

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

October 1, 2007
6:30 P.M.

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ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Gill, Harris, Nicholson, Fitzpatrick and Shambaugh

Absent: Commissioner Murray and Lear

Others Present: Director of Parks and Recreation Richard Gill, Recreation Services Manager Idris J. Al-Oboudi, Recording Secretary Jane Grace and others (see attached list)

AGENDA CHANGES

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Fitzpatrick requested that the July 23, 2007 Parks and Recreation Commission minutes should be amended to read that the Commission asked staff to conduct site visits to other cities that have installed playground equipment similar to the proposed equipment.

Mr. Al-Oboudi reported that the proposed equipment has been seen in the industry for over four years and Mr. Gill reported that City staff and consultants have verified the longevity and success of the equipment installed in various cities.

The minutes of the July 23, 2007 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting were approved as amended. (MSC: Fitzpatrick/Nicholson – Unanimous)

CEREMONIAL

Mr. Gill reported that the Parks and Recreation Department recently conducted a “Rename the Class Brochure” contest. Recreation Services Manager Gina Allen was in attendance to present an award to Manhattan Beach resident Doug McMillan, winner of the contest, who submitted the name “Manhappenings.” Mr. McMillan was not able to attend the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

Commissioner Harris reported that the City conducted a very successful “First Annual Walk’N Wag” event in connection with the “Fourth Annual Pet Appreciation Day” on Sunday, September 30 in Live Oak Park. Mr. Al-Oboudi reported that \$1,700 was raised for the Manhattan Beach K-9 Trust Fund to buy additional equipment and training. Over \$5,000 was also raised in the raffle to help support two local animal rescue groups.

Commissioner Harris read a letter from the California Parks and Recreation Society (CPRS), thanking Mr. Idris J. Al-Oboudi for speaking at their Leadership Academy on June 25, 2007, clearly guiding professionals in the field of parks and recreation.

GENERAL BUSINESS

07/1001.1 – Approval of Conceptual Designs for the Replacement of Play Equipment at Upper Play Area in Polliwog Park

Mr. Gill reported that in this year's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget, \$1.1 million has been earmarked for the renovation of play equipment at four city parks. This Commission has seen and approved the conceptual plans for three of these parks (Manhattan Heights, Marine Avenue and Village). Polliwog Park has been considered separately; outreach was done to the community and neighbors around Polliwog Park and a meeting was held to hear suggestions from the community.

Mr. Gill introduced David Volz and Jody Rios of David Volz Design, who will give a presentation regarding the proposed designs for Polliwog Park. Staff is asking the Commission for conceptual approval of the Polliwog Park design which will be forwarded to City Council, along with the conceptual designs for Manhattan Heights, Marine Avenue and Village parks.

Mr. David Volz reported that their original task for the refurbishment of the Polliwog Park play equipment was to meet the current standards. They have since had to address drainage problems and have been approached to make the area a special park, accessible to all. Mr. Volz reported that three community groups (Pediatric Therapeutic Network, Friendship Circle and Exceptional Kids) helped with the initial design. This focus group helped determine replacement play equipment but was also sensitive to special needs, proposing a park for everyone.

Mr. Volz reported that the proposed design includes:

- Core area – with best surveillance
 - Existing trees
 - Existing play equipment
 - Sand play area
 - Picnic area
 - Improved walkways
 - Ring of palm trees to define core area
- Outer area – with less surveillance (for more independence)
 - Maze – color coded for teaching methods for special-needs children
 - Low plantings
 - Paths
 - Degrees of separation for larger muscled kids
 - Butterfly garden
 - Water play space (may be moved to another park)
 - Rocks for seating/social areas
 - Benches
 - Picnic area
- Replacement of Par Course
 - Police and Fire Department type exercise equipment

Mr. Volz reported that the original design included a parking area, but suggestions from the community have indicated that parking is not needed. Staff is investigating access for the handicap parking spaces at the Historical House.

Mr. Volz reported that the proposals are over budget and if the Commission recommends approval of the conceptual designs, Council would have to decide if they are willing to support the proposals.

