

**CITY OF COSTA MESA
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

January 28, 2004

The Parks and Recreation Commission of the City of Costa Mesa met in regular session at 6:30 p.m., January 28, 2004, at City Hall, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa, California. The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Harris followed by the Pledge of Allegiance by Commissioner Leece.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present:

Mark Harris, Vice Chair
Mirna Burciaga, Commissioner
Byron de Arakal, Commissioner
James Fisler, Commissioner
Wendy Leece, Commissioner

Also Present:

William J. Morris, Public Services Director
Steven E. Hayman, Administrative Services Director
Jana M. Ransom, Recreation Manager
Bruce Hartley, Maintenance Services Manager

MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner de Arakal, seconded by Commissioner Fisler, and carried 4 to 0, with Commissioner Burciaga abstaining from voting, to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2003 meeting as received.

Vice Chair Harris welcomed Commissioner Burciaga to the Commission, noting that she had been appointed by Council Member Libby Cowan.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Adele Green, 2853 Boa Vista Drive, Costa Mesa, indicated that her group here this evening has nicknamed themselves "Early Friends of Estancia Park i.e. Balearic Center", and would like to present a proposal to the City of Costa Mesa regarding their friends the dogs. She went ahead to indicate that their proposal to this Commission is to ask for use of Estancia/Balearic Park every day from dawn to 8:30 a.m. for this group's dogs to run around off leash. Mrs. Green indicated that their dogs are healthy and with current shots and licenses and that some of them have received their canine good citizenship certificate. She mentioned that this group cleans up after their dogs, soccer games and people using the park. She indicated that they are not comfortable with the dog park since a lot of times its dirty, has no grass, the dogs aren't trained, are from outside the community and have aggressive behavior. She showed a few pictures of the area being requested for exclusive use, noting that their group consists of professional people.

Responding to questions and comments from Vice Chair Harris, Mr. Morris proposed to allow staff to look into this to provide the Commission back with an Informational Item, indicating that it would then be the prerogative of this Commission to agendize it for a future meeting.

CONSENT CALENDAR

No items

OLD BUSINESS

BARBECUES IN CITY PARKS

Mr. Bruce Hartley made the presentation.

Responding to questions from Commissioner Leece, Mr. Hartley indicated that it is against the current City ordinance to bring portable barbecues to the parks without a permit. However, he noted that according to the Fire Marshal’s opinion, there is no immediate fire danger from portable barbecues.

In response to a question from Vice Chair Harris, Mr. Hartley noted that staff is indicating that it could put six additional cooking grills at 5 parks where there is already hardscape and other amenities so it will be easier and more cost effective.

Mr. Hartley responded to questions from Commissioner Fisler regarding the cost of adding the additional barbecues.

Responding to comments and a question from Commissioner de Arakal, Mr. Hartley indicated that the use of propane or other kind of barbecues is not an ongoing problem during the course of the year. He noted that during the holidays is when a lot of this is seen. Staff does not have exact numbers of how many people are cited for unpermitted use of barbecues.

Responding to comments and questions from Commissioner Leece, Mr. Hartley indicated that little by little staff has been replacing and adding barbecues and aging park site furnishings through their operating budget.

Vice Chair Harris commented that he did not want to receive and file this item. He indicated that he would like staff to look into what some other cities do. If they have something similar to this City’s Title 12, what do they allow (propane, charcoal) and how do they address the situation of unpermitted barbecues. He noted that he did not want to recommend funding for adding more barbecues at this point.

Commissioner de Arakal indicated that he would be interested to know the extent to which the permitting process information is posted in the parks, and the exploration of ways to make sure that the public is aware of the permitting process beyond just park postings.

MOTION

A motion was made by Vice Chair Harris, seconded by Commissioner de Arakal, and carried 5 to 0, to have staff investigate other cities’ policies on propane and charcoal barbecues in their parks. Staff to report on the extent to which the permitting process is posted in the parks, and to then explore ways to make sure that the public is aware of this process.

