

Richmond Recreation & Parks Commission

MINUTES

Wednesday, January 12, 2022 6:00 PM



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CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Meeting called to order by Chair Joey Smith at 6:01 P.M.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Joey Smith, Allison Blakeley, Soheila Bana, Maryn Hurlbut, Catalin Kaser, Aaron Rowden, and Eleanor Thompson*

*Arrived after Roll Call

ABSENT: Brendan Havenar-Daughton (excused)

Chair Smith requested that the Commission embrace a genuine acknowledgement that the City of Richmond was situated on land that was previously and currently occupied and cared for by First Peoples, the Huichin: Confederated Villages of Lisjan, Chochenyo Ohlone Territory, made up of the seven Tribes of Lisjan (Ohlone), Karkin (Ohlone), Bay Miwok, Plains Miwok, Wappo, Delta Yokut and Napian (Patwin) whose territory included Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano, Napa and San Joaquin counties. The intent is to relentlessly identify and pursue opportunities for genuine engagement with local indigenous communities to understand indigenous struggles, needs and goals, with a specific focus on exploring pathways to return indigenous lands to indigenous hands.

Chair Smith provided a brief overview of the meeting procedures and the Mission of the Recreation and Parks Commission.

AGENDA REVIEW

Motion by Commissioner Hurlbut to approve the agenda, as amended, to correct the reference to Willie *May's* Day and to identify the date of the next meeting as *February 2*, seconded by Commissioner Kaser, and carried by a voice vote, with an abstention from Commissioner Rowden.

OPEN FORUM

Cordell Hindler, Richmond, invited Commissioners to a performance of *As you Like It* at the Master's Playhouse on January 21, 2022 at 8:00 P.M. In addition, he corrected the spelling of one of the speakers

at the last meeting (Jan *Mignone*), and expressed his concern that the fees to rent the Community Center were too high and should be reconsidered.

Darlene Rios Drapkin, East Bay Pickleball Association, expressed her appreciation for the Commission's consideration of the Association's request at the last meeting for dedicated pickleball courts. She reported the Richmond Tennis Association (RTA) had agreed to support dedicated pickleball courts at Booker T. Anderson, Jr. (BTA) Park. As a result, she was proceeding to meet with all those involved to complete the process to gain approval from the Recreation & Parks Commission and the City Council.

ANNOUNCEMENTS THROUGH THE CHAIR

1. Chair Smith advised that the Next Commission meeting would be held on February 2, 2022 via Zoom.
2. The balance in the Commission Trust account was reported to be \$413.08, with an additional \$1,000 in the Trust for the RTA Snow Ball account.
3. There were no membership changes.
4. Anyone wishing to speak during this meeting was encouraged to send an email to recreation@ci.richmond.ca.us by 1:00 P.M. the day of the meeting. Emails must contain in the subject line 1) Public Comments – Open Forum; or 2) Public Comments agenda item # [include the agenda item number].

Commissioner Hurlbut reported that in conjunction with the Hurlbut Benevolent Foundation there had been additional donations to the RTA Snow Ball account, with an update to be provided at the next meeting.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Commissioner Kaser corrected the name of the Sustainability and Climate Responsive Committee as referenced in the first paragraph under AD HOC COMMITTEE STATEMENTS in the minutes of December 1, 2021, as the *Sustainability and Climate Responsiveness Committee*. She also expressed an objection to the use of the term "ladies of the night" under the OPEN FORUM comments.

Approve Minutes of the December 1, 2021 Meeting

Motion by Commissioner Thompson to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2021 meeting, as amended, seconded by Commissioner Blakeley, and carried by a voice vote with an abstention from Commissioner Hurlbut.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

Public Works: Facilities

The report from Jose Urquilla, Superintendent of Facilities, was provided verbally and visually.

Parks & Landscaping Divisions:

Greg Hardesty, Superintendent of Parks & Landscaping, provided an oral and visual report and responded to questions from the Commission, including the status of park signage that had been discussed by the Commission.

