



County of Santa Cruz

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES

979 17TH AVENUE, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95062

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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION Minutes of June 8, 2020, 7:00 p.m. meeting 979 17th Avenue Santa Cruz, CA 95062

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Jim Rapoza, Mariah Roberts, Maggie Duncan-Merrell, Kate Minott, Steven Bennett
Staff: Jeff Gaffney, Rebecca Hurley, Jennifer Mead

II. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

Motion: Move Budget information item to action item so Commissioners can make a recommendation to staff and/or the Board of Supervisors. (Minott/Bennett 4/0; 1 Abstention, Roberts)

- At 7:50pm, Commissioner Rapoza and Chair Roberts, along with Director Gaffney brought up that moving an information item to an action item could be a Brown Act violation so item was moved to end of information items to allow for discussion and not risk a Brown Act violation.

Motion: Agenda approved. (Duncan-Merrell/Minott 5/0)

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

1. Vivian Fetter-Evans Subject: Habitat Restoration signage at Anna Jean Cummings
2. Tricia Potts Subject: Friends of County Parks update

IV. CONSENT AGENDA Consent Agenda was approved. (Rapoza/Duncan-Merrell 5/0)

V. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Roberts 1st District: There is a lot going on in the world. A lot of news and reports every day. I've seen a lot of beach and park use. People really have used these spaces during this difficult time. I want to thank everyone in the Parks Department for all their work with opening and closing parks spaces and facilities.

Minott 2nd District: Always exciting in the 2nd District. The skate parks at Seacliff was an issue, the second issue was the Polo Grounds dog park. After Director Gaffney re-opened the skate park Never a dull moment.

Duncan-Merrell 3rd District: The City of Santa Cruz will be offering a 3 week summer camp for 72 participants. Educational camps and weeklong classes will also be offered. The camps will stay within the confines of the Public Health Order. Many virtual classes being offered through the Parks and Rec webpage. Online Senior Programs have been in high demand and are also being offered; they continue to enrich the lives of seniors.

Bennett 4th District: A lot going on in Watsonville. One bright note is City of Watsonville approved the sale of fireworks to go on this year. That's a major fundraiser for a lot of non-profits. I know we'll discuss COVID later, but I do have some comments relating to parks. The Health Department's decision to close parks during Easter seemed wrong since it forced people to go inside where it is more difficult to social distance. Also, the 11-5 beach closure is a similar issue where more crowding will occur during the open hours. I do not understand the motive and wanted to bring this up.

Rapoza 5th District: I've been gratified to see Parks staff take the opportunity to do a lot of work in the parks. I've been sheltering in place because of age. When I do drive around the Valley to get out, everything is looking good in the parks. Yesterday's news was sad for the entire 5th district and the entire County.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Thank you all for your kind words and consideration for our lost Peace Officer.
- So many things to share. We were gearing up for summer at the start of all this, we printed our Activity Pamphlets and lost \$10,000 in printing costs.
- Staff has been resilient and stepped up. I am so proud of what our staff was able to do and continues to do. Maintenance staff never stopped working, they've been in the field every day.
- A lot of opening and closures, and purchasing additional signage to put at parks.
- Simpkins was going to be an Alternate Care Site and then quickly became a youth shelter.
- We hired two new full time employees: Michael Hettenhausen, Park Planner and Anissa Childers, Aquatics Coordinator.
- We've been strengthening our partnerships with the city park agencies and State Parks.
- Kat Palermo, our consultant has helped to track everything regarding the opening and closures
- Will Fourt, our Park Planner continues to work park projects and get bids done.
- The Heart of Soquel bid came in under at 1.1M, it was estimated at 1.3M.
- The Rail Trail planning and Library Annex projects are moving forward. We'll start construction for the Annex in fall 2021.
- We are party to the Temporary Permit Program that came along recently to help restaurants open up and give them more space on public land adjacent to their restaurants.

VII. REGULAR AGENDA – Information Items

- a. Parks COVID response – we've deployed a lot of staff to the Emergency Operations Center. Our Maintenance Staff continues to work in the field and respond to the daily changes regarding COVID. A majority of our office staff is working remotely and we are changing our services to be in compliance with the health orders.
- b. Status on staff
 - i. Eric Sturm is the Emergency Operation Disaster Service Worker (DSW) Manger, Kathy DeWild is managing three hotel shelters, Margaret Ingraham is our Disaster Service Worker liaison for the department and is working on contact tracing projects for HSA, Anna Tobar has been managing the call center, several lifeguards are working the call center, Rec staff has been working at the disaster service worker childcare sites.
- c. Summer Camp updates – Our revised Summer Camp started today. We are collaborating with Boulder Creek Rec district and City of Watsonville to share resources and staffing. It will bring in a little revenue and provide relief for parents. We wanted it to be available for underserved families to participate. 33% of participants are low income.
- d. Simpkins Community Center update – The public is very enthusiastic about wanting to come back to swim. We are working with Health Officer and planning to open for lap swim and therapy swim by reservation only. I commend the Aquatic staff and Superintendent Hurley for making this happen.
 - i. I do want to address one of the speakers earlier. We have been putting in a lot of

planning at Anna Jean Cummings. We've been doing tree planting and we'll be doing trail work. I know there was a question around the restoration signs. Restoration is a technical and scientific term. Restoration has a specific meaning in the park world and I think it may have been misleading. It was appropriate to remove the signage.

- ii. If people want to share idea about revenue generating ideas or different service, we can provide in the post-COVID world, please email me.
- e. Status of budget – It is a status quo budget because the County had enough reserves to bridge the fiscal gap for the remainder of the fiscal year. They are predicting a 40M shortfall, next fiscal year the budget will be much tighter. There will be a revised budget meetings in August and towards end of September budget should be finalized. Ultimately, they've been talking about a 10% furlough for staff and 5% for Sheriff's staff, there is talk of layoffs. As a Department, we are looking how we can trim 20% since that is what the CAO's is asking. We are working with CAO's office to put together a proposed budget. We're still looking at the CARE's Act money and how that will come down. We don't know what will be reimbursed, a lot of it may not be reimbursed. We should have a better idea of the outlook in August.

VIII. REGULAR AGENDA – Action Items (none)

- a. Elect Commission Chair and Vice-Chair

Motion: Commissioner Duncan-Merrell was nominated for Chair. (Rapoza/Bennett 4/0; 1 Opposed, Minott)

Motion: Commissioner Rapoza was nominated for Vice Chair. (Duncan-Merrell/Bennett 4/0)

IX. WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE LISTING (none)

- X. **ADJOURNMENT** – Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m. (Duncan-Merrell/Bennett 5/0)