Commissioner de Arakal commented that he is not against portable propane barbecues in the parks necessarily, but thinks they ought to be permitted. He reiterated his interest in the need of informing people through park postings and other means about the permitting process.

NEW BUSINESS

CIRCLE OF SERVICE NOMINATION – TOM THOMPSON

Ms. Ruth Raheb made the presentation.

Kris Hagen, ReLeaf Costa Mesa member, indicated that Mr. Thompson was the “Fred Rogers” of tree planting and that he was a truly remarkable person. She indicated that Mr. Thompson died a year ago and that a tree planting for him had been done at Fairview Park. She said that ReLeaf Costa Mesa feels very strongly about honoring him this way and indicated that ReLeaf Costa Mesa has paid for the plaque.

MOTION

A motion was made by Commissioner Fisler, seconded by Commissioner Burciaga, and carried 5 to 0, to recommend to City Council to approve the induction into the Circle of Service for nominee Tom Thompson. Induction to occur Friday, July 23, 2004.

GROUP ONE COST RECOVERY PROPOSAL

Ms. Ruth Raheb made the presentation.

Ms. Ransom indicated that as City employees, staff felt it incumbent to bring this issue to this Commission as part of the discussion of revenue streams for the City. Ms. Ransom noted that staff has no bias in bringing this item to this Commission only to ask the Commission’s consideration and direction as to whether or not staff should pursue it further.

Responding to questions from Commissioner Leece, Ms. Raheb indicated that everyone, other than group one field users, pay for lights. She noted that the light fee in 2003 was \$5.00 above the fee for the use of the field.

Ms. Ransom, in response to a question from Commissioner Leece, confirmed that the City pays for the lights on the City’s fields, and the School District pays for the lights on their school fields.

Responding to questions from Commissioner de Arakal, Ms. Raheb noted that the City and School District do not share revenue generated from City or school fields because the City has assumed the mowing contract. She indicated that the revenue generated from the rental of school’s pools and gymnasiums all go back to the school district for maintenance.

In response to a question from Commissioner Burciaga, Ms. Raheb indicated that it is not an everyday occurrence, but that it happens often that group one field users reserve fields and do not use them. She went over the three-strike policy.

Responding to a question from Vice Chair Harris, Ms. Raheb indicated that one of the reasons this issue is before the Commission tonight is because staff has been working very closely with this Commission and Council on cost recovery for classes and programs. She noted that it seemed natural then to include all aspects of our programming. Ms. Raheb noted that staff has found that revenues are not as high as expenditures citywide, and that all City departments have been asked to look at their programs and see if staff is being effective and efficient and if it is time to propose some changes.

Amy Stephens, 2004 North Capella Court, Costa Mesa American Little League President, indicated that their biggest concern is that they are being turned into a new source of revenue stream. She noted that her organization and all the other group one users put in thousands of dollars a year into the fields, not including the amount of donated items by businesses in the community and volunteer work to improve the fields, indicating that there is a lot of benefit to the schools and other groups that also use those baseball fields. She indicated that she would like to have this proposal examined from every direction and have all the group one users included/involved in this proposal before it is implemented.

Ted Spules, 1154 Charlton Street, representing Costa Mesa Pony League, indicated that there are not enough fields in the City to provide for upper division ball, and that to give strikes for not using a reserved field on a particular night is unfair. He noted that they are a very small organization trying to keep their fees down and offering scholarships to some families who are unable to pay so that those kids are not left out and are able to play. He indicated that as is the City, they too are trying to keep their costs low.

Jon Zich, 2851 Ellesmere, Costa Mesa, indicated that he does not consider this report/proposal neutral, because it does not include considerations from the baseball organizations and from AYSO Region 120, which is the one he represents. He noted that they are not a revenue stream but community based, youth, non-profit organization. He noted that the volunteers in this organization have provided tens of thousands of hours of community service, and that the benefits of his program and little league and pop warner far exceeds the cost that is being talked about in this proposal. Mr. Zich indicated that the Field Ambassadors do not pay a particular benefit to his program, and suggested eliminating them. He said that there is a lot that is not being considered in this report, and that he does not think there is enough information to make any other recommendation than to continue to provide the existing 100% fee waivers for group one field users.