Community Services Division:

Ranjana Maharaj, CSD Administrative Manager, provided an oral and visual report and responded to comments from the Commission.

Tetteh Kisseh, Recreation Program Coordinator, provided an update to the pickleball request for two permanent courts dedicated to pickleball at BTA Park. He advised that staff had toured Tiller and Lucas Parks and would meet with community members to discuss the installation of pickleball courts in those areas. Staff had attended the RTA meeting in December when RTA had supported two dedicated pickleball courts at BTA Park. More meetings would be held with the Southside Neighborhood Council to further discuss the placement of pickleball courts in the community.

Ms. Maharaj advised that the request related to pickleball courts would be returned to the Commission for action prior to being submitted to the City Council for approval.

Stephanie Ny, Community Services Division, informed the Commission that the next cycle of the Love Your Block Mini Grant, if approved by the Council, would launch on January 31, 2022. The application cycle would last through the end of February, allowing community groups to apply for up to a \$10,000 grant for beautification and clean-up projects within the City of Richmond, highly encouraged for park use. A final report on the award of the ten mini grants last year was expected in May 2022.

Ms. Ny added that the City had been awarded an \$8 million grant from California State Parks for Shields-Reid Park in North Richmond. Multiple outreach meetings had been held to gather input from the community and June 2025 was the deadline to complete the reconstruction. The City had also been awarded a \$1.17 million grant for Dirt World Bike Park on the Richmond Parkway, and two \$100,000 grants from PG&E and PG&E Corporation Foundation for Nevin and Shields-Reid Parks and Community Centers to serve as resilient hubs during extreme heat events.

When asked, Ms. Ny explained that she and Jene' Levine-Snipes were the grant writers for the City in conjunction with PlaceWorks, which had prepared the concept design. She also provided an update on the Mobile Tool Library.

The Commission expressed its sincere appreciation to the grant writers for all their efforts.

PRESENTATIONS

Friends of Richard J. Boyd Park

Janis Hashe, representing Friends of Richard J. Boyd Park, explained that the former Atchison Park had been renamed because of the many contributions Richard J. Boyd had made to the community in the area of opportunities for youth. A survey sent to the immediate area had resulted in strong support for improvements to increase the usage of the underutilized park. The survey had revealed that a walking/jogging path around the perimeter of the park with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) curb cuts to create easier access, a renovation of the basketball court, continuing the renovation of the baseball diamond, and refurbishing the children's play area was recommended. Residents had also expressed their appreciation for the additional maintenance of the park. An email letter of support from Bram Begonia, CEO of the Bay Area Rescue organization supported any improvements to the park.

Denise Abersold, the widow of Richard J. Boyd, described the work that Richard had done to improve Richmond parks.

Barbara Postel reported that the soccer field in the park was not being used because it was too “lumpy” and unusable. She too sought the Commission’s help to improve the park.

AD HOC COMMITTEE STATEMENTS

Sustainability and Climate Responsiveness Committee (Brendan/Catalin/Maryn)

Commissioner Kaser reported that the committee was still in communication and still moving forward although the holidays had made contact difficult.

Willie Mays Day (Maryn/Eleanor/Joey)

Willie Mays Field Committee (Maryn/Eleanor/Joey)

Commissioner Hurlbut agreed that many meetings had not been scheduled due to the holidays. She reported that word had gotten back that Willie Mays had personally seen the proposal and was delighted, but concerned that there might be some overreaching in how much time he would be able to participate due to age and health reasons, which she noted would be taken into consideration when scheduling the events. The next meeting would be scheduled by the Mayor’s office.

Associate Commissioner Committee (Maryn/Allison/Joey)

Commissioner Hurlbut stated she had not been informed as to the status of the Commission’s action to send the item to the City Council.

Kiosk Concept Paper for a “Walk of Honor” Committee (Maryn/Eleanor/Joey)

Commissioner Hurlbut reported that the Committee had approved the concept paper at its last meeting and had submitted it to two of three different groups that had accepted it and intended to respond with their own creative concept of how the proposal would be executed. She did not expect to hear more until the end of the month but expected to know whether the first one could be done by May 6, 2022.

