



## **Staff Report**

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### DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION ON SEMERIA PARK AND CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT SERVICES

Honorable Mayor, Council Members, Honorable Chair and Commissioners:

#### **Summary**

The 1992 Park and Open Space Master Plan identified the need for local parks within the Cipriani neighborhood. The neighborhood, which has over 1600 homes, is currently underserved with one elementary school and one park including a dog exercise area. The City of Belmont acquired the parcel at the intersection of Semeria Avenue and Casa Bona Avenue in 2005 for the development of a future park. In April 2008, the City Council ranked the Semeria Park development project as their highest priority.

On September 20, 2008 the Parks and Recreation Commission held a special meeting to receive input on the proposed park project. The public meeting was attended by 57 residents who provided the Commission with input into the features and functions the community would like incorporated into the park design. It appeared that the attendees unilaterally support the proposed park project and the recreational opportunities it will provide the neighborhood.

The overall consensus of the public's input was that the area should be developed with a play structure for young children, a swing set that can be used by all ages, benches where neighbors can converse, an open area for riding bicycles and other activities, trees for shade, perimeter fencing for users safety and landscaping that will enhance the beauty of the neighborhood.

The public identified issues including whether the site should be designed to allow for off street parking, lighting for night time visibility and the possibility of installing speed bumps or signage for additional safety at the intersection.

#### **Background**

The Parks and Recreation Commission held a special meeting on September 20, 2008 to allow for public input on the proposed park project. The outreach meeting was attended by approximately 57 residents. On October 1, 2008, the Commission received additional feedback at their regularly scheduled meeting.

Resident's comments included the following:

- Include trees, lawn area, plants
- Play structures for different age groups
- Provide perimeter fencing for safety
- Include pathways for bicycle riding and other activities
- Install a dog litter station
- Install a drinking fountain
- Encourage the use of neutral colors for play structure
- Include small picnic area without a barbeque
- Swings for toddlers, youths and adults
- Lighting for visibility into the park
- Do not allow parking
- Allow some parking with restrictions
- Speed bumps or Stop signs at intersection

Prior to the purchase of the vacant lot by the City of Belmont, the area was overgrown with vegetation and used by nearby residents for off street parking. In October 2005 after aquisition, the City Council considered a resolution prohibiting parking on the dirt, adjacent to Semeria Park. Following discussion, the City Council unanimously continued the item and directed staff to study alternatives, and for the current parking allowance to remain status quo until further review.

Currently, signage allows for parallel parking along Casa Bona Avenue and Semeria Avenue within the city's Right-of-Way. The acquired parcel is approximately 7,444 square feet, in addition, there is approximately 3,523 square feet of dirt public Right-of-Way to the edge of paved roadway where parking has been allowed. The City of Belmont owns approximately 10,967 square feet of undeveloped property at the proposed park site.

### **Discussion**

It appears after receiving public input that there is overwhelming support for the park development project. The Parks and Recreation Commission voted unanimously (8-0) to recommend the professional services of a Landscape Architect be obtained to provide design options and construction documents for Semeria Park.

Staff has identified the State of California 2002 Resources Bond Act as a source of funding for the Semeria Park project. The City of Belmont has an allocation of \$220,000 available through the Per Capita Program and an additional \$68,000 allocated from the Roberti-Z' Berg Harris Block Grant. The project must be completed by May 2011 to ensure use of the bond funding. The combined amount of \$288,000 is available to the City of Belmont through the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002. A portion of the funds can be used for Landscape Architect services (non-construction costs) with the

remainder being used for construction costs.

### **General Plan/Vision Statement**

- We choose to make our home among these beautiful hills, trees, parks, views, and open spaces.
- Our playgrounds and athletic fields are of high quality and in high gear.

