

CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

Parks, Beaches & Recreation Commission

Regular Meeting

March 4, 2008 - 7pm

Convened 7:10pm

ROLL CALL

Present: Tim Brown, Chair
 Bill Garrett
 Phillip Lugar
 Marie Marston
 Greg Ruzicka
 Cristine Trapp

Excused: Debra Allen

Staff: Mark Harmon, General Services Director
 Wes Morgan, Recreation & Senior Services Director
 Sean Levin, Recreation Superintendent
 Teri Craig, Admin Asst

DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Director Morgan stated that Opening Day/Grand Opening at Mariners Park was extremely successful and noted that Commissioner Marston was in attendance. He noted that there was over 1000 people there and very festive with some Council Members and the City Manager throwing out first pitches. He also thanks General Services and Public Works for their great work with the park.

Director Harmon stated that it was their hope that the rain season was done and that it would give staff some time to clean up the beaches and storm drains. He also reported that the Breakers Drive HOA met last week and that an email was forwarded thanking staff for the new signage that was installed at CdM State Beach and noted that it has helped curtail some of the BBQ activity and late night partying.

City Council Actions – Director Morgan stated that GKK had been hired as the project manager for the OASIS project and reminded the Commission that they had been the project manager Newport Coast Community Center and the Santa Ana Heights Fire Station.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. **Minutes of the February 6, 2008 regular meeting.** Waive reading of subject minutes, approve and order filed.
2. **Park & Operations Division Activity Report.** Receive/file monthly Activity Report for activities and upcoming projects.
3. **Recreation & Senior Services Activity Report.** Receive/file monthly Activity Report for activities and upcoming projects.
4. **Item removed by Commissioner Lugar**

Motion by Commissioner Ruzicka to accept items 1 - 3 of the Consent Calendar. Motion carried by acclamation.

4. **Picnic Table Donation** - Commissioner Lugar stated that in looking at the photograph included with the staff of the picnic table and noted his concern durability.

Director Harmon stated that the table included in the staff report was the one that will be replaced and had just distributed the style of the bench that will be replaced.

Motion by Commissioner Lugar to approve item 4 of the Consent Calendar. Motion carried by acclamation.

INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

5. Sunset Ridge Park Draft Concept Plan – Chair Brown asked Director Morgan to comment on the charge of the Commission and then will move on to the Architect and then will listen to public comments regarding the project.

Director Morgan stated that we are here tonight at the direction of the City Council to continue the orderly progression back to the City Council regarding Sunset Ridge. He stated that he believed that everyone understands the reason for the meeting and that there is a lot of interest on what direction the project takes. The outreach began at the October Park Development meeting and it was decided to have the first outreach meeting that next month and the public was noticed. He went on to say that on January 10th another Park Development meeting was held and Sunset Ridge was again the main focus of the meeting and more outreach was done. On February 11th another Public Outreach Meeting was held. Director Morgan stated that the next step is to present the project to the full Commission by EPT and to listen to public comment. He reiterated that the Commission wants to hear all comments relating to the project and that these will be forwarded to City Council for a Study Session in April. He reported that some Council Members, Chair Brown, Director Badum and some members of youth sports organizations visited some homes at Newport Crest.

Chair Brown stated that he had been present at each of the 4 public meetings and was very familiar with the issues.

Ric Vanderwood from EPT stated that he had been looking forward to make the presentation to the full Commission and noted that staff has worked very diligently on the concept plan over the past several months to address the issues from the City and the desires of the public. He reported that three things were considered at the beginning of the project:

1. Park program - an active park where it will include ball fields and support amenities for an active park.
2. Outreach Program - input has been taken from the public to incorporate their thoughts as much as possible.
3. Physical constraints of the park - easements and topography.

The PowerPoint was presented.

Commissioner Ruzicka asked about the pedestrian entry on Coast Hwy @ Superior at the corner and stated that it is a hideous intersection with congestion and that a lot of people will end up parking at the shopping center across the street and questioned whether it is a good idea to have a pedestrian entrance at the corner from the standpoint of people meandering across the roads and slowing up traffic and delays that it could cause an already congested area.

Mr. Vanderwood stated that he understands the concern but as stated earlier that if there is not a path at the location people will still beat a path there to use the quickest route to their destination.

Commissioner Trapp addressed the pedestrian access midway on Superior noted that people will be crossing Superior without a crosswalk from the parking lot on the other side.

Mr. Vanderwood stated that it was located there just as another entrance to the park without having to go all the way around it.

In answer to Commissioner Trapp's question, Mr. Vanderwood stated that the elevation difference between PCH and Newport Crest at the maximum is 50-75 feet. She also asked if the baseball screen could be moved down. Mr. Vanderwood stated that because of the easement keeps it in that area.

