



County of Santa Cruz

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES

979 17TH AVENUE, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95062

(831) 454-7901 FAX: (831) 454-7940 TDD: (831) 454-7978

JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION Minutes of June 1, 2015, 7:00 p.m. meeting 979 17th Avenue Santa Cruz, California

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m.

Present: Mariah Roberts, Kate Minott, Dave Mercer

Absent: Jim Lang (excused), Steven Bennett (excused)

Staff: Jeff Gaffney, Jennifer Mead

II. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS – Motion to move Information Item VII to VI. (Mercer/Minott 3/0)

III. CONSENT AGENDA

A. The minutes from April 20, 2015 were approved. (Minott/Mercer 3/0)

B. The reports were accepted and filed.

C. Information items on consent agenda were approved. (Minott/Mercer 3/0)

IV. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Katherine Sweet spoke about the value of our parks and that they are an asset to the community. After the Anna Jean Cummings Park clean up on Sunday May 31, 2015 she feels that our parks are under attack. The group cleaned up several illegal camps and collected over 800 lbs. of material including carpet, bedding, camping equipment, a generator, weapons, and drugs. Mrs. Sweet reminded the Commission that Anna Jean Cummings Park is a rare, coastal prairie and is a habitat for whitetail deer. She insists on more coordination to prevent illegal camps from happening in AJC, and would like to see more recommendations from the Commission and the Parks Department. She handed out homemade signs she made to post around the park. The signs read “No camping is allowed anywhere in this park. The park is patrolled regularly by citizens. Any illegal campsites or activities are reported to the SC Sheriff’s Dept at 471-1121.”

Kathy Colfer spoke about similar concerns regarding AJC and that she frequents the park quite a bit. In the last two years it has gotten worse and is not safe. She has seen assaults between homeless people and reports that elderly people do not feel safe walking through the park. She says that they need more help with this issue and more organizers.

Dan Colfer spoke about being frustrated when dealing with Sheriff’s office dispatch. Unless there is an incident at the park, police will not go out AJC.

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Minutes of June 1, 2015, 7:00 p.m. meeting

V. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Gaffney thanked those who spoke during oral communications and said it is important that these problems are brought to the department's attention. The Heart of Soquel Plaza ribbon cutting ceremony was a successful event, the community was involved and KSBW and the Register Pajaronian covered the story. The Parks Budget Hearing is June 16th at 9am, Director Gaffney and staff are reaching out to groups who would be willing to attend and show support for the department. The California Conservation Core can help with projects at Parks, such as AJC clean up and we are looking at ways to partner with them. Director Gaffney has an upcoming meeting with Sheriff Hart to discuss the Work Release Program and he will bring up what was conveyed during today's oral communications. The Farm Park will have an opening event on October 8th, 2015 and there will be a plaque dedication in honor of Steve Boysol. Director Gaffney has a meeting with Marc Monti regarding the Polo Grounds fundraiser.

Commissioner Minott added that the Lions Club is hosting the Great Gatsby Casino Night at Simpkins Swim Center on October 24, 2015 to help with the GoGo Polo fundraising efforts. Commissioner Roberts added that she looks forward to collaborating with California Conservation Core, she thinks it is a great program and that there is a need to identify projects to use this resource.

Katherine Sweet added that she spoke with Deputy Travis while at AJC clean up and the idea of cutting off access to certain areas of the park after hours may be a solution to the illegal camping. Director Gaffney disagrees and feels closing off areas of the park only further invites criminal activity into these areas since regular people would not be entering.

Commissioner Roberts asked what could Parks do to create a presence at AJC, are Park Rangers a long term possibility? Director Gaffney hopes to see a special patrol unit or a volunteer ranger program develop in the Parks department. As we find more resources, develop nature programs, and build a volunteer force we will incorporate a public safety component that will help with this issue.

VI. REGULAR AGENDA - Information Item

1. Fred Keely gave his presentation on the Parks, Recreation, Agricultural Conservation, and Open Space Project Status Report.

The Board of Supervisors approved the Parks, Recreation, Agricultural Conservation, and Open Space Project (PRACOSP) Status Report on April 21, 2015. There are two key items the project is focused on: Assembling a team and gathering feedback. Mr. Keely is working closely with Jeff Gaffney, and Principal Administrative Analyst-Christina Mowrey-Riggs, and CAO to get input.

Small contracts have been signed with Miller Maxfield Firm, Civinomics, and the Nature Conservancy to assist with shaping PRACOSP information and communicating it. Clark Beatie, a former Parks Department employee is volunteering his time to look at bigger pieces like Capitol Improvement plans and open space elements. The Board is interested in having a workshop on the open space concept in mid-August. Following the workshop would be public meetings in each supervisorial district as well as each of the

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Minutes of June 1, 2015, 7:00 p.m. meeting

four cities. We want the workshop to draw public interest and will encourage the Board to provide clarity about what next steps they would like to see.

Two concerns city mayors and county supervisors had: 1) How can we make best use of the parks we have now? 2) Will PRACOSP have eminent domain?

- 1) Efforts will be made to put a dent in fixing the parks we have now.
- 2) PRACOSP will not have eminent domain, recommendation was passed on April 21, 2015.

Current timeline is August 18, 2015 - return to Board for a study session, hold public meetings through September and October, then possibly look at options to place something on ballot in 2016. Commissioner Minott asked if PRACOSP would include City and County Parks? Mr. Keely responded that is could be both city and county parks, it can be whatever the community wants. However, it will not be state or federal parks. Commissioner Minott asked if it will have a Board of Directors? Mr. Keely responded the government structure is flexible. It is common to elect a director to each ward/district. Or have representation from officials who are elected in some other capacity, or it could be a mix of both. Once the goals of this entity are established, the structure will be more clear.

Commissioner Roberts asked if Mr. Keely has a good and bad example of other counties who have this entity. Mr. Keely responded with examples but did not label them as good or bad as they mostly demonstrate the different options for PRACOSP. Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority looks like a big robust Parks Department. They focus on acquisition, trail building, recreation, and partner with the Santa Clara County Parks department. They develop a work plan each year and decide which projects and funding should go where. Secondly, San Mateo Mid Pen County and POST are a combination authority of eminent domain, they were both able to pass ballot measures with 2/3 votes. They raise and spend a lot of money and are trusted entities.

Commissioner Bennett had a question about income for OSD's, how is that structured? Is typical income from property tax? Mr. Keely responded that a parcel fee structure is likely, but that funding decisions would come from another contract where a firm is focusing on all possibilities, and determining what is most strategic.

Commission Minott thinks people are interested and yet weary to create another layer of government. Mr. Keely replied that there will be a lot of testing and information gathered to determine if there is some form of the OSD that will appeal to people and benefit the community the most.

VII. REGULAR AGENDA – Action Item

1. Consider a workshop to discuss duties of the Parks and Recreation Commission and to define its working goals (Mercer/Minott 3/0)

VII. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m. (Minott/Mercer 3/0)