



City of Sunnyvale

Meeting Minutes Parks and Recreation Commission

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

7:00 PM

Council Chambers, City Hall, 456 W. Olive
Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94086

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Alexander called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chair Alexander led the salute to the flag.

ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Chair Henry Alexander III
Vice Chair Craig Pasqua
Commissioner Ralph Kenton
Commissioner Robert Pochowski
Commissioner Andrea Schneck

Council Liaison Vice Mayor Martin-Milius (present)

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Misuk Park announced an Earth Day event at the Charles Street Community Garden and Full Circle Farm on April 18 and 19, respectively.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1A [15-0284](#) Draft Minutes of February 11, 2015 Parks and Recreation
Commission Meeting

Commissioner Kenton moved and Commissioner Schneck seconded the motion to approve the draft minutes of February 11, 2015. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Chair Alexander III
Vice Chair Pasqua
Commissioner Kenton
Commissioner Schneck

No: 0

Abstain: 1 - Commissioner Pochowski

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Environmental Advocate Shani Kleinhaus from the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society spoke about the need to educate people who fly drones and model airplanes at Baylands Park. She indicated the County is considering additional signage to advise landing of motorized planes when hawks are present in order to avoid collisions. She stated that hitting a hawk is a violation of United States Fish and Wildlife regulations.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/GENERAL BUSINESS

2 [15-0300](#) Leaf Blower Study and Findings (Study Issue ESD 14-01)

Program Manager Elaine Marshall of the Environmental Services Department presented the staff report. She answered Commissioner questions regarding the benefits of educating the public versus an option of banning gas leaf blowers; about the research used to calculate particulate matter created by gas leaf blowers; what the impact of a ban on gas leaf blowers would be on the City Parks Division; how the public would be educated about municipal code restrictions and best practices of gas leaf blower use; and what other cities have done to address the use of gas leaf blowers in their communities.

Chair Alexander opened the public hearing at 7:24 p.m.

Sunnyvale resident Steve Pavlina is an owner and operator of commercial residential housing in Sunnyvale. He stated there is no practical alternative to gas leaf blowers to complete landscape work. He stated he could not afford the staffing to keep his properties at the current level of standards, and if leaf blowers were banned it could result in an excess of leaves on the ground creating a slipping hazard.

There were no further Public Comments and Chair Alexander closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Kenton moved and Commissioner Pochowski seconded the motion to approve alternative 3) Direct staff to incorporate public education to Sunnyvale residents and landscape professionals regarding the current Municipal Code restrictions related to leaf blower use and education to leaf blower operators on best practices into the City's environmental education efforts as allowed within existing resources and priorities. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Chair Alexander III
Vice Chair Pasqua
Commissioner Kenton
Commissioner Pochowski

No: 1 - Commissioner Schneck

Commissioners Kenton, Pochowski, Vice Chair Pasqua and Chair Alexander voted yes. Commissioners agreed a ban on leaf blowers would have severe economic implications. Commissioner Pasqua stated a green gardener certificate would be beneficial for the profession, Commissioner Pochowski stated that better technology could lead to alternatives in the future.

Commissioner Schneck voted no, she stated she believes public education is not enough. She stated the data is clear that there are extreme negative health and environmental implications from gas powered leaf blowers and she would like more active options considered. She stated she was not in favor of a ban, but would like to see incentivizing options and limiting the hours of leaf blower use.

3 [15-0128](#) Biological Constraints and Opportunities Analysis for the Sunnyvale Landfill and Baylands Park and Protecting Burrowing Owl Habitat on City Facilities (Study Issue)

Assistant Director of Public Works Craig Mobeck presented the staff report. He answered Commissioner questions regarding the Baylands agreement with Santa Clara County and the financial impact of locating the Animal Assisted Habitat (AAH) at Baylands Park. He answered questions about burrowing owls and the existing mounds at Baylands, and where the owls are currently nesting. He stated there is no current plan for public education.

Chair Alexander opened the public hearing at 8:09 p.m.

Shani Kleinhaus of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society thanked the City for giving consideration to the burrowing owls and suggested if nesting occurs that funding could be available through a Habitat Conservation Plan. She said the area looks relatively nice already and hopes to continue the partnership with the Public Works Department. She also explained that Baylands Park is one of the hot spots to watch birds in the San Francisco Bay Area, especially during the migration season. The test area, which was the suggested location for AAH, is used by people observing birds. She asked the Commission to consider a more appropriate place for AAH instead of locating it at Baylands Park and indicated there is little

space along the bay for migratory birds.