### **Fiscal Impact**

The City of Belmont has a combination of available funds through the State of California totaling \$288,000 of which a portion can be used for non-construction costs (Landscape Architect services). The Professional Services Agreement will not exceed the amount of \$50,000 and funding is available from the State of California 2002 Resources Bond Act. There is the potential that the total project, depending on design, could exceed the amount available from the State of California which would require additional funding from Fund 341, Planned Park to complete the project. The construction of a new park will require additional maintenance from the Parks Maintenance staff and its fiscal impact is not known at this time.

### **Public Contact**

Posting of City Council agenda

### **Recommendation**

The Parks and Recreation Commission is recommending the services of a Landscape Architect to provide design options and construction details for the proposed park project. Staff is recommending the City Council authorize the City Manager to execute a professional services agreement not to exceed the amount of \$50,000 for Landscape Architect services.

### **Alternatives**

1. Take no action
2. Make other recommendation
3. Refer to staff for more information

### **Attachments**

- A. Resolution
- B. Minutes of September 20, 2008 Commission meeting
- C. Draft Minutes of October 1, 2008 Commission meeting
- D. Excerpt of Minutes October 25, 2005 City Council meeting

Respectfully submitted,

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Daniel Ourtiague  
Parks Manager

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Jack R. Crist  
City Manager

Staff Contact:  
Daniel Ourtiague, Parks Manager  
650-595-7441  
[dourtiague@belmont.gov](mailto:dourtiague@belmont.gov)

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELMONT  
AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL  
SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT SERVICES FOR  
SEMERIA PARK FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$50,000**

**WHEREAS**, Landscape Architect services are needed for the design of Semeria Park; and

**WHEREAS**, funding is available from the State of California 2002 Resources Bond Act; and

**WHEREAS**, a Landscape Architect will be selected based on qualifications and experience; and

**WHEREAS**, the Professional Services Agreement will not exceed the amount of \$50,000; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Council of the City of Belmont authorizes the City Manager to execute a professional services agreement with a Landscape Architect for design and construction plans for Semeria Park to not exceed the amount of \$50,000.

\* \* \* \* \*

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Belmont at a special meeting thereof held on November 5, 2008 by the following vote:

AYES, COUNCILMEMBERS: \_\_\_\_\_

NOES, COUNCILMEMBERS: \_\_\_\_\_

ABSTAIN, COUNCILMEMBERS: \_\_\_\_\_

ABSENT, COUNCILMEMBERS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
CLERK of the City of Belmont

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR of the City of Belmont

**City of Belmont  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING      SEPTEMBER 20, 2008  
MINUTES**

The special meeting of the Belmont Parks & Recreation Commission of September 20, 2008 was called to order @ 10:07 a.m. at Semeria Park.

**I.                    ROLL CALL**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:      Bortoli, Andrews, Warden, King, Cheechov, & Sullivan

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:      Moissiy, Rafi & Shjeflo

STAFF PRESENT:                      Parks Manager (PM) Ourtiague and Secretary Saggau

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:      Councilmembers Feierbach & Braunstein

**II.                    APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the regular meeting of September 3, 2008 were approved by unanimous voice vote.

**III.                    SPECIAL MEETING BUSINESS**

A.      Park Development Input

C Bortoli explained the Commission would like to hear input from the residents on what they would like to see at this location for a proposed park. He noted there is a budget of \$250,000 for this project. He stated at the next Commission meeting on October 1 this item will be on the agenda which will provide another opportunity for residents to give their input.

John Obertelli asked about potential liability of a play structure. C Bortoli said he believed the City assumes some liability and noted concerns that need to be considered are parking and safety at this intersection.

Bill Pope preferred that no skateboard ramps be installed and also asked about lighting at the park. C Bortoli noted that city parks close at dusk and lighting can be touchy and suggested maybe a timer could be used at the site.

Bill Dean would like to see trees, grass, have it nice looking, and include places for kids to play. He would not support a parking area on this site.

Neighborhood parent said she would like to see a tot park with fencing around it. She added there should be separate areas for the smaller kids and bigger kids. She requested baby swings and suggested using the rubber material on the ground for

ease of maintenance. She mentioned many people have dogs and perhaps a fenced-in dog area could be included in the back.

