



Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

Zoom Webinar – Pleasanton, CA January 13, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

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

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was recited.

Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Steve Berberich, Sadie Brown, Joannie Fields, Mary Hekl, Rameshu Immadi, Michael Vickers, and Chairperson Chuck Deckert.

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Heidi Murphy, Library & Recreation Director; Michele Crose, Assistant Library & Recreation Director; Matt Gruber, Landscape Architect; Giacomo Damonte, Parks Superintendent; and Edith Caponigro, Recording Secretary.

AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None.

MINUTES

1. Approve regular meeting minutes of November 18, 2021.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fields, seconded by Commissioner Berberich, to approve the November 18, 2021 meeting minutes. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Chairperson Deckert provided details about participating in the meeting based on the March 3, 2020 State of Emergency proclaimed by Governor Newsome due to COVID-19.

2. Introductions/Awards/Recognitions/Presentations

None.

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

None

MATTERS FOR THE COMMISSION'S REVIEW / ACTION / INFORMATION

4. Review and Recommend Approval of the Draft Ken Mercer Skate Park Final Conceptual Design

Ms. Crose advised that she, Landscape Architect Matt Gruber, and consultants for the Ken Mercer Skate Park were prepared to present for the commission's review a Final Conceptual Design for the skate park. She noted that extensive community outreach was conducted with presentations of the concept alternatives being provided and information obtained from these presentations being considered and included in this final conceptual design.

Consultant Gina Chavez provided details about the initial community outreach conducted and the information that was received pertaining to preferences and priorities on different skating styles and skill levels, as well as feedback on non-skating related amenities. She noted people had asked for picnic and shade areas, focused lighting that would allow for nighttime skate use, lawn areas, additional parking, and especially direct access to the shopping center.

Ms. Chavez commented on the conceptual designs previously reviewed by the commission and reviewed with commissioners the Final Conceptual Design. She noted that this final design shows two main entry points, a large shade shelter, plenty of hang out and picnic areas, drinking fountains, twenty additional parking spots, direct access to the shopping center, a beginner skate area, intermediate/advanced skate area, protecting the existing tree area and pathway near Hopyard Road. Commissioners were also advised that the concept allows for the inclusion of a restroom facility if funding is made available.

Zack Wormhoudt commented on the historical significance of the original skatepark and how it is important for it to be incorporated into the final design. He noted that the original skatepark is one of the older municipal skateparks in the United States that is still in use, and it is important to the skating community and the City of Pleasanton for it to be preserved in its entirety.

Ms. Chavez noted that since City Council had requested that the skatepark be screened from Hopyard Road with trees, low growing ground cover and flowering plants, a preliminary conceptual plant palette was being shown on the design as to what this might look like. She then asked Mr. Gruber to comment on the next steps for this project.

Mr. Gruber advised that staff will be taking this project to City Council in February asking Council for approval to move forward with the next steps of the design and moving to the construction

document stage. He noted that staff was looking for a recommendation from the commission to recommend this final design concept to City Council.

Commissioners were advised by Mr. Gruber that because of the increase in construction costs, the project will cost more than had been originally thought and will be in the range of \$7M to \$8M rather than the \$4M to \$5M range.

Chairperson Deckert commented on the increased cost for the project and asked Mr. Gruber about the possibility of requiring fundraising to make up the difference in funding from the original estimated project amount as was being considered for the All-Abilities Playground. Mr. Gruber indicated it might be possible to look at some fundraising opportunities for the skatepark and that City Council would make those financial decisions.

Chairperson Deckert questioned whether the Hopyard Village Shopping Center merchants had been contacted regarding use of their parking spaces. Mr. Gruber advised that the parking lot in question is owned by the City of Pleasanton. Chairperson Deckert then asked about the concrete area and whether it included the existing concrete pathway. Ms. Chavez confirmed it included the existing pathway but was slightly reconfigured in the final design.

Commissioner Fields noted that commissioners had been informed that including a restroom at the Cubby Dog Park would cost about \$65,000 and wondered why the estimated cost to include one in this project was anticipated to be so much more. Mr. Gruber advised that while infrastructure may be available, sewer connection to the area is the bigger issue and would require connecting to either Hopyard or the softball complex, additional study would also be required to see if the depth would be available to connect to the softball complex. He noted the cost to do this could be anywhere from \$200K to \$500k.

