



MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, February 26, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Staff Liaison
Christopher Jones | (510) 559-7005
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El Cerrito City Hall – City Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530

This Meeting Place is Wheelchair Accessible

7:00 p.m. CONVENE REGULAR MEETING

1. **ROLL CALL – Present:** Chair David Zuckermann; Members Ben Chuaqui, Avis Codron, Norman La Force, Art Machado. **Absent:** Vice-Chair Tara McIntire
2. **COMMISSION/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUCEMENTS**
None
3. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**
None
4. **COUNCIL/STAFF LIAISON ANNOUCEMENTS AND REPORTS**
Staff Jones reported on the mid-year budget adjustments made by the City Council at their previous meeting and direction given to staff to identify an additional \$2 million in savings to increase the City's General Fund Reserves for the next fiscal year. He explained the upcoming Strategic Plan Process will be used to identify residents' priorities to help determine where the savings will come from. There was some discussion of the budget issues.

Staff Jones also announced that the City Council gave direction that the General Fund subsidy of \$60,000 for 4th of July Festival be reduced as much as possible by seeking outside funding sources and identifying cost savings. There was discussion of the revenues and expenses associated with the event.
5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
Moved/Seconded: La Force/Machado. Pass a motion to approve the minutes of the Park and Recreation Commission meeting on January 22, 2020.
Ayes: Chair David Zuckermann; Members Ben Chuaqui, Avis Codron, Norman La Force and Art Machado
Noes: None
6. **PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES AND COMMISSION WORK PLAN PREPARATION**

Staff Jones reported, and discussion was held on, picnic site and clubhouse rental revenues. There was discussion about the various facilities, how they are used and future goals to increase rental revenue.

Staff Jones presented a revised spending plan for Measure H and other parks and recreation facilities related funds (Proposition 68 Per Capita Program and Development Related Fees) based on previous Commission feedback. The plan includes backfilling General Fund landscape management funds, \$110,000 that will likely be reduced due to the City's financial situation. It also includes an additional \$70,000 for enhanced vegetation management in the Hillside Natural Area (HNA).

Cathy Bleier, a member of the El Cerrito Urban Forest Committee (UFC), spoke about the UFC's desire to collaborate with the other Commissions on shared areas of concern including fire safety. She expressed a desire to work with the Park and Recreation Commission on fire safety and landscape/vegetation management especially in the Hillside Natural Area.

Discussion about how the funds would be spent in the HNA occurred. Staff Jones explained that once the budget framework was decided, proposed activities in the HNA would be presented to the Commission as part of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for parks and recreation facilities for a recommendation to the City Council.

Chair Zuckermann stated that he would like to see some of the money for the HNA be dedicated towards trail maintenance in addition to vegetation management.

Sue Duncan, resident and member of Make El Cerrito Fire Safe, stated that there are lot of pine trees in the HNA grove near King Ct. She said that the Delta Crews removed vegetation in the HNA that had been there for decades. She said that there is so much more vegetation and overgrowth that needs to be removed that has been there for decades.

Commissioner La Force urged careful attention towards vegetation management activities that have a meaningful impact rather than fighting losing battles such as constantly removing eucalyptus detritus without addressing the trees themselves.

Staff Jones continued the budget framework discussion by describing Measure H eligible expenses at the Swim Center including those for maintenance contractors.

Discussion was held about the Recreation Department's cost recovery of 76% and striking a balance between cost recovery and affordability of services. Commissioners discussed formulating a recommendation to the City Council in this regard at their next meeting.

Other funding items that were presented were an equipment and sign replacement fund for \$20,000, an emergency facility and equipment repair fund of \$100,000, master plan projects for nearly \$250,000, and the balance of funds, around \$50,000 being held in reserve. The projects identified were at Arlington Park, Cerrito Vista Park and Centennial Park as well as several projects throughout the City identified as Immediate Work Priorities.

Moved/Seconded: La Force/Chuaqui. Approve the spending allocations in concept with two amendments 1) For vegetation management in the Hillside Natural Area the allocation should include funds for trail maintenance and enhancement; 2) need greater detail on what vegetation management activities will be done.