Melinda Meier agreed a separated tot lot was a great idea. She would like to see something that grows with kids and a grassy area would provide a place to play.

Art Paley agreed with the comments on the tot lot but did not think dogs should be integrated with children. He noted the play area by the library works fine.

Todd Adler acknowledged this may be a contentious issue but that some parking should be included at the site due to the narrow streets. He added it may be necessary to have speed bumps at this site for safety.

C Bortoli agreed some parking may be needed for those that need to unload food for a picnic. One resident suggested having a sidewalk all the way around would provide an area for people to park. Another resident suggested limiting the time allowed for parking.

Michael Linden expressed concern with children darting out in the street and agreed speed bumps may be needed. He was opposed to dogs at the park and noted barking would be amplified into the neighborhood. He did not think the park should be used for picnics as then more cars would park in the area.

Lucille Ulrich preferred not to have picnic tables, but benches. She questioned if there would be room enough to have a sidewalk around the perimeter of the park providing a place where children could ride their tricycles.

Jeff Schmitz agreed there is no good place for kids to ride bikes and would like to see some sort of sidewalk or pathway. He added he would like the park to be very green with drought resistant trees.

One resident stated he would prefer that permanent parking not be made available for residents.

Sarti said she would have a problem with not providing a little bit of parking at the site as the road is very narrow.

Resident commented that he agreed that the park should not have a picnic area as wild animals would be attracted to the food source.

Resident that grew up in the neighborhood noted that youths in the 7-13 age range need places too.

Dennis Fetterly said he agreed with a lot of other comments. He would like to see an open space used for a variety of purposes including play structures but would not like the space to become too fragmented. He supported the idea of having a bike track around the outside. He also had a concern about animals being attracted to a picnic area.

Resident noted the importance of providing shade in the park.

Ginger Bushue said the play structures would be for little kids. For the older kids she suggested swing sets which would accommodate all ages including adults. She preferred that lighting not be permanent as that would impact neighborhood residents.

Ms. Bushue questioned if the City has any restrictions on developing this park and questioned if they would agree to maintain grass at the park due to the expense. PM Ourtiague explained the City had for many years limited park development due to the maintenance costs but now the thought is if you don't build now when will it be done. The City has an obligation to maintain what it builds.

Barbara Fetterly –Agreed swings are a great idea. She suggested including a dome structure. She noted she has a dog but would not want dogs in this park. She thought little and big picnic benches would be a great idea. She reiterated the importance of providing shade in the park.

A resident suggested considering if the Belmont Garden Club would be willing to assist with this park.

One resident noted that deer are common in this area and would not want the City to spend money on plants that would get eaten. Raccoons are also a concern with garbage cans.

Laura Sullivan requested a fence be placed around the perimeter that has a gate that closes with a latch.

Mark Schoenstein supported a tot lot with a fence around the perimeter. He agreed with a pathway around the perimeter and limited parking. He would like to see greenery included in the park.

PM Ourtiague explained that city parks are closed from sunset to sunrise and dogs must remain on leash.

Adjacent neighbor noted this park would directly affect her family and was concerned about lighting. She supported the black rubber surface because grass will not work and was concerned about expense and maintenance. She would not want dogs because people do not always clean up after them. If a fence is installed she would like a lower fence versus a tall fence. She asked that the trees planted not be too tall as she likes her view. She asked that a play structure accommodate all ages. She was fine with picnic benches, but not too many. She noted this should be a park and not a parking lot but currently neighbors take up this area with cars. She was concerned about safety and proposed a stop sign be installed and said she does not like speed bumps but perhaps they should be installed on Casa Bona and Semeria.

Mark Solar said he would prefer this be a neighborhood park and not a destination park.

Dog parent said she is 100% for not having dogs there. She noted that raccoons can be quite destructive with new sod. She does not have children and would like this park to be beautiful and a place that adults can enjoy too.

Another resident agreed it should be beautiful and agreed with having a fence installed but it should be visually appealing.

