



## Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes

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### Zoom Webinar – Pleasanton, CA February 11, 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: Sadie Brown, Joanie Fields, Mary Hekl, Brad Hottle, Deborah Wahl, and Chairperson Chuck Deckert

Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Bryan Bowers

Staff Present: Michele Crose, Library & Recreation Assistant Director; Matt Gruber, Landscape Architect; Sarah Hosterman, Assistant Landscape Architect; Giacomo Damonte, Parks Superintendent; Terry Snyder, Office Manager; and Edith Caponigro, Recording Secretary (joined at 7:40 p.m.)

#### **AGENDA AMENDMENTS**

None.

#### **MINUTES**

##### **1. Approve regular meeting minutes of January 14, 2021.**

A motion was made by Chairperson Fields, seconded by Commissioner Wahl, to approve the regular meeting minutes of January 14, 2021. **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**

Louis Astbury – Mr. Astbury noted that he is a Master Gardener and would like for the commission to think about trying to move forward on Phase II of the Bernal Park project, a project approved by voters 15-years ago. He noted that in 2017 City Council had signed off on moving forward with a final plan and he did not want to delay momentum that has already been started.

Mr. Astbury felt that adding the Master Garden to this project will add a new dimension that is not available in any of the other wonderful Pleasanton parks and would be an educational resource that will provide training to families growing victory gardens and seniors growing their own food – it would also be a resource for schools and school garden programs. He noted that the project was approved to provide a 1.23-acre plot where Master Gardeners would have an educational garden to provide live demonstrations and grow historic hop gardens.

Mr. Astbury encouraged the commission to take a look at the plan that had been provided and consider moving forward on this project. Chairperson Deckert informed Mr. Astbury that at the January meeting the commission was asked to consider project priorities and make a recommendation to City Council. At that meeting the commission agreed to retain Bernal Park on the priority list but did not make any recommendation with regard to it moving forward.

## **MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMISSION**

### **4. Review the Concept Plans and Public Comments for the Proposed Playground Renovations at Ken Mercer, Tawny, and Vintage Hills Parks and provide recommendation on Final Design**

Ms. Crose advised that Mr. Gruber and Ms. Hosterman would be providing an interesting presentation and public comment information they have received regarding playground renovation.

Ms. Hosterman provided information about planned playground renovations planned for this year including background details about the process and the public outreach conducted. She reviewed with commissioners' slides covering planned playground renovations for the eastern and central play areas at the Ken Mercer Sports Park, the play areas at Tawny and Vintage Hills Parks.

Commissioners were advised that safety inspectors inspect equipment at all parks and identify the oldest parks, or parks that have equipment that requires updating. She noted that the three parks identified are the three oldest parks and have equipment that was installed in 2001 and it was determined that if equipment was showing wear-and-tear it needed to be replaced/renovated.

Ms. Hosterman advised that in October 2020 the three parks were identified and in November 2020 interviews were conducted to select the playground manufacturer and public outreach was conducted. Because of COVID restrictions, social media platforms and virtual meetings were used to obtain public comment.

In reviewing the Ken Mercer playground area slides, Ms. Hosterman noted that comments from the public always included requests for swings to remain as well as play items that are loved. With this in mind, equipment will be replaced with modern play equipment that fits into the footprint of the play area while retaining similar items to those items the public requested. She noted that the overall response to the new design for this play area was positive with a request that big kid swings be added, and the red/blue color scheme was the preference.

Commissioners Fields noted she was not provided a copy of the renovation that includes the swings and Mr. Gruber stated it should be in the back of the packet provided. She also had questions about the color scheme. Ms. Hosterman noted that updated renderings were being presented for the commission to consider at this meeting.

Ms. Hosterman reviewed with commissioners slides of the original playground equipment and the new modular structures in the design. She noted that this new modular structure would be the first of its kind in Northern California. Ms. Hosterman commented on the play area for both the 2-5 year olds and the area for the 5-12 year olds and explained how the equipment would fit into the play area footprint. She discussed how parents had wanted to see a more traditional type structure, wanted equipment that had height but allow easy accessibility for parents reaching children, would be entertaining for children, and that there would be space shade.

