

**CITY OF FULLERTON
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

City Council Chamber
Monday, February 12, 2007
6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Russell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE

Commissioner Swanson led the flag salute.

ROLL CALL

Present: Kathleen Baier-Dalton, Kathleen Dasney, Craig Russell, Kathleen Shanfield, Nancy Spencer, Neil Swanson

Absent: None

Staff: Parks and Recreation Director Ron Molendyk; Parks and Recreation Managers Dave Alkema, Grace Carroll Lowe, Dannielle Mauk and Judy Peterson; Administrative Analyst Chris Gerry; Landscape Superintendent Dennis Quinlivan.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments.

CONSENT ITEMS (Items 1 - 3)

Commissioner Swanson MADE A MOTION and Commissioner Spencer SECONDED THE MOTION to approve the Consent Calendar items as corrected.

AYES: Dalton, Dasney, Russell, Shanfield, Spencer, Swanson

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

The MOTION PASSED unanimously.

1. MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 8, 2007 REGULAR MEETING

The January 8, 2007 Minutes were corrected by Commission Dasney as follows:

On Page 1, after "MOTION PASSED," the sentence should read "Dennis Quinlivan, representing Maintenance including both Facilities and Landscape."

On Page 4, Public Comments, the correct spelling for the speaker is "Caroline Eckert."

On Page 5, regarding the Dog Park, the motion should read "on a trial basis" rather than "temporary basis." Also, on the same page, the phrase "**so moved** with review 6 to 12 months review" was clarified by attaching it to the first portion of the motion and revising it to read, "with the stipulation that provision be made to evaluate the project in 6 to 12 months."

On Page 6, the port-a-potty reference was made by Commissioner Dasney, not Commissioner Spencer.

2. LANDSCAPE DIVISION MONTHLY REPORT FOR JANUARY 2007

Recommendation to receive and file the Landscape Division January 2007 Monthly Report.

3. BUILDING AND FACILITIES DIVISION MONTHLY REPORT FOR JANUARY 2007

Commissioner Swanson asked about the Facilities Division year-to-date report on graffiti removal, and when the year starts, and Director Molendyk said the year starts in July, and that about half a million dollars is spent yearly on graffiti removal.

Commissioner Spencer asked about the 182 tree difference between trees removed versus those planted. Landscape Superintendent Quinlivan said 160 were planted since the Commission last met, that Landscape is working in residential areas, has a good percentage of the arterial planted, will plant 90 trees near the 57 Freeway and confirmed that West Coast Arborists is doing the planting.

Director Molendyk asked Superintendent Quinlivan if he would pass onto Facilities Superintendent Otley that the Commission would prefer a report more specifically on Parks and Recreation facility improvements rather than on all City facilities, and Commissioner Dasney agreed.

REGULAR BUSINESS (Items 4 - 8)

***4. GILMAN PARK IMPROVEMENTS**

Director Molendyk introduced the Gilman Park Improvements agenda item and Parks Manager Dave Alkema. Director Molendyk said Gilman Park was identified a year ago by the Parks and Recreation Commission as a park needing improvements, especially the bridge and play area. He added that state laws require upgrades for handicapped access and safety.

Manager Alkema then provided a Power Point presentation, noting that a year ago staff showed Commission photos of deteriorated and unsafe park equipment at Gilman Park, and that since then, the most unsafe equipment had been removed. Tonight, he said staff was bringing a concept plan for improvements for the Commission's approval. He showed an aerial photo of the park, located at Rolling Hills Drive between Placentia Avenue and Associated Road, which was very nice but also secluded, resulting in a lot of vandalism.

Manager Alkema showed photos and described the safety hazards at the park. He then provided a concept plan for Gilman Park with a revitalized trail system, a new bridge, two new age-appropriate play areas with safety surfacing, picnic tables, benches, and security lighting, which should reduce vandalism. He said the trees along Eucalyptus Place and the streambed would be trimmed and thinned out, and would make the play area more visible. Maintenance would be cleaning out the channel, trees and brush to make people feel more comfortable about using the park when it's improved. He asked for the Commission's recommendation to bring the item to Council for its approval.

Director Molendyk said staff publicly noticed Gilman Park to get input from residents for the conceptual plan. He asked the Commission to support higher levels of maintenance in neighborhood parks. He also noted the new Park and Trails Program which is providing oversight of parks and monitoring of play equipment, and that new state laws require playground safety inspections.

Commissioner Spencer asked about the investment of money in a park whose topography makes it difficult to prevent vandalism. Manager Alkema replied that the play areas will face residences, the tree canopy will be raised, and security lighting installed to provide higher visibility and reduce vandalism. He said the hope is to get homeowners to buy into the revitalized park and assist in monitoring the park. Commissioner Spencer said parents hadn't wanted their kids playing at Gilman because the play area was secluded and Manager Alkema agreed, saying the new location and tree trimming will help.

