

San Rafael Park and Recreation Commission

Meeting Minutes: November 15, 2012

Chairman Ralph Mihan called the meeting of the San Rafael Park and Recreation Commission to order at 7:05 p.m.

Roll Call: Mark Bustillos, Eric Holm, Jeff Jones, Mark Lubamersky, Mark Machado, Ralph Mihan

Commissioners Present: Bustillos, Holm, Jones, Lubamersky, Machado, Mihan

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Director Carlene McCart

1. Action Items

A. Marin Bocce Federation Project Report

Tom Miller, CEO, Marin Bocce Federation reported 2012 was a record year for participation. Revenue is up 20% over previous years. The Bocce Complex was opened more hours for public use and group reservations were up. Hours of operation increased. MBF faces facility challenges in the next year as two courts need to be rebuilt at a cost of \$30,000 each. The renovation performed on courts G and H did not perform well. Both are deteriorating in addition to the two courts that need to be rebuilt. MBF considered a bid for US Bocce Federation competition but concluded a smaller national draw tournament in 2015 would be more financially beneficial for the organization.

Miller asked the Commission to consider a proposal from MBF to construct two additional courts with ten parking spaces, or four courts with twenty-four parking spaces, replacing the entry to Albert Park. Concept designs have been created to illustrate the new addition schemes. MBF would fund either project to expand their operation.

Commissioner Machado inquired as to the estimated costs. Miller replied that each additional court would cost \$30,000 to construct. Two courts and ten additional parking spaces are estimated to cost \$90-\$100,000. MBF needs two to four additional courts to host the national competition they seek.

Commissioner Lubamersky noted that the organization was notified in the past that expansion of the Bocce Complex in Albert Park was not practical given the other uses of the park itself, the shared parking facilities and the proximity to residences in Gerstle Park. He urged another location be considered to make bocce available to more San Rafael residents. A Terra Linda location would be preferable, and MBF has a successful model to use at another site. Miller agreed that a northern facility would attract more Novato players.

Commissioner Bustillos affirmed that expansion at Albert Park is not a concept the Commission would endorse.

B. Report and Recommendation Regarding Homelessness and Quality of Life Issues in San Rafael.

Stephanie Lovette, Economic Development Manager presented the Report that was prepared for the City Council. The Council created a Task Force to study the issue in response to community concern about the impacts of increased homeless presence on the downtown, the declining County services for this population, and the vested interest of the City in the continued vitality of

the private vendors, County and Federal assistance for Ritter Center, St Vincent's Dining Hall, and other service providers. Last year, Mayor Phillips appointed himself and Councilmember Damon Connolly, along with several members of the public, to study the issues. The group concluded their work with several public outreach sessions designed to invite feedback on possible strategies.

The Task Force recommends the following strategies:

1. Secure additional mental health outreach resources for the homeless population.
2. Coordinate closely with the County of Marin, Ritter Center, St Vincent's Dining Hall and other providers.
3. Establish a program using the Palo Alto Streets Team model whereby homeless individuals are hired and supervised to sweep, remove litter and empty trash receptacles in the downtown area in exchange for vouchers for food and housing. The program has been evaluated as an effective alternative for those who wish to separate themselves from the unhealthy community that exists on the streets.
4. Work with local retailers to restrict alcoholic beverage displays vulnerable to theft, increase security around alcohol products and sales; increase local restrictions on public consumption of alcohol.
5. Collaborate with Community Action Marin to extend mental health care teams to campsites in the hills and open spaces
6. Collaborate with local churches participating in the REST Program to shelter the homeless during the winter months.
7. Continue and expand efforts to clean out illegal camp sites throughout the City.

Chair Mihan inquired about the capacity to shelter the homeless population through the REST program. Currently the program shelters 50 individuals each night at different locations. The census of the population that live on the street, in shelters and the precarious housed is 1000 in Marin, although Lovette said this number is considered low, since the population increases when the weather is mild or warm. Commissioner Holm serves on the Board of Directors for Ritter Center, which reports working with 250-400 homeless individuals consistently.

