



**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
Minutes of Regular Meeting of September 4, 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

Commissioner Absent: Mittelstadt

Youth Commissioners Present: Dai, Sanders

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

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Led by Chair Michaels.

**COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments)**

None

**COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS / AGENDA AMENDMENTS**

The Commission moved the Bike Pump Track before the Volunteer Coordination Process Update to accommodate public comments.

Commissioner Lyford announced the American Youth Soccer Organization's Opening Day and Commissioner Michaels thanked staff for a great Movie in the Park.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**July 24, 2019 Draft Minutes**

**ACTION:** On a motion by Commissioner Foehr seconded by Commissioner Lyford, the minutes were unanimously approved (6-0, Commissioner Mittelstadt absent).

**ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

**Summer Intern Recap**

Alison Kim and Sloan Adrouny from Carlmont High School presented highlights from their summer internship. Kim talked about creating a volunteer pamphlet, taking program photos, drafting a new volunteer web page and volunteer interest form, and helping plan the O'Donnell playground reopening. Adrouny shared her experiences helping at the senior lunch program and preschool as well as working on an adopt-a-park program and designing volunteer stickers.

Commissioners shared questions and comments.

- The Commission thanked the interns for their work.
- In response to Commissioner Foehr, the interns agreed the only thing they would change was incorporating a day in the field with park staff.

- Commissioner Foehr encouraged the interns to share their experiences with their peers and Commissioner Dai encouraged them to join the Youth Advisory Committee.
- Commissioner Sanders thanked the City for helping teens get involved in local government.

### **Youth and Teen Summer Program Recap**

New Recreation Coordinator Brandon Council introduced himself and gave a brief overview of his background. Recreation Supervisor Michael Moran then presented summer highlights for Camp SOAR, the Counselor in Training (CIT) program, aquatics, the new Swimmer Aide program, “Summer Nights” at the Hideout (previously the Teen Zone), and contract camps. He thanked the Belmont Park Boosters for donating a new screen and projector to Movies in the Park.

Commissioners shared questions and comments.

- Commissioner Lyford thanked staff for the breadth of programming and Commissioner Foehr was excited to see an increase in teen programming over the past few years.
- Commissioners Dai and Sanders were excited to work with Council in future programs.
- In response to Commissioner Fox, Moran said most cancelled camps were STEM or half day programs; Commissioner Michaels suggested combining half-day camps to offer full days.
- In response to Foehr, Moran said aquatics’ net revenue decreased due to increased rent and staff pay increases, as well as lower attendance the 4<sup>th</sup> of July week.
- In response to Commissioner Cotten, Moran said Camp SOAR could take a few more kids next year, but growth was limited due to the building’s capacity.
- In response to Michaels, Moran said some families booked the whole summer, but there were also new campers every week.
- Michaels recommended incorporating more guest speakers at the Hideout. Moran mentioned a couple of the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) talks were held at there last year.
- Director Shearer thanked Moran and Recreation Specialist II Chris Fonesca-Bates for carrying summer programming in the absence of a Recreation Coordinator.

### **Bike Pump Track Review**

Commissioner Block presented the history, benefits, potential issues, and progress of building a bike pump track. He mentioned the community brought the idea to the Commission in 2016 and since then, it has been on the agenda seven times and was identified as a priority in 2018. An ad hoc committee has evaluated potential locations and is still considering the Sports Complex, Hidden Canyon, Water Dog Lake (near top of the John Brooks trail), and the Oracle parking lot by the Sports Complex. Risk management, neighborhood and environmental impacts, and funding still need to be explored. Next steps include continuing to evaluate potential sites, gathering community feedback, presenting to City Council, integrating a pump track into the Park and Open Space Master Plan, and considering a small pilot track.

Commissioners shared questions and comments.

- Commissioners Cotten and Foehr expressed support for the project.
- In response to Commissioner Fox, Block said he would like to explore sites within the city first, though partnering with an adjacent community could prove beneficial. Commissioner Michaels suggested talking with the County.
- In response to Commissioner Lyford, Block said interest in pump tracks is increasing and in addition to Santa Cruz pump tracks, Pacifica and he Menlo Park are planning them.

- In response to Lyford, Block said there are not currently organized bike clubs in Belmont, though having a pump track could encourage them to form. When pump tracks get busy, people typically take turns going around the track a couple of times.
- In response to Michaels, Block said they reached out to Oracle but received no response.

The Commission received public comments.

