

San Rafael Park and Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes: November 19, 2015

Chair Ralph Mihan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the San Rafael Community Center

Roll Call: Commissioners: Mark Bustillos, Eric Holm, Jeff Jones, Stacey Laumann, Mark Machado, Ralph Mihan, Chair, Tom Obletz, Cicily Emerson, Alternate

Commissioners Present: Bustillos, Holm, Jones, Laumann, Mihan, Obletz

Commissioners Absent: Emerson, Machado

Staff Present: Carlene McCart, Community Services Director, Debbie Younkin, Senior Recreation Supervisor, Tiffany Haley, Aquatics Coordinator

1. Action Items

A. Friends of Falkirk Proposal

Director McCart introduced Don Chapman, Master Gardener, and volunteer at Falkirk Cultural Center. Mr. Chapman was instrumental in the recently completed 3-year Falkirk Greenhouse Restoration Project, through the Master Gardeners. He reported the greenhouse facility to be "Grade A" in functionality, climate controlled for various propagation and education initiatives, and structurally sound. Approximately \$9,000 plus volunteer labor was contributed to the restoration, and \$23,000 in climate control system equipment and installation were donated to the City through the Master Gardeners. This was the recent focus for the volunteer organization. Previous initiatives have been the design and installation of the Mediterranean, Succulent and Greenhouse Gardens.

Chapman introduced his proposal to form a non-profit 501(C)3 to support fundraising and initiatives throughout the 11 acres of the Falkirk grounds, expanding from the formal Garden areas. The Agreement between the City of San Rafael and the University of California Extension Program (Master Gardeners) is necessarily specific to the mission of the UC program. The Charter for the Master Gardener program is limited to community information and education on horticulture, which precludes grounds improvement. A separate non-profit organization could address portions and projects on the Falkirk Grounds that do not fall under the existing Agreement.

Once accredited as a non-profit organization, Friends of Falkirk would be eligible for grant funding, and private and corporate donations. The UC Davis Extension program does not allow for outside fundraising. The organization would collaborate with the City to determine appropriate improvement projects, seek funding and act in the project management capacity under City direction. The proposed Friends of Falkirk would focus on grounds and related exterior elements of the Cultural Center and not the mansion itself.

Commissioner Jones inquired about the relationship between the current Agreement with UC Extension and an additional Agreement with Friends of San Rafael. Chapman replied the UC Extension program would continue to maintain the gardens and Greenhouse to support the educational demonstrations, workshops, lectures, plant sales and activities of the Master Gardeners.

Chair Mihan noted similarity of the Friends of Falkirk proposal to various volunteer support groups for the National Parks System. He also inquired how the Friends group would select projects to support. The new group and City staff would refer to the Falkirk Grounds Masterplan to

determine priority projects. Friends of Falkirk would provide funds and volunteers to achieve mutual goals.

Chapman stated there is no intended conflict or collaboration with UC Davis Extension, although many of the current volunteers would serve both Master Gardeners and Friends of Falkirk work.

Commissioner Oblatz noted no endowment exists for the Cultural Center, and supported the solicitation of funding for grounds improvements, as the City financial support is limited.

Mihan suggested the mission statement of the new 501(C)3 be broad to allow for future flexibility.

Commissioner Laumann commented that non-profit organization has advantage over governmental agencies, such as the City of San Rafael in attracting outside funding, and there may be an appropriate time for the City to request assistance from Friends of Falkirk. She suggested the 501(C)3 charter list priority categories such as access to Falkirk grounds and history, sustainability initiatives and existing site improvements.

After further discussion, the Commission indicated support for the proposal and requested Chapman return with the final submittal of the Charter for final approval.

B. Aquatics Season Review

Senior Recreation Supervisor Debbie Younkin introduced Tiffany Haley, newly appointed Aquatics Coordinator. Ms. Haley previously held seasonal positions within the Community Services Department in the Aquatics Program. She assumed her new full time position in November.

To begin her Annual Report, Younkin described the Water Safety Day activities held in May, a community event that featured demonstrations, entertainment, information and a pancake breakfast. San Rafael Fire Department, Police Department, US Coast Guard, Kaiser Hospital, and Los Gallinas Sanitary District participated and over 200 community residents attended.

The Aquatics program trained over 200 students for Lifeguard Certification during the 2015 Aquatics Season. The Orcas Swim Club utilized the facilities for practice and swim meets, representing over 8,000 visits to the pool. 16,275 attended during Public Swim hours 8,500 visits were recorded for season pass holders. 1,600 visitors came for organized pool parties. 1,416 visits were attributed to Lap Swim Pass holders. The Terra Linda Community Pool also produced swim lessons for 1,320 students and hosted camps and group uses that attracted 2,615 patrons.

Marketing incentive programs utilized during the 2015 season included free passes, Groupon offers, guest passes associated with season passes.

The Terra Linda Community Pool collected \$390,508 in revenue for the 2015 Aquatic Season, and expended \$409,021. 40,948 attended the facility.

The Cities of San Rafael and Novato have an Agreement for San Rafael to operate the Novato Hamilton Pool. At that site 41,503 attended during the 2015 Season. \$324,473 was collected in revenue. \$207,999 was expended by the City of San Rafael. As per the Agreement terms San Rafael retained \$266,255 of the revenue collected in 2015 for a net profit of \$58,230.

Oblatz asked for an update on the Pool House Project and the projected impacts on the 2016 season. Younkin provided the information and said the next season will be unaffected except

the locker room facilities will not be finished when the Orcas start the team swim season practices. The project will conclude in March 2016.

Commissioner Bustillos inquired about the comparison of sales of season passes 2012-2015. 2015 sales were down primarily due to cooler spring weather.

Mihan asked about the use of social media and discounts. Special offers are made mid to late season as incentives to purchase in advance. Younkin pointed out the of the discount entry ticket books sold only 44% were redeemed.

After further discussion, the Commission commended Ms. Younkin and her staff for a successful aquatic season and operation.

2. Commission Items

A. Director's Report

McCart reported on the schedule for negotiating a new Agreement with the San Rafael Pacifics Baseball Club; the monitoring and progress of the Village at Loch Lomond Development; the Departmental emergency response readiness training; opening of the production of Cinderella and a reminder of the Boards and Commissions Reception December 3; vacancies and recruitments for the Youth Services and Marketing Coordinators. She congratulated the reappointment of Commissioners Jones and Bustillos

She went on to announce Leslie Blomquist, Assistant City Engineer has left to assume a position in Citrus Heights; the announcement of a new position of Homeless Coordinator; a break in and occupation of facilities within Albert Park Stadium, the decision to lock the restrooms in the upper portion of Gerstle Park for the winter season; progress on the Grand Avenue Bridge funding; traffic signal conversion in preparation for the SMART train operation; the unveiling of the Public Safety Building scope in January.

B. Falkirk Report

There was no report

C. Parks Report

There was no report

D. Approval of Minutes, Meeting of October 15, 2015

M/s Oblatz/Jones to approve the Minutes

AYES: Bustillos, Holm, Jones, Laumann, Mihan, Oblatz

NOES: None

ABSENT: Emerson, Machado

3. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.