Chris Sarris, 1758 Centella Place, Newport Beach, representing AYSO 97, agreed with previous speakers, noting that they are a community based organization that takes care of the community's kids. He said that they put tens of thousands of dollars into the fields, noting that these improvements are not strictly for their games, but for everybody to use. He noted that they pay taxes, the taxes pay for these fields, and that this would be a double taxation. He agreed with Mr. Zich's recommendation of continuing to provide the existing 100% fee waivers for group one field user groups.

Dave Stiller, 2879 Regis Lane, Costa Mesa, asked if the Field Ambassador program is essential, since it is being used as the basis for the need to start charging fees to group one field user groups. He noted that he wouldn't like to see any fees imposed for these kinds of programs since participating families or individuals already have to pay a fee to belong to these organizations. He noted that there is a lot more work and investigation that needs to be done before any kind of fee is assessed into programs which have served this community for years and years.

Aaron Rios, Newport Harbor Baseball President, agreed with his colleagues from the other organizations, indicating that the idea of increasing or assessing fees to group one field user groups should be tabled.

Olivia Ramos, 2234 Ruther, Costa Mesa, expressed her concern about the 5% increase, indicating that they work with a small, low-

income group. She noted that they already charge a small amount to families and that the increase being talked about tonight would really affect them.

Commissioner Leece commented that she has lived in the City for 31 years and that for most of those years her kids have used the baseball and soccer fields. She indicated that she does not think that the fees for group one field user groups should be raised, since taxes pay for the fields. She noted that the kids of Costa Mesa should have the ability to use the fields for free. Commissioner Leece mentioned that the Whittier School field is being used now and that it is great how we are finally maximizing the use of fields.

Ms. Raheb responded to questions from Commissioner de Arakal regarding the Field Ambassadors program.

Responding to questions and comments from Commissioner de Arakal, Ms. Ransom indicated that it is a matter of record that City expenditures are greater than revenues at this point citywide, and that City staff is exploring various revenue streams. She noted that revenues coming in through a recreation program benefit the general fund.

Commissioner de Arakal commented that he can't, in good conscience, bring himself to charge any kind of fee for group one field user groups. He indicated that he would be easily disposed to raise fees on non-resident groups.

Vice Chair Harris indicated that he really likes the Ambassador Program and thinks it is important. He indicated that he definitely would not favor raising fees for group one field user groups.

Commissioner Fislser said that he is not ready to support any increase in fees for group one field user groups, indicating that it is the City's youth we are talking about and the City should provide these recreation opportunities for them. He agreed with Vice Chair Harris on the need to keep the Ambassador Program. He favored Commissioner de Arakal's idea of the adding of a transfer / cancellation fee of \$5 or even \$10. He noted that it costs more to run the Job Center than to have the Field Ambassadors Program, and suggested looking at the privatization of the Job Center.

Commissioner Burciaga commented that her three children have been very involved with AYSO and that she admires and supports the work of these organizations. She indicated that she in no way supports the imposing of any fees on group one field user groups, favoring the adding of the \$5 fee for cancellation / transfer. Regarding the groups reserving and not using fields, she suggested charging half of the field use permit.

Commissioner Leece indicated that she was not in favor of the cancellation or transfer fees.

MOTION

A motion was made by Commissioner de Arakal, seconded by Vice Chair Harris, and carried 5 to 0, to direct staff to explore the following options to bring back to this Commission as potential for revenue in the City and how it would work: 1. \$10 Cancellation of Reservation fee, 2. \$10 Transfer of Reservation fee, 3. An assessment of the revenue that the lighting fee generates to determine whether or not it is efficient and the possibility of raising that fee, 4. A revenue analysis of what all non-resident field user groups generate for the City.

BREAK

The Vice Chair called for a break at 8:10 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

**BICYCLE TRAIL AND
LANDSCAPE
IMPROVEMENTS ON THE
WEST SIDE OF
SOUTHBOUND NEWPORT
BLVD FRONTAGE ROAD
BETWEEN ARLINGTON
DRIVE AND FAIR DRIVE**

Mr. Bill Morris made the presentation.