Commissioner Fields asked about the distance from the skatepark to the existing restrooms at the softball complex and was informed that it was about 1/8 of a mile and would take several minutes to walk there. She stated that she felt it would be a mistake not to include additional restrooms in this project. Regarding the plantings shown on the design, she hoped that consideration had been given to them being drought tolerant plants that require as little maintenance as possible.

Commissioner Berberich indicated he had two questions, one about the location of the proposed restroom and the possibility of moving it closer to the softball field, and second was concerning the addition of more parking space. Mr. Gruber agreed this could be considered but connection to the sewer line was something that still needed to be researched. Ms. Crose advised that when the park is in full use, specifically for tournaments or special events, of which there are many, parking is often an issue. It is hoped that by adding additional parking neighbors will not be impacted with the new skatepark and also the All-Abilities Playground.

Commissioner Berberich questioned if staff had a breakdown on what the cost was going to be for the additional parking spaces since it had been indicated that a restroom could cost approximately \$500K. Mr. Gruber indicated he did have the information but not with him at the meeting but could provide it at another meeting. Commissioner Berberich then asked about the

placement of garbage cans so people have no reason to complain about garbage being left by park users. Ms. Crose advised that the intent is to have a multitude of garbage cans in place at the skatepark and lighting fixtures will be installed so as not to interfere with neighbors and will be automatically powered to shut-off at the curfew time of 10 o'clock. Mr. Gruber added that fourteen trash receptacles are planned for this park and the cost for them is included in the cost estimate.

Commissioner Berberich thanked staff for their information and indicated it would be helpful if they could provide the commission with information about the costs involved for the additional parking spaces.

Commissioner Brown stated she was pleased that most of the trees would be retained and was impressed hearing about the historical background of the original skate park. She indicated she was pleased with the final design and would be excited to see the project take place.

Commissioner Immadi asked for help understanding some of the technical features indicated on one of the design slides. Mr. Wormhoudt indicated that technical features refer to input received from user groups regarding the types of terrain in the skate park and the more technical features allow skaters to perform and practice diverse types of moves and tricks.

Commissioner Immadi asked about a nearby bike parking and places where people could sit and watch the skaters. Ms. Chavez advised that a bike rack would be placed along the multi-use path and the design does include seating areas with a guardrail.

Commissioner Vickers questioned when the commission had been made aware of the earlier cost estimate of \$4-\$5M. Mr. Gruber indicated the number had been provided at the previous commission meeting, but had been a guess, since a hard estimate for the project had not been established but had assumed to be somewhere in that region with the \$400,000 budgeted for the design being 10% of the construction cost. Ms. Crose added that information had been provided to the commission at previous meetings about skateparks costs in other areas.

Commissioner Hekl stated she was excited about the project and thrilled about the additional parking spaces.

Chairperson Deckert opened the meeting for public comment.

Sam Isola- thought the design was great and felt the additional parking was a valid thing since this new skatepark will become a regional draw for a lot of people. He indicated he has already heard from a lot of people who are looking forward to coming to a new skatepark in Pleasanton.

Tadeshi Yamada- agreed with Sam that this skatepark will be a smash hit and will be used a lot since it will be a state-of-the-art facility. He noted a lot of people are already asking about it.

Tom Augusta- indicated he has a skatepark that he built in his back yard for about \$35K and stated he would be willing to work with the city to provide a skate park at a lower price than the millions quoted. He discussed the lack of a ¼ pipe on the street side of the park and there being

no response wall and indicated he has some concerns about the design and use of space. Mr. Augusta felt ¼ pipes are a requirement and what kids want. He invited people to see what he has built because there is a lot of wasted concrete at skate parks.

Bryce Peterson – thanked the team for a great design and felt the skate park had the potential of being one of the best parks in the area and would draw people from other states. He indicated he was in favor of the additional parking.

Andrew Lambert – thanked staff and the consultants for a great presentation and was pleased they provided historical information about the current skatepark, and it being considered in the design. He indicated he has been sharing information about the proposed skatepark and has received lots of positive feedback and has also been working with Mr. Wormhoudt in the community and hearing about the popularity of the sport and people are looking forward to this becoming the best skatepark in the State and Country. Mr. Lambert noted there is a huge demand regionally for a skatepark like this and did not want to see it delayed because of cost.

Chairperson Deckert asked Mr. Lambert about the restroom and whether he felt it should be included in the project at the beginning, rather than added later. Mr. Lambert felt people wanted to see the skatepark put in place and would not want the project to be held up because of a restroom.

Chairperson Deckert closed the meeting for public comment.

Commissioner Fields indicated she did not want to be short-sighted regarding the issue of the restroom and felt it was something that should be included in the project. She also wondered if the consultants should take into consideration comments made by Mr. Augusta.

