

CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

Parks, Beaches & Recreation Commission Regular Meeting December 1, 2020 – 6:00 PM

I. CONVENE MEETING OF THE PARKS BEACHES & RECREATION COMMISSION TO ORDER – 6:00 PM

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Heather Ignatin, Chair
Diane Daruty, Vice Chair
Hassan Archer, Commissioner
David Granoff, Commissioner
Laird Hayes, Commissioner
Walt Howald, Commissioner
Kate Malouf, Commissioner

Staff: Laura Detweiler, Recreation & Senior Services Director
Sean Levin, Recreation & Senior Services Deputy Director
Micah Martin, Deputy Public Works Director
Kevin Pekar, Parks and Tree Superintendent
John Nelson, City Arborist
Mariah Stinson, Administrative Support Specialist

III. PRESENTATION

A. Recognition of Celeste Jardine- Haug For Her 32 Years of Service

Director Detweiler gave a summary of Celeste's career with the City.

The Commissioners provided well wishes to Celeste on her future endeavors.

IV. NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON CONSENT CALENDAR-None.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Minutes of the Parks, Beaches & Recreation Commission Meeting of October 6, 2020.

Recommendation: Waive reading of subject minutes, approve and order filed.

B. PW Activity Report

Recommendation: Receive/file Activity Report.

C. RSS Activity Report

Receive/File Activity Report of past and upcoming projects and events.

D. Bench Donation

Staff recommends that the Parks Beaches & Recreation (PB&R) Commission approve a Santa Monica bench donation requested by Nina Elisius at Buffalo Hills Park. The bench will be a new addition to the location, requiring noticing of adjacent residents.

Motion by Commissioner Granoff; seconded by Commissioner Archer, to APPROVE VI, CONSENT CALENDAR. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

VII. CURRENT BUSINESS

A. Residences at 4400 Von Karman Project - Review of Public Parks

Staff recommends that the Parks, Beaches & Recreation (PB&R) Commission determine whether the proposed amenities within the proposed public park for Residences at 4400 Von Karman project are practical, useable, and feasible for the general public, and provide recommendations to the City Council.

Rosalinh Ung, Principal Planner with the Community Development Department, disclosed that the project proposed for 4400 Von Karman is a 312-unit apartment project located in The Airport Area. The 1-acre park was to be located between the new residential structure and the existing adjacent office building in the Koll Center Newport Planned Community. The project will be constructed in three phases over 2.7 years. If approved, construction will begin in the 3rd quarter of Fiscal Year 2021 and concluded in the 1st quarter of Fiscal Year 2024. The Planning Commission has recommended project approval to the City Council.

Tim Stanley with The Picerne Group, applicant, disclosed that The Picerne Group is a family-owned company that resides in the City. In addition to the 1-acre park, an additional ½-mile of pedestrian trails will circle the park and connect the park to the exterior community. After receiving feedback, the project now includes a unisex restroom, monument signage, separation fencing for large dogs and small dogs at the dog park, and a water station. The Bocce Ball court will be replaced with a game lawn with synthetic turf and includes park lighting. The proposed firepits will be removed.

Matt Jackson, MJS Design Group, confirmed that the park will not be fenced and available to the public. The unisex restroom is in the center of the park and will be open during park hours. Seating will be included along the proposed pedestrian trails and lawn areas.

Chair Ignatin appreciated the feedback that was given from the applicant.

Regarding Commissioner Hayes's questions, Mr. Stanley believed that one restroom would be enough. Regarding restrooms that were locked at Uptown Park, he suspected it may be COVID-19 related. Director Detweiler stated that she would investigate the missing monument sign at Uptown Park as well as the locked restrooms. Mr. Jackson explained that a California garden includes California native plants or drought-tolerant plants.

Commissioner Hayes suggested plant signage that showcased what type of plants are located within the garden and include more affirmative signage.

Regarding Commissioner Granoff's questions, Mr. Stanley commented that the hours will follow the City's hours for public parks.

Regarding Commissioner Archer's inquires, Mr. Stanley noted that the red boundary line is City park dedication, but the park will extend beyond that. Wayfinding signage will be included that will direct the public on how to enter the park.

