

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2020, AT 7:00 P.M. WITH REMOTE ACCESS VIA RING CENTRAL WEBINARS

ROLL CALL TO ESTABLISH QUORUM

Meeting called to order at 7:08 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Lindermeier, Vice Chair Spielman, Commissioners Dailey, Yeh, Corrigan, Weinberg, and Morris

ABSENT: None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MOMENT OF SILENCE

A. In memory of City Employee, Recreation Leader II, Lori Stoia

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSIONER

Commissioner John Corrigan (appointed by City Council on Tuesday, September 8, 2020) was introduced by Donna Legge and welcomed by the other Commissioners

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Marta and Mike (no last name provided) requested information about the Hillview Baseball Park off-leash pilot program. Mike additionally expressed that he was interested in being involved in implementation.

Los Altos resident (identified only by initials KND) thanked the Commission for their work and echoed the previous sentiment about the Commission moving forward in a timely-manner with the implementation of off-leash hours at Hillview Baseball Field.

James Gibbs expressed that he believes that an area under the oak trees near the Bus Barn Theatre (across the parking lot from the Main Street Library) could become a maintained, fenced-in dog park.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/ACTION

1. Commission Minutes
Approve minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 12, 2020.

Action: Upon a motion by Vice Chair Spielman, seconded by Commissioner Weinberg, the Commission approved accepting the minutes of the meeting of August 12, 2020 with minor corrections.

Approve: Lindermeier, Spielman, Dailey, Yeh, Corrigan, Weinberg, and Morris.

Oppose: None.

Abstention: None.

Motion passed unanimously: 7-0-0.

2. Pilot Off-leash Implementation Plan

Receive recommendation from the Dog Park Subcommittee and forward a recommendation to City Council regarding a proposed implementation plan for the pilot off-leash program in Heritage Oaks Park

Public Comment: Chris Higgins professed appreciation that Los Altos is finally considering an off-leash dog park. He spoke about creating new friendships and supportive relationships through local dog parks.

John Squire expressed concern that Heritage Oaks Park is too small to be suitable for off-leash hours.

Yoav Agmon opposed making Heritage Oaks Park an off-leash dog park, in general. He believes that the method of choosing Heritage Oaks Park as an option was inappropriate and mentioned that he has submitted emails to the Commission previously voicing his objections.

Arundhati Shukla spoke in support of the Subcommittee's implementation plan for Heritage Oaks Park. She praised the Subcommittee's work and the compromises that were made.

Jane Clayton acknowledged the large amount of work completed by the Dog Park Subcommittee. She voiced support for the evaluation team and incident-reporting procedure but maintained that she opposes the selection of Heritage Oaks Park, in general, due to the size of the park, parking constraints, and existing soccer programming.

Martin Saso strongly opposed the use of Heritage Oaks Park for an off-leash pilot program, even with the Dog Park Subcommittee's recommendations. He stated that he has been documenting and reporting frequent off-leash violations since the Parks & Recreation Commission began actively considering dog parks for Los Altos early in 2020.

Susan Kearney thanked the commission and the Dog Park Subcommittee, in particular, for their hard work on this issue. She spoke in support of off-leash hours at Heritage Oaks Park and of a community evaluation team but voiced some concerns about pieces of the implementation plan (e.g., waiting until after COVID-19 and automatic shutdown options).

Jon Norris voiced that he believes that the implementation plan is reasonable and benefits the local residents. He also said that he believes that community and accommodation are important parts of reaching a compromise.

Jessica Norris spoke to support the off-leash pilot program at Heritage Oaks Parks. She stated that she believes that early socialization of dogs is vitally important and will help mitigate safety (aggression) issues. She stated that the proposed off-leash hours are ideal (regarding the number of people in the park during proposed hours).

Tracy Pirnack spoke in opposition of Heritage Oaks Park as an off-leash pilot location, including that she wanted the following components added to the report prior to City Council submission: unanimous opposition from immediate Heritage Oaks neighbors, concern about human-dog conflicts, and non-compliance with Santa Clara County best practices for dog park (fenced vs non-fenced).