Commissioner Trapp asked the status of the environmental process.

Director Morgan stated that the environmental process has not begun as we are trying to get through the conceptual part of the project.

Commissioner Marston asked who would be the reviewing agencies through the environmental process.

Director Morgan stated that the plan would be reviewed by the City, Cal Trans and the Coastal Commission.

In answer to question regarding specific species, Mr. Vanderwood stated that there does not appear to be any as the area was graded by Cal Trans many years ago.

Commissioner Marston asked if the access was right in and right out and if Cal Trans has been consulted.

Director Morgan stated that the only conversation with Cal Trans has been the possibility of a traffic light and staff was told that would be highly unlikely and that the median would not be split so it would be right in and right out.

Commissioner Trapp confirmed that you would have to come to Superior and make a u-turn to gain access.

Engineer Sinacori stated that a u-turn at Superior cannot be made so drivers will have to go to Balboa Blvd. He noted that a lot of people from the Peninsula will use the park and will probably walk into the park. A barricade could be built at the parking lot or additional plantings to keep people from crossing at that point. He also noted that you cannot make a u-turn on Superior except at Hospital Road. He also noted that staff is uncomfortable with constructing a left turn pocket because of the 4 lanes from the other side.

In answer to Commissioner Marston's question, Director Morgan stated that the land use designation for this parcel was voted on by City Council in 2006 and listed as active.

Director Morgan stated that he has received some questions regarding the outreach of the General Plan - this project as one of them. He noted that he spoke with Asst City Manager Wood who reported that the outreach was extensive whether it was focused on Sunset Ridge or the Recreation Element or the land use designations for the acreages.

Commissioner Ruzicka asked if staff has looked at the possibility of an underpass.

Director Morgan stated that it would be prohibitively expensive but that even before that discussion a concept needs to be approved.

Chair Brown opened the public comments

Chair Brown stated that most of the audience has attended these meetings and that they were less formal but that they would be held to 3-minutes. He stated that the primary purpose for this

meeting is to hear from the community and not to answer questions as we are still in the conceptual part

The following people made spoke at the meeting:

Kathy Arblaster	Jackie Davidson
Mike Lombardi	Barbara Taylor
Jenny Lombardi	Robert Orby
Helen (no last name given)	Chris Bebo
Don Brunner	Michael Alta
Byron De Arakal	Richard Roses
Lance Bell	Fariq Ghanem
Christi Plesfig	Mark Gonzales
Ted Berry Jr.	Jim Harris
Jane Drew	Elizabeth Beresford
Kristine Adams	Jan Vandersloot
Ted Berry Sr.	Michael Daly
Fred Cornwall	

The following comments were stated:

- More soccer fields - more children use them and so the City should be fair across the board
- If the park was only for soccer then there would be one park solely used for soccer
- It will become Sunset Stadium
- Quality of life for people in the Crest should be important to the City of Newport Beach
- Noise study should be done
- Spending \$5M for a passive park is just as good of an idea as an active park
- Was an EIR done before the City bought the land?
- Where would Newport Crest like the children to play if not here
- I do not have children and do not want to hear or see children playing out my window
- Concern of overdevelopment, noise nuisance and safety
- Can you ensure that the Crest does not become a parking lot and will the City cover the cost of extra parking guards
- City should compromise and it should become more of a passive park
- The park should include a memorial to Louise Greely
- Baseball fields should be smaller
- More soccer fields, no baseball fields
- What will happen if Banning Ranch becomes a park
- There should be an analysis of plants on the land
- When was the public outreach done for this land before it was named active within the General Plan
- The City should consider Banning Ranch before completing plans for this park
- Suggested a pedestrian bridge be built for better access.
- Louise Greely should be commended publicly for her efforts.
- Walk & Bike Trails
- View areas within the park
- Liability for homeowners if balls become a problem
- How and why was it determined that there should be ball fields
- What will be the schedule for the park
- Who will get to use the park
- Whose decision is it regarding the park facilities
- Banning Ranch should be incorporated as a solution for access and use of the park
- Should not be an active sports park but rather a balance between active and passive.

Chair Brown closed the public discussion

Chair Brown stated that he believed that the Commission has some latitude here and that the Commission can simply do nothing and make it available to the Council, discuss it and make some recommendations.

Director Morgan stated that the charge from the City Council was to reach out to the community; take input and bring back to them what was said.

In answer to Commissioner Lugar's question, Director Morgan stated that when the purchase was made, staff provided to Cal Trans at their request a rough draft of sports fields on the park and sports fields were written into the request to purchase. When the property was acquired from Cal Trans staff met with them onsite and they were well aware that sports parks would be part of the design. He reminded the public and commission that the field is zoned what it is today.