Statement of Policy and Guidelines for Naming or Re-naming of Parks, Facilities and Streets

Commissioner Hurlbut stated the suggested rewrite from CSD had been received although no meeting had yet been scheduled to go over the updates to be able to create a final draft for the Commission.

Ms. Maharaj referred to discussions on the Associate Commissioner Committee at the November 3, 2021 meeting when LaShonda White had noted that the proposal had yet to be submitted to the City Council, it could be modified, and the City Attorney would have to approve the legality of the proposal prior to making a recommendation to the City Council. At that time, Chair Smith had stated that the committee would re-discuss the proposal. Since the proposal had been submitted to the City Attorney’s office on multiple occasions, Ms. Maharaj asked for direction from the Commission as to how to proceed.

Commissioner Hurlbut did not want to delay the matter any further given that it had been in process for some time. She suggested that the Associate Commissioner Committee would have to meet again to review and make adjustments in advance and then move on with the next step.

With respect to the policy guidelines, Ms. Maharaj stated the last additions to the document had come from the City Council Liaison staff, and the City Clerk had commented that with a name change there had to be notification to the neighbors by postal mail. As such, the responsibility for the cost of postage

would become an issue. She noted that the Chair had suggested that whenever something was brought to the Commission for a name change the applicant would have to be notified of the additional cost or a portion of the cost for postage.

Commissioner Hurlbut commented that in the past an e-blast had been used for notification purposes.

With respect to Willie Mays Day, Commissioner Thompson asked how Commissioners would participate, and Commissioner Hurlbut noted that the chief of staff for the Mayor would call a meeting and Commissioner Thompson would take the lead with that and other questions.

Chair Smith wanted to make sure that Charles Cavenes would be an active part in that process, if available, given that he was the originator of the request.

DISCUSSIONS & ACTION ITEMS

- a. Coordinate** an open conversation on how the city can support the native stewardship of Ookwe Park
 - i. Recreation and Parks Commission
 - ii. Sogorea Te' Land Trust
 - iii. Arts and Culture Commission
 - iv. Planning Commission

Motion by Commissioner Kaser to continue the item to the February 2, 2022 meeting given the absence of Vice Chair Havenar-Daughton, seconded by Commissioner Thompson and carried unanimously by a voice vote.

COMMISSIONER LIAISON REPORTS

There were no reports.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Blakeley identified a lack of participation with the Google docs that the Vice Chair had started and asked if she should continue to send them out.

Chair Smith suggested that should be done at least every quarter and she urged Commissioners to contact the Secretary at least quarterly for a new form. She presented her written report and acknowledged the suggestion that it would be a good idea to have her reports as a recap and record of what the Commission had been doing for parks. She advised that she would continue to send out the link.

AGENDA SETTING FOR NEXT MEETING AND FUTURE TOPICS

On Commissioner Kaser's suggestion to designate a meeting to discuss an annual calendar of activities and events, Ms. Maharaj noted that a planning meeting could be scheduled, which she suggested should occur in October each year to discuss the calendar for the following year.

Commissioner Bana urged the Commission to be creative and work on walking and biking activities and pursue funding to improve the walkability and bikeability of streets in addition to parks as well as considering recreation.

Commissioner Kaser provided a link for Travel Safe Richmond, a City effort to look at the streets that were unsafe using collision data to make Richmond safe. The website had an interactive map to identify the streets that were dangerous and allowed individuals to provide feedback as to what would make Richmond safer. She suggested that the Commission could collaborate with that effort and agreed with the need to think about recreation and parks in terms of movement, including traveling to parks. She urged a focus in 2022 as to how to make it easier for people to be able to recreate and move around the City safely for all ages and all abilities.

Commissioners discussed the benefits of grants, the work involved in grant writing, and suggested that volunteers in the community might be able to help in that regard.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:14 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Anita L. Tucci-Smith
Minutes Clerk