During a discussion among the Commissioners, the following points were made:

1. Commissioner Gill inquired whether there would be any lighting installed – Mr. Volz indicated that the plan does not include lighting
2. Mr. Volz suggested that the project would take four to five months (including grading for drainage problem).
3. Commissioner Harris voiced a concern that there was no barrier between the core area and Redondo Avenue. Mr. Volz indicated that they would enclose the area with plantings; the pediatric therapists indicated that a change in color or texture would be enough of a barrier for autistic children and they were against fencing.
4. Commissioner Harris inquired whether any of the present play equipment would be used in the new project. Mr. Volz indicated that the old equipment is out of date and out of compliance but would be recycled. The present benches would be used and additional benches would be included.
5. Commissioner Nicholson inquired whether the proposed play area would affect Frisbee Golf. Mr. Volz indicated that holes 8 and 9 are impacted but they are sensitive to their needs and should still be able to play.
6. Commissioner Gill inquired about the possibility of increased usage. Mr. Volz suggested that there might be a small increase in daytime use by special-needs groups that travel to Universal Play Spaces.
7. Commissioner Nicholson inquired whether any trees would have to be removed. Mr. Volz indicated that one or two trees would have to be removed but they will be replaced three-to-one.
8. Commissioner Nicholson suggested that a water play area would be nice and well used. Mr. Gill suggested that there would be additional maintenance costs for this type of area and it could be included in the Facility Strategic Plan for an aquatics facility. Commissioner Nicholson suggested that the proposed water feature is designed more for individual play, where the aquatics facility is designed for larger groups and paying patrons.

Mr. Gill reported that staff will ask City Council to consider the conceptual designs for the replacement of playground equipment at Polliwog, Manhattan Heights, Marine Avenue and Village Parks. He indicated that the staff report will include various options, phases and the costs for each option for Council's clarification.

9. Commissioner Gill inquired whether there are any federal or state funds that might help finance the project. Mr. Gill indicated that the City is using a \$100,000 grant for the

recycled rubber. Commissioner Gill suggested that this would be a perfect park for local corporate sponsorship.

10. Commissioner Gill suggested that Polliwog Park needs a facelift and the proposal would make a beautiful addition.
11. Commissioner Fitzpatrick suggested that it is very apparent that something needs to be done at the four parks and staff could possibly present pictures of existing conditions to City Council.
12. Commissioner Harris suggested that we should also show the City Council pictures of children actually playing on the types of playground equipment that is being proposed.
13. Commissioner Gill suggested that if the new parks were built, they would tie into the facility strategic plan, showing the community what can be done.
14. Commissioner Nicholson suggested that when presenting the proposals to Council, staff should show pictures of how the parks look now and how they would look after the installation.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Julie Profet lives near the park and suggested that the proposal is a beautiful design. She reported that she sees special-needs children using the park and thinks the new park is a really nice idea. She suggested that a parking area is not necessary as there is plenty of parking on Redondo Avenue and Manhattan Beach Boulevard. Ms. Profet suggested that the plan should include a grassy, flat, open-space area where people could play games and throw a ball.

Ed Knizeski suggested that he generally likes the proposal but inquired whether grading of the area will completely fix the drainage so that the upper park will never flood.

Mr. Volz reported that the lower park is a flood plain and the plan for the proposed play area will be to move the play equipment and play areas out of the way so that the water can take a course down the slope to the flood plain.

Betty Carol Kostan is a member of the Botanical Gardens and felt with their beautiful park already in the area, the City should concentrate of the play equipment and grounds, rather than a garden area.

15. Commissioner Harris inquired whether Polliwog Park is the best place to build this play area if the costs are beyond our budget.
16. Commissioner Gill suggested that Polliwog Park is where the play area belongs and it should not be hidden away in a smaller park.

Mr. Gill indicated that the recommendation to staff could be a tiered approach, giving the City Council phases and options for the proposals.

A motion was made to approve the conceptual design for the replacement of play equipment at the upper play area in Polliwog Park and in so doing direct staff to break out the costs for the drainage issue and special needs component and equipment.

(MSC: Nicholson/Gill – Unanimous)

REPORTS

Mr. Gill reported that the Hometown Fair is scheduled for this weekend (October 6 and 7).

Mr. Gill reported that the artificial turf is very near completion with the final inspection happening October 2.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Jane Grace
Recording Secretary

Lynn Harris
Commission Chair

Parks & Recreation Commission
October 1, 2007

David Volz, David Volz Design
Jody Rios, David Volz Design
Julie Profet
Ed Knizeski
Betty Carol Kostan