Commissioner Lugar stated that his question had more to do with the phase 1 environmental analysis that is usually done before purchase, and asked if the land was just visually reviewed for contaminants?

Director Morgan stated that is probably the extent of the research that was done.

Commissioner Lugar stated that he had been a member of the General Plan Advisory Committee for four years and co-chair for three years and vice chair the very first year. He went on to state that Commissioner Marston had also been a member of the committee along with some audience members, noting that Dr. Vandersloot had been an original member and so was Louise Greely and appreciated their input. He stated that to his recollection Louise had always wanted the parcel to be a park and had worked with Jan Debay and noted that he did not recall her specifying that it needed to be a passive park but rather a democratic park and how that works out regarding passive vs. active I believe she would have left that up to the voters. He stated that it did remain in the General Plan as an active park. It was understood that during the four years of meetings every month and sometimes more that all were publicly noticed and people were begged to come and tell the committee what they thought and noted that he did not believe that the committee heard from any residents in the area that are here tonight as to whether it should be a passive park. Commissioner Lugar stated that he was concerned about that because the some are arguing that the General Plan did not consider their interests when in fact it did. He stated that the noise is something that everyone is sensitive to but yet everyone that knew that a park would be built there knew it would be noisy and now that it is going to be in the backyard here they come. He stated that he does want to hear from the community but that the only recourse would be to change the General Plan and outside of that it has always been understood that it would be an active park. Commissioner Lugar stated that in fairness to the numbers of children that play soccer vs. those that play baseball and commented that it is imbalanced and that he would support sole use for soccer.

Commissioner Ruzicka stated that he would be remiss if he was not able to ponder these issues before a recommendation is made.

Commissioner Garrett stated that after listening to the audience and noted that he is always on the resident's side and often times the City appears to do whatever they want to do but in this case there is a shortage of sports fields in this City and would like to see the fields reduced and possibly just have one large soccer field and the rest be used as some sort of noise barrier for the residents.

Commissioner Marston suggested that we recommend to City Council that a noise study be done to see what kinds of measures can be taken to dissipate noise before more concept plans are done.

Discussion ensued regarding sound walls, acoustic barriers, noise study, noise specialists, views, scheduling of fields, elevations, etc.

Chair Brown stated that this is the 4th outreach meeting that he has attended and has heard a lot of discussion on the park. He stated that he believes that many if not most of the issues brought forth can be mitigated, probably not to everyone's satisfaction. He stated that he had heard that the General Plan could just be changed but that is easily said but not realistic. Also he stated that in his opinion it will be an active park and use could be mitigated as far as hours of use, fields, and urged the audience to focus on mitigation of the issues as opposed to pursuing the notion of changing the General Plan. This concept plan for the park is very general and most of the questions raised have no answers because we are not at that point. An EIR will be done, and if the audience remains vigilant in your attempts to mitigate some of the uses then they could be addressed but if you get bifurcated in the passive park issue and changing the General Plan that it would prevent all of you from what will eventually happen. Chair Brown urged that this be kept in mind as the process moves forward.

Motion by Commissioner Marston to recommend to the City Council that a noise study be conducted at Sunset Ridge Park.

COMMITTEE REPORTS -

Parks - Nothing to report.

RSS - Nothing to report.

Budget - Commissioner Garrett stated that a meeting was held tonight and thanked staff for a complete report and noted that it would be presented to the full Commission next month.

AD - Hoc

–Youth Sports Liaison - Nothing to report

–Community Services Award - Commissioner Lugar recommended Dr. Perry for the next recipient. Superintendent Levin stated that he would have staff write up a recommendation for the committee to review.

Other

–Santa Ana River Vision Plan- Commissioner Trapp stated that they had met in January and focused on specific areas. Next meeting is scheduled for March 26 and will review final plans. Commissioner Lugar volunteered to help with restrictions of easements regarding SCE, etc.

–1/1 Marine Memorial Committee- Commissioner Garrett stated that the unveiling will take place on May 26 at 1pm at Castaways Park and urged the Commission to attend and noted that all the funds have been raised.

–MarinaPark - Commissioner Garrett stated that there is controversy regarding the building height and will go to City Council Study Session on March 11.

Commissioner Trapp stated that the McFadden Groundbreaking would take place on March 17 at 10am and urged everyone to attend.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following are new or ongoing items to be discussed:

- Fire pit discussion - safety; regulate what is burned
- Possible implementation of Parks & Rec Foundation.
- City Council Policy B-17 - Spring 2008
- Parking Signage at Back Bay View Park
- Dog Park

ADJOURNED IN MEMORY - 9:07pm

Submitted by: _____
Teri Craig, Admin Assistant