



## Human Services Commission Minutes

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### Zoom Webinar – Pleasanton, CA September 1, 2021 - 7 p.m.

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairperson Rubino-Brumm.

#### Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was recited.

#### Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Mary Jane Bedegi, Joe Carlucci, Susan Hayes, Patty Powers, Mike Sedlak, and Chairperson Rubino-Brumm.

Commissioners Absent: Harshkumar Gohil, Kelsey Lem, and Meera Parikh.

Staff Present: Jay Ingram, Recreation Manager, Michele Grose, Assistant Director of Library and Recreation; Matt Gruber, Landscape Architect; Zack Silva, Recreation Supervisor, and Edith Caponigro, Recording Secretary.

#### **AGENDA AMENDMENTS**

None.

Mr. Ingram introduced Ania Pawlak advising she was selected as Office Manager for the Library and Recreation Department on the retirement of Terry Snyder. Ms. Pawlak indicated she was looking forward to working with commissioners.

#### **MINUTES**

##### **1. Approve regular meeting minutes of August 16, 2021.**

A motion was made by Commissioner Bedegi, seconded by Commissioner Carlucci, to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2021. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

## **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

### **2. Public comment from the audience regarding items not listed on the agenda**

None

## **MATTERS FOR THE COMMISSION'S REVIEW/ACTION/INFORMATION**

### **3. Review the All-Abilities Playground Conceptual Design Presentation and Provide Feedback**

Ms. Crose provided information about the request made by residents with special needs family members for the city to consider installing an all-abilities playground in Pleasanton. She advised that together with RRM Design, staff held several stakeholder meetings, a community outreach meeting, and conducted a survey to collect public feedback and are meeting with the commission tonight to review two conceptual designs that have been created for the all-abilities playground at the Ken Mercer Sports Park and collect their feedback.

Ms. Crose introduced the city's landscape architect, Matt Gruber and Gina Chavez, project manager for RRM Design advising they will be available to answer questions.

Mr. Ingram confirmed with Ms. Crose that commissioners were being asked to provide feedback on this item and that no action would be required.

Ms. Crose informed commissioners that this all-abilities playground project was being considered simultaneously with a skatepark project also being considered for the same park but in a location closer to the Hopyard Road area. She advised that to date staff and the consultants have held a total of six stakeholder meetings with several groups that includes the executive team from Sunflower Hill and members of Rotary North and have presented the project for review by the Parks and Recreation Commission. A public workshop was also held in April to obtain feedback on what people were interested in having in this all-abilities playground.

Ms. Chavez reviewed with commissioners a PowerPoint presentation outlining the two proposed park designs. She noted that concepts in each of the designs are interchangeable and what RRM Design and staff were looking for from the commission was their design preference and the concepts that should be included. Ms. Chavez commented on different design features that included swings, slides, climbers, sensory type play items, exercise area, walking loop, zip line, picnic and rest areas, shade structures, etc.

Commissioners were informed by Ms. Chavez that people had commented on the importance of a water feature, but because of drought issues sensory play features had been included in both design concepts in place of water features. She advised that the first design concept was being called "Pleasanton Rise" playground that includes elements relating to stars, rainbows, clouds, sun, and the moon. Ms. Chavez further commented on parking in the area, park access, small-scale copy of Pleasanton downtown signage, and minimal removal of trees.

It was noted by Ms. Chavez that both designs would include features suitable for use by all age groups such as exercise equipment and a basketball area. In reviewing the second concept, "Pride of Pleasanton" commissioners were advised that this design was more organic and celebrated the lush environment of the park while pulling some of Pleasanton's character elements. Ms. Chavez again reviewed proposed features to be included in the park: activity items, swings, slides, sensory play, walking loop, basketball area, rest and picnic areas, music location, etc.

Ms. Chavez noted that the plan is to add additional parking into the all-abilities playground and that the restroom facility in the area would be updated or replaced. She also reviewed with commissioner's pictures of proposed equipment for both design concepts.

After reviewing both design concepts Ms. Crose advised provided information about project next steps and the feedback they are hoping to collect. She noted that the design concepts and all information collected will be shared with City Council at a fall meeting. A second public workshop will be held at the Ken Mercer Sports Park on September 24th and after all information has been collected one conceptual design will be created.

