



**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES**

**Wednesday, November 16, 2011
6:30 p.m. – 700 Alma Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Arrillaga Family Recreation Center
Elm Room**

CALL TO ORDER at 6:34pm

Present – (Chair) K. Blythe, C. Carlton, J. Cebrian (Vice Chair), A. Kirkpatrick, J. Tooley;

Not present – N. Naclerio, T. Cecil

Staff Present – Cherise Brandell, Community Services Director; Katrina Whiteaker, Recreation Manager; Bridget Matheson, Recreation Coordinator; Todd Zeo, Sports Coordinator

PUBLIC COMMENT #1

Mary Kuechler of Menlo Park spoke against drilling a well in Nealon Park. Ms Kuechler said that Nealon Park is surrounded by densely populated residential. The staff report, presented to the City Council in November, proposes drilling a well in the middle of Nealon Park. Ms Kuechler is concerned that the construction would present a disruption to Menlo Park residents. Ms Kuechler asked the commission to oppose the project as it is not beneficial for the community.

K. Baker Rice of Menlo Park resident and user of city tennis courts spoke against the Nealon Well project. Ms. Baker said that Menlo Park has lost four tennis courts due to construction. The Nealon court is newly resurfaced and fully used at all time. Ms. Baker believes that construction and noise would be inappropriate for a public open space and is concerned that the private golf club would be the only party that would benefit from the project.

James Lewis of Menlo Park spoke about the sculpture located in front of Willow Oaks Park. Mr. Lewis mentioned that the sculpture “Sofas” is a work of a Bay Area artist. Mr. Lewis would like to design a detailed story board that would give information about the artwork and the artist.

Elizabeth Houck of Menlo Park spoke against the Nealon Park well. Ms. Houck believes that the project is not an appropriate usage of park space, water and resources and pointed out that the City Council gave suggestion to place the well in Nealon Park, without even giving an option to the community to express their opinion whether or not they support the project at all. Ms. Houck said that the proposed project does not meet the water conservation concept presented by the city Environmental Commission earlier this year.

The commission requested that the Nealon Park issue be placed on the future agenda.

Mike Haven with MA Little League, spoke about of Flood Park. Mr. Haven said that sports are great importance for Menlo Park youth. Menlo-Atherton Little League will support

adoption of the park. Mr. Haven said that, as a field user group, MA Little League will be willing to support upgrading and maintaining the park if permitted to do so.

Rick Ferrick of Menlo Park spoke about Flood Park. Mr. Ferrick said that adopting the park would open more field space for Menlo Park youth sports. Mr. Ferrick believes that there is a true need for more sports fields in Menlo Park and encourages the Commission to recommend adoption of the park.

Amy McGarahan of Menlo Park spoke about Flood Park. Ms. McGarahan said that there is a collective willingness in the community to organize and help with the park's maintenance. Ms. McGarahan strongly encourages the city to take the ownership of the park.

Skip Hilton of Menlo Park spoke about Flood Park. Mr. Hilton said that adopting the park is a great opportunity to add open space to the city and that there are volunteer groups that are willing to help in renovating the park and that there are many ways to offset the maintenance costs if the city is to adopt it.

A. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of minutes dated September 21, 2011

Motion/Second (Kirkpatrick/Cebrian) to approve minutes of September with an amendment to state that Kelly Blythe was present. Motion passed with all commission members in favor.

B. REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Approval of Field User Groups

In March 2010, the Parks and Recreation Commission approved a new athletic field use policy. As part of the new policy, athletic field user groups were required to fill out a Field User Group Application. The application requires a presentation to the Parks and Recreation Commission for all new user groups. Returning user groups are only required to submit their updated paperwork. While the returning user groups are welcome to come to the annual presentation meeting, it is not a requirement for renewal unless the user group violated city field policies during the past year and is on probation.

Although 11 user groups were approved last year, only eight groups used field space. All of the returning user groups have provided their updated resident information to ensure the priority for field space for the upcoming year.

The new user groups presented their programs.