Moving on to Tawny Park Ms. Hosterman commented on the existing play equipment and the versions that had been presented to the public. She noted that the parents preferred the more traditional version while kids liked the climbing structure. There was also a slight preference for the blue/green color schemes.

Ms. Hosterman noted that for the Vintage Hills Park they liked the traditional swing set with two belt swings and two bucket swings. A request received for this area was for shade and blue/green was the preferred color scheme. Ms. Hosterman reviewed with the commission revisions with shade options.

Commissioners were advised of difficulties trying to connect with a large number of people to conduct a public outreach meeting and why a survey was conducted. Ms. Hosterman advised that the survey response has been amazing with over 1,000 responses received. She reviewed in detail with the commission the responses received for each of the parks and the different age groups covered.

Commissioners were asked to consider the designs for each of the three parks and provide staff with their recommendations. Ms. Hosterman advised that staff would then be presenting to City Council at their March meeting requesting approval of a contract for equipment fabrication with plans for construction of the playground equipment in mid-summer.

Mr. Gruber reviewed with Commissioner Fields results from the survey noting the number of adults that preferred the more traditional equipment while kids who play on the equipment prefer something that is more challenging. Staff also noted that while the new equipment looked higher and more massive, when measured it was similar in height to the existing equipment.

Commissioner Field expressed her concern with youth being able to smoke and drink while hiding in the equipment. Mr. Gruber indicated staff would work with the playground manufacturer to avoid the possibility in the new equipment.

Commissioner Wahl liked the idea of getting equipment that is fun and innovative for the kids while being new equipment for Northern California. She asked Ms. Hosterman to confirm the inclusion of shade cover on some of the equipment and asked that this be considered when advised it was not included. Mr. Gruber advised that staff would discuss this with the manufacturer.

Ms. Hosterman indicated that trees could be planted in the area to provide shade and Mr. Damonte noted that tree planting would not be an immediate solution.

Commissioner Hekl discussed concerns expressed by parents in not having easy visibility of their kids when using the equipment, especially when they might also be trying to watch a sports game. She questioned if the manufacturer might have something that would be more open making it easier for parents to view their children. Ms. Hosterman commented on the possibility of panels being removed to provide more openness.

Commissioner Hekl discussed with Mr. Gruber the results of the survey and was informed that over 1,100 results had been received with the survey only being open for one week.

Commissioner Brown agreed with comments made by Commissioner Hekl and felt that having a traditional playground at the Ken Mercer Sports Park would satisfy concerns of parents. She felt it great to be getting new playgrounds and liked that kids were being given an opportunity to choose playgrounds they prefer.

Commissioner Hottle indicated he liked the playground designs and the opportunity of having different themed playgrounds. He also stated that he understood the concerns expressed by Commissioner Hekl and wondered what staff would do when more responses were received to the survey.

Chairperson Deckert also liked the different themes and the fact that Pleasanton would be the only place in Northern California to have such playgrounds. He stated that he was moving in the same direction as the kids with regards to structure choice.

Commissioner Hottle felt consideration needed to be given to incorporating a shade structure at one location since the area will likely get very hot in the middle of the day.

Mr. Gruber noted there was about a \$600,000 budget for putting in all the playgrounds at the three parks and these will likely be the last playground installations for one or two years. Commissioner Hottle suggested staff check what the cost would be to include a simple shade structure and perhaps make some change to cover this cost.

Commissioner Fields agreed with Commissioner Hottle's comments about making an equipment adjustment and using the funds for a shade structure. She questioned whether staff was allocating \$200,000 from the budget amount to each of the three parks.

Ms. Hosterman provided details on how staff had worked with the equipment representative and manufacturer to obtain this unique equipment for Pleasanton with the budget that was available. She was concerned that staff may not be able to find a way to cover the cost for a shade structure.

Commissioner Hekl felt the commission would be interested to learning how staff had divided the available budget across the parks. Commissioner Fields agreed.

Commissioner Hottle commented on the location of the special equipment and whether shade would be needed. Mr. Damonte commented on redwoods in the area and the fact that some of them were struggling and Mr. Gruber noted that the city has been spending between \$150k and \$200k for playground equipment replacement.

Commissioner Fields felt it was difficult for the commission to make sound decisions when they hadn't been provided budget information for each of the playgrounds.

