



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Minutes of Regular Meeting of November 7, 2018
City Council Chambers, One Twin Pines Lane, Belmont, CA
The Beekman, 123 Nassau Street, New York, New York (Commissioner Michaels)

CALL TO ORDER: 7:01 PM.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Block, Bortoli, Foehr, Fox, Hosmer Raddavero, Mittelstadt, Michaels (by Skype)

Commissioner Absent: Cotten

Staff Present: Parks and Recreation Director Shearer, Administrative Assistant Clark

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Chair Mittelstadt

COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS / AGENDA AMENDMENTS

Commissioners Foehr and Raddavero attended the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) social last month, which was hosted by Belmont and gathered about 100 teens from nearby cities.

Commissioners Foehr, Fox, and Mittelstadt enjoyed San Mateo County's Commissioners Workshop.

CONSENT CALENDAR

July 18, 2018 Draft Minutes

ACTION:

On a motion by Commissioner Bortoli, seconded by Commissioner Fox, the July minutes were unanimously approved.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Twin Pines Master Plan Concept Design Presentation and Study Session

Director Shearer shared a brief history of the Twin Pines Master Plan, which will guide park improvements for the next 10-20 years while leveraging and preserving unique park features. Commissioner Foehr introduced the ad hoc committee and discussed project goals.

Linda Gates of Gates and Associates explained how community feedback was gathered on park priorities from July to September and a base plan was brought to the community in October, along with alternative options for the parking/arrival, "town square," and "adventure retreat" areas. Gates will present a revised plan to the Commission in January, then present to City Council by early February.

Gates presented the base plan.

- The arrival area/parking area better connected pedestrians to 6th Avenue, reduced the width of the parking lot to accommodate a bike trail, replaced the solid fence along Ralston with a see-

through/ornamental fence, and assigned a recreational use to the island in front of the Manor (such as a demonstration garden, etc.).

- The creek corridor was activated by eliminating vehicle traffic behind the Senior and Community Center, installing exercise stations, transforming the Creekside Studios into a bocce ball court, improving the Cottage patio, creating a clear separation between the rental space behind the Lodge and pedestrian traffic, creating a loop trail around the creek, adding creek access and an overlook, extending the creek trail to 6th Avenue, and formalizing trails to the southern neighborhood.
- A town “Town Square” would be developed south of the western parking lot by reorienting the primary path to lead to the Senior and Community Center and adding a central lawn area.
- The “Events Meadow” would gain a trash/concession/restrooms area near the creek.
- The “Family Grove,” including the Buckeye Picnic Area, would relocate the restroom slightly north, have the pedestrian path split to create a mini loop, have a larger playground with a small water play area, renovate the picnic area, and add a challenge/rope course for teens.
- The “Adventure Retreat,” including the Redwood Picnic Area, would formalize the trail that connects with Paloma and enhance the existing picnic area.

Gates then presented the three areas with alternative variations.

- The first parking variation created a drop off loop, added parking to the island in front of the Manor, and reclaimed some green space along the western edge of the parking lot. The second variation also added a drop off loop, but removed the island and added green space in front of the Manor. Community feedback leaned toward the second variation.
- The only variation for the Parks and Recreation office removed the building, moving offices to the lower level of City Hall on 6th Avenue. Community feedback leaned toward this option.
- The first variation for the “Retreat Area” added challenge courses and the second variation provided multiple ADA-accessible levels all the way down to the creek. Community feedback leaned toward the first variation.

The commission shared questions and comments regarding the “Parking/Arrival” options.

- Commissioners Block, Foehr, Bortoli, Michaels, Fox, Hosmer, Raddavero, and Mittelstadt preferred the second variation. Reasons included improved traffic flow, more connected green space, and a new plaza in front of the Manor.
- Commissioners Block, Foehr, Bortoli, Michaels, and Mittelstadt expressed concerns about separating motorists from pedestrians and bicyclists. Commissioner Foehr suggested moving the bike bath to the north side of the parking lot. Commissioner Mittelstadt suggested moving the bike path or striping the parking lot.
- Commissioners Foehr and Mittelstadt suggested angling the parking spaces.
- Commissioners Fox and Mittelstadt suggested more space to turn into the parking lot.
- Commissioner Mittelstadt suggested planting replacement trees for those removed from the island and only replacing the Ralston fence along the parking lot to ensure park patrons are still protected from traffic views. Commissioner Fox suggested an alternating fence design.
- Commissioner Bortoli raised questions about nighttime lighting inviting after-hours park use and suggested considering the Senior and Community Center van’s drop-off route in the design.
- In response to Commissioner Raddavero, Gates said a partnership with San Mateo County in coordination with their flood management plan could be considered later on in the process.

The commission shared questions and comments regarding the “Active Creek Corridor” base plan.

- Commissioners Fox and Mittelstadt questioned how much a bocce ball court would be used and Commissioner Mittelstadt pointed out its heavy maintenance. Commissioner Foehr suggested relocating it to the “Adventure Retreat,” but Commissioner Bortoli said the people who wanted it also attend the Senior and Community Center, so it makes sense to keep nearby.
- Commissioners Michaels, Foehr, Block, and Mittelstadt appreciated the strong pedestrian flow along the creek, including the new loop path. Commissioner Bortoli liked the idea of formalized creek access but warned of the impact of heavy rain. Commissioner Hosmer raised questions about the ownership of creek side property abutting 6th Avenue.
- In response to Commissioner Mittelstadt, Gates clarified one path would remain wide enough to accommodate maintenance vehicles in the western end of the park.
- Commissioner Mittelstadt mentioned the time involved in transporting trash to the eastern end of the park and asked if a solution could be incorporated.

The commission shared questions and comments regarding the “Town Square” options.