- Esther Thomas said she and her husband are residents who love mountain biking and want a pump track to share the outdoors with their child. Thomas offered her help.
- Elizabeth Grewal said mountain biking is an important/growing sport and a pump track is a great way to introduce kids to it. Her son is a Senior at Design Tech High School and Captain of the Woodside Beasts, which she has seen grow over the past four years. She encouraged the Commission to enlist help from other cities.
- Ryan Kaffman, San Carlos resident and avid mountain biker, loves visiting Water Dog Lake with his kids and believes it is important to offer beginners opportunities there. He is happy to volunteer. His children James and Ava expressed support for a pump track as well.
- Sharron Penn, a San Carlos resident who is active in the Boy Scouts, said she is a big supporter of anything to get kids outdoors.
- Kida MacGregor, a senior at Gunn High School and member of the Woodside Beasts, said a pump track is a great way to introduce kids to mountain biking.
- Cameron Adams, a senior at Sequoia High School, has been biking at Water Dog for five years and hosts a beginners' mountain biking group on Sundays. He believes a pump track would be an amazing place to help people learn, especially since Water Dog is advanced.
- Sally Lee, a San Carlos resident and BMX mom, has spent a lot of time driving to San Jose and would love a pump track closer to home. She has observed how helpful and supportive the biking community is at similar sites but added it is important to have City-led maintenance. As real estate agent, she also believes unique amenities add to home values.
- Quin Felton, a senior at Carlmont High School, Assistant Captain of the Woodside Beasts, and member of the Bear Development Team and Penvelo Racing, said he spoke on behalf of Penvelo in saying pump tracks help build bike-handling skills and biker safety, assisting with road riding as well as mountain biking. He said Penvelo would like to help support that.
- Dillon Ristow, a junior at Everest High School, said he has ridden pump tracks since kindergarten and gained a lot of bike-handling skills on them. He said Water Dog is dangerous for kids, so it is a good location for to offer a pump track as an alternative.
- Paul Serra, a professional mountain biker and coach, said pump tracks are the most efficient and safest way to learn how to ride, and they help build an intergenerational community.
- Jarron Ristow, Woodside Beasts coach, said the caliber of riders who spoke was impressive and all had experience at Water Dog Lake. He said a pump track would enhance the park and help kids get the skills they need to tackle the trails there while pulling them off screens.

Commissioners shared comments.

- Commissioner Sanders expressed her support and Commissioner Dai agreed it should be a priority but inquired about maintenance.
- Commissioner Lyford said public comments highlighted the benefits of locating a pump track at Water Dog Lake. Commissioner Fox agreed that a trial pump track made sense there.
- Commissioner Foehr commented on the passion of the speakers and added that some of them may be able to assist with ranking the trails' difficulty at Water Dog Lake as well.

- Commissioner Cotten thanked the public for coming and said the project would move forward with careful consideration, adding that perhaps it should be reframed as a “skills course.”
- Commissioner Michaels suggested keeping an open mind since places like Redwood Shores off the Bay Trail or a portable track could have potential.
- Block said bike-ability should be incorporated into the Parks and Open Space Master Plan as they continue to explore building a pump track. Next steps included reconvening the ad hoc committee, discussing a high-level feasibility study, and conducting public outreach. Michaels recommended exploring low cost/free options for the feasibility study, like connecting with contacts he made at the annual California Parks and Recreation Society conference.

### **Volunteer Coordination Process Update**

Director Shearer reminded the Commission that volunteer coordination was a FY20 Commission priority and reviewed progress to-date. The ad hoc committee met twice, and the summer interns helped advance some projects. Future efforts included updating the volunteer web page, an online volunteer interest form, a volunteer survey, a spring volunteer day, and volunteer recognition efforts (such as stickers). New Recreation Coordinator Brandon Council has experience working with volunteers and may help manage the process once established, though it will not be his primary role.

Commissioners shared questions and comments.

- Commissioner Fox recommended volunteer buttons instead of stickers.
- Commissioner Michaels asked if ACTIVE Net had a volunteer module and Commissioner Lyford said they could ask other cities what systems they use.
- Michaels complimented the brochure and suggested adding icons to signify key volunteer categories (e.g., one-time vs. continuous). Director Shearer said they plan to add icons to online and print materials. Michaels also recommended corporate-focused information.

### **Appoint Rich Bortoli to a Senior Advisory Committee Member-at-Large Position**

Commissioner Lyford recused himself from the discussion due to a conflict of interest.

Director Shearer thanked Commissioners for interviewing candidates and Recreation Supervisor Cheri Handley for coordinating the application process. Commissioner Cotten said each applicant offered great ideas and Commissioner Foehr suggested finding ways to engage the applicants who were not selected.

**ACTION:** On a motion by Commissioner Cotten seconded by Commissioner Foehr, Rich Bortoli was unanimously appointed as a Senior Advisory Committee Member-at-Large (6-0, Commissioner Mittelstadt absent).

Commissioner Lyford returned to Council Chambers.