Mr. Gruber asked commissioners to confirm that they would like staff to look at taking funds from one area and put to another so there would be funds for a shade structure. Commissioner Fields stated that the commission was not now talking about a shade structure but would like to be informed about the exact costs for each area. Mr. Gruber indicated that he could put cost information together to show to the commission when the survey results were received.

Commissioner Fields stated she would like to receive details on the places that the equipment is to be placed and would be able to make a recommendation after going through all the adjustments.

Ms. Hosterman stated that staff would like to receive the commission's recommendation on moving forward with the design. With the budget to do all that had been presented to the public and at this meeting they needed direction on which way to go. However, additional components are not in the budget and if they are a concern for the commission staff would need to go back and determine if the components can be included.

Ms. Hosterman asked commissioners to advise staff on whether they agreed with comments that had been made by children or those from the adults.

Commissioner Fields reviewed and commented on the options for Tawny Park. Commissioner Wahl felt the commission was going to move forward with the guidance and decision of the community for both the structure and color scheme. Chairperson Deckert agreed.

Ms. Hosterman again reviewed the survey result and equipment options screens with commissioners. After reviewing Mr. Gruber asked the commission to provide direction so staff can move forward.

Commissioner Hekl wondered if the commission should wait on making a recommendation until the survey closes and all results have been received. Commissioner Wahl suggested staff was asking for a recommendation in order to be able to stay on track for equipment installation mid-summer. She felt it made sense to move forward with the direction the survey results are currently showing.

Ms. Hosterman commented on the reasons for conducting the survey and how staff relies heavily on the opinions of the public. She apologized for not being able to provide more streamlined information to the commission.

Commissioner Hottle confirmed with the staff that the equipment and design choice of the kids was the hydra while the adults were more focused on the traditional. Mr. Damonte was advised by Ms. Hosterman that of the 1,000+ people who had responded to the survey almost 45% voted for Option A and over 55% voted for Option B with Option B being the traditional.

Mr. Gruber informed Commissioner Hottle that equipment lifespan is approximately 15+ years with 8-10 year warranties, and the equipment being replaced in these three parks is at 20-years, of the 45 parks in Pleasanton, staff is to replace three playgrounds every year.

Staff discussed with the commission the vandalism of playground equipment in November 2020 and the steps and costs involved to replace. Mr. Damonte provided details on equipment inspections conducted by staff and why it is sometimes necessary to move forward with equipment replacement at a park. Mr. Gruber discussed comments that have been received for not replacing equipment at the Vintage Hills Park.

Ms. Hosterman discussed comments received from the public and the commission, noting that staff still has a lot of work to do.

Chairperson Deckert indicated he would be willing to take a motion if anyone would like to make one.

Commissioner Wahl made a motion to proceed with the concept plans for the Proposed Playground Renovations at Ken Mercer, Tawny, and Vintage Hills Parks based on the survey recommendations from the community, with the exception of the structure referred to as the Octagon chosen by the kids. Inclusion of a shade structure at Tawny Park, with shade at Ken Mercer Park needing to be addressed by staff, and staff having the ability to make a recommendation to paint/repair equipment at Vintage Hills. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hottle.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

AYES: Commissioners Brown, Fields, Hekl, Hottle, Wahl, and Chairperson Deckert.  
NOES: None.  
ABSENT: Commissioner Bowers  
ABSTAIN: None

Commissioner Fields asked that the next time the commission is asked to make a recommendation on park structures that costing details be provided.

**5. Review and Discuss Landscape Architecture Projects Status Report for 2020**

Mr. Gruber reviewed with commissioners the Landscape Architecture Projects Status Report for 2020, noting the following updates:

Lions Wayside and Delucchi Parks –

- The Blue Gum Eucalyptus in Wayside Park had major branch failure so the City performed an inspection of the trees health and a resistograph to test for decay/fungus. It was determined the tree had Sulfur Fungus and that there was a moderate chance the tree would fail. The tree was removed in September 2020 due to safety concerns.
- In November 2020 the City held a Zoom meeting with the consultant to discuss concepts that incorporated input from the RWQCB, added the newly purchased property, and factored in the loss of the Eucalyptus.