One resident noted the fence around the play structure at Twin Pines Park is a good example. She expressed concern with parking spaces at the end of the park and that they would be better placed on the sides of the park.

Bobbi Dean – was curious about the ground cover and if grass would survive well and be properly maintained. She noted another playground where they used shredded tires for cushioning the play structure.

PM Ourtiague noted the park crews maintain all the parks in Belmont which all have wildlife. Staff is familiar with their potential impact and has found ways to lessen any damage.

Staci Daley thought that some parking needs to be provided and preferred parallel for safety reasons. She had concerns with potential damage with carving on picnic tables and did not want a large picnic area. She was also concerned with the potential for graffiti on play structures.

Jane said this is a great area for walking. She suggested even though this would not be a dog park a dog waste dispenser could be installed. She would also like to see a water fountain in the park. She agreed with providing a bench and adult swings so that everyone in the community could enjoy the park.

One resident expressed concern with the parking situation and noted parking at this location occurs during the evening hours. She suggested allowing residents to park there at night since parking is so limited in this area. Another resident noted evening hours would be the time of day working adults could enjoy the park and was opposed to having residents use it as a parking lot.

A resident questioned what problems the City has had with neighborhood parks. C Bortoli said planting the right type of plant material has been one problem but this has been improved upon. C Bortoli added he was pleased that he has not heard today any concerns from neighbors that a park would bring a lot of park users that drive to the location. C Warden added if someone was going to drive somewhere they would likely go to Twin Pines or Cipriani Park. He recalled at College View Park some residents were concerned about the potential of increased usage of the park in their cul-de-sac but nobody drives to it.

The question of a name for the park was brought up. Suggestions included Casa Bona Playground, Semeria Playground and Casa Semeria.

Natasha grew up in this neighborhood and agreed with a lot that has been said but feels that simple is better. If there is open space they can do what they want to do there. This would make it possible to use it for various purposes.

Another resident that grew up in the neighborhood had played on this dirt lot and noted if there are too many structures this would limit the ability to use the park. She suggested installing a barbeque pit. C Bortoli noted people often bring portable barbeques parks. The adjacent neighbor was opposed to having a barbeque installed due to fire concern.

One resident suggested a compromise and having some play structure and some open space. She also requested that any play structure have a neutral color scheme.

A resident questioned where the process would go from here and if a Landscape Architect be hired to prepare two plans? C Bortoli explained the Commission is also working on a park for Davey Glen and has decided to recommend to the City Council that a Landscape Architect be hired to prepare plans for a passive park with overlays that can add different aspects to it. He thought this may be considered for this project too.

One resident said he agreed with all those that said “less is more” and keep it simple. And that the park should be a walking destination.

Hartley Laughead noted the neighborhood association president was not able to attend today but the association would like to participate in any way they can.

Another resident supported the idea of installing a dog waste disposal outside of the park for those walking outside of the park.

C Bortoli thanked everyone for their input and noted the Commission plans to meet and discuss this topic at their October 1 meeting.

One resident asked when the job would be completed. C Bortoli replied that the money needs to be spent by June 2011 but would likely be completed sooner. The Commission does not have a schedule yet; this will probably be set after a Landscape Architect is hired.

The question was raised if the Commission could for see any obstacles to this project. C Bortoli said he did not know of any. He noted the Commission had not thought about lighting and that needs to be considered.

PM Ourtiague explained the planning and the process takes the longest time but this project is on track and moving forward. He noted the Commission will meet on October 1<sup>st</sup> to deliberate and decide on possible next steps. They may recommend to the City Council that a Landscape Architect be hired to prepare some preliminary designs.

*C King moved, seconded by C Warden, that the Commission close public comments.* Vote 6-0 in favor.

C Warden questioned if it would be possible for the Commission to give staff direction to hire a Landscape Architect at their next meeting. He noted the Council has already approved this project in the budget. Staff will look into.