Commissioner Vickers added that he too felt it was critical that the restroom be included and that it needed to be substantial with several stalls, considering the comments made about the number of people who are anticipating this will become a regional facility.

Chairperson Deckert questioned if anyone was willing to make a motion and Commissioner Vickers indicated he was still concerned about the cost and not ready to support a motion.

Chairperson Deckert reminded commissioners that it was up to City Council to consider the costs and not the responsibility of this commission. Commissioner Vickers stated he was concerned about people approaching him about recommending the project with such inflated cost.

Chairperson Deckert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Brown, to move forward recommending approval of the Draft Ken Mercer Skate Park Final Conceptual Plan and that City Council consider including the restroom in the conceptual plan.

Commissioner Berberich had a question regarding which concept the commission was recommending for approval. Ms. Murphy noted that at the previous meeting the commission had

considered two design concepts and the design concept considered at this meeting was a third concept that included ideas from the previous two concepts.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Commissioners Berberich, Brown, Immadi, and Chairperson Deckert.

NOES: Commissioners Fields and Vickers.

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

Chairperson Deckert encouraged commissioners to attend the City Council meeting when this matter will be discussed, and Ms. Murphy noted that City Council will take into consideration the 'noe' votes and asked staff to explain.

5. Review and Recommend Approval of the Draft All-Abilities Playground Master Plan at Ken Mercer Sport Park

Ms. Crose provided a project overview and details about community outreach conducted for this project, similar to what was done for the previous item, and advised that the commission is being asked to review and recommend approval of the Draft All-Abilities Playground Master Plan at the Ken Mercer Sports Park. She noted that the playground will be situated around the existing playground and provided information about public workshops and community surveys that have been conducted, along with presentations made to the Human Services and Youth Commissions and at the Farmer's Market.

Ms. Chavez commented on the initial outreach conducted, how it led to the design concepts, the follow-up outreach, and the preferred plan. She noted that initial outreach consisted of stakeholder meetings and virtual workshops as well as a community wide survey. Information collected led to two design concepts. Information was then collected from presentations of these designs which led to selection of design Concept One with the inclusion of some ideas from Concept Two.

Ms. Chavez then reviewed with commissioners the refined final conceptual plan for the all-abilities playground that included ideas and recommendations that had been received. She commented on the large central swing area, the slope area, the mounded cloud plaza, picnic areas, sensory area, rocking chairs beneath the trees, quiet places, shade structure and seating options. She noted the design also includes lawn area for flexible activities, and a challenge course. Ms. Chavez then asked Mr. Gruber to comment on the next steps for this project.

Mr. Gruber advised that the next steps for this project are like those of the skatepark project—the final design concept will go forward to City Council, with the commission's recommendation and comments, for final decision on the conceptual design. He added that the cost is going to be somewhere between \$6M and \$8M. He commented on the volatility of the construction market which makes it difficult to price this project and the skatepark. Mr. Gruber also noted that some refinements to the design may be needed that will also affect the cost. He asked the commission to review and make a recommendation for this project.

Commissioner Hekl indicated she was pleased to see how features from both concepts had been incorporated into the final design and appreciated the incorporation of the bright design and butterflies. She felt this will be a wonderful park and is looking forward to spending many good times at the park.

Commissioner Vickers had no questions.

Commissioner Immadi questioned what uses were being envisioned for the planned stage area. Ms. Chavez advised it will be a lawn area where people could do small performances or some passive type of activity. Ms. Murphy noted that at a similar type of place she had visited in Palo Alto children were making up a play, so this could be an imaginative place for many things.

Commissioner Immadi questioned whether children sitting in the rear would be able to see people who would be performing. Ms. Chavez advised that while the design is not final it is showing three stairs that would provide an elevation level for people to see clearly.

Commissioner Brown stated she was excited with the plan but had a question with the slide in one of the zones and wondered whether it would be actual turf or AstroTurf. Ms. Chavez advised it was being shown with real turf but could be changed to AstroTurf. Commissioner Brown liked that as many trees as possible would be retained and was hoping that real grass would be installed and not AstroTurf.

Commissioner Berberich noted that with all the colors and moving things his first reaction to certain areas was that they looked like Disneyland. He questioned who would be responsible for managing and maintaining this playground daily and whether use of equipment would be on a first-come basis. Ms. Crose advised that staff envisions the playground being opened from dawn to dusk, the same timeframe as other playgrounds, and does not envision planning or programming times or activities. She indicated the playground would be open for any public user, during the park hours and it is anticipated when the playground first opens it will be quite popular. Ms. Crose added that the Dublin all-abilities playground, when first opened, was extremely popular. Now that it has been open for some time and still popular, people are able to enjoy using facilities without issue.