Commissioner Dasney asked if the park is officially closed as the gate is chained. Manager Alkema said the chain was to keep unauthorized vehicles out, and that once improvements were made, the new road would ensure handicapped access. Commissioner Dasney told Superintendent Quinlivan that one of the toilets in the ladies' room there doesn't work.

Commissioner Swanson said his children had used the park and got splinters and burns, and agreed that the park needed updating. He asked about the plans for the rest of the park. Manager Alkema said staff removed the most dangerous equipment and probably more needed to be removed. He said they will start with the front of the park to get the public in, then revitalize the trail system, and clean out the brush to increase visibility; however, due to its isolation, more substantial improvements would probably not be made. He added that the restrooms were very poorly located, perhaps a port-a-potty might be safer though more ugly, or perhaps it could be demolished and rebuilt.

Director Molendyk said staff will try to upgrade the park, but would like input from the neighborhood, e.g., where to make improvements, keeping part of the park more natural, and possible fencing.

Commissioner Dasney said she loved the park the way it was but noticed landscaping would be a challenge, e.g. erosion and parts of the path near Hartford Avenue were almost impassable. She proposed an exercise section, and rock climbing walls further in, saying she was “delighted” at this. When Commissioner Dasney noted that some people may not know the park belongs to Fullerton, Manager Alkema said a monument sign would be erected per the park monument replacement program.

Commissioner Swanson asked about the area under water last year, wanting to ensure that new improvements won’t go underwater and be damaged. Manager Alkema said the new play equipment will withstand water if the drainage course is kept clear.

Commissioner Shanfield asked about the unknown costs noted in the agenda letter, and Manager Alkema deferred to Superintendent Quinlivan on the tree trimming costs and gave a rough estimate of \$250,000 to \$300,000. When Commissioner Dalton asked, Superintendent Quinlivan said Maintenance cleans the area out yearly because it can cause flooding and endanger homes.

Commissioner Dalton asked and received more detailed information on where the old amenities were and where the new additions were. When asked, Manager Alkema estimated the park was about seven acres.

Commissioner Dalton confirmed with staff that tonight, Commission was supposed to assist in identifying the need for the improvements at Gilman Park which would start the process. Manager Alkema said there is a budget for planning and design, and that there may be some money in a fund to start construction. He agreed that the timeline can be lengthy, and Commissioner Dalton said the Commission may need to revisit this in the next fiscal year as she expects the improvements to be costly.

Commissioner Dalton said Gilman was a passive-use park and that trying to use it for active uses caused some of the problems. Commissioner Spencer and Superintendent Quinlivan said they had Arbor Day there four or five years ago, and that the equipment and location were almost an “attractive nuisance.”

Commissioner Dalton said it was nice there were a lot of people from the neighborhood, and that she welcomed them to attend the community meetings to develop the plan. Manager Alkema agreed, saying staff would be happy to set up meetings at the park or in chambers to get input.

Chair Russell opened the meeting to public comments. The following residents spoke:

Carol Sumner, 2719 Hartford Avenue
Jim Sumner, 2719 Hartford Avenue
Brent Haskell, 2540 Hartford Avenue

Chrystine Ammari, 2621 Cambridge Avenue
Barbara Steinberger, 2912 Clairmont Avenue
Rick Sanchez, 2818 Eucalyptus Place
Larry Parish, 2867 Marymount Avenue
Cynthia Smith, 2540 Hartford Avenue
Suzanne Hofstetter, Deerpark Avenue
Laura Gordon, 2806 Eucalyptus Place
Jay Sanchez, 2818 Eucalyptus Place
Steve Rogers, Hartford Avenue
Steven Chow, (no address given)

The Gilman Park neighbors were appreciative of both the proposed improvements and staff, liked the rustic feel of the park, and expressed concern about more picnic tables, better lighting, slippery and uneven paths, poor park access, trash, the sprinkler system, drainage problems and flooding that endangered homes, untrimmed trees and an unsafe feeling in parts of the park, pests and insects, teenage drinking and other questionable activities at night, coyotes, and poor police response. Staff and commissioners noted that some of the problems would be addressed through the proposed improvements and responded to the other issues with recommendations and referrals, information on the new park signage program, and a commitment to visit the park and address some of the residents' concerns. However, it was noted that the improvements were focused on the lower half of the park at this time.