C Warden said he has lived in this neighborhood for 42 years and is thoroughly excited about developing this area. He noted two things important to him. (1) He thinks it needs to be an area for all kids but really for the smaller kids. He noted older kids get into other programs. He would like to have a tot lot neighbors can walk to and swings for older kids. (2) He said it is also important that this lot needs to be pretty. He would like to see something everyone would be proud to have in their neighborhood.

C King thanked everyone for their comments and assisting the Commission in visualizing what the park can be.

**IV. NEXT MEETING**

C Bortoli noted the next Commission meeting would be held on October 1<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

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Grace Saggau, Secretary  
September 20, 2008

**City of Belmont  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING OCTOBER 1, 2008  
MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Belmont Parks & Recreation Commission of October 1, 2008 was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**I. ROLL CALL**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Bortoli, Vice Chair Moissiy, Commissioners (C) Warden, Cheechov, King, Sullivan, Andrews and Shjeflo

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: C Rafi

STAFF PRESENT: Parks and Recreation Director (PRD) Gervais, Parks Manager (PM) Ourtiague and Secretary Saggau

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*C Warden moved, seconded by C Cheechov, to accept the Minutes of the regular meeting of September 20, 2008 as presented. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.*

**III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION/COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

C Andrews asked that he be replaced as liaison to the Green Committee due to a conflict with the Sports Committee meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month. C Sullivan agreed to accept this assignment, and C Moissiy agreed to be the alternate.

Chair Bortoli reported that the Senior Center now has a defibrillator and that he participated in training on use of the equipment, which he felt was very user friendly. The Senior Flu Clinic will be on October 30 from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. at \$5.00 per person and the Holiday Craft Faire will be November 22 and 23.

PRD Gervais announced the following events:

- Save the Music Festival will be held Sunday, October 5, in Twin Pines Park from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Proceeds will be used to fund the school music program.
- Saturday, October 18 will be the public celebration of the Manor House remodeling project. C King added that the open house will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There will be tours, two shows in the galleries and refreshments.
- A Halloween event will be held in the Senior/Community Center from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Friday, October 31st.

#### **IV. AGENDA AMENDMENTS**

None

#### **V. OLD BUSINESS**

##### **A. Field Use Subcommittee**

PRD Gervais stated that the Field Use Subcommittee needs to be reactivated and asked that Commissioners Shjeflo and Andrews meet with staff to work through some field use issues related to the Sports Complex. Recreation Manager Brunson will contact them to arrange a meeting.

#### **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **A. Discussion and Direction on Semeria Park Project**

PRD Gervais recused himself from this discussion because he lives within 500' of the subject property.

PM Ourtiague summarized the Staff Report using a power point presentation, and answered questions from the Commission.

C Warden raised the possibility of increasing the size of the park by approximately 1,000 feet if the City would grant an encroachment permit, lot line adjustment or whatever is required to extend the park into the street. PM Ourtiague said that he would check into this option.

PM Ourtiague suggested that if he is given direction from the Commission at this meeting the project could possibly be on the agenda for a joint meeting with the City Council on November 5, after which a landscape architect would be hired to develop a conceptual design with Alternates 1 and 2. The next step would be to solicit public input followed by a final master plan to be presented to the Planning Commission and then City Council, with the possibility of having a construction project underway at this time next year.

C King commented that she would not want the necessity for an encroachment permit to hold up the project.

Responding to C King's question regarding parking on the property, PM Ourtiague stated that a Resolution was passed in 2005 allowing parking on the property. He encouraged the Commission to make a recommendation to the City Council regarding this topic.

C Warden clarified that he believed it was not the intent to allow parking there in perpetuity – it was only because the City was not doing anything with the site and people were complaining that they could not park there. At the time it seemed reasonable to temporarily allow parking on the site knowing that it was eventually going to be a park.

C Bortoli questioned the timing required for resolution of the parking issue. PM Ourtiague recommended that the project be approached as a City-owned parcel designed to meet the wants and desires of the neighborhood. Alternate plans could be with and without the inclusion of a

parking plan. It would be his task to be specific as to what should be incorporated into the proposed designs. He noted that this project is a #1 priority in 2008 for the Commission and Council

C Cheechov asked that the architect be free to design the type of park that he thinks best; he should not be limited by the parking issue.