Jen Lee, with Bay Area Wave Lacrosse Group, presented their program. Ms Lee said that the group has been using Menlo Park sport fields in the past four years and would like to continue their program in La Entrada and Kelly Park.

Kelly Bourke with Stanford Goals Program said that Stanford Goals Program is an afterschool program and a research study conducted by Stanford University. Ms Bourke explained that this is an obesity prevention study where the children are participating in physical activities and nutritional programs. They are based in the Menlo Park Boys and Girls Club, serving low income families. Next year, the program would work with 240 families and are looking for field space at Kelly Park.

Mark Ryan with Saint Raymond School in Menlo Park said that the school's sports program is interested in using baseball field in Burgess Park and La Entrada. There are five teams in need of practice fields on week days and weekends.

Kurt Lange with Mid-Peninsula High School has been with the program for 25 years and has been renting Kelly Field for soccer for the last 10 years. Mr. Lang requested Kelly Park and Nealon Park for practices in spring 2012.

Motion/ Second (Carlton/Cebrian) to approve all presented user group requests for 2012. Motion passes with all members in favor.

2. Discussion and feedback to staff on potential acceptance of Flood Park from San Mateo County

Staff is recommending the Parks and Recreation Commission provide feedback on whether, and under what terms, the City of Menlo Park should accept Flood Park from San Mateo County and explore the possible options for its sustainable operation.

Staff requests the Parks and Recreation Commission consider the following questions:

- 1) How will Flood Park meet the current or future needs of Menlo Park?
- 2) Are these community needs significant and sufficient to seek out the necessary options to achieve financial sustainability in order to operate the park? If yes, why?
- 3) Based on the potential funding options (for both ongoing operations costs and start-up capital costs) should the City of Menlo Park continue to explore the transfer of Flood Park from San Mateo County? If so, why?
- 4) Is there any additional feedback the Commission would like to provide on the Flood Park project and process?

Staff will then incorporate the Commission's input and preferences into the materials being developed for the Council's review on December 13.

Katrina Whiteaker presented the stats of the park's current condition. The staff estimates that, under the city, the park would be brought to Menlo Park standards, which could increase the maintenance costs. One example is garbage service with Recology, which is not presented in the County's expenses. On the other hand, the revenues could eventually increase, once the park is ready for field rentals. Further conversation was about revenues and ways to reduce the maintenance costs. Commissioner Andy Kirkpatrick pointed out that the city should consider private-public partnerships, similar to one with Menlo Swim. Kelly Blythe added that leasing the park, or its portions, could reduce the overall costs.

- **Motion/Second (Carlton/Tooley) to recommend City Council continue with the process of accepting Flood Park from San Mateo County. Motion passed with all members in favor.**
- **Motion/Second (Kelly/Kirkpatrick) to suggest the following options to City Council: strongly consider a joint operating agreement with the County, public / private partnerships, sale or lease of a portion of the park for a use acceptable to the community, and further evaluation of all possible funding alternatives. Motion passed with all members in favor.**
- **Motion/Second (Kirkpatrick/Blythe) that City Council and staff take a long term view of the future potential of Flood Park and keep in mind that full development may not occur for 10 – 15 years. Motion passed with all members in favor.**

C. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Program presentation – Onetta Harris Community Center
Bridget Matheson spoke about the center's programs. After the PowerPoint presentation, Bridget said that the past year's highlights are new marketing strategy and community outreach.

D. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Director's Update

- **Arrillaga Family Recreation Center** - acoustic panels were installed to improve the sound quality. The center hosted the California Parks and Recreation Society District 4 conference "Riding the Wave of Chaos" on Friday, November 4th.
- **Gymnastics Construction** – the project is on schedule for completion in April.
- **Onetta Harris Community Center** - All of the signage on the OHCC campus has been install including at the Senior Center, OHCC, Belle Haven Pool, Belle Haven Youth Center, and signage throughout the parking lot.

E. PUBLIC COMMENT #2

There were no comments.

F. ADJOURNMENT at 9:00pm.

Submitted by Jelena Gaines