



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Minutes of Regular Meeting of May 1, 2019
City Council Chambers, One Twin Pines Lane, Belmont, CA

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Block, Cotten, Foehr, Fox, Lyford, Michaels, Mittelstadt

Youth Commissioners Present: Dai, Sanders

Staff Present: Parks and Recreation Director Shearer, Office Assistant II Gonzalez

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Chair Michaels

COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS / AGENDA AMENDMENTS

Commissioner Block shared that the pump track committee looked at a possible location off the John Brooks Trail.

Commissioner Foehr complimented the Earth Day event and Commissioner Lyford added that there was great community engagement about the Belmont Community Center.

Commissioners Mittelstadt, Lyford, and Michaels complimented the Egg Adventure Hunt and Recreation Coordinator Jeffrey Giacoletto and Recreation Supervisor Michael Moran for their work on the event.

Commissioner Michaels shared that he and Director Shearer spoke with the Oakland-based nonprofit Change Labs, which may provide valuable input on the city's Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan.

Commissioner Michaels recommended the commission adopt a more organic format for topic discussion (as opposed to each commissioner providing questions, then comments). He also reminded youth commissioners that their input is encouraged, but they cannot vote.

CONSENT CALENDAR

April 3, 2019 Draft Minutes

ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Foehr seconded by Commissioner Lyford the minutes were unanimously approved.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Belmont Sports Complex Synthetic Turf Project Update

Director Shearer informed the commission of a presentation she gave City Council regarding the need for additional funding for the synthetic turf project. Since the project began, costs have increased while funding has been delayed, requiring the city to identify alternative funding sources for the project to progress. Shearer reviewed major sources of the cost increase and said City Council was still supportive

of advancing the project. Shearer planned to request authorization to go out to bid at the next City Council meeting so the project could begin as scheduled on December 1, 2019.

Commissioners shared questions and comments.

- Commissioner Block confirmed the anticipated development fees would still be realized, but not in time to advance the project without alternative funding. Commissioner Lyford confirmed financing would not delay the call for bids, though Shearer said the contract would not be awarded until funding was in place.
- Commissioners Cotten and Foehr agreed the project should move forward to avoid chasing construction costs.
- In response to Commissioner Fox, Shearer confirmed all funding would now come from a loan, not from the general fund.
- Shearer confirmed Callander Associates determined the Planning Commission's proposed changes were not feasible.
- In response to Commissioner Dai, Shearer said the delay in development fee receipts could delay new projects but would not impact projects in progress; there may also be state funds and competitive grants available for future projects.
- In response to Commissioner Sanders, Shearer said the department reached out to other cities to identify alternate venues for Babe Ruth Baseball practice but have been unsuccessful to date.
- In response to Commissioner Mittelstadt, Shearer said maintenance equipment would not be included in the bid, but she would set aside funds for field maintenance and some funds would be derived from water savings. Commissioner Michaels suggested sharing maintenance equipment with other cities and considering donations, grants, or private sponsorship. Shearer mentioned Director Gervais applied for one grant unsuccessfully and the field doesn't qualify for Prop 68 competitive grant funds.

O'Donnell Park Project Update

Director Shearer presented an overview of the playground improvements to date: An Eagle Scout is refinishing the tables and benches under the gazebo, concrete work to make the pathway ADA compliant was completed, and once the site is prepared, new playground equipment will be installed. In addition, the Foster City Rotary and San Mateo High School Interact Club dismantled and refurbished the old equipment, installing one structure at a Yurok Indian Reservation in northern California; the other structure will be installed nearby this summer.

Commissioner Cotten inquired about the potholes adjacent to the park and Commissioner Michaels asked about adding crosswalks or striping. Director Shearer agreed to follow up with Public Works on these requests.

Commissioner Michaels proposed hosting weekly construction talks for the public during future projects. Commissioner Foehr suggested posting project information on the park bulletin board.

Volunteer Coordination Process Improvement Plan

Director Shearer reviewed volunteer program goals, current volunteer groups, examples of past projects, outreach, and areas for improvement. Proposed improvements included raising awareness by improving the website and developing a project catalog; creating an adopt-a-park program, volunteer days, and "scoop patrol" at off-leash dog areas; and celebrating and recognizing volunteers through events such as an annual BBQ.

Commissioners shared questions and comments.

- In response to Commissioner Fox, Shearer said hiring a volunteer coordinator is not currently feasible; in addition, staff are not available to oversee weekend projects, but the department could “deputize” existing volunteer groups to lead projects. Commissioner Lyford endorsed an adopt-a-park program and Commissioner Mittelstadt suggested connecting volunteers with groups like the Belmont Park Boosters and Belmont Historical Society.
- Commissioner Foehr recommended identifying existing models for processing volunteer requests, considering staff time in processing these requests, and responding to requests with an expected answer time.
- Commissioner Foehr suggested recognizing key park volunteers on park bulletin boards and Commissioner Cotten recommended adding who to contact for volunteer opportunities. Shearer said it would be helpful to show before and after photos from recent projects as well.
- Commissioner Foehr liked the idea of thanking volunteers with swag, Commissioner Block suggested a public thank you such as an annual award, and Commissioner Lyford said a BBQ or t-shirts would offer a good incentive.
- Commissioner Block recommended collecting information about potential volunteers’ skill sets when they fill out volunteer waivers, then compiling a database for future needs.
- Commissioner Fox suggested posting projects on NextDoor.
- Commissioner Block suggested identifying the requirements for high school volunteer hours. Commissioner Michaels proposed consistently advertising opportunities through local high schools. Commissioner Foehr mentioned connecting with key clubs as well.
- Commissioner Michaels summarized Commission feedback: establish a committee to identify and encourage existing self-sufficient groups, pilot an adopt-a-park program at O’Donnell Park and off-leash dog areas, host a volunteer day at regular intervals, and leverage technology to engage people (e.g. a volunteer calendar that syncs with personal calendars, QR codes at parks, the MyBelmont app, and ActiveNet).
- Commissioner Lyford recommended connecting with companies that offer volunteer opportunities to employees and Commissioner Michaels mentioned Benevity as one option.
- In response to Commissioner Mittelstadt’s inquiry of staff bandwidth, Director Shearer said staff could carve out time for some simpler tasks. Commissioner Foehr suggested utilizing a committee for some tasks as well. Commissioners Foehr, Lyford, Block, and Dai volunteered to form the Volunteer Program Subcommittee.

Commission Calendar

Director Shearer said that in the staff report, upcoming events were added under each month, but in the future, they will be listed at the end of the calendar. She welcomed commissioners to contact her if other topics should be added.

Commissioner Block mentioned that the bicycle/pedestrian committee may not have anything to present in June; Shearer will check with Public Works to see if there will be a presentation on the Ralston Corridor Project. Commissioner Block also offered to move the pump track to June and give another presentation for new commissioners.

OTHER BUSINESS / UPDATES

Department Reports

Director Shearer shared that the Community Garden held a clean-up day. April was also a busy month for outreach on the Belmont Community Center: there was a productive Community Advisory

Committee meeting and the survey was closed with over 2,000 responses; Group 4 is now consolidating survey data to come up with three high-level program and site options. April events included a “Get Hooked on Fishing” class, an Easter Event at the Belmont Community Learning Center, the annual Egg Adventure Hunt, and an Earth Day event organized by Public Works. There was also a ceremony unveiling four poetry signs at Belameda Park, new flooring was installed in the Teen Zone and at the Parks and Recreation office, the Senior Showcase was well attended, and there will be a grand opening for the old Emmett House site on May 9, 2019.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:28 PM.

Brigitte Shearer
Parks and Recreation Director