

Richmond Recreation & Parks Commission

MINUTES

Wednesday, April 20, 2022 6:00 PM (SPECIAL MEETING)



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CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Meeting called to order by Chair Joey Smith at 6:00 P.M. who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Smith expressed a genuine acknowledgement of the land which was previously and currently occupied and cared for by First Peoples and wanted to embrace this wisely and respectfully.

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

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

AGENDA REVIEW

Motion by Commissioner Hurlbut to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Thompson, and carried by a voice vote, the agenda was approved as submitted.

OPEN FORUM

Garry Hurlbut, Richmond, expressed disappointment that SnowBall was a virtual event and hoped the event will be an in-person event in the future.

DISCUSSIONS & ACTION ITEMS

- a. **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 of the East Bay Pickleball Association to convert one tennis court to fixed pickleball courts at Booker T. Anderson, Jr. (BTA) Park.

The request was presented to the Southside Plus One Neighborhood Council and was approved as long as the courts were located on the West side of the courts and not the East side as preferred by Darlene Drapkin from the East Bay Pickleball Association. Follow up zoom meetings with the Southside Plus One Neighborhood Council were conducted in March but due to a lack of quorum, staff proceeded to submit a request to the Recreation and Parks Commission for their approval to install the pickleball courts on the East side of the tennis courts at the 4/6/22 meeting. However, due to lack of quorum at the Recreation and Parks Commission meeting, no vote was taken. Mr. Kisseh, reached out to both Southside Plus One and East Bay Pickleball Association for their reasons and provided a breakdown from each group in the staff report. Mr. Kisseh requested the Commission to provide direction as to the placement of the permanent Pickleball courts.

Commissioner Thompson, asked for clarification on which side has more cracks and Mr. Kisseh stated that while both sides show cracks, the East side, requested by the East Bay Pickleball Association has less cracks.

Commissioner Hurlbut inquired whether the mounted storage on the fence is mobile, to which Mr. Kisseh advised the storage can be moved. In addition, Ms. Hurlbut advised that the Pickleball Association has free reign to hire someone to fix the cracks. It is in her opinion the neighborhood should have preference over where to locate the pickleball courts, as they represent the people in the community that are maintaining the park.

Secretary Blakeley asked if it is possible to repave the courts and solve the issue and Mr. Kisseh advised it would solve the issue. As a result, Ms. Blakeley suggested that the courts be resurfaced.

Commissioner Rowden had questioned the dimensions of the courts and what equipment is being carried to play pickleball. Mr. Rowden also referenced the correspondence from Vice Mayor Martinez that Ms. Drapkin, on behalf of Pickleball Association, is willing to cooperate with the Neighborhood Council's view and should; therefore, be considered by the Commission.

Commissioner Bana asked if there was data as to the number of pickleball participants and for clarification on the vote forthcoming.

Myrtle Braxton clarified that the neighborhood is not against Pickleball but wants to ensure the community has say about what is in their parks.

JC Farr, President of the Eastshore Neighborhood Council, reiterated the desire to have Pickleball at BTA. He later received information that Pickleball was taking over the entire courts and now that Pickleball is agreeing to go to the West side, there should not be a problem.

Garry Hurlbut, President of the Richmond Tennis Association, wanted to express their support of an active and healthy lifestyle whether that is pickleball, soccer, tennis, etc. He further expressed that a grant was submitted but they didn't receive enough funds for BTA. He proposed to the Commission to look at the area by Nystrom School that needs development.

Commissioner Hurlbut presented the motion to have the permanent pickleball court on the West side, as proposed by the Neighborhood Council, seconded by Commissioner Thompson, and carried by a voice vote.

- b. APPROVE** a Request to temporarily display a plaque at Shimada Friendship Park

Marcia Vallier presented as part of the Miraflores Sustainable Greenbelt Project and Richmond Rotary's Centennial Project, to place a temporary plaque at Shimada Friendship Park.

Jan Brown, former President of the Richmond Rotary, also spoke on the Rotary's Centennial Project to honor David Ninomiya and hopes to have a dedication this Friday (4/22/22) at 10:30 am. at Shimada Park, pending permanent placement at Miraflores Park.

Commissioner Kaser thanked Marcia and Jan for their presentation and stated she recently toured the progress at Miraflores Park and supports the temporary placement at Shimada Park

Commissioner Hurlbut asked for the dimensions of the plaque and who will be handling the placement. Marcia Vallier stated the plaque is 3 ft by 3 ft and 4 inches thick and she has been working with Jose Moreno and Greg Hardesty in the Parks Department.

Secretary Blakeley clarified that only the plaque will be displayed at Shimada Friendship Park and will be moved to Miraflores Park when ready and this was confirmed by Marcia Vallier.

Chair Smith inquired as to who is responsible for the maintenance and per Ms. Vallier, she has been in talks with Greg Hardesty of the Parks Department, who assured her it would be taken care of by the Parks Department and staff. In addition, Chair Smith asked what is the estimated time frame in which the plaque will be at Shimada Park and Ms. Vallier anticipated approximately 2 years and was affirmed by Jan Brown.

Don Lau and Madalyn Law both spoke in support of this development and expressed the hope of keeping the project in the public eye until the anticipated completion in 2025.

Commissioner Hurlbut motioned to allow temporary placement of the plaque at Shimada Friendship Park as outlined in the request until it can be permanently installed at its formal location, seconded by Commissioner Thompson, and carried by a voice vote.

c. REVIEW AND PROVIDE COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS for the Draft Fee Waiver Policy and Partnership Policy

Ranjana Maharaj, Deputy Director for Community Services-Recreation, reminded the Commission the *Draft Fee Waiver Policy and Partnership Policy* was presented by LaShonda White (Interim Director of Library and Community Services) at the April Commission Meeting. Ms. Maharaj indicated the item will be presented to City Council in May and encouraged the commissions feedback.

Commissioner Rowden expressed his appreciation of the research and consideration put forth in the proposal and looks forward to having a clear standard that will benefit the community and provide the appropriate level in which to waive fees.

Discussion arose as to whether a vote is needed, however Commissioner Hurlbut stated that as the item is not listed as needing approval, it should be placed on the May Commission Agenda (5/4/22). Ms. Maharaj will reach out to LaShonda White asking to present to City Council at their May 17th meeting, which would allow the Recreation and Parks Commission to vote on the item.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine George
Executive Secretary