Responding to a question from Vice Chair Harris, Mr. Morris confirmed that the Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA) 90% grant is for the bicycle facility. He noted that the funding for the landscape was budgeted by Council in last year's capital improvement program (\$300,000).

In response to comments made by Vice Chair Harris, Mr. Morris pointed out that the Fairgrounds Board and staff were very gracious and supportive of this project and that it has been a pleasure working with them in getting the approvals and working all of the agreements out. He confirmed that the new 8-foot wide multi-purpose trail would be concrete.

Commissioner de Arakal indicated that he loved this plan and the color palette. He noted his hopes of having a lot of opportunities to implement it in other parts of the City, and in particular the southeast Bristol Street corridor from Red Hill on up to the Bristol Street Specific Plan Area.

Vice Chair Harris commented on how great and beautiful this area will look.

Mr. Morris indicated that staff would be coming back to this Commission in the future to take a look at all the plant palettes for all of the other areas for median islands and parkways based on this new direction from Council.

MOTION

A motion was made by Commissioner de Arakal, seconded by Commissioner Burciaga, and carried 5 to 0, to approve the landscape-planting palette for the parkway on southbound Newport Boulevard Frontage Road between Arlington Drive and Fair Drive.

**TREE REMOVAL REQUEST –
TEWINKLE ATHLETIC
COMPLEX PROJECT**

Mr. Bruce Hartley made the presentation, showing pictures of the trees being recommended to be removed.

Mr. Morris added that staff did leave a copy of the diagram of the trees to be removed with the president of the Mesa del Mar Homeowners Association last week.

Vice Chair Harris clarified that the trees being considered for removal tonight have nothing to do with the expansion of the ball fields.

Commissioner de Arakal said he is very happy with how the plans for the baseball fields, the skate park and the renovation of the lakes at TeWinkle Park are moving ahead. He thanked staff for their efforts and indicated that TeWinkle Park is going to be a very nice park.

MOTION

A motion was made by Commissioner Burciaga, seconded by Commissioner de Arakal, and carried 5 to 0, to approve the request for the removal of fifteen (15) City trees and the installation of one hundred sixty-two (162) replacement trees, in conjunction with the Athletic Complex renovation project.

RECREATION MANAGER'S

Ms. Jana Ransom gave special thanks to Vice Chair Harris for his

REPORT

participation in the Snow Hill event, where 2500 kids were entertained for about 4 hours.

Ms. Ransom reported that the Family Day Out program to the “Newport Beach Boat Parade” held during the month of December had been a fun and successful event. She noted that the “Winter Camp” filled to capacity, and that staff is looking at ways to possibly take additional kids as we move into the spring program. She encouraged anybody wanting to participate in the “Presidents’ Week” camp to get in line early.

Ms. Ransom briefed the Commission on the ACT Committee, indicating that the Committee will hopefully be coming to this Commission to talk about what they see as the status report of teens in Costa Mesa.

Ms. Ransom reported that thanks to Mr. Hartley and his staff working with the School District on the Joint Use Agreement, a couple of school fields had been aerated. She indicated that City and School district staff met recently to discuss a number of other areas, noting that the School District is very open to all of the issues that the City brings to them.

Ms. Ransom reported that the fall Softball season had concluded, and that one of the items of major concern showing in the evaluations was poor field conditions. Ms. Ransom noted that the Maintenance Services Department had done a complete infield upgrade, so that poor field conditions will not be a future concern for the Softball program.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Leece, Ms. Ransom confirmed that the TeWinkle Park fields will go down in August 2004 and will not be scheduled again until June of 2005.

Commissioner de Arakal commented that, as the Little League season approaches, he wanted to make sure that all the portable restrooms at Tewinkle Middle School get screened.

MAINTENANCE SERVICES MANAGER’S REPORT

Mr. Bruce Hartley welcomed Commissioner Burciaga to the Commission.

