



Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes

Zoom Webinar – Pleasanton, CA April 8, 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: Heidi Murphy, Library & Recreation Director; Michele Crose, Library & Recreation Assistant Director; Matt Gruber, Landscape Architect; Giacomo Damonte, Parks Superintendent; Zack Reda, ?????; Terry Snyder, Office Manager; and Edith Caponigro, Recording Secretary.

AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None.

MINUTES

1. Approve regular meeting minutes of March 11, 2021.

A motion was made by Chairperson Fields, seconded by Commissioner Hottle, to approve the regular meeting minutes of March 11, 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.

Joe Streng (a past Commissioners on the Parks & Recreation Commission) – wanted to thank Commissioners Hottle and Wahl for their service on the Parks and Recreation Commission and making a remarkable different to the commission. He especially thanked Commissioner Wahl for her knowledge on trees and flora and hoped Commissioner Hottle’s desire for a casting pond would eventually be achieved. He encouraged both commissioners to consider serving in another capacity.

MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMISSION

4. Receive the All-Abilities Playground Stakeholder Presentation and Provide Feedback

Ms. Crose advised that in 2017 residents with special needs family members had approached the City and identified a need for an all-abilities Pleasanton playground and in September 2020 community engagement and design work for the project was approved by City Council.

At the January 2020 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting commissioners voted to recommend City Council consider plans for an all-abilities playground at the Ken Mercer Sports Park. Council approved the design process at and funds were budgeted for the project.

Commissioners were advised that together with the design firm of RRM Design Group staff has created a schedule for the project that includes document review, outreach workshops, stakeholder discussions, presentations at several commission meetings, and eventually the drafting of conceptual plans.

Ms. Crose introduced Gina Chavez and Jeffrey Ferber from RRM Design and asked them to join her in reviewing with commissioners a PowerPoint presentation for the All-Abilities Playground:

Ms. Crose provided background information during the presentation for the All-Abilities Playground and Ms. Chavez commented on the proposed location that will include upgrading the existing picnic area, playground, and restroom so they will be ADA compliant. She discussed the project overview, timeline and stakeholder meetings and community workshops and reviewed with the commission preliminary features and visuals that can be considered for the all-abilities playground.

Ms. Chavez commented on the Inclusive Design for this all-abilities playground that will include Sensory Surprises, Gather-Play Together concepts, Imaginative & Creative ideas, Quite & Calm area, Art & Whimsy models, and a Family and Social space.

Commissioners were advised by Ms. Crose that the first step in the design process will be to hold several Stakeholder meetings. These Stakeholder meetings have been scheduled for the week of April 12-16 with Sunflower Hill, Pleasanton Rotary North, and PUSD-PTA Special Needs Committee. Information will be provided at these meetings and ideas and recommendations will be collected so they can be considered for the preferred plan concept.

Commissioner Wahl questioned whether outreach will be conducted so people will be allowed to ask about different elements and designs of the all-abilities playground. Mr. Ferber advised that RRM hopes to have an outreach process that allows for listening to the community and allows for providing information about the project, sharing information, and learning about things the community is most interested in. He noted that RRM will be reaching out to the Stakeholders to get details about what things are important and can be put into the design.

Commissioner Wahl confirmed with Mr. Ferber that members of the community will have the opportunity to comment on what they think are important things to be included in the playground. He advised that RRM will try not to lead people to a solution but will offer guidance.

Commissioner Hottle was pleased with the presentation and overall design element ideas for the all-abilities playground and liked the inclusive design concept, bright colors, visual stimulation, and quiet-calm area. He commented on low spots in the proposed area for this playground and thought they could be helpful for providing a good playground.

Commissioner Hottle liked that the overall design of an all-abilities playground could look like a small amusement park and questioned whether organizations that work with children with special needs had been contacted to provide input on the playground design. Ms. Crose commented on the stakeholder meetings already scheduled with the hope that these groups will reach out to others so everyone will feel included.

Commissioner Hottle noted he has been in favor of this project since the beginning and is sad to be leaving the commission but is confident it will be a great all-abilities playground.

Commissioner Hekl indicated she was extremely interested in this project and thought kids of all abilities would love the playground, the colors, and the abilities. She felt it would be a good addition to the Ken Mercer Sports Park.

