

Richmond Recreation & Parks Commission

MINUTES

Wednesday, April 6, 2022 6:00 PM



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CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Meeting called to order by Chair Joey Smith at 6:09 P.M. who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Smith requested that the Commission embrace a genuine land 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 Napien (Patwin) whose territory included Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano, Napa and San Joaquin counties. The intent was 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.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Joey Smith, Allison Blakeley*, Maryn Hurlbut, Catalin Kaser, and Eleanor Thompson

*Arrived after Roll Call

ABSENT: Brendan Havenar-Daughton (Excused), Aaron Rowden (Excused), Soheila Bana (Excused)

Chair Smith advised that the Commission is one member short of being able to vote but will be able to discuss business and if necessary, a special meeting can be called if urgent votes are needed.

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

AGENDA REVIEW

Ranjana Maharaj, Deputy Director for Community Services - Recreation, advised there is an Amendment to Item 9, Presentation by Darlene Drapkin with East Bay Pickleball Association has been removed and will be discussed under Item 11 (Action Items).

By consent, the agenda was approved as submitted with the Amendment noted by Ms. Maharaj.

OPEN FORUM

Cordell Hindler, Richmond, advised he will be attending the Youth Council Meeting later this month to advise of the vacancy on the Recreation and Park Commission. In addition, Mr. Hindler invited Commissioners to attend the Richmond Rotary Club weekly meeting on May 6th at 12:30 pm at the Richmond Country Club.

Marcia Vallier, with Vallier Design Associates, requested approval from the Commission to install a temporary plaque at Shimada Friendship Park to honor Japanese American Families and dedicated to David Ninomiya, a former Rotary President, with a ceremony planned for April, 2022.

Chair Smith advised that without a quorum, the Commission was unable to vote, however Commissioner Hurlbut expressed her support for the project. Commissioner Kaser stated she would like to get more information on the project. Greg Hardesty, Superintendent of Parks & Landscaping, advised there is support from the Marina Bay Landscaping District.

LaShonda White, Interim Library and Community Services Director, informed that as this item was not on the Agenda, and cannot be further discussed. Chair Smith invited Ms. Vallier to present at the May Commission Meeting and be placed on the May Agenda.

JC Farr, President of the Eastshore Neighborhood Council, inquired about the plans for the Booker T Anderson (BTA) facility. Chair Smith advised work has been done and monthly updates are provided in the staff reports presentations.

ANNOUNCEMENTS THROUGH THE CHAIR

1. Chair Smith advised that the Next Commission meeting would be held on May 4, 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.

Chair Smith encouraged all to donate to the RTA Snow Ball event. Commissioner Hurlbut advised that additional funds have been received by way of donations making the overall total more than \$6,500.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Approve Minutes of the March 2, 2022 Meeting

Commission was unable to approve as a quorum was not in attendance. Commissioner Kaser asked for a correction on her report update and her participation on graffiti removal at the skate park.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

Public Works: Facilities

Report from Jose Urquilla, Superintendent of Facilities, was provided verbally and visually, and responded to questions from Commissioner Hurlbut as to the Plunge's mural and the repairs needed due to the humidity issues. Mr. Urquilla gave an update on the BTA facility addressing the delays and progress.

Parks & Landscaping Divisions

Greg Hardesty, Superintendent of Parks & Landscaping, provided a verbal and visual report, and responded to questions including the Park Rules and QR code signage. Chair Smith suggested including Spanish on all signage and Commissioner Blakely suggested the use of symbols for clarity. Commissioner Kaser commented on the current bike rack situation at Nicholl Park. Chair Smith questioned the illegal dumping situation and Mr. Hardesty advised of the notification procedures his team uses to address the issues.

Community Services Division: Recreation and Neighborhood Services

Ranjana Maharaj, Deputy Director for Community Service-Recreation, provided an extensive oral and visual report and responded to comments from Commissioner Hurlbut on the promotion of the Willie Mays Event on May 21st and getting it posted on the City Calendar.

Stephanie Ny, CSD staff, provided a presentation and update on Richard J. Boyd Park and the Urban Greening Grant Application. In addition, Ms. Ny presented updates on the North Richmond Mobile Tool Library and a soft launch date of 4/22-23 at the Earth Day Events. Ms. Ny continued with the Love Your Block Mini-Grants for Fiscal Year 2020-2022 and concluded by answering the Commissioner's questions.

PRESENTATIONS

LaShonda White, Interim Director, Library and Community Services Department presented to the Commission a *Draft Fee Waiver Policy and Partnership Policy*. Ms. White advised this information was presented to City Council on March 15th. Ms. White responded to the Commission's questions and encouraged continued feedback.

Commissioner Kaser asked how the fee waiver policy would affect spontaneous gatherings and what would be the process versus planned events. Ms. White noted the important concern, and it will be included in the staff report to City Council.

Commission Kaser questioned the process in Richmond for basic table set up requests, as it is more complicated and more expensive than surrounding cities. Ms. White reiterated the need to hear this type of feedback so these could be incorporated into the process going forward.