Chair Russell brought the agenda item back for Commission discussion. Commissioner Swanson thanked his neighbors for coming to the meeting and agreed with their concerns. Commissioner Spencer said it was a beautiful park, but was concerned about safety, and supported trimming and thinning out trees even though she likes trees. Commissioner Dalton said she heard over and over the need for substantially increased maintenance, particularly with the stream bed and flooding. She said the City needs to get the debris out, realizes this was a money issue, so there was a need to increase the maintenance budget when planning the park.

Chair Russell said he heard the enthusiasm for the revitalization, but also heard that others living near certain areas of the park needed better access, and hoped to look at that. If the City can't do something about it quickly and cheaply, he hoped to come back to deal with this issue. He also heard lighting was an issue as well as maintenance. He encouraged the residents to contact Maintenance and Parks and Recreation just as he encouraged them to contact the Police as all calls are logged.

Commissioner Dalton MADE A MOTION to recommend approval of the Gilman Park concept plan to Council. Commissioner Dasney SECONDED THE MOTION. Chair Russell called for the vote.

AYES: Dalton, Dasney, Russell, Shanfield, Spencer, Swanson
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
The MOTION PASSED unanimously.

5. LIONS FIELD UPDATE

Director Molendyk provided a history of the Lions Field concept plan, saying it was the third attempt at renovating Lions Field, and that it was and still is the number one project for the Department. He said that since the last time Lions Field was reviewed by the Commission, the City Manager asked him to reevaluate the master plan and look at installing a football field since softball, baseball, and soccer have other fields, but football doesn't. Also, staff considered synthetic grass and turf, but are going with turf. Other changes include extra dollars from Redevelopment since more of the hillside will be used for the complex, and Maintenance is being asked to remove its buildings to increase parking and decrease traffic safety risks on Brea Boulevard. He acknowledged the representatives from Pop Warner and Fullerton Hills Softball in the audience, and said they met with staff last week. Although staff wants to get input, both staff and the leagues want to keep the momentum going.

Parks Manager Dave Alkema acknowledged Pop Warner Football's need for a full-size football field and a practice field, but said it's a multi-use facility that also needs to accommodate Girls Softball which has been there many years. He said staff was trying to contain costs, but with bonds, they can make major improvements on a one-time basis, and that they are now able to improve parking, the slopes, and build new buildings. He reviewed the recent meeting with Pop Warner and Softball, said it was very productive, and that everyone wanted to cooperate. He noted that funding could disappear if they don't move forward, and said the groups were at 95 – 98% agreement on most issues.

Manager Alkema noted the planned parking, restrooms, snack bar and meeting room, saying he was given direction by the City Manager that the Maintenance building would be removed, as will Pop Warner's storage. They will try to assist Pop Warner with its special equipment storage needs. A picnic shelter, more restrooms, and nice softball fields are also planned so Fullerton Hills Softball can also have tournaments. Besides one full football field, the City will try to put in one more small football field within softball fields.

The slope is a serious issue because it's soft, has possible contamination and ground squirrel holes, and needs to be pushed back, making the hillside very sheer. Staff is looking at a pour-in-place concrete wall with arbor. The bench area at the top right of the plan has some contamination area, but can be addressed. Manager Alkema said the complex had a nice park setting but may need to have street access addressed. He said he will be meeting with the user groups to finalize the plan, and will then be returning to Commission for approval of the concept plan.

Commissioner Swanson noted that the new plan was "radically different" plan from the previous one, and had a lot more emphasis on football. He wanted to see the previous plan for comparison which Manager Alkema agreed to provide the next time. When Commissioner Swanson asked, he was told the buildings were a restroom, snack bar and small storage area. He also asked about the parking and exit near the Maintenance area

and was told it was locked off right now, but could be opened, perhaps only for an entrance due to the high-speed blind curve.

Manager Alkema said they will bring the plan back for commission approval. Commissioner Swanson asked about the trail, and said it was changed after the first plan mostly due to cost, and now that the slope would be pushed back, the original trail plan was no longer feasible. Director Molendyk said there was an alternative plan which the previous parks manager and Manager Alice Loya developed, and that he would provide that information at the next review.

Commissioner Swanson asked about practice areas during football season when the turf becomes very muddy, and Manager Alkema said the area would be regraded and relighted, and require high maintenance. Commissioner Swanson agreed, saying that after building beautiful new sports complexes, it wouldn't be right to settle for something less. He said it was innovative and applauded staff.

Commissioner Shanfield asked about parking spaces, and was told exact figures would be provided at the next review but that there would be at least double the number of spaces. Director Molendyk said the traffic flow problem would probably be solved by one entrance and two exits. When asked, Manager Alkema said all the improvements would be made in one phase and probably take about a year.