Chairperson Rubino-Brumm thanked Ms. Crose and Ms. Chavez for the presentation and asked commissioners to provide comments and feedback.

Commissioners Hayes thanked staff and the consultant for the great presentation and felt the two concepts were amazing, especially since concepts were interchangeable. She indicated she liked the fact that the designs worked with landscape elevation in the area but was concerned that removing trees and planting young oak trees would take a long time to offer shade. Ms. Chavez advised that nearly all trees in the area will be preserved, saving the shade canopy.

Commissioners Hayes indicated she liked the design of Concept #1 since it sparked imagination and reminded her of Children's Fairyland, a place she enjoyed going to as a child, but was excited that concepts from the second design could also be included.

Chairperson Rubino-Brumm confirmed with Ms. Chavez that a "design concept" meant that the location for suggested items was not yet confirmed. Ms. Chavez agreed that the exact form of what will take place and where things will be placed is not yet confirmed until all feedback has been received. Chairperson Rubino-Brumm indicated that her preference was for Concept #2 because she liked the nature part of it and with a large population of adults with disabilities in Pleasanton, she thought this would be more suitable.

Commissioner Powers stated that her preference was for Concept #1, but she liked the game tables for seniors from Concept #2. She did not think the design provided enough parking and more disabled parking was needed. Commissioner Powers suggested staff and the consultant discuss the design concepts, especially the parking matter, with a couple of organizations that work with children, and adults, with disabilities since it is their clientele that are frustrated at not being able to go to playgrounds and would be able to provide feedback.

Commissioner Carlucci had questions about what information on this project would be available on the website. Ms. Crose provided details noting that everything shown to the commission at this meeting was on the website and larger photographs would be available for viewing at public events such as the Farmers Market.

Commissioner Carlucci felt he preferred the more traditional aspects of Concept #2 and did not like the "Big Bird" feature in Concept #1. He also felt the more traditional design would be easier to maintain and repair and was concerned about taking care of exercise equipment. Ms. Crose noted the Parks Superintendent had been an integral staff member working on this project and had answered such questions. Mr. Gruber noted that he visited all-ability playgrounds in other cities and had talked with their staff members on this matter.

Commissioner Powers questioned whether any staff members had visited the Dublin all-ability playground to observe what equipment people are using and to ask them for their opinions on what is most popular. Ms. Crose advised that staff has visited this playground but has not asked people for their opinions, also one mother had videotaped her son on one of their spinners and asked that it be included in a Pleasanton design. Commissioner Carlucci felt this might be a good student project if staff's time was limited. Ms. Chavez noted that RRM staff also take their children to playground sites to test equipment.

Commissioner Sedlak commented on a video on the RRM website that features Gwendolyn Playgrounds and asked how this playground compared with the designs being considered by the commission. He indicated he had some issues with different design elements but felt focus should be on how it delivers a product and resource for special needs individuals. Ms. Chavez noted the Pleasanton park would be unique and the Gwendolyn Park mother is an advisor who has been working with them for several years gauging the needs of the special needs community. She advised that RRM has experience working with different communities and want each playground to be unique and special.

Commissioner Sedlak commented on the playground quiet area and proximity to the proposed music area and concerns with noise for the residential area. He also felt parking was going to be problematic because more people will want to use such an attractive playground and parking at the Ken Mercer Sports Park was already challenging. Commissioner Sedlak asked about the possibility of adding a two-tiered parking structure. Ms. Crose felt this was going to be cost prohibitive. Mr. Gruber agreed but felt there were some other parking options that staff could look at if the directive is given that this is something the needs to be considered.

Commissioner Sedlak questioned if the Parks and Recreation Commission were aware of the parking liability issue. Ms. Crose advised that they have reviewed the designs and have raised similar parking concerns. She agreed with Mr. Gruber that if given the directive to look for additional parking they would do that.

Commissioner Hayes asked about the possibility of taking ADA spaces from somewhere else in the park. Ms. Chavez noted that some spaces had been taken from another playground in the park and had been consolidated to the front of the all-abilities playground.

