrigation backflow replaced on Valley Avenue at Northway Road.
New irrigation, water-wise grasses and an oak tree installed at Elmridge Court roundabout.
New cellular based radio hub installed at Bonde Tank.

Weed Abatement

All fire safety weed abatement completed throughout the city.

Staffing Changes

Two retirements, three staff transitioned out of the division, and three promotions. Division currently has six vacancies.

Commissioner Fields questioned why redwood trees had been planted at Moller Park since they are not drought tolerant. Mr. Damonte advised this was done because there is an existing row of redwood trees and because they are at the bottom of a slope which means rainfall and irrigation migrates to the area, also this is not a park that receives recycled water. Mr. Gruber also pointed out that there are two climate zones in the area and Moller Park is on the edge of the cooler climate zone.

Commissioner Fields commended Ms. Damonte and his staff and all the work they have been able to complete when they have less workers. Mr. Damonte thanked her for the comments and provided information on staff members who had retired or moved to other departments and the number of vacancies within the department.

Chairperson Deckert commented on the number of parks that had vandalism damage and questioned whether the budget had been affected because of this. Mr. Damonte indicated there were currently no concerns with the budget, but the vandalism had increased drastically with incidences such as damage to trees and signs and graffiti.

Commissioner Vickers indicated he had recently noticed skateboarders using the hockey rink at Val Vista Park and questioned if this was allowed or whether the park was supposed to be locked. Mr. Damonte advised that the rink is never locked and that it is available for others to use for skateboarding, etc., but if staff notices something that is not appropriate it will be stopped, and individuals will be confronted.

Commissioners Vickers questioned the reasoning for replacing the play equipment at the Ken Mercer Park since the equipment being replaced did not appear to be old. Mr. Damonte advised that when equipment reaches the threshold of 20-years, which this playground equipment had, it was on the outer edge of its lifespan and begin running into more maintenance issues with replacement parts that are hard to find.

Commissioner Vickers thought the equipment had been replaced only about 10 or 12 years ago but was not going to question records held by the staff.

Commissioner Berberich commended parks staff on the great job they do maintaining all the Pleasanton parks and felt the great parks and schools were what draw a lot of people to want to live in Pleasanton.

6. Recommend City Council Adopt New Recreation Programs and Fees for Fiscal Year 2020/2021

Ms. Murphy provided commissioners information regarding the City of Pleasanton Fee Policy that was adopted by Resolution No.92-99 and states: “The City Council authorizes staff to adjust to provide new program/classes at a fee based on the cost of service or established guidelines, and that fees for such programs or classes be submitted to the Council for approval within one-year period from initiation of the class or program.”

Commissioners were advised that per the City of Pleasanton Fee Policy staff created programs that would meet the needs and interests of the community while maintaining COVID-19 health guidelines in FY 2021/21 with many of the new programs created being limited to the number of participants or provided virtually to follow the guidelines.

Ms. Murphy reviewed with commissioners the listing of new programs offered in Fiscal Year 2020/21 that included program information, session and description, and fees. She discussed with commissioners an item on the list pertaining to community member requests regarding the donation of items in memory of lost loved ones and advised that staff had worked together on the cost of such items that would include purchase price, installation, maintenance, and a memorial plaque. Ms. Murphy noted that style of benches and installation locations for donated items would be determined by the Parks Division.

Commissioners were asked by Ms. Murphy to comment on these new programs and provided a motion requesting acceptance by City Council.

Commissioner Vickers questioned how the city would be publicizing the donation project. Ms. Murphy advised that information would be included on the city’s website once the fees had been approved by City Council and that no major marketing for this was being planned.

Commissioner Fields had concerns about the cost of the benches and felt that picnic tables should cost more. Mr. Damonte advised that metal picnic benches and garbage cans are expensive but are sturdy and robust and often powder or plastic coated. Commissioner Fields asked about the concrete combination picnic table and benches which she thought were aesthetically better looking than metal pieces and was advised by Mr. Damonte that these would be cheaper than the metal benches.

Commissioners Fields discussed with Ms. Murphy the class fees that have already been put in place. Ms. Murphy advised that the Fee Policy allows staff to provide new programs and fees based on the cost of service and then bring these to City Council within a year for adoption of the new pricing. She advised that if the commission felt it was necessary, they could modify the fees before they are moved forward to City Council.

Commissioner Fields then discussed with Ms. Murphy the times and lengths of the programs and the services and activities that are being provided. Ms. Murphy provided additional information about the session lengths and cost of the Drama Camp. Commissioner Hekl felt the camp prices were a bargain based on the length of the camps and what is being provided.

Commissioner Vickers commented on the sign-up times for non-Pleasanton residents and informed by Ms. Murphy that typically non-residents are allowed to sign-up for programs one-week after Pleasanton residents and often programs are filled within a couple of days of being made available.

Commissioner Hekl questioned if the city has considered reopening and allowing people to donate to buy a brick for installation at the Firehouse. Ms. Murphy advised that this needed to be done as a grouping with a limited amount of time offered for the sale of the bricks because of costs involved. She felt that this was something that could be considered for the 10-year anniversary of the Firehouse Arts Center.