Resident Peter Carroll expressed concern that the park not be organized too tightly without taking into consideration the changing ages of the neighborhood – too much for kids below the age of 6 doesn't do much good after they become 10 to 15. He hoped that the Commission would realize that it is a community space; not just a place for people to take toddlers in the daytime. He believed that one of the things lacking all over the City is a place for people to meet, and suggested a bulletin board that is accessible to anybody for posting non-commercial notices about yard sales or the birth of a child, etc., and perhaps a bench or two where adults could sit and talk to each other or use their wireless laptops.

C King interjected that at a previous meeting someone suggested the inclusion of adult swings.

Resident Mike Bushue stated that his remembrance of the meetings in 2005 was that the City would have the curb line parking for the short term to deal with the situation until a long-term solution with parking included was resolved. He will be opposed to the project if all parking is removed. He sees this as an opportunity to put a minimalistic or acceptable amount of parking in the area and satisfy the neighbors who want to park overnight as well as people who want to come and use the park. Secondly, he believes that an encroachment in the front to gain 1,000 feet would pinch the corner off and make it less than an enjoyable corner in which to make a turn. He added that he has been a proponent of establishing a park that is green, has trees and would make the downhill view less obtrusive. Chair Bortoli asked Mr. Bushue if timed parking during the day would be acceptable to him. Mr. Bushue replied that he did not think that would be necessary because when vehicles are there at night they stay all night but everybody else leaves relatively early during the day. He estimated that if there were six or so spots, five of them would be available during the day.

Resident Donna Briscoe agreed that parking is needed and would like to see a sturdy steel fence around the park, benches that are made of steel rather than wood, and that lighting is kept down and must be off at a certain time.

Resident Dennis Fetterly spoke in favor of having a park there and agreed with the previous speakers that some parking is needed; however he would not want to see a ring of parking spaces around the park but something discreet off to the side. He added that some street parking is currently available that is not being used in the setback space. He would also like to see some sort of paved path around the perimeter of the park inside the safety fencing where kids could ride bikes and roller skate.

Commissioners commented as follows:

C King:

- Ready to turn it over to an architect rather than have Commissioners design the park.

C Cheechov:

- Wanted a chain link fence strong enough to stop cars from running into the park.

C Shjeflo:

- Was impressed with neighbors' comments and believed there was enough there plus comments made tonight.
- A creative landscape architect could see things that no one has seen.
- Liked all of the ideas and they should be given wholesale to the landscape architect.
- Parks have a positive impact on property values. Recommended that anyone interested should look at an article by Professor John Compton at Texas A&M, who has done numerous studies on the impact of parks on property values. He considers a park with 50% or more vegetation a passive park. For the nearby neighbors it's about a 20% bump in property value in the best situations and can go down to about 5%. Sometimes people next to a new park feel that they are being adversely impacted but it appears not to be so when it comes to the value of the lot.

C Andrews:

- Concurred with previous comments and suggested letting the architect proceed with the items highlighted in the Staff Report.

C Sullivan:

- Was pleased that there is so much support in the neighborhood and thought it was clear that everybody wants something
- Agreed with PM Ourtiague's assessment that the primary thing that everybody can agree on is that the park should enhance the neighborhood and that the Commission should concentrate on things that bring people into the park as opposed to a nice looking garden that would not be used.
- Lighting is not needed as there are street lights and it will be closed at night.

C Moissiy:

- Thought it important to remember that residents have voiced that different age groups be able to use the park. The landscape architect should try to incorporate that without making it appear segregated with three different parks for three different age groups.
- Believed that the safety and longevity of a sturdy fence that takes away from the natural look outweighs the desire to have it look like a natural park.
- A parking structure could make it the destination park that some residents are afraid of getting; that decision would have to be weighed.