There were no further public comments. Chair Alexander closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Pochowski moved and Commissioner Kenton seconded Alternatives No. 1, 2 and 3, Recommend that Council: 1) Direct staff to work with Animal Assisted Happiness if they choose to provide a proposal for locating their facilities at Baylands and the County is amenable to considering this type of use at the park; 2) Direct staff to submit a proposed project in the Capital Program for constructing low impact park enhancements and planting native perennial in various locations at the Landfill including installing additional artificial burrows at both the Landfill and Baylands preserve and providing other habitat enhancements for owls at the Landfill; and 3) Direct staff to incorporate into the operating budget additional costs, estimated to be \$10,000 for Baylands and \$25,000 for the Landfill, related to enhancement and management of habitat. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Chair Alexander III
Vice Chair Pasqua
Commissioner Kenton
Commissioner Pochowski
Commissioner Schneck

No: 0

Commissioners explained their rationale. Commissioner Pochowski said he supports alternatives 2 and 3. Commissioner Pochowski expressed concern that he doesn't have enough information about using the land for AAH compared with leaving it undeveloped, or about the impact on migratory birds. He stated he is comfortable recommending staff explore options. All the Commissioners stated they agreed with exploring AAH for further information gathering. Commissioner Pasqua asked if anyone from AAH was present, and noted they were not at the prior meeting to represent their program. Commissioner Kenton also said he would like to see the park enhancements installed, and that he supports alternative 3. Commissioner Schneck agreed with the other commissioners and stated that California is biological diversity hot spot and it is a small cost to make a positive difference. She said she has faith the City will do their best to create proper education and care for burrowing owls. Vice Chair Pasqua also stated he still holds hope that the South Hill will become a dog park.

Superintendent of Parks and Golf Scott Morton presented the Commissioner Training, reviewing how Commissioners can educate themselves on the parks and recreation services in Sunnyvale, the organizations that provide resources to Commissioners, and the policies which are in the Commissioners purview. He provided information about a CPRS meeting for Commissioners on April 18 in Fremont.

Chair Alexander opened the public hearing. There were no public comments and he closed the public hearing.

5 [15-0057](#) Review and Approval of the 2015 Work Plan

Commissioners reviewed the Draft Work Plan. Staff answered questions regarding specific items on the work plan. Chair Alexander inquired about how the Commissioners can appropriately encourage public engagement.

Chair Alexander opened the public hearing. There were no public comments, he closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Pochowski moved and Vice Chair Pasqua seconded to approve the Draft Work Plan with the amendment to add the Golf Course Vendor Agreement in May. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Chair Alexander III
 Vice Chair Pasqua
 Commissioner Kenton
 Commissioner Pochowski
 Commissioner Schneck

No: 0

Commissioners expressed their rationale for their vote. Commissioner Schneck stated the plan meets the requirements, and includes community engagement. Vice Chair Pasqua stated that it is a manageable plan. Chair Alexander stated it is the most active work plan he has seen in his three years since being on the commission.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS & COMMENTS

-Commissioner Comments

Commissioners discussed having a presentation during the April meeting from a youth sports organization. Staff committed to finding a presenter.

Commissioner Kenton inquired what activities the Teen Advisory Committee (TAC) has been coordinating and how he can assist. Superintendent of Community Services Daniel Wax committed to providing a list of activities.

-Staff Comments

Superintendent Wax announced the special event Fit and Fun Earth Day Fair on April 25 at the Columbia Neighborhood Center from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. He also provided information about a Commissioner email address which is available to the public: parksandrecreationcommission@sunnyvale.ca.gov. All incoming emails will be forwarded to the Commissioners, and the subject line will indicate if the item is operational or policy related.

Superintendent Morton announced that 50 trees were planted during the Arbor Day celebrations. Pictures are available at <http://www.sunnyvaleurbanforestadvocates.org/>

Commissioners agreed to hold a Special Meeting on April 22 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers to discuss park dedication standards.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Alexander adjourned the meeting at 9:22 p.m.