Mr. Damonte added that there would be a need to add full-time staff to help care for this new infrastructure.

Commissioner Fields felt this final design was to be a homogenization of the two previous concepts that the commission had reviewed. She felt that while including the Pleasanton Arch in the design of the entry plaza she was disappointed that nothing else about Pleasanton was included, for example a dairy barn silo and something replicating the Century House or the Adobe. Commissioner Fields felt there were too many butterflies in the design, but the challenging activities were good.

Chairperson Deckert discussed the possibility of fundraising for this project and the project being built in phases, he also commented on being able to get funding numbers together to make both projects come together and having discussions with staff about the possibility of fundraising. Mr.

Gruber commented on other all-ability playgrounds projects that have had funding components and has been something staff has considered from the beginning. He felt that once the project moves forward with the design and is able to dial-in on the costs there would be an opportunity to talk with donors who might be interested in donating towards construction of this playgrounds. Ms. Crose added that positive interest had been received by the Lions and Rotary Groups when presentations had been made at the stakeholder meetings. Ms. Murphy noted that grant opportunities were also available for consideration.

Chairperson Deckert questioned whether the city would be open to naming rights on either of the projects. Mr. Gruber felt there would be opportunities for components that people could sponsor, or tiles/bricks could be dedicated.

Chairperson Deckert opened the meeting for public comment.

Christy Murphey – commented on the public interest in having a lot of swings in this playground and suggested consideration be given to including a tire or platform swing. She felt this playground was going to be extremely popular with many kids.

Ashley Lyn Olson – noted one of her comments was also going to be about the swings. She also had questions about what things in the park would be wheelchair accessible. Ms. Chavez noted that the butterfly structure would be wheelchair accessible and other things would be removable making them wheelchair accessible. She also advised that some consideration was being given to making the zip line wheelchair accessible and the rockers would also be accessible for those in wheelchairs.

Ms. Olson questioned if detailed plans were available about the ramps going on and off the main structure such as the castle structure in the middle of the playground and whether there would be interactive or handheld games. Ms. Chavez advised that detailed plans are not yet available for the castle structure, but the vision is that this structure will be accessible with people being able to come off one side and down another. She also noted that there will be all types of unique features for the senses.

Chairperson Deckert closed the meeting for public comment.

Commissioner Berberich felt that the city should be able to submit applications for state and federal grants. He then questioned whether the right amount of research has been conducted to meet what is needed for kids with special needs. Mr. Gruber advised that there is a Magical Bridge Foundation that has designed many all-abilities playgrounds on the Peninsula that have received grants from that county, but he was unsure what might be available through Alameda County, but this is certainly something that will be investigated as the project moves forward.

Chairperson Deckert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Brown, to recommend approval of the draft All-Abilities Playground Master Plan at the Ken Mercer Sports Park.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Commissioners Brown, Immadi, Vickers and Chairperson Deckert.
NOES: Commissioners Fields.
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: Commissioner Berberich

Chairperson Deckert thanked staff and the consultants for their presentation and commissioners for their comments and indicated he looked forward to this moving forward to City Council.

6. Review and Approve Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Schedule for 2022

Ms. Murphy reviewed with commissioners the proposed commission meeting schedule for 2022 and asked for them to provide any changes before approving. She noted that staff was not recommending any cancellations due to holidays.

Commissioner Fields made a motion, seconded by Chairperson Deckert, to approve the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting schedule for 2022.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Commissioners Berberich, Brown, Fields, Immadi, Vickers and Chairperson Deckert.
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

7. Select Commission Chair and Vice Chair for 2022

Ms. Murphy noted that annually the Parks and Recreation Commission selects a Chair and Vice Chairperson to facilitate meetings. The term of service for these positions is one year beginning in January of each year, since the commission did not meet in December 2021 the selection needs to take place at this meeting.

Chairperson Deckert nominated Commissioner Fields to serve as the Parks and Recreation Commission Chair for 2022 since she has served on the commission for the longest term and has not been Chair and is always aware of agenda items and willing to ask tough questions.

No other nominations were received.