Chair Russell commented he was glad football could be on grass and there would be more space than before. He asked about the previous Pop Warner controversy on other groups using the Lions Field Club House, let alone demolishing the building in the current plan, Director Molendyk said the field users' leadership had been very cooperative and in agreement on the improvements and storage, saying staff wanted to "level the playing field" so that all groups could get the same treatment.

Chair Russell asked about the remodel on the top of the slope, and Manager Alkema said they saw the slope renovation as an opportunity to beautify the area including a picnic shelter, parking and a trailhead. There was discussion on the area and how it was considered for overflow parking but rejected.

A discussion then ensued on the softball fields and ball trajectories with input from Ruben Castillo, Fullerton Hills Softball President, who said there would be no problem, especially with the planned higher fencing near Brea Boulevard.

Commissioner Dalton biggest concern was on the cost of the slope change and was told that due to the poor condition of the slope, there was no other choice but to stabilize it. Director Molendyk said they have the support of the leagues, the City Manager wants it done right, and there is money available from Redevelopment Bonds.

Commissioner Dasney initiated a discussion about Pop Warner's storage needs and if a basement might help, and was assured staff was open to all ideas and that there would not be a storage container after the improvements.

When Chair Russell expressed concern about football's negative effect on the turf, Manager Alkema noted the higher level of maintenance needed to prevent turf problems. Commissioner Shanfield asked how high the wall would be and Manager Alkema said 10 to 25 feet in height, and that the new plan could meet the space requirements for the fields due to the type of wall used, and that he would provide a photo.

Steve Cone, Pop Warner President said they only need about 500 s.f. for storage but they also use the building for registrations and weigh-ins also. He approved of the third plan, saying they have about 500 sets of helmets and shoulder pads. He agreed with Chair Russell that Lions Field was in dire need of repairs and that he wanted to ensure the process continues and will help when asked.

Ruben Castillo of Girls Softball said they're ready to help, too, and agreed that Lions Field should be protected by using other fields, and was willing to work with Pop Warner. Director Molendyk said there could be other partnerships, perhaps with Fullerton College and Fullerton High School, to use their fields. Chair Russell suggested using Cal State Fullerton also, and suggested honoring those who donated the building.

6. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

The Commission agreed with Director Molendyk's suggestion to put on March's agenda an action item to form a committee to work on policies for field allocations and priorities.

Director Molendyk noted a planned April Commission workshop on April 9th to review Department progress, capital improvement projects, program enhancements and the Department budget and maintenance, and said he would like to start earlier and provide food. He said he wanted to coordinate the workshop with the new Commission appointments which were postponed to March 6.

Director Molendyk showed the Commission the finished shade structure at the Sports Complex, acknowledging staff for their work. The Commissioners were impressed with it, and Commissioner Dasney said she saw the structure herself and that one could easily see through it. When she asked, staff said that the shade could be winched tighter when needed, and that the official life expectancy was 10 years for the shade and 25 for the posts, but that the shade should last 20 – 25 years.

Commissioner Shanfield said she couldn't attend due to a school trip for Spring Break, and Director Molendyk said they can look at an alternate date, confirming that April 16, 2007 will be the new meeting date, and the time 5:00 p.m., in the Council Conference Room.

Commissioner Dalton said tonight would be her last meeting as she was retiring, had expected her appointment to end in December 2006, and had made other plans.

7. REPORT ON CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS

The information was received and filed.

8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Dalton reiterated that she would not be attending anymore meetings including the March meeting.

Commissioner Shanfield said she was taking a City class at Hillcrest Park and asked if the mats there were cleaned. Manager Grace Lowe said she didn't know they were still there, that the teachers were responsible for their own equipment. She said she would talk to the teacher and if she wants them, the responsibility would transfer to her.

Commissioner Dasney asked about the upcoming Sacramento CPRS conference and was told Director Molendyk, Analyst Chris Gerry and Museum Educator Aimee Aul were attending. He said he is going to help recruit for the Parks and Recreation Director. He said the new travel policy allows for conferences and travel, and if Commission wants to become more active, they could consider it in future budgets. He said they could discuss this at budget workshops, and perhaps they could pass on to their Council members.

Commissioner Dasney asked about a Civic Center Plan meeting schedule, and Director Molendyk City staff is planning on making a Commission presentation in March. Commissioner Dasney congratulated staff on the successful dinosaur exhibit and the increased publicity on Senior Center activities.

Director Molendyk reminded Commission of the new Fullerton resident, granddaughter Megan Molendyk, and the Chair congratulated him.

Commissioner Dalton MADE A MOTION to adjourn the meeting, and Commissioner Swanson SECONDED THE MOTION.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Molendyk, Secretary

RM:pf