



City of Saratoga Parks and Recreation Commission

ACTION MINUTES

DATE: Tuesday, September 9, 2008
TIME: 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
LOCATION: Saratoga City Hall
Senior Center – Magnolia Room
19655 Allendale Avenue
Saratoga, CA 95070

Call to Order – 6:33 p.m.

Roll Call: Chair Thomas Soukup, Vice Chair Vita Bruno, Commissioners Katherine Forte, Denise Goldberg, Lerry Wilson

Absent: none

Staff: Recreation & Facilities Director Michael Taylor, Administrative Analyst Crystal Morrow

Report on Posting of the Agenda: Pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2, this meeting was properly posted on September 4, 2008.

Accept Agenda Items: No additional items may be added pursuant to Government Code Section 54954.2.

- GOLDBERG: MOVED TO ACCEPT
- BRUNO: SECOND
- APPROVED: 5-0

Oral & Written Communication: Any member of the public may address the Commission about any matter not on the agenda for this meeting for up three minutes.

Commissioners may not comment on the matter, but may choose to place the topic on a future agenda.

- Written communication from William Glennon regarding facility naming. Glennon suggested the possibility of naming a park or building after Burton Brazil, the first mayor of Saratoga.
- Written communication from Anthony Bartolo commenting on Ravenwood Park playground equipment designs.
- Pravin Madhani, member of the public and representative of AYSO, asked if the Parks and Recreation Commission had any concerns or questions he could pass along to AYSO.

Approval of Draft Minutes: Draft Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes for July 8, 2008.

- BRUNO: MOVED TO ACCEPT

- FORTE: SECOND
- APPROVED: 5-0

Reports: *(This section is informational only; no actions will be taken.)*

1. Michael Taylor, Director of Recreation & Facilities

- Taylor that Recreation is very busy. The department is gearing for fall session and currently taking registration.
- Taylor noted that Recreation conducted an analysis of registration in the last fiscal year and compared online registration to the 2005-2006 fiscal year. Staff found that there 31% of customers are signing up online now, compared to 19% in 2005-2006.
- Taylor mentioned that City Council is investigating feasibility of reinstating a teen afterschool program. A Council Ad Hoc was created and the committee may seek input from the Parks and Recreation Commission.
- Taylor said that there have been several incidents of vandalism at some of the City's parks, including Azule Park and Blaney Plaza. The cost to repair the damage is being covered through the City's liability insurance.
- Forte commented that she has been speaking with her neighbors about recreational classes offered by the Saratoga Recreation Department. She noticed that many neighbors were confused about the difference between Los Gatos Saratoga Recreation and the City's Recreation Department, but everyone appears to be happy with available programming.
- Taylor added that having both Los Gatos Saratoga Recreation and the City's Recreation Department has been positive for residents, because it offers residents a wider variety of services.
- Bruno asked if Los Gatos Saratoga Recreation operates an after school program
- Taylor answered yes and said that Los Gatos Saratoga Recreation is able to operate programs on school grounds after school hours.

2. Denise Goldberg, Pedestrian, Equestrian, and Bicycle Trails Advisory Committee

- Goldberg announced that the Heritage Orchard Trail is now open and added that there was an opening celebration for the new sidewalk along Lawrence near McDonalds.
- Goldberg reported that the Trails Committee is interested in creating a pedestrian cut thru from Congress Springs to Cox along Highway 85; there is already a gate in the wall. The Committee is going to investigate the feasibility of opening up the pathway, which would allow bicyclists or pedestrians to access Congress Springs without going on to Glen Brea. Goldberg added that there is precedent for this type of path along Highway 85.
- Goldberg mentioned that the Traffic Safety Commission (TSC) is considering de-listing Mount Eden Road and Highway 9 from bike route map, so these two routes would no longer be considered bike routes in city and would be removed from county bike route maps. The TSC will be discussing the issue on Thursday.