Commissioner Hekl also loved the concept and wanted everything shown to be in the playground. She asked about the time for gathering information and getting a budget for the project. Ms. Chavez advised that RRM will be going into design for the playground in May after collecting information and input from stakeholders and will remain cognizant of the budget. Mr. Ferber noted that when budget details are made available RRM will design the playground to whatever funds are available. He noted that once design concepts are reviewed, a better idea of costs can be considered. Commissioner Hekl thought it would be helpful to have some idea of the budget when people are considering items to be included in the design. Mr. Ferber advised that people will be given the opportunity to state which items they think are important to be included.

Commissioner Fields questioned if all elements could be shown to the public so they will have an opportunity to choose the ones they like. She also asked if any of the stakeholders are being asked to provide funding for the project.

Ms. Crose advised that stakeholders are being asked to provide feedback on design concepts, however, the Rotary and Lions groups were included so they can share information with other groups, and it would be great if they choose to provide financial assistance.

Commissioners Fields suggested staff also reach out to the Chamber of Commerce as a stakeholder. Ms. Crose agreed.

Mr. Gruber advised that the challenge for this all-abilities playground project is that it is not going to be just for people with special needs but for all people. Commissioner Fields indicated she understood this but felt activities chosen for the playground will be activities that enrich people who use it.

Mr. Ferber advised that RRM will try to determine from stakeholders how they feel about certain activities and asking them to prioritize features, keeping in mind the need for flexibility because there currently is no budget in place.

Commissioner Fields asked how many activity options people will be given to choose from and who would be making the final selection of items for the park. Mr. Ferber indicated the final decision would be made by looking at several different factors. He also noted that the site for this all-abilities playground provides room for many activity items to be included.

Commissioner Fields had concerns about getting the public involved in the process because of COVID. Mr. Ferber advised that a follow-up survey will be conducted after the first workshop and possibly something will be available outside City Hall. Ms. Crose noted that all information will also be available on the city's website and with changes to the COVID guidelines it may be possible to do something at Ken Mercer Sports Park site. Ms. Murphy commented on an April 23 meeting also being held outdoors at the Sports Park.

Commissioners Fields was advised by Ms. Murphy that information and details about the all-abilities playground could be displayed in the Library showcases and Mr. Gruber commented on doing outreach at the playground site and the Farmers Market. Commissioner Fields indicated she was in favor of all these suggestions and would like to recommend that outreach be done to some of the larger Pleasanton corporations to see if they might be interested.

Chairperson Deckert hoped that as many outreach meetings as possible could be conducted, so it is on everyone's radar. He questioned if there was a plan to move this playground to another area and was advised by Mr. Gruber there was no plan to move this playground to another area.

Chairperson Deckert stated that after conducting the outreach process he wanted to be sure that City Council was behind the project and would be budget-wise so this becomes a park area that everyone will be proud of. Ms. Murphy noted that the City Council Priorities Workshop is scheduled for April 28 on Zoom and encouraged commissioners to attend. Mr. Gruber advised that funding is available for the design process but not for building of the all-abilities playground.

COMMISSION REPORTS

5. Committee Meetings

- A. Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Committee – Chairperson Deckert advised that the committee reviewed the CAP 2.0 presentation and made recommendation.
- B. Community of Character – Scholarship awards have been decided and committed.
- C. City/East Bay Regional Park District Liaison Committee – none.
- D. Heritage Tree Review Board – meeting scheduled later in April.
- E. Public Art Selection Sub-Committee – Commissioner Fields advised that PASS considered two temporary art signs for the downtown area, one by the Museum and one by the bus stop across from Meadowlark Dairy. Ms. Murphy advised that this item has also been reviewed by the Civic Arts Commission as an art installation that will direct people to different art pieces in the downtown area.
- F. Sports Council – none.

MATTERS INITIATED BY THE COMMISSION

Chairperson Deckert asked that Committee assignments be considered at the next meeting when new commissioners are on board.

Chairperson Deckert thanked Commissioners Hottle and Wahl for their insightfulness and time they have served on the commission and indicated they both will be missed.

Commissioner Hottle stated his time on the commission has been an experience and he has enjoyed working with everyone on the planning stages of the many projects.

Commissioner Wahl agreed that her many years on the commission have been a great experience but as one door closes another will open.

Commissioners and staff thanked both Commissioner Hottle and Wahl for their service on the commission and to the community, for their passion for parks in the City of Pleasanton, and the opportunity of having been able to work with them. They encouraged both commissioners to visit Parks and Recreation Commission meetings to offer comment on projects and to consider other opportunities for serving the community. It was agreed that once guidelines for COVID have eased that a belated-get-together will be planned.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

To be decided.