A motion was made by Chairperson Deckert, seconded by Commissioner Fields, recommending City Council approve the new Recreation Programs and Fees for Fiscal Year 2021/21.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Commissioners Berberich, Fields, Hekl, Immadi, Vickers, and Chairperson Deckert.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: Commissioner Brown.

ABSTAIN: None.

7. Review and Comment on the Library and Recreation Department for January – March 2021

Ms. Murphy reviewed with commissioners a presentation highlighting recreation related areas from the Library and Recreation Department Report for January-March 2021. She commented on the amazing job done during COVID-19 at the Alviso Adobe and the many ways in which their services had been made available, including a field trip platform where teachers could sign-up and do virtual field trips with students. Commissioners were advised that over 11,000 people participated in these pre-recorded field trips.

Ms. Murphy advised that during the pandemic: 1) new virtual platforms were started as well as educational videos, 2) Pre-school, youth and teen programs were offered virtually, 3) Ptown Life news team continued working virtually and everyone should sign-up for their newsletter, 4) Youth-in-Government Day was held virtually, 5) middle-school students were encouraged to come play at the Amador Recreation Center after school each day, and 6) sports and aquatics continued during the pandemic. Commissioners were reminded of the mission statement “Discover, Connect and Enjoy” and that city staff teams had worked diligently through the pandemic working on programs, serving, and making meals, delivering groceries, and setting up vaccine sites.

Commissioner Fields asked about the reopening of the Alviso Adobe and when swim classes would be available at the Aquatic Center. Mr. Murphy advised that swim classes would begin the week of June 14th and the Alviso Adobe would be opening soon to the public and is currently open for camp.

Commissioner Fields encouraged new members of the commission to visit the Alviso Adobe and Ms. Murphy asked them to email her if they are interested in attending any of the summer programs.

8. Select Committee Assignments

Chairperson Deckert suggested before considering committee assignments that Commissioner Berberich introduce himself and provide a little information on why he decided to become a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Commissioner Berberich advised that he has lived in Pleasanton for 30+ years and spent most of his life in public accounting. He stated that he had approached past-Mayor Jerry Thorne about joining the commission because of his interest in parks and is activity in the cricket community as well as his daughter's activities playing softball and basketball.

Commissioner Vickers asked Commissioner Berberich if he was aware that the City of Pleasanton was looking for a new sponsor for the Patelco Park area as this was an item discussed at the previous meeting. Ms. Murphy advised that this was something being handled by the Sports Council who currently have an extended agreement with the city because of the COVID-19 pandemic but will eventually be looking for a new sponsor.

Chairperson Deckert reviewed with commissioners the different committees and their meeting days and times and asked them to consider which committee(s) they would like to be assigned. The following committee assignments and project representatives were determined:

Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Committee

- Chuck Deckert Alternate Mike Vickers

Community of Character

- Ramesh Immadi Alternate Chuck Deckert

East Bay Regional Park District / City Liaison Committee

- Steve Berberich Alternate Chuck Deckert

Heritage Tree Board of Appeals

- Joanie Fields Alternate Check Deckert

Public Art Selection Sub-Committee

- Joanie Fields Alternate Ramesh Immadi

Sports Council

- Mike Vickers Alternate Steve Berberich

Chairperson Deckert asked Commissioner Hekl if she was interested in being on any of the committees. Commissioner Hekl stated she was under the impression that as an Alternate commissioner she could not be a committee representative. Ms. Murphy advised that she was able to be on a committee but could not vote on any matter when all commissioners attended a meeting.

Commissioners were advised by Chairperson Deckert that staff would notify them about upcoming meetings.

COMMISSION REPORTS

9. Committee Meetings

A. Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Committee – none.

B. Community of Character – none.

C. City/East Bay Regional Park District Liaison Committee – none.

D. Heritage Tree Review Board – none.

E. Public Art Selection Sub-Committee – none.

F. Sports Council – none.

10. Other brief reports on any meetings, conferences, and/or seminars attended by the Commission members.

None.

MATTERS INITIATED BY THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Fields reminded everyone about the joint meeting with City Council on June 21 and encouraged everyone to read all the material they had received. Ms. Murphy noted that Assistant City Manager, Brian Dolan would be the lead staff person discussing the Century House, but commissioners could reach out to her with any questions they might have and the joint meeting agenda on the website will have links to information from previous meetings.

Chairperson Deckert noted that a future agenda item would be on E-Bikes. Ms. Murphy advised that since several people now own E-Bikes staff wanted to discuss this and other things that are not allowed on trails. Chairperson Deckert advised that East Bay Regional Park District was also revisiting this.

Chairperson Deckert indicated he would most likely not be available for the July meeting and indicated that Commissioner Fields would need to chair the meeting.

Commissioner Berberich asked for an opportunity to discuss with City Council the need for cricket fields and the potential for pickleball courts. Ms. Murphy advised that the city budget needed to pass before these projects and the skate park could move forward. She noted that Mr. Gruber and Mr. Damonte had visited various park sites and brought back several choices. Mr. Gruber indicated several park sites have been examined and once the budget has passed more work can be done.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- E-Bikes
- Century House Joint Meeting 6/21

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:17 p.m.