- Goldberg commented that the Trails Committee is going to be investigating the possibility of creating a trail along by Wildwood and along the creek that travels around the back of the businesses in the Village.

3. Crystal Morrow, Staff Liaison

- Morrow reminded Commissioners that the Commission Recognition Event is coming upon September 23, 2008.
- Morrow passed around award nomination forms for the California Association of Park and Recreation Commissioners and Board Members Awards Dinner in March.
- Morrow noted that the Council is scheduled to discuss term extensions for members of the Parks and Recreation Commission and Library Commission during the September 17, 2008 City Council Meeting.

Old Business:

4. Ravenwood Park Playground Equipment

Issue: The playground equipment at Ravenwood Park is scheduled to be replaced in the next year; at the last Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, staff was asked to bring back revised playground designs and design costs.

Action: Parks and Recreation Commission will review playground equipment designs and recommend a playground equipment design to staff.

- Staff reported on the playground equipment designs
- Robert Corson, member of the public, introduced himself and said he had informally surveyed his neighbors about the design options.
 - o Corson added that he lives near the park and helped develop the park in the early 1990s.
 - o Corson found that his neighbors universally favored the Ross design, feeling it is more compatible with the current structure and provides more divided play areas
 - o Corson added the neighborhood would like to retain the sand pit
 - o Corson asked if the retaining wall around the play area would be replaced as it is beginning to deteriorate
 - o Corson said that there is a general feeling that drinking fountain is located in a bad spot, since it is between the water feature and the sand area. Corson said most park users do not use the fountain and it may not be necessary to keep it.
 - o Corson observed many park users enjoy the current speaker system and asked if that could be retained
 - o Corson asked if there are plans to replace dead/dying trees that border the park
- Bruno summarized Corson's comments by noting that the majority of the neighborhood preferred the Ross design
- Soukup asked if the price was reduced by several thousand dolls, would it be feasible to install a sand pit.
- Staff answered that the current project budget is \$50,000, any cost over that would likely require Council approve to allocate additional funds to the project

- Wilson wondered if residents had a full appreciation of decision process in terms of budget
- Forte said she felt reluctant to carry out work without more feedback from the neighborhood
- Wilson added that between now and November, it would be easy to meet with neighbors to understand their interests and educate them about the budget limits
- Goldberg said the City may be able to get eagle scout to build bench or sand pit, there are ways to get some of the work done at minimal cost
- GOLDBERG: MOVED TO RECOMMEND THE ROSS DESIGN WITH THE FOLLOWING STIPULATIONS
 - STAFF WILL TRY TO NEGOTIATE COST WITH ROSS RECREATION TO GET WORK DONE WITHIN PROJECT BUDGET. STAFF MAY REMOVE MONKEY BARS FROM DESIGN IF THAT IS THE ONLY WAY TO NEGOTIATE COSTS.
 - IF UNABLE TO NEGOTIATE COSTS, THE COMMISSION WILL ASK THE CITY COUNCIL TO ADD MONEY TO THE PROJECT BUDGET.
 - IF STAFF IS UNABLE TO NEGOTIATE COSTS AND COUNCIL DOES NOT APPROVE ALLOCATING ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO THE PROJECT, THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION WILL CONSIDER OTHER DESIGN OPTIONS AT A FUTURE MEETING
- BRUNO: SECOND
- APPROVED: 5-0

5. North Campus Naming Process

Issue: The Council has directed the Parks and Recreation Commission to lead a public process to name the North Campus.

Action: Parks and Recreation Commission to continue planning the public process to name the North Campus.