A motion was made by Chairperson Deckert, seconded by Commissioner Brown, to nominate and elect Commissioner Fields to serve as the Parks and Recreation Chair for 2022.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Commissioners Berberich, Brown, Fields, Immadi, Vickers and Chairperson Deckert.
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

Chairperson Deckert informed Commissioner Fields that as Chair of the Commission she would also be Chair of the Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Committee.

Commissioner Berberich nominated Commissioner Vickers to be Vice Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Commission for 2022.

No other nominations were received.

A motion was made by Commissioner Berberich, seconded by Commissioner Fields, to nominate and elect Commissioner Vickers to service as the Parks and Recreation Vice Chairperson for 2022.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

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

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

Ms. Murphy advised Commissioners Fields and Vickers that she and Chairperson Deckert had been meeting regularly to discuss agendas prior to meetings and she suggested that they also meet to connect and discuss meeting agendas.

COMMISSION REPORTS

8. Committee Meetings

- A. Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Committee – no report

- B. Community of Character – Commissioner Fields advised that the group had met via Zoom and discussed holding the Martin Luther King breakfast virtually with the breakfast items being delivered to everyone who has purchased a ticket. She commented on the scholarship awards that will be going to students from all three high schools and the May 18th luncheon that is scheduled to be held at the Veterans Hall is going to be a Mexican Fiesta type event. If unable to be held at the Veterans Hall because of COVID, a secondary plan is to hold the event on the patio at the Senior Center.

- C. City/East Bay Regional Park District Liaison Committee – no report. Chairperson Deckert expressed his concerns with no meeting being held for some time with this committee. Ms. Murphy questioned if that was something that the commission wished to pursue further and suggested she and Commissioners Fields and Vickers meet to discuss. Commissioner Vickers felt it was unacceptable for EBRPD to indicate they do not want to meet, and it was important for them to be working with communities.

Chairperson Deckert commented on the trailhead the city allowed to be built with the understanding that EBRPD would move forward with the Garms project. Ms. Murphy

suggested Commission Fields provide her with information and questions on how staff should proceed on this matter.

- D. Heritage Tree Review Board – Commissioner Fields advised that the Board had met and had agreed to a request made for removal of a tree for the homeowner to put in solar.
- E. Public Art Selection Sub-Committee – no report
- F. Sports Council – Commissioner Berberich advised he had attended the Sports Council meeting at which three items were discussed: 1) Stanford Medicine’s agreement to sponsor the Bernal Sports Park is now in place; 2) the Sports Park is going to officially open on January 31, 2022, and 3) there is low registration across the board on all sports with many older kids dropping out.

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

None.

MATTERS INITIATED BY THE COMMISSION

None.

Ms. Murphy informed commissioners that Ania Pawlak would be sending out an email to them with some potential dates in March for touring the Century House and asked that they respond as quickly as possible so dates can be put on the calendar. She indicated she would like to get everyone in one group to do this.

Commissioners were also advised by Ms. Murphy that staff is offering some different ways of receiving meeting packets and asked commissioners to contact Ms. Pawlak and inform her of their preferred way of receiving their packets.

Commissioner Immadi had questions about the density of grass at school district fields that are maintained by the city. Ms. Murphy advised that the city only co-owns gyms with the school district and does not co-own any fields with them. Mr. Damonte commented on a school district upper field that the city maintained as well as a parcel behind Fairlands Elementary School that the city owns.

Commissioner Immadi commented on the property behind the Fairland School that is not maintained and indicated a lot of people have been complaining to him about this problem. He asked about a list that shows the properties that falls under the city’s authority. Mr. Damonte indicated he has been unable to locate any historical information on the area that Commissioner Immadi is discussing.

Ms. Murphy suggested staff look further into this matter and provide detailed information at a later commission meeting. She indicated this would be put on the list of future agenda items.

Commissioner Berberich questioned if an Outreach Committee should be formed to meet with members from the school district. Ms. Murphy advised that there is a City Council and School District Board Liaison Committee that regularly meets one Tuesday afternoon each month and there is also a staff liaison committee that meets to talk about issues and share resources. Commissioner Vickers requested commissioners be provided details about meeting dates and times.

Ms. Murphy provided information about the outreach to be conducted on February 5th and 12th for Cricket and pickleball and suggested commissioners block the dates and try to attend.

Commissioner Fields asked about Wayside Park and Ms. Murphy advised that some good news may be forthcoming since the Water Board had indicated they like the creek restoration plan. Mr. Gruber advised that something may be available for the commission to consider by the February meeting.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Century House
- Lions Wayside
- Cricket Pitch
- Pickleball
- E-Bikes

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2022 at 7 p.m.