Mr. Hartley presented the Commission with a PowerPoint presentation on what the Maintenance staff has been working on. He indicated that with most of the projects on hold due to the uncertainty of the budget, staff is doing a lot of things with in-house skills, creativity and operating budget to make a difference out there. He went over in detail on the following improvements: small patio landscaping at Park Avenue Fire Station, Davis field infield renovation, Smallwood Park, Harper Park, Pinkley Park, and Senior Center.

Vice Chair Harris commented that this is a prime example of utilizing the City’s staff’s workforce and talents. He noted that pictures are worth a thousand words, and that he was glad to see projects being done by City forces instead of spending the money contracting out. Vice Chair Harris suggested taking this presentation to the City Council.

Commissioner de Arakal complemented Mr. Hartley and his staff for their fantastic work and the way they prioritize their budget, noting it is a model for others. He commented that the restroom at Smallwood Park is on his list to be rebuilt when the budget allows.

PARKS PROJECTS MANAGERS REPORT

Mr. Morris briefed the Commission on the following projects: Multi-purpose trail in Fairview Park, Hamilton Street Community Garden, Parkway and Neighborhood Entrance Landscape Improvements, Joann Street Bike Trail, Marina View Parks Security Lights, and the skate board park at TeWinkle Park.

In response to a question from Vice Chair Harris regarding the Park Monument Signs, Mr. Morris indicated that most of the projects in the Capital Improvement Program that are funded with general fund monies have been put on hold. He indicated that staff is trying to be financially prudent at these times not knowing what might happen to the State budget and the taking of Vehicle License Fee funds.

Mr. Morris, responding to a question from Commissioner de Arakal, indicated that the installation of chain link fencing in conjunction with the Fairview Road Arterial Wall project is tentatively on hold since it involves general fund money.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

Commissioner Burciaga indicated that it is a pleasure for her to be part of this Commission and of service to the Community. She thanked her fellow Commissioners for their help during tonight's meeting. She commented that it is nice to see all the improvements that are going on in the City, inviting the community to visit and enjoy the City's parks.

Commissioner Fisler invited the community to the CostaMazing Pride in the Park Fun Run/Walk to be held Saturday, February 7, 2004 at Fairview Park.

Ms. Ransom confirmed that the Fun/Run Walk fee is \$25.00. She noted that Plums Café will be serving breakfast and that a 1K Kids run would also be taking place. She mentioned that there would be a Community Fair with lots of vendors and a concert by The Answer. She encouraged people to call the Recreation Offices at 714-754-5300 for more information.

Commissioner Leece indicated that she had enjoyed Mr. Hartley's PowerPoint presentation. She made some comments regarding the Athletic Field Use and Allocation Policy referring specifically to problems at TeWinkle and California Schools, indicating hopes of going in the right direction to get them solved.

Commissioner de Arakal welcomed Commissioner Burciaga, saying that he has admired her role in the community and the leadership she provides. He said Commissioner Burciaga would be a great addition to this Commission and was looking forward to working with her. He invited the community to the Costa Mesa United fundraising event on February 26, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Hilton Costa Mesa at 3050 Bristol Street. He noted that this is the organization and the program to develop funds to build a football stadium at Estancia High School and a 50-meter swimming pool at Costa Mesa High School. He indicated that from his standpoint as a Parks and Recreation Commissioner, this is an important endeavor that the community and the business community need to get behind. For more information about this event people can call (714) 545-1150.

In regards to Fairview Park and the residents on Swan Drive, Commissioner de Arakal made the statement that it is very bothersome for him that the City is even contemplating deeding public parkland when the City does not have enough of it.

Vice Chair Harris and Commissioners Leece and Fisler agreed with the statement made by Commissioner de Arakal regarding Fairview Park and Swan Drive residents.

Vice Chair Harris thanked staff for their response to the challenges of tonight's meeting. He also thanked his fellow Commissioners and indicated that this Commission is here to represent the people in the community and hopefully help with the betterment of it.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m. to the Study Session on Wednesday, February 25, 2004 at 5:15 p.m. in Conference Room 1A, followed by the regular Commission meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Submitted by:

William J. Morris
Public Services Director