Frank Martin spoke in support of keeping signage and dog-owner responsibilities simple when submitting the Commission's recommendations to City Council. He felt like any location would have opposition and didn't feel like the current opposition should be considered prohibitive.

Menashe Shahar spoke in strong opposition to the decision to approve Heritage Oaks Park as a location for a pilot off-leash program. He indicated that he still believes that Heritage Oaks neighbors were not able to voice their opinions until the decisions had already been made by the Commission.

Marta and Mike (no last name given) voiced their support of the implementation plan for Heritage Oaks Park's pilot off-leash hours program. They echoed the following ideas -- keeping the recommendation simple, beginning in November, and praising the Commission and the Dog Park Subcommittee for their work on this set of tasks.

Zahra Ardehali praised the Commissioners who met with and listened to residents. She voiced that Heritage Oaks Park is too small and too busy to sacrifice any land for additional activities, including a dedicated dog park or off-leash hours for dogs.

Bob S (no last name given) reported that he lives close to Grant Park and makes great use of the park for exercising his family's dogs. He stated that Heritage Oaks is a great selection for an off-leash pilot program, and he plans to assist make the pilot program work well.

Carol (no last name given) voiced her opinion that she does not believe that an off-leash dog park is necessary in Los Altos. She stated that she believes that a fenced-in dog park could be appropriate in Los Altos.

Mia (no last name given) extolled the Commission's efforts, but further stated that she does not support choosing what was clearly a "second choice" location for recommendation to City Council.

Chaya Shahar spoke about the signatures that the Heritage Oaks neighbors collected from residents who do not agree that Heritage Oaks Park is a good choice for an off-leash pilot program. She does not believe that the buffer zone between the park and the neighbors is sufficient.

Nancy Perkins stated that elderly neighbors are just as at risk as children while spending time in the park, and she further stated that sectioning off areas of the park (using fences, trees, and

other barriers) would be ideal. She suggested that repurposing an unused tennis court area could be a possible solution.

Yael Kohari stated that she supports Hillview Baseball Field for the off-leash pilot program. She also echoed earlier comments about the area near the Bus Barn and Main Street Library, under the oak trees.

CHAIR LINDERMEIER INITIATED A 5-MINUTE BREAK AT 10:14 P.M.

AT 10:19 P.M., COMMISSIONER DAILEY ANNOUNCED THAT DUE TO A FAMILY EMERGENCY, HE HAD TO LEAVE THE MEETING, AND HE EXCUSED HIMSELF.

Vladimir Rubashevsky spoke in opposition of the implementation plan regarding Heritage Oaks Park as the park is not suitable. He highlighted the small buffer zone and lack of fencing. He indicated that he believes the off-leash violations (outside “set” hours) will continue even after off-leash pilot plan implementation.

Action: Commissioner Morris moved that the Parks & Recreation Commission recommend to City Council that they start the off-leash pilot program immediately at Hillview Baseball Field and wait on the off-leash pilot program at Heritage Oaks Park until the Commission can explore other parks and/or work on an implementation plan that has less opposition. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Corrigan.

Commissioner Weinberg offered a friendly amendment to cut all wording in the motion following the words “Hillview Baseball Field.”

Commissioners Morris and Corrigan approved that amendment.

The amended motion read: Commissioner Morris moved that the Parks & Recreation Commission recommend to City Council that they start the off-leash pilot program immediately at Hillview Baseball Field.

Approve: Lindermeier, Spielman, Corrigan, and Morris

Oppose: None.

Abstention: Yeh and Weinberg.

Motion passed: 4-0-2.

Action: Vice Chair Spielman moved to modify the May 20, 2020 [Parks & Recreation Commission] decision regarding hours [for an off-leash pilot program at Heritage Oaks Park] to match the hours from the [Dog Park Subcommittee’s] Implementation Plan. (Commissioner Weinberg contributed to the wording of the motion.) The motion was seconded by Commissioner Morris.

Approve: Spielman and Corrigan.

Oppose: Yeh, Weinberg, and Lindermeier.

Abstention: Morris.

Motion failed: 2-3-1.