### **Belmont Sports Complex Synthetic Turf Project Update**

Director Shearer said staff is working with the County on the terms of a loan which they hope City Council will approve by early October, allowing the City to execute a construction contract this year.

Commissioner Lyford mentioned drainage issues at the east side of the Sports Complex; Shearer said staff looked at the problem and plan to address it as soon as possible.

## **Commissioner Calendar**

Director Shearer reviewed the October calendar and mentioned the athletic field use policy review may get pushed back if the synthetic turf project gets delayed. She reminded Commissioners to start brainstorming for the December priorities prep.

## **OTHER BUSINESS / UPDATES**

### **Department Report**

Director Shearer provided department highlights: the Twin Pines bike path was under construction and three eucalyptus trees needed to be removed during this project; NDNU held a volunteer day; the O'Donnell playground reopening event was a success; new outdoor exercise equipment was installed at Barrett thanks to a county grant; the fall tree give-away was underway; Belmont Community Center outreach was conducted at Carlmont Shopping Center during National Night Out; the Hideout had two upcoming open houses; Movies in the Park had begun; there was a volunteer-prepared Indian lunch and five new leaves were added to the Senior and Community Center volunteer giving tree; and the American Youth Soccer Organization's Opening Day and the Battle of the Badges were coming up. Commissioner Foehr recommended posting signage about the bike path construction and notifying Commissioners of events such as lunches they could participate in.

## **ITEMS OF BUSINESS (CONT.)**

### **Belmont Community Center Project Update**

Commissioner Foehr recused herself from the discussion due to a conflict of interest.

Director Shearer presented progress to-date, including round one's outreach, results, site analysis, and resulting "base plan" and potential "enhancements." During round two people were asked to rank three potential enhancements and react to two high-level site layout options; they largely ranked an outdoor pool first, gym second, and community room third. As a result, Group 4 Architecture recommended eliminating the community room from the design. Other potential refinements included shifting the parking entrance slightly east, making a larger dog park, incorporating overflow or flexible parking, moving Belburn's parallel parking on-site, adding a walking track around the facility, incorporating sound/building buffers on the east side, and adding outdoor park restrooms. The Community Advisory Committee largely preferred site option A and led staff to begin working with traffic engineers to examine traffic and parking impacts of each design.

Commissioners shared comments on removing the community room from the design.

- Commissioner Cotten asked if this removed the only kitchen; Shearer needed to investigate.
- Commissioner Fox agreed it was good to focus on unique amenities but suggested upgrading the Senior and Community Center community room as well.
- Commissioner Lyford liked the idea of a community room to hold lecture series, though Shearer said flexible classrooms or a gym could serve this purpose.
- In response to Block, Shearer said a community room could generate more revenue, but the community needed to decide if Barrett was the right site for it.
- In response to Lyford, Shearer said Group 4 was looking at which amenities Burlingame chose for their new community center.
- In response to Block, Shearer said the benefit of removing a community room from the design was the ability to reallocate space to a larger dog park, different building configuration, etc.
- Commissioner Dai expressed support for removing the community room since there is one at the Senior and Community Center down the road.

- Commissioner Block was hesitant to remove the community room so early in the design process. Michaels said to give a stronger opinion, he wanted to further explore their options.
- In response to Block, Shearer said a community room could be used for a lecture series, theatre performances, meetings, or events, depending on how it's designed. It would occupy about 4,000 square feet.

Commissioners shared comments on site options A and B.

- In response to Block, Shearer said the site assessment led them to leave the garden and maintenance shed in their current locations. Cotten said they also offer a buffer to neighbors.
- Fox was concerned the public may have chosen option A based on the building arrangements, which could change.
- Commissioner Michaels wanted to expand the dog park and call it a “small dog park.”
- Michaels suggested encouraging alternative modes of transportation to the new center and Shearer said overflow parking could be converted to other uses if needs decreased.
- In response to Block, Shearer said field space was designed assuming existing groups would continue use. Lyford added it is best to design large fields that can be broken down as needed.
- In response to Fox, Shearer said the dog park may not attract all dog owners, but improvements to Cipriani Dog Park could also be considered as part of a larger effort. Michaels said the Parks and Open Space Master Plan can address dogs more holistically.

Shearer said community outreach concluded and next steps include another Community Advisory Committee Meeting on September 26, a Parks and Recreation Commission presentation November 6, and a City Council presentation November 12. The design phase is on track to conclude by early November. In response to Michaels, Shearer said maintaining existing site uses was an assumption that appeared to be confirmed through round one outreach, but as community needs change, flexible spaces can adapt. Group 4 is now working on cost modeling and funding plans. They can also apply their expertise in sustainable design elements later in the design process.

**ADJOURNMENT: 10:10 PM.**

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Brigitte Shearer  
Parks and Recreation Director