Pleasanton Pioneer Cemetery –

- The new cemetery map and informational panels were installed in mid-January 2020.
- On January 21, 2020 City Council accepted the Entry and Wayfinding improvements.
- The South Hill improvements were advertised for bid in June 2020 and City Council awarded the contract to Suarez & Munoz Construction on August 4, 2020 for the low bid of \$598,000.
- Construction began on August 31, 2020 and the project was substantially complete on January 5, 2021.
- The project is scheduled to be accepted by City Council on February 16, 2021.

Valley Trails Park -

- In September 2020 two new benches were installed adjacent to the new tot lot.

- The City began preparing construction documents for the landscape improvements in December 2020.

#### Basketball Court Replacements -

- The City prepared documents for resurfacing the basketball courts at Orloff and Kottinger Village Parks in May and June 2020.
- The bid opening for the Basketball Court Resurfacing at Orloff and Kottinger Village Parks occurred in July 2020. Two qualified bids were received and on September 1, 2020 City Council awarded the contract to the lowest bidder, Silicon Valley Paving Inc. in the amount of \$281,172.
- Construction of the basketball courts began on September 21, 2020.
- Construction of the courts is complete and the project is scheduled to be accepted by City Council on February 16, 2021.

#### Bocce Ball Court Renovation –

- Construction of the bocce ball courts began on February 24, 2020 but was halted in March due to the pandemic.
- Construction restarted in May 2020 after restrictions were eased and was completed in September 2020.
- City Council accepted the improvements on November 17, 2020.

#### Transportation Corridor Parking Lot –

- The City prepared agreements with adjacent property owners throughout 2020
  - The project construction was delayed by direction of the City Manager to time construction to begin in Spring 2021 due to budget concerns and unknowns associated with the pandemic
  - Plans will advertise for construction bid by mid-February with bids due March 2021
- Mr. Gruber noted that the trail in this area will be 10' wide with lots of landscaping. He also commented on a new silica treatment that will be used for trees.

#### All Abilities Playground –

- Council awarded the environmental contract to Dudek for \$45,810. At the same time, City Council awarded the design and construction contract to Action Sports Construction for \$49,000.
- Action Sports Construction was unable to meet their insurance obligation, so the City amended the contract with Dudek to provide trail design services. City Council approved Dudek's contract amendment on November 17, 2020.
- On December 9, 2020, City Staff met with Dudek to review the draft trail alignment and potential environmental concerns associated with the project.

#### Garm's Staging Area –

- The City of Pleasanton and EBRPD held a Zoom meeting to discuss the status of the project in November 2020. At this time, nothing is being done by EBRPD.



Commissioner Wahl expressed her concern that EBRPD has not maintained the agreement they have with the City and is taking so much time to get an environmental review done. She commented on the MOU that the EBRPD is renegeing on. Commissioner Fields agreed and said she was disappointed that EBRPD has not stepped forward and met the agreement.

Ms. Crose stated that she felt funding was an issue for EBRPD and thought the COVID pandemic has also been an issue.

Commissioner Hottle agreed with other commissioners that what was supposed to be a temporary agreement is not being followed through by EBRPD. He questioned whether any recourse could be taken that would force EBRPD to do something.

Mr. Gruber agreed with the commissions concerns but thought that EBRPED was having environmental and funding issues.

Commissioner Fields felt EBRPD was inconveniencing residents in the area and should be held responsible for holding up their end of the deal.

Mr. Gruber noted that per the agreement, EBRPD has with the City of Pleasanton the contract is supposed to be completed by June 2021 and the City Manager has been having serious conversations with park district staff.

Commissioner Wahl felt the park district should be informed that all members of the Parks and Recreation Commission are disappointed that nothing has been done and feel they are being transparent. She felt the City should agree to never work with EBRPD on anything else.

Mr. Gruber advised Commissioner Hottle that he was unsure what repercussions and steps the City might be able to take because the park district has met the term of MOU.

Mr. Crose advised that she would advise the appropriate staff members of the commissions concerns and provide an update to the commission.

Chairperson Deckert noted that EBRPD has been commenting on issues they have in other areas.