C Warden:

- #1 recommendation was that parking and traffic problems on Semeria between Casa Bona and Cipriani need to be solved as a separate problem.
  - He walked up and down Semeria and was shocked at how many off-street parking spaces there are that are not being used. People have illegal encroachments, illegal flower pots, and driveways and garages that are not being used since it is more convenient to park in the public lot.
  - He encouraged Commissioners to drive down Semeria at 9 or 10 at night to see the problem.

- People on Semeria want parking available at the park because they think it will alleviate their problem, and people on Casa Bona do not want the parking because for the most part they have enough parking.
- Problem needs to be called out to City Council. He will bring pictures and point out that if the City is going to put in the park something needs to be done about the parking and traffic problems on Semeria.
- Parking 12 cars at the park would look ugly.
- The City bought the lot as a City park, not as a parking lot. If a house were to have been built on that site, there would be very little parking available.
- He has talked to members of the Fire Department, who said that there are times they cannot get a fire truck through the area.
- Believed the words “passive” or “active” should not be used to label the park as people are not sure what they mean.
- Believed that traffic calming would create a mess in the area; speed humps and warning signs would be required. He counted seven cars in an hour and a half on a Saturday so did not see a big traffic problem.
- Did not think people wanted dogs there other than the dog waste bag dispenser.
- Did not want bbqs there.
- Thought that a small area for toddlers is needed. Only 30% of households have kids in school – the other 70% need to be considered.
- There needs to be significant areas for benches and grass and things like that.
- There are 1600 houses in the neighborhood – the largest single neighborhood in the City – it is necessary to move ahead with the park.

Chair Bortoli:

- Agreed that fencing is important; primary is safety and secondary is looks. There are different ways to put a fence up that will withstand a small car.
- Regarding parking, his thought was 2 to 4 parking spaces, in order to accommodate visiting grandparents and loading and unloading of paraphernalia.
- Suggested looking at the encroachment idea – if it is going to cause a problem perhaps they could take just use part of the area and still have room to move cars around.
- Afraid that cement paths would invite skateboarders.
- Not necessarily in favor of speed bumps and indicated that Fire and Police Departments are not fans of them. Crosswalks and that sort of thing would be fine.
- Generally agreed that they are ready to obtain a landscape architect – why should the Commission design the park – that’s what the landscape architect does.

After brief discussion regarding the next steps, PM Ourtiague clarified that since this is a Council Priority Calendar item, he would include the Commission’s recommendation in a Staff Report for the upcoming Joint City Council/P&R Commission meeting. He would include the Commission’s comments along with the public’s comments and perhaps prepare a resolution that the City enter into a professional services contract agreement with a landscape architect. Council members would have an opportunity to voice their opinions and give staff direction at that point.

***C Shjeflo moved, seconded by C Andrews, that the Commission recommend to City Council that a landscape architect be hired to provide conceptual preliminary designs, and that the recommendation include all of the comments from the on-site meeting and from this meeting. Motion passed 8-0 by voice vote.***

C King asked why the recommendation had to go to Council instead of staff since the money is available. PM Ourtiague responded that since it is a City Council Priority Calendar item they need to be brought into this step of the project. The recommendation is to hire the services of a landscape architect; it is not for any design or specifications. Discussion ensued regarding this procedure, with PM Ourtiague noting that it would likely not be possible to obtain a proposal from a landscape architect in time for the second Council meeting in October.

## **VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

### **A. Questions and Comments**

PM Ourtiague reported that the unfortunate but necessary removal of eight large Monterey Cypress trees would be occurring the following week along Ralston Avenue at the intersection of Misty Lane. Quite a few of them are dead; the other ones are in severe decline and pose a serious hazard. The adjacent homeowners have all agreed to replant the trees trying to follow the General Plan guidelines for large-arcing canopy trees along Ralston Avenue.

Responding to C King's question regarding the status of Tree City, PM Ourtiague reported that the application had been submitted.