- Commissioners Fox and Foehr liked the idea of a lawn area where the office currently stands. Commissioner Foehr said it would be a community asset to have the office on 6th Avenue. Gates offered to prepare a concept sketch with a drop off zone added and the office removed.
- Commissioner Hosmer was undecided but would consider the building’s removal due to the renovation costs, gained open space, and a new location on 6th Avenue. Commissioner Michaels was also torn but suggested an information kiosk by the park if the office was moved.
- Commissioner Raddavero was in favor of keeping the office near programs, rentals, and the park.
- Commissioner Bortoli suggested assigning the office building an alternate use such as the history museum. Commissioner Mittelstadt added this could help minimize renovations, though Finance should be consulted on the impact of lost rental revenue if the office moved to City Hall. Commissioner Block wanted to examine what renovations were truly needed. He was also open to alternate uses such as a history museum or teen/homework/tutoring space.

The commission shared questions and comments regarding the “Events Meadow” base plan.

- Commissioner Foehr liked the consolidation of building needs but wanted to ensure views of the Meadow were not obstructed from the pedestrian entrance.
- Commissioner Bortoli suggested involving the Park Boosters in any modifications and keeping a shade structure where the concessions currently reside.
- In response to Commissioner Fox, Gates said garbage may be addressed with an enclosed compactor, but those details would need to be worked out later on.
- Commissioners Hosmer, Raddavero, and Michaels liked the overall proposal.
- Commissioner Mittelstadt suggested incorporating the Park Boosters storage shed into the building and moving the building to the north end of the Meadow. Commissioner Fox suggested making it architecturally like the Manor.

The commission shared questions and comments regarding the “Family Grove” base plan.

- Commissioner Bortoli warned of trying to be all things to all people and Commissioner Hosmer expressed concerns about compromising the space’s peaceful nature.
- Commissioner Foehr liked the idea of a natural adventure course for teens, the bigger play area, and the new bathroom placement. Commissioner Michaels also liked the proposal, as long as it is executed in a way that matches the surroundings. Commissioner Fox liked the bathroom placement and idea of a confined ropes course while maintaining the natural feel.
- In response to Commissioner Raddavero, Gates said the adventure course would be permanent.

- Commissioner Block liked the idea of appealing to teens, but was also sensitive to keeping the space quiet and scenic. He asked about a place for younger children to learn to ride bikes and Commissioner Fox suggested a loop around the playground.
- Director Shearer pointed out the new restroom location provides a barrier between the bike path and children's play area.

The commission shared questions and comments regarding the "Adventure Retreat" options.

- Commissioner Hosmer liked the first variation or the base plan.
- Commissioner Fox favored something between the first and second variation, or moving the picnic area to the back right, though Commissioner Mittelstadt warned of noise by Silverado.
- Commissioner Mittelstadt wanted to enhance the base plan, perhaps with creek access and no volleyball court.
- Gates pointed out the second variation would allow the lower level to flood and could facilitate a beneficial partnership with San Mateo County to help address creek erosion. Commissioner Block liked the idea of a partnership as well as how the second variation permitted creek access.
- Commissioner Bortoli leaned toward a more natural design.
- Commissioner Foehr liked enhancing the playground or the second variation if it didn't remove so many trees. She also suggested considering relocating the nature/adventure play area here.
- Commissioner Michaels said the ad hoc committee needs to spend more time identifying the purpose and target users of the space.
- Commissioner Raddavero liked the second variation.

Senior Services / Holiday Craft Faire Presentation

Recreation Coordinator Andrea De Lara presented an overview of the Senior and Community Center attendees, volunteers, partnerships, annual Holiday Craft Fair, and activities. Recreation Supervisor Cheri Handley discussed volunteer recognition and elaborated on community partnerships.

Commissioners shared questions and feedback.

- In response to Commissioner Foehr, De Lara clarified they are responsible for screening, training, and scheduling their volunteers. Commissioner Bortoli pointed out that De Lara and Handley are the only permanent staff, so volunteer coordination is a large part of their job.
- At Commissioner Fox's request, De Lara shared feedback on the Twin Pines Master Plan: she had only heard a few people express interest in a bocce ball court or the existing horseshoe pits, so she would rather see these areas made into a more flexible-use space. She was supportive of closing the area behind the center to vehicle traffic and suggested increasing the shuttle service. Handley added that parking is still a huge issue and adding more ADA parking and including a drop-off zone close to the center were important considerations.
- In response to Commissioner Block, Handley stated the shuttle service was at capacity at certain times of the day but does change regularly.

At 9:58pm Commissioner Michaels left the meeting.

Belmont Sports Complex Update

Director Shearer reported that all agencies listed in the staff report said if the department stays within the confines of the proposed project areas, the project is clear to go. Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) wants to see the 90% final drawings before final approval, but their preliminary input was incorporated into these designs. Commissioner Hosmer suggested contacting

Mid-Peninsula Water District as well. The department is meeting with sports leagues again and Shearer is exploring the logistics of portable clay pitcher mounds. Commissioner Bortoli asked Shearer to investigate who would move the mound and where it would be stored. Shearer confirmed the project includes lighting upgrades and a transitional turf area before the fence, and that the openings around the field do not have a gate, which was a BCDC request. Commissioner Fox asked Shearer to find out why the decomposed granite had to be used at the lower level. Commissioner Block suggested including how many gallons of water will be saved in future reports.

Parks and Recreation Commission Priorities

Director Shearer asked the commission to review the list of priorities and email her any comments or additions by November 21st. All items will be discussed and ranked at the December meeting. In response to Commissioner Foehr, Shearer will follow up with Human Resources regarding whether a Volunteer Coordinator position was previously approved.

ADJOURNMENT: 10:29 PM.

Brigitte Shearer
Parks and Recreation Director