Bustillos inquired about the impacts of the Dining Hall attracting individuals whose illegal or inappropriate behavior negatively impacts businesses and visitors in downtown. Lovette replied that the operation of St Vincent's is not anticipated to change, as the organization owns the building where they operate and does not plan to move from the downtown area. The City has little authority to restrict the operation. The management controls behavior of those attending the Dining Hall, but cannot mitigate the impact of problematic clients when they leave the premises. The property across the street from St Vincent's will be under development soon which should have an impact on homeless persons congregating on that site. Bustillos noted from a law enforcement perspective that the community is negatively impacted by the presence of the dining hall in the downtown area. Lovette commented that other Marin cities experience the same issues without the presence of a free food service. Rapid re housing, and scattered housing efforts minimize the impacts on a particular city and neighborhood, she asserted.

Holm inquired about the projected date for the Street Teams program to commence. Lovette noted that the program's annual cost is \$270,000. Until funding is secured from sources other than the City, the program cannot go forward.

Mihan asked if better and more services actually attract homeless to the community. Lovette contended the access to public open space from downtown services is the dynamic that is more likely to attract transient homeless to San Rafael. She said the City will immediately enforce the new "Open Container" ordinance to curb public drinking and intoxication, target the serial inebriates in the downtown area, and use Police resources to discourage unacceptable behavior.

The Commission thanked Ms Lovette for her Report.

C. Albert Park Stadium and Ball Field Use Policy Draft Review

Director McCart presented the third installment of the proposed Policy relating to the fee structure for the use of the facilities. The Commission began the review in September. She noted the City Council approves all fees, charges, and their increase or reductions. This proposal sets the benchmarks for future fees, delineating the types of uses and groups that will be charged the least and those activities that will be charged higher fees in relation to the community need and service.

Mihan asked if utilities that serve the baseball and softball fields could be separated by meter from the other portions of Albert Park to provide an accurate account of cost. McCart responded separate meters for water and electricity would be very expensive to install, approximately \$75,000.

Lubamersky inquired about the definitions of school, commercial and private use as they relate to the fee structure.

Mihan suggested the Policy be adopted without the fee structure, as it requires City Council action. Consensus was the fee structure is acceptable.

M/s Holm/Bustillos to Approve the Albert Park Stadium and Ball Field Use Policy, and recommend the fee structure to the City Council.

AYES: Bustillos, Holm, Jones, Lubamersky, Machado, Mihan
NOES: None
ABSENT: None

2. Commission Items

A. Director's Report

McCart reported 1500 attended Day of the Dead celebration at Boro Center and an increased number of school classrooms visited the interpretive program the Monday following. The City received continued funding for the multicultural senior program at the Center. Improved lamps have increased the lighting in the auditorium at the San Rafael Community Center. Recruitment for an Aquatics Coordinator has begun. Construction of the Canal Community Garden has commenced and is projected to be complete in February 2013.

B. Falkirk Report

McCart reported the annual Art Auction is scheduled for December 7. Victorian Holiday and teas programs are open now for registration. The Boards and Commissions reception is scheduled for December 10.

C. Parks Report

Parks Superintendant Dave Davenport reported Parks crews were involved in preparation for predicted winter storms, cleaning catch basins and drainage infrastructure. Arbor Day observance was last month at Terra Linda Community Center where trees were planted around the pool to celebrate the City's 30th years as a designated Tree City USA honoree. Lawn and turf renovation is occurring now, leaf collection is stepped up, graffiti removal has increased as have cleanup of homeless encampment on public land. Crews are also installing 35 street trees as part of the annual installation in partnership with Marin Releaf.

M/s Machado/Holm to accept reports.

AYES: Bustillos, Holm, Lubamersky, Jones, Machado, Mihan
NOES: None

ABSENT: None

D. Report from Committees

M/s to reject the letter of resignation from Commissioner Lubamersky after 12 years of service. The motion died as incompatible with protocol, and in light of the fact that the Commissioner is newly appointed to the San Rafael Planning Commission. Lubamersky was noted for his accomplishments and contributions to the Park and Recreation Commission and thanked his service.

Mihan reported to the Commission that the City Council is currently in negotiations with San Rafael Yacht Club for a new Agreement allowing the organization to continue the use City property and facilities on Yacht Harbor Drive. He reported his concerned relayed to the Council that the SRYC was not required to provide public access to the property for the launching of kayaks, and this should be a provision of future Agreements. He called for a public easement on the site, the installation of a launch and noted the site is an important link to the Bay Area Water Trail system. The consensus of the Commission was to support of this inclusion.

E. Approval of Meeting Minutes, October 18, 2012

M/s Jones/Holm to approve minutes.

AYES: Bustillos, Holm, Lubamersky, Jones, Machado, Mihan
NOES: None
ABSENT: None

3. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.