C Shjeflo commented that the City should be very proud that it is moving ahead with Semeria Park, which will be enjoyed by people for possibly 1,000 years. He especially commended Coralin Feierbach and Dave Warden for promoting the purchase of the lot by the City, and believed it was unimaginable how much good something like this will do. C Warden added that he wanted to be sure that C Shjeflo also be given the appropriate amount of credit because he never gave up on trying to acquire the lot, gave free legal advice, and was right in the middle of brokering the deal to buy it.

C King raised a point of order regarding changes to Minutes. She noted that minutes must reflect what was said and cannot be changed if the speaker wishes something else was said. The change made in the July meeting minutes was minor (August meeting to next meeting) but she reminded the Commission the words in minutes cannot be changed.

### **C. Department Monthly Report**

None.

### **D. Future Agenda Items**

PM Ourtiague stated that the next meeting will be a joint meeting with the P&R Commission and the City Council, and will be held on Wednesday, November 5, time to be determined. The tentative agenda is as follows: 1) discussion on the Davey Glen Park, 2) discussion on Semeria Park, 3) annual report on the Athletic Field User Fee, and 4) the P&R Department's Strategic Plan.

Responding to C King's question regarding the status of the Donation Catalog, PM Ourtiague stated that it is going to be a City-wide catalog and not specific to any department. The City Attorney is being consulted and a staff person is assigned to the project.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

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Grace Saggau, Secretary

DRAFT

## Excerpt of Minutes of October 25, 2005 City Council Meeting

### **Resolution Prohibiting Parking along Semeria and Casa Bona Avenues Adjacent to Semeria Park**

Public Works Director Davis stated that parallel parking has been permitted along this property since the City acquired it, which conflicts with existing Ordinance prohibiting parking on dirt.

**Mike Bushue**, Semeria Avenue, stated that until purchased by the City, this property was overgrown, full of sinkholes, and used as overflow parking. He supported its acquisition for a future park. He noted the neighbors were not notified of this proposed parking restriction. There is a parking problem in the area along narrow streets. He noted that people are obeying the parallel parking restriction, and recommended leaving it as is. He noted that four parking places would be required if a home were built here.

**Todd Adler**, Casa Bona Avenue, stated that he supported the purchase of the site for a future park. He noted that it is currently needed for parking, and a prohibition will impact parking in the area.

**Dennis Fetterly**, Semeria Avenue, stated that he too supports a future park at this site, but the area is needed for parking for guests and additional cars owned by residents. He noted that safety concerns have not been addressed.

**Art Paley**, Semeria Avenue (via Comment Card), expressed opposition to any parking prohibitions in or around this parcel.

Councilmember Feierbach stated that she supported the purchase of the lot for a future park. She noted the park would be developed for the neighborhood, and it is not intended that people outside the neighborhood would drive to go to the park. She stated that existing ordinances prohibit parking on dirt. She recommended allowing staggered street parking. She added that when the park is developed, no one is going to be able to park on the property. She commented that many people do not use their garage for cars, but as storage.

Mayor Warden stated the streets are narrow and cars parked on either side almost block the street. He noted this condition exists on many other narrow streets in the Cipriani neighborhood, and is a safety issue. He described the red curb installation on San Juan Boulevard, which alleviated the safety problem. Parking on dirt creates a soil problem on the Semeria lot. He noted that if the lot had been developed as a home, there would be no parking available.

Councilmember Metropulos agreed that this is a safety issue, and supported the concept of staggered parking similar to San Juan Boulevard. He noted that a fire truck would have difficulty because of cars parked on either side of the street.

In response to Councilmember Mathewson, Public Works Director Davis confirmed that the Parking and Traffic Safety Committee discussed this issue. He noted that this area is different from San Juan Boulevard due to the short length of curb, and that there are off-street spaces available along Semeria Avenue. A portion of the vacant lot could be paved to facilitate parking.

**ACTION:** On a motion by Councilmember Bauer, seconded by Councilmember Metropulos, and unanimously approved by a show of hands to continue this item in order for staff to study alternatives, and for the current parking allowance to remain status quo.