Vice Chair Daruty commented that the BBQs were not working at Uptown Park. Mr. Stanley shared that the BBQs should have been on at Uptown Park but believed they may have been turned off due to COVID-19.

Vice Chair Daruty suggested having way to signs along the main thoroughfare so that the public is aware that there is a public park nearby.

Commissioner Howald asked if the internal streets were public or private. Mr. Stanley clarified that the internal street running in front of the residential project is a private street but is open to the public. The concept of having a park between the residential building and the office building has been well received by the public.

In terms of Vice Chair Ignatin's questions, Mr. Stanley mentioned that the one staff recommendation that was not incorporated into the design was a tot lot and that was because he believed there would not be a demand for tot lot. He disclosed that the plan currently proposed four, time-restricted, free parking spots, but is agreeable to adding one more.

Commissioner Malouf asked if spill-over parking will be available and Ms. Ung mentioned that during the weekend all parking spaces within the office complex will be available.

Chair Ignatin called for public comment.

Jim Mosher shared that the area has been developing into a residential area, but without a Master Plan. He suggested to include basketball hoops and handball courts. He pointed out that the parking spots are not dedicated parking spots for the park and suggested that free parking be available in the nearby parking structures for park users. He supported the removal of the fire pits. He requested clarification on the park hours in terms of after-dark.

Chair Ignatin closed public comment.

Commissioner Malouf wanted to see the parking spaces include signage that designates them as public parking spaces.

Commissioner Archer requested there be signage for the pedestrian trail.

Motion by Chair Ignatin; seconded by Commissioner Hayes, to APPROVE the proposed amenities to be provided within the proposed public park for Residences at 400 Von Karman project are practical, useable and feasible for the general public, and provide recommendations to the City Council. Additionally, staff to work with the applicant on a signage plan to include monument signs and way to directional signs on Von Karmen and Birch, affirmative park rules, park layout, plant identification, and signs for the five dedicated parking spots versus the four proposed. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

B. Reforestation Request- 2800 Catalpa Street

Staff recommends that the Parks, Beaches & Recreation (PB&R) Commission consider the reforestation request of a California Sycamore tree located at 2800 Catalpa Street on the Camphor Street side. The applicant, Matt Menlove, at 2800 Catalpa Street has met the procedural requirements for reforestation established in City Council Policy G-1. There will be a one-for-one replacement tree, Chinese Fringe (Chionanthus retusus) installed at the applicant's cost.

City Arborist Nelson reported that an inspection of the tree determined that the tree was healthy and did not meet the criteria for removal per the G-1 Policy. There had been repairs to the public infrastructure in the past, but the public infrastructure was serviceable.

Chair Ignatin asked what the growth rate is for a Chinese Fringe tree and City Arborist Nelson responded between 6 to 12-inches per year. There were no oppositional comments received by the neighbors.

Chair Ignatin called for public comment; seeing none public comment was closed.

Motion by Chair Ignatin, seconded by Commissioner Archer, to APPROVE the reforestation request of a California Sycamore tree located at 2800 Catalpa Street on the Camphor Street side. The applicant, Matt Menlove, at 2800 Catalpa Street has met the procedural requirements for reforestation established in City Council Policy G-1. There will be a one-for-one replacement tree, Chinese Fringe (Chionanthus retusus) installed at the applicant's cost. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

C. City Council Policy G-Series Revisions

Staff recommends that the Parks, Beaches and Recreation (PB&R) Commission consider the revisions to the City Council Policy G-Series and forward to City Council for adoption.

Superintendent Pekar presented the revisions for Policy G-1, G-3, and G-6. Several key issues that were addressed included transparency, appropriate notification for tree removals, the application process for tree removals, basic and advanced tree risk assessments, changes to tree species and sizes, and procedural changes.

A key change included enhanced protections for special trees including more widespread notification for special tree removal, a longer appeal period, and a petition process. Other key changes included 14-day notice of removal for standard trees, process flow charts, the inclusion of basic and advanced risk assessments, Coral Trees were removed from the problem tree list, an increased petition range of a 500-foot radius around the tree in question, no maximum amount of people who can be petitioned, and updates to the approved tree lists.

Chair Ignatin appreciated the flow charts.

Chair Ignatin called for public comment.