Commissioner Bedegi questioned the possibility of using parking spaces from other parks such as the Tennis Park and the possibility of parking spaces at local churches. Ms. Crose advised that staff could look at all opportunities and could consider such especially for large tournaments at which shuttle service could be offered. She discussed the issue of impacting neighborhoods.

Commissioner Sedlak asked about the cost for the all-abilities playground and questioned if this project was going to take precedence over the Lions Wayside and Delucci Park project. Ms. Crose advised that staff has heard figures in the ballpark of \$4-5M but noted it would depend on when the city is ready for construction and what is taking place in the construction world. Mr. Gruber noted that there is currently no funding for the all-abilities playground, but funding is available for the Lions Wayside and Delucchi Park project and with information received from the Regional Water Quality Control Board it appears this project will happen before the all-abilities playground project.

Commissioner Bedegi stated her preference was for Concept #2 because of the special Pleasanton things it has to offer. She wondered how it stood up in terms of criteria that meets the needs of the developmentally challenged individuals and felt handicapped children would have difficulty maneuvering items in Concept #1. Commissioner Bedegi questioned if there was another park in Pleasanton that reinforced Pleasanton's special qualities and asked about the tactile use of items laid out in Concept #1. Ms. Crose advised that no park currently reinforces special qualities of Pleasanton and noted that places that have become iconic include Century House, Adobe, Kottinger Barn, and the Pleasanton Arch and these could be included if the community want to see them.

Commissioner Bedegi commented on the climbing structure in Concept #1 and whether it would be suitable for the audience that will be attracted to this park. Ms. Crose commented on sensory differences in the concepts but advised that each concept will have items for all senses, however Concept #2 will be brighter, more vibrant, and visually stimulating and in Concept #1 the features will be more accessible by all. She noted that the goal for the all-abilities playground is to include features that will be accessible for everyone and encourage whole families to come to the park.

Commissioner Carlucci questioned if there was a template or checklist being used that indicate items that should be included in the design for different individuals. Ms. Chavez advised that a list is used that indicates the items that would reach the greatest audience taking into consideration the different social conditions. She noted that as the process moves forward consideration will be given to making sure all aspects and conditions are met.

Commissioner Bedegi asked if the zip line feature was being included in both concepts. Ms. Chavez advised that it was being shown in one design concept but could be included in the other design if that is what the community indicates.

Chairperson Rubino-Brumm referenced Commissioner Sedlak's comment about separating the music area from quiet areas and making sure there was no noise issue for residents. Ms. Chavez noted that all these issues would be taken into consideration when creating a final design. Chairperson Rubino-Brumm felt the designs were great and the all-abilities playground would be good for children of all abilities and still offer many other exciting amenities for adults.

Mr. Ingram discussed the possibility that angled parking might offer an opportunity to add more spaces and asked about including double (partner) swings where people can face each other. Ms. Chavez noted that one of the swings was included in Concept #1.

Chairperson Rubino-Brumm thanked staff and Ms. Chavez for the terrific design concepts and presentation.

#### **4. Review and Comment on the Library and Recreation Department Quarterly Report for April-June 2021**

Mr. Silva reviewed the Library and Recreation Department Quarterly Report for April-June 2021 with commissioners commenting on recent changes that now allows the city to offer some in-person programs. He noted that the library has been able to open to some capacity as has the Senior Center, and registrations for programs and camps filled quickly.

Commissioner Bedegi commented on the difficulty of looking at the report and knowing if things are working well. She felt it would be helpful to be able to look at the report and see the positive highlights and what programs stands out. Mr. Silva discussed directives that were put in place that limited what programs and activities were allowed to take place and how this contributed to numbers in the report.

Mr. Ingram added additional information about changes the city had to make because of the pandemic such as the library offering curbside pickup which was well received by the community, and the services provided from the senior center for meals and senior support programs.

Commissioner Bedegi was curious on how the budget works for the programs when program revenue and demand was reduced because of the pandemic. Mr. Ingram noted that Library and Recreation Department revenues were substantially reduced due to the pandemic but did acknowledge the City did receive Federal Cares Act fund like other local jurisdictions. He commented on staff reductions, staff members working from home, and the reduced number of people allowed to participate in programs and activities.

Chairperson Rubino-Brumm noted that the next Human Services Commission meeting is scheduled for October 6, 2021.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

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