#### Miscellaneous Park Projects –

- Playground Renovation – consistent with the City’s ongoing playground replacement plan, the City is replacing three play areas at the Ken Mercer Sports Park (two play areas for 2 to 5 year-old children and one play area for 5 to 12 year-old children), Tawny Park (one play area for 2 to 5 year-old children and one play area for 5 to 12 year-old children), and Vintage Hills.
- Centennial Towers – City staff prepared construction documents for the Centennial Plaza Renovations project in December 2020. The plans are being incorporated into the Transportation Corridor plans expected to go out to bid February 2021.

Mr. Gruber provided details on some renovation that has taken place at Centennial Towers advising that more will be done in conjunction with the transportation corridor.

- Skate Park - Commissioners were advised by Mr. Gruber that an RFQ was put out for a skate park designer and staff is in the process of selecting someone and will move the selected designer to City Council for approval. He noted that staff is planning to move forward with this but there are budget issues.
- Augustin Bernal Mountain Bike Trail – Mr. Gruber advised that staff is working with an environmental firm and designer and has met with members of the Golden Eagle Homeowners Association to work on trail connection items. He noted that the City is willing to take over liability of the trail and want to make sure the trail is safe.

## **6. Review and Discuss Parks Maintenance Division Report for 2020**

Mr. Damonte reviewed with the commission the Parks Maintenance Division Report for 2020 that included information on some of the following projects:

- Repairs at the Marilyn Murphy Kane Trail caused by a driver
- New “Pick up after your dog \$100 fine” signs installed in all parks
- Installation of new trees at Val Vista Community Park and Augustin Bernal Park
- Slide repair at Valley View Trail
- Val Vista Park fencing replacement
- Meadowwood Court median renovation
- Removal and cleanup of downed trees caused by storm
- Renovation of planters
- Concrete replacement at Ken Mercer Sports Park and installation of new concessions stand.
- Installation of new irrigation pump at Muirwood Park
- Playground replacement at Orloff Park
- Waterline repair at Cubby’s Dog Park
- Removal of ornamental fence at Laurel Creek Park because of vandalism multiple times
- Turf renovation and new tree installation at Museum on Main
- Removal of two hazardous Chinese Pistache trees
- Dragging of ballfields at Ken Mercer Sports Park
- Completion of Muirwood Dg Park renovation
- Removal of Blue Gum Eucalyptus tree at Lions Wayside Park
- Santa Rita Road and Bernal Avenue median renovations
- Replanting of Main Street planters
- Completion of Orloff Park playground equipment
- Court resurfacing at Orloff and Kottinger Village Parks
- Graffiti removal at Laurel Creek Park
- Maintenance and cleaning of Owl boxes
- Damage to playground equipment at Hansen Park
- Bike pump and tool station Eagle Scout project completed at Augustin Bernal Park
- Senior Center parking lot planter renovated

- Repair of faulty pressure regulator at Val Vista Park

Mr. Damonte commented on difficulties experienced because of the pandemic shelter-in-place orders that required a reduction in staff work time, reduced contact between employees, and closure of parks while still trying to continue routine maintenance activities. He expressed gratitude to all parks staff members and City contractors who remained productive during these difficult times and were able to complete numerous parks and trails projects.

Commissioner Wahl thanked staff for their quick response to graffiti damage to Ryan's bench in Val Vista Park. Ms. Crose advised that she was recently informed of this damage and the Art Conservator has been notified to work on it.

Commissioner Hottle questioned if the mobile citizen's app was still available and Chairperson Deckert and Mr. Damonte advised that it is still functional. Ms. Snyder advised commissioners can also email her with any concerns.

Chairperson Deckert discussed issues at the Arroyo Bridge with Mr. Damonte.

Commissioner Fields discussed the issue of dogs being off-leash on the Marilyn Murphy Kane and thanked staff for putting out sandwich boards informing people of this rule. She noted that people living in the area are letting their dogs out to go in the grassy area. Commissioner Wahl agreed with this problem and also commented on the issue of people not picking up after their dogs.

Chairperson Deckert thanked Mr. Damonte and the city staff doing such great work under difficult conditions.

## **MATTERS INITIATED BY THE COMMISSION**

Chairperson Deckert noted the agenda did not have an item for committee reports and advised that since the last commission meeting the Bicycle Pedestrian and Trails Committee had not met.

Commissioner Fields advised that at the Community of Character meeting the group had finished closing up details of the scholarships to high school students.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

## **NEXT MEETING:**

To be decided.