Jim Mosher wanted to see the lack of consistency regarding the appeal procedures to be addressed including clarity around if all decisions made by the Commission can be appealed to the City Council and if there is a fee regarding any action the public may take. He wanted to see the Commission be the body that residents would go through for appealing a problem tree removal, not a Council Member who lives in the vicinity of it. He suggested that the new G-Series Policies be consistent with the newly revised Policy B-17 regarding Park donations.

Randy Black acknowledged the Ad Hoc Committee, Commission, and staff's hard work on updating the policies. He believed that more revisions were needed to make the policies clearer. He suggested that the unnecessary cross-references to prior iterations of the policies be removed. He advised that all special trees receive a level 3 risk assessment before removal.

Jim Maloney echoed the previous speaker's concerns. He agreed that the flow charts do not include level 3 risk assessments until after the Commission has approved the denial of a removal request for a special tree.

Dennis Bress requested that the meeting be held via Zoom so that the public can watch the meetings. He concurred that level 3 risk assessment needed to take place for all special trees before any removal is made.

Chair Ignatin closed the public comment.

In response to Chair Ignatin's questions, Superintendent Pekar clarified that level 3 risk assessment can take place at any time by Staff or by the Commission. He did not recommend it as an automatic for all special trees. He predicted that 10-15 special trees are removed each year. Year to date, the City has spent \$15,000 for level 3 risk assessment testing.

Vice Chair Daruty commented that high-level tests may endanger a tree and Superintendent Pekar concurred that certain ones can.

Commissioner Howald wanted to know how many special trees are located within the City. Superintendent Pekar restated that the City contains over 1,000 special trees and

there is now a substantial notification process that takes place before the tree can be removed.

Commissioner Granoff believed that developers should be required to do level 3 risk assessment testing when special trees are involved. Superintendent Pekar concurred that the Commission could require a developer to have City Staff do a level 3 risk assessment and have the applicant pay for it.

Commissioner Archer believed the policies contain a robust process that an applicant must go through before any special trees are removed.

Commissioner Granoff agreed with Mr. Mosher regarding Council Members who live in a district where a tree is being proposed to be removed. Superintendent Pekar noted that the language only applies to problem trees and that a problem tree removal appeal can only go through the Council.

Motion by Commissioner Howald, seconded by Commissioner Hayes, to APPROVE the revisions to the City Council Policy G-Series and forward to City Council for adoption. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

PB&R Commission / staff announcements/ Ad Hoc Committee updates or matters which Commissioner members would like placed on future agendas for further discussion (this is a non-discussion item).

Director Detweiler announced that City Hall will be closed from December 24, 2020, to January 3rd, 2021. The Winter Navigator has been sent out and all community centers have been reopened. The January 2021 PB&R meeting has been canceled.

Deputy Director Martin reported that level 3 testing was done on the Marine Avenue trees and those findings will be presented at the Commission's February 2021 meeting.

Commissioner Malouf reported that on Cliff Drive all the City-owned trees are dead and she wanted to know what species of tree is being proposed to replace those dead trees. Deputy Director Martin expressed that Staff is working with the school district to address the issue.

Chair Ignatin called for public comment; seeing none public comment was closed.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Public comments are invited on non-agenda items generally considered to be within the subject matter jurisdiction of the PB&R Commission. Speakers must limit comments to three (3) minutes. Before speaking, we invite, but do not require, you to state your name for the record. The Commission has the discretion to extend or shorten the speakers' time limit on non-agenda items, provided the time limit adjustment is applied equally to all speakers.

Jim Mosher reported there has been a significant change to the Veterans Memorial Park without any notice to the public, Commission input, or right to appeal. A portion of that park has been transformed into a hazardous waste disposal location for boat/car oil.

Maureen Cotton is a resident who lives across the street from Veterans Memorial Park and expressed that the park hosts many major events. She wanted the Commission and Staff to know that it is now being used as a hazardous waste disposal location.

Commissioner Hayes asked if Staff was familiar with the hazardous disposal and Deputy Director Martin noted that it was approved by the Harbor Commission. The receptacles are not located on the park lawn, but in an alleyway.

X. ADJOURNMENT – 8:15 p.m.

Submitted by:

Mariah Stinson, Administrative Support Specialist

Approved by:

Heather Ignatin, Chair