- Goldberg asked when Fellowship Hall is expected to open
- Taylor answered that it would likely be complete at the end of this year or early next year
- Wilson asked what other work is being done at the North Campus
- Taylor said that the front two buildings will be demolished and replaced with minimal landscaping
- Wilson commented that naming the North Campus is opportunity for branding the facility and creating an new image for the property
- Bruno mentioned that she felt the Commission should delay decision on the naming until it is clear how the facility will be used
- Wilson agreed, saying that it does make it hard to brand if the Commission doesn't know how the North Campus will be used
- Taylor noted there have been inquiries about renting Fellowship Hall for weddings and other parties
- Wilson added that key to branding is driving an emotion, but you have to be able to tie what is being done at North Campus to that intended emotion

- Soukup suggested that the first step in the process should be educating the Commission on the North Campus and getting an overview of the site
- Taylor suggested scheduling the November meeting in North Campus, the Commission can tour the North Campus and staff can send information on the history of the site and current uses
- Goldberg mentioned that she liked the idea of meeting and the North Campus and volunteered to write something about the North Campus that the Commission could use to educate the public on the site
- Wilson volunteered to put together outreach framework for different constituencies and how to approach them so that the Commission has a plan when ready to begin outreach process

New Business:

6. Report on Saratoga Community Gardens

Issue: In March 2008, the Parks and Recreation Commission received a resident request to study community gardens in Saratoga.

Action: No action necessary.

- Bruno wondered if the Heritage Orchard could be used for educational programs
- Soukup reminded the Commission that Council has directed the Commission to work with the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) to develop programs in the Orchard
- Goldberg suggested working with the HPC to offer tours of the Orchard to schools and recruit for Orchard docents that can lead tours
- Soukup recommended that the Parks and Recreation Commission start on Orchard programs with HPC and see what response is like to see if there is need or interest in developing gardening programs
- Goldberg said an option for the Orchard is to make it an interpretive orchard, where the public can walk through to observe how it is maintained, learn about what goes on in an orchard, and learn about the history of the Heritage Orchard and orchards throughout the valley
- Goldberg suggested sending a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission to a future HPC meeting to discuss and Goldberg volunteered to attend the next HPC meeting and report back at the November meeting
- Soukup recommended holding a joint meeting with the HPC, maybe early next year January meeting

7. Report on 2005 City of Saratoga Community Satisfaction Survey

Issue: During the March 2008 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, staff was asked to report on the results of the 2005 City of Saratoga Community Satisfaction Survey conducted by Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Association.

Action: No action necessary.

- o Goldberg noticed that one of the primary resident concerns is the Village
- o Goldberg added that the Trails Committee is working on developing a trail that runs along the creek behind Village businesses, she hopes the trail will travel all the way to Hakone

- Goldberg also noted that there appears to be a lot of interest in youth programs
- Bruno commented that the possibility of developing a trail along the creek in the Village and upcoming discussions on youth programs will help to address these two resident concerns related to Parks and Recreation

Agenda Items for Next Meeting—Tuesday, November 18, 2008

- The Commission requested an update on De Anza Trail and Kevin Moran Park
- Other agenda items include
 - o Fun Run
 - o North Campus Naming
 - o Musical Performances in City Parks
 - o Pedestrian, Equestrian, Bicycle Trails Advisory Committee agenda items
 - o If necessary, Ravenwood Park playground equipment designs
- Wilson asked the Commission to agendaize discussion on Park Watch program in Reston Heights, Virginia
- Commission members agreed to agendaize the topic possibly in January
- Wilson asked the Commission to agendaize discussion on the possibility of working with Saratoga High School students in media programs and KSAR to run a program that shows residents how to work out in Saratoga parks
- The Commission agreed to together with the Park Watch program under an agenda item called Park Usage
- Wilson mentioned that Saratoga High School will be building outdoor sport courts on its campus
 - o Wilson wondered if the Commission might want to review the courts at a meeting
 - o The Commission indicated that they would like to keep an eye on the project and discuss it when there has been enough time to determine if it is successful

Adjournment

- BRUNO: MOVED TO ADJOURN MEETING
- GOLDBERG: SECOND
- APPROVED: 5-0
- Meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Minutes submitted by:

Crystal Morrow, Administrative Analyst II
City Manager's Office, City of Saratoga