Chair Smith asked to clarify that paid fees for the use of parks and city facilities goes to the General Fund and none goes into the CSD-Recreation's budget. Ms. Smith asked with regard to partnership policies to ensure fairness, to specify terms for the partnership policies, and provide quarterly updates.

AD HOC COMMITTEE STATEMENTS

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

Commissioner Kaser stated on behalf of Commissioner Havenar-Daughton, that he has made progress but no actual reporting yet. Commission Kaser communicated a tree planting partnership is in the works with more information to follow. Ms. Kaser invited all to Earth Day activities on 4/23 at Unity Park from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and to join the Closing the Greenway Gap Community input sessions at Harbour Eight Park on April 12-14 from 2:00 pm– 6:00 pm.

Willie Mays' Day Project (Maryn/Eleanor/Joey)

Chair Smith provided an update to the Willie Mays Day celebration with the new date of Saturday, May 21st. In addition, there will be a parade, video presentations, and the reveal of the kiosk. Chair Smith shared her excitement for all to attend and enjoy the festivities.

Associate Commissioner Committee (Maryn/Allison/Joey)

Chair Smith stated again that the Associate Commissioner Committee had not met given the time devoted to the Willie Mays' Day Project.

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

Ms. Maharaj advised that a meeting would need to be scheduled with the Mayor's Office Staff to discuss the two versions of the document; however, with much of the focus on the Willie Mays Day, setting a meeting should be picked up after the May 21st event.

DISCUSSIONS & ACTION ITEMS

- a. **COORDINATE** Open Conversation on How the City can Support the Native Stewardship of Ookwe Park:

As Vice Chair Havenar-Daughton was not in attendance, this item was continued until the next meeting.

- b. **APPROVE** a Request to Convert One Tennis Court to Fixed Pickleball Courts at BTA

Tetteh Kisseh, Recreation Supervisor, presented the staff report on the request to convert one tennis court to fixed pickleball courts at Booker T. Anderson, Jr. (BTA) Park tennis courts. This request was presented to the Southside Plus One Neighborhood Council and was conditionally approved provided the courts were located on the West side of the courts. Mr. Kisseh stated that follow up meetings were held on 3/16 and 3/25 but the Southside Plus One Neighborhood Council members were not in attendance at both meetings. He stated that he is submitting a staff recommendation to place the permanent pickleball courts on the East side of the courts.

Commissioner Kaser followed up with questions as to why the recommendation was ultimately in favor of the Pickleball Association and their request for permanent East side courts. Mr. Kisseh stated the decision was made after several attempts to meet with the Southside Plus One Neighborhood Council to hear their recommendations, but they did not attend these scheduled meetings.

JC Farr, President of the Eastshore Neighborhood Council, stated they anticipated a partnership with the Pickleball Association but feels pickleball is taking over their community tennis courts. Mr. Farr stated he would like to take this issue to City Council.

Eduardo Martinez, Vice Mayor of Richmond, spoke to voice his disappointment that people are viewing this as a political issue when it is an issue of equality. He addressed as pickleball players must bring their equipment that it makes sense to have the permanent pickleball courts closer to the street (East side). He expressed his hope that there will be more pickleball courts in Richmond in the future but not at the expense of tennis.

Darlene Rios Drapkin, President of the East Bay Pickleball Association, spoke on being pleased in

making pickleball happen at BTA. Ms. Drapkin stated the reason she wants the pickleball courts closest to the main gate (East side) is due to the many cracks on the courts West side and she hopes in the future they can raise funds for resurfacing to contribute to the neighborhood.

Madalyn Law, President of the Park Plaza Neighborhood Council and Co-Chair of the Southside Plus One Neighborhood Council, spoke of her acceptance of pickleball at BTA and welcomed them by providing two designated courts but felt insulted when it was expressed that the offered courts were cracked. As a result, Ms. Law stated there is frustration that pickleball is pushing the community to the lesser part of the court.

Secretary Blakeley asked questions about resurfacing the courts and the hopes of having a resolution that benefits all parties.

Commissioner Thompson suggested that perhaps the pickleball community and Neighborhood Council should meet again to try and come to a decision that works for all.

Chair Smith reiterated that as the Commission does not have a quorum and cannot vote this evening, that perhaps each side can meet to come to an agreement and is brought to the Commission next month.

Commission Kaser stated she could not support staff's recommendation at this time as the Neighborhood Council opinions are an important part of the process and structure for making decisions.

Ms. Drapkin commented that she has been collaborative with the Neighborhood Council and attended many meetings. As a resident of Richmond, Ms. Drapkin is willing to concede with the Neighborhood Council but is re-thinking in providing East Bay Pickleball Association's support to pickleball in Richmond.

COMMISSIONER LIAISON REPORTS

Secretary Blakeley shared her concern for garbage at many parks, specifically beer bottles and cigarette butts. She will continue to send out the rolling report for other commissioners to share their liaison reports.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Chair Smith , Commissioner Thompson and Commissioner Kaser referenced their previous statements addressed during the Ad Hoc Committee Statements.

AGENDA SETTING FOR NEXT MEETING AND FUTURE TOPICS

The pickleball request would return on the agenda for the May 4, 2022 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:59 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine George
Executive Secretary