Ayes: Chair David Zuckermann; Members Ben Chuaqui, Avis Codron, Norman La Force and Art Machado

Noes: None

7. TOT LOT REPLACEMENT DISCUSSION

Staff Jones presented background information on a BART sub-station upgrade on Oak Street between Willow Street and Central Avenue. There is a small tot lot consisting of a sand pit area with benches, a turf area, fencing and trees that need to be relocated, at BART's expense, due to the project.

The City engaged Placeworks, a landscape architecture firm, to identify new locations. Option #1 was identified near the corner of Oak Street and Central Avenue. Option #2 was identified near the corner of Oak Street and Willow Street. Option #1's advantages are that it is more visible and has more space available for the relocation. Its disadvantages are that there is increased traffic noise and a concrete pad would need to be reconfigured. Option #2's advantages are that it is in a quieter and more protected location and has the potential for future nature play/sensory development plantings. Its disadvantages are that it is not as deep or wide as the existing location.

Commissioners discussed the merits of each location. Option 1 is much more visible, and Option 2 is in a quieter location. They discussed the potential of adding a small play structure instead of the sand but determined that was outside of what BART is willing to do.

Moved/Seconded: Machado/Zuckermann. A motion to move the tot lot as is to site #2 resulted in a tied vote and did not pass.

Ayes: Chair David Zuckermann; Member Art Machado

Noes: Members Chuaqui and Codron

Abstention: Member La Force

Moved/Seconded: Chuaqui/Codron. Pass a motion to move tot lot to site #1 replacing in-kind and hopefully adding to it.

Ayes: Members Ben Chuaqui, Avis Codron and Art Machado

Noes: Chair David Zuckermann

Abstention: Member La Force

8. JOINT AD-HOC COMMITTEE WITH ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION

Staff Jones stated that he had communicated some public art ideas in parks to the Arts and Culture Commission of consider funding out of the Art in Public Places Fund. Ideas of public art in parks included public art that children can play on, park entry signs, bike racks, and sculptures. The Arts and Culture Commission seemed especially interested in the parks signs concept and decided to create an Ad-Hoc Committee to go over options and bring back recommendations. They asked if any members of the Park and Recreation Commission would like to join the Ad-Hoc Committee on public art in parks.

Chair Zuckermann designated himself and Members Codron and Chuaqui to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee.

9. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF PARKS AND RECREATION RELATED PROJECTS

Staff Jones gave one update about a portion of a trail in the Hillside Natural Area that runs through private property. The City is looking into getting an easement for this portion of the trail before putting it on the wayfinding signs.

10. RECREATION DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Staff Jones reported on the Recreation Department's Summer Camp Showcase on February 3, 2020 and the Summer Camp Discount Day on the following Wednesday as a huge success. 54 camps filled that day and over 80% of offered camps meant their minimums.

The Annual Egg Hunt is on April 11, 2020 at 10am at the Arlington Park.

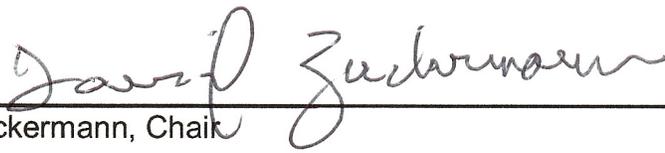
The Adult Programs and Services Division is hosting free AARP Tax Preparation appointments for low- and moderate-income seniors through April 13th. They also sent a group of seniors to the Amazon Fulfillment Center in Sacramento.

Students from Fairmont Elementary school made Valentines Cards for participants at the Midtown Activity Center's lunch program. Upcoming Wednesday presentations include Japanese Heritage, Fall Prevention Workshops, Getting to Know Medicare and using Medicare with VA Benefits, Intro to Folk Dancing and EC Historical Society Presentation on Japanese-American flower growing.

11. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

- Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at 7 p.m.
- Master Fee Recommendations
- Budget Recommendations

12. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.



David Zuckermann, Chair

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular Park and Recreation Commission meeting of January 22, 2020 as approved by the Park and Recreation Commission.



Christopher Jones, Staff Liaison