Action: Commissioner Morris moved to continue the Dog Park [implementation Plan] Discussion at a future meeting. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Action: Vice Chair Spielman moved to create an evaluation committee for the Heritage Oaks Park off-leash hours pilot program made up of at least one of each of the following, if available: one McKenzie Avenue resident, one dog owner in favor of off-leash hours, one Dog Park Subcommittee member, and one staff member/liaison. Commissioner Morris seconded the motion.

Approve: Lindermeier, Spielman, Yeh, Corrigan, and Weinberg.

Oppose: Morris.

Abstention: None.

Motion passed: 5-1-0.

Action: Commissioner Morris moved for the Parks & Recreation Commission to accept the implementation plan as presented to the Commission with the exception of the signage and the automatic shutdown section, both which should be addressed by legal and code criteria. Vice Chair Spielman seconded the motion.

Approve: Spielman, Corrigan, and Morris.

Oppose: Lindermeier, Yeh, and Weinberg.

Abstention: None.

Motion failed: 3-3-0.

COMMISSIONER DAILEY RETURNED TO THE MEETING AND RESUMED FULL PARTICIPATION AT 11:53 P.M.

Action: Vice Chair Spielman moved to recall his previous motion regarding hours, which read as follows:

Vice Chair Spielman moved to modify the May 20, 2020 [Parks & Recreation Commission] decision regarding hours [for an off-leash pilot program at Heritage Oaks Park] to match the hours from the [Dog Park Subcommittee's] Implementation Plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Morris.

Commissioner Morris offered a friendly amendment that would include the motion's wording and add the phrase "with the understanding that the rest of the implementation plan be taken up at a later date" at the end.

Vice Chair Spielman rejected that friendly amendment. The original wording stood.

Approve: Lindermeier, Spielman, Corrigan, Weinberg, and Morris.

Oppose: Dailey and Yeh.

Abstention: None.

Motion passed: 5-2-0.

Action: Commissioner Dailey moved that the Parks & Recreation Commission make their recommendations to City Council and submit the [Implementation Plan] report without endorsement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Yeh.

Approve: Lindermeier, Spielman, Dailey, Yeh, and Weinberg.

Oppose: Corrigan and Morris.

Abstention: None.

Motion passed: 5-2-0.

Action: Commissioner Weinberg moved that the Parks & Recreation Commission close debate on this agenda item and move to the next agenda item. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dailey.

Approve: Lindermeier, Spielman, Dailey, Yeh, Corrigan, Weinberg, and Morris.

Oppose: None.

Abstention: None.

Motion passed unanimously: 7-0-0.

CHAIR LINDERMEIER INITIATED A 5-MINUTE BREAK AT 12:33 A.M., ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

3. Bocce Ball Courts Donation Offer

Receive a report by staff and forward a recommendation to City Council to accept or not accept the conditional offer of \$50,000 by December 31, 2020, from the Los Altos Community Foundation (Los Altos Legacies) and Rotary Endowment Fund to build two Bocce Ball courts in Grant Park.

Public Comment: Roberta Phillips voiced her opposition to acceptance of the gift/donation for bocce ball at Grant Park because the Grant Park Master Plan does not include Bocce Ball. She specifically mentioned the (small) size of Grant Park.

Frank Martin vehemently protested the length of the meeting and time at which the Agenda Item 3 discussion began. He stated that Grant Park did not need Bocce Ball courts (since the new Hillview Community Center is already also going to have them). He stated that a Master Plan was necessary first.

Action: Chair Lindermeier moved to table the Bocce Ball donation offer discussion to another date so that residents can be more involved. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Spielman.

Approve: Lindermeier, Spielman, Dailey, Yeh, Corrigan, Weinberg, and Morris.

Oppose: None.

Abstention: None.

Motion passed unanimously: 7-0-0.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

4. Monthly staff report

Staff Liaison reminded Commissioners about the mandatory training with the City Clerk on Tuesday, September 15, 2020 and spoke about the rezoning of parkland, which is being discussed by City Council.

COMMISSION REPORTS AND COMMENTS

POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Bocce Ball Donation Offer (Oct)
2. Los Altos Parks Plan – Staff Report
3. Staff Report – Hillview Community Center

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Lindermeier adjourned the meeting at 1:13 a.m. on Thursday, September 10, 2020