



MEMORANDUM

Date: 8/23/2016

To: Menlo Park City Council

From: Christopher Harris, Parks and Recreation Commission Chair

Re: 2-Year Work Plan Update and Proposed Goals for May 2016 to May 2018

Current work plan goals and achievements for 2014-2016:

1. Research and evaluate the social services and recreation opportunities in the Belle Haven neighborhood in support of the Belle Haven Visioning and Neighborhood Action Plan resulting in diverse, high quality programs meeting the needs of neighborhood residents.
 - Received update on the Belle Haven Neighborhood Action Plan and provided feedback to staff on future next steps.
 - Provided feedback to the Belle Haven Community Development Fund on the Belle Haven Mini-Grant Program. Commissioners were impressed with the program and look forward to the completion of more projects and seeing further improvements. The Commission supports the Mini-Grant Program for its high community benefit in building community and increasing pride in the neighborhood. The Commission would like to see the program continue next year and in future years.
 - The Commission received presentation by Brenda Villa from Menlo Swim and Sport and provided feedback on the programming out at Belle Haven Pool. The Commission was supportive of the expanded hours and year round programming and would like to see outdoor lighting at the pool to help with the pool operation.

2. Research and evaluate opportunities to support and increase arts program offerings for the community resulting in residents having a greater exposure to the arts and improved partnerships with new and existing arts groups and venues.
 - The Commission formed an arts subcommittee to address the topic of promoting the arts in Menlo Park.
 - Preliminary work is proceeding for a downtown outdoor or indoor exhibition of works of local artists. The Burning Man organization has been contacted and the concept of an exhibition in Menlo Park has been explored with local Burning Man artists. As a result of a short discussion with a representative of the Atherton Arts Foundation, we will explore the possibility of cooperating with Atherton in a joint exhibit in Menlo Park.
 - The Commission's Arts Sub-Committee met and identified two sources for public art in Menlo Park, the first was the Great Spirit Path restoration project in Bedwell-Bayfront Park, and second was identifying two areas in downtown as potential locations where local artists could display their work.

- The Commission also reviewed and approved the proposed Fremont Park tree repurposing and art project that was the result of creative problem-solving by the Public Works Department employees.
 - Reviewed and provided feedback on programs at the Menlo-Atherton Performing Arts Center (PAC) and Menlo Park Grant for the Arts. The Commission weighed in on the continued challenges in scheduling the PAC for programs although staff has made the most of the current arrangement.
 - Received a presentation from Jean at Kepler's Arts and Lectures who received a grant from the City's Grant for the Arts Program. They discussed the continued challenges with scheduling the PAC with the school which has made scheduling events difficult.
3. Study and evaluate City operated parks to ensure their short and long term vitality resulting in park structures and flora being properly maintained; parks being utilized by the community with greater frequency; and ensuring a proper balance of park usage and long term conservation.
- Reviewed and provided feedback on proposed next steps for community engagement activities supporting the 2015-16 Capital Improvement Projects for parks.
 - Addressed the topic of drones and other UAS at Bedwell-Bayfront Park at four separate meetings including a study session. Reviewed and considered options for regulating drone and RC aircraft use at Bedwell-Bayfront Park before making recommendation to the City Council. The Commission was split evening on the best course of action to take which included banning drones and RC aircraft from the park or allow the usage with significant regulation. The Commission was unanimous in the need to have a decision made on the issue given the increase drone usage and significant public feedback on the issue.
 - The Commission reviewed and considered a proposal from the Menlo Park Historical Association for the installation of storyboards at Fremont Park. The Commission accepted the proposal and recommended that City staff work with the Association on the installation of two storyboards which would cost approximately \$2,000 each. The Association would be required to work with the City's Public Works Department and coordinate the proposed project.
 - The Commission received a presentation from the Friends of Bedwell-Bayfront Park and heard public comment on a number of issues which include on-going park maintenance, security and code enforcement issues related to off-leash dogs, radio-controlled planes, parking enforcement etc. and long-term park usage.
 - Bedwell-Bayfront Park Sub-Committee was formed and composed of members of the Commission and Friends of Bedwell-Bayfront Park.
 - The Bedwell-Bayfront Park Sub-committee also met with City staff to discuss current park maintenance contracts which are set to expire, a proposal for a park master plan and the long-term sustainability of the park. The Commission supports moving forward with a park master plan and

plans to submit a proposal to the City Council to address these concerns at a later date.

- The Commission received a presentation from the San Mateo County Parks and Rec Department on the status of the County's Flood Park. The County expressed interest in a partnership with the City in helping manage the park and shaping its future. The County is doing a master plan for the park and would like the Commission and the City to help in informing residents to get their input into the process. The Commission supports potential joint-use of the park in order to increase the park's use and maximize the benefit to residents in Menlo Park.
- Supported the partnership between the San Mateo County Health System and the Community Services Department in the implementation of a Passport to Parks program that encourages residents to visit the City parks while supporting health and wellness.
- Bedwell-Bayfront Park Sub-Committee which includes Commission and Friends of Bedwell-Bayfront Park membership continue to advocate for increased enforcement of park rules and recommend that the City acquire the services of a Park Ranger. Other issues of concern include park maintenance and the increasing presence of drones in the park.
- The Commission reviewed and approved recommendations for placement and installation of two benches at Bedwell-Bayfront Park.
- Reviewed and provided feedback to the Environmental Programs Division on the draft Integrated Pest Management System (use of pesticides in City Parks).
- The Commission received a status update of the Menlo Park playgrounds as part of an independent audit that was conducted which provided recommendations on playground best practices and changing safety standards. The Commission also toured three playgrounds including those at Willow Oaks, Burgess and Nealon Parks.
- Commission toured three parks including Nealon, Jack Lyle and Willow Oaks and discussed usage, amenities and maintenance. Information gained from the tour was included in the annual CIP process.
- Prioritization of the restroom projects at Jack Lyle and Willow Oaks Park. On their parks tour in July 2014, the Commission indicated that both of these parks need public restroom facilities given the high usage by residents and field user groups that serve youth sports programs.
- The field condition and irrigation issues at Nealon Park Softball Field are a major concern for the Commission. Commission is supportive of relocating the existing dog park at Nealon Park to another location in the park if possible and timing the relocation along with the Sod Replacement project that is being proposed for Nealon in FY 2015-16. A new Dog Park with expanded hours and amenities is highly desirable while helping to preserve a highly used softball field by youth and adult field user groups.
- Received presentation and provided feedback to Public Works Department regarding the Fremont Park Pine Tree Removal and Replacement/Reuse project.
- Commission addressed the City's Facility Naming Policy and provided input with regard to monuments and memorials in parks.

Other areas and issues addressed by the Commission:

1. Commissioners attended the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Commissioner Training that was held in June 2015.
2. Commissioners participated in a first-ever training retreat which focused on Community Services Department strategic planning, Commission work plan development and greater resident and stakeholder engagement strategies.
3. Reviewed and provided feedback on the Community Services Operational Review recommendations.
4. The Commission reviewed and recommended to the City Council the approval of a sponsorship policy for Community Services Department events and programs.
5. Supported the Community Services Department's Anti-Bullying Campaign and Unity Day during the month of October in collaboration with the Mayor's work on the Bully Project.
6. Commissioners began conducting park, program and recreation facility site visits in order to learn more about the programs and services the City provides and provide feedback to Community Services and Parks Division staff. The increased community engagement is one of the outcomes of the Commissioner retreat.
7. Reviewed and approved Sports Field User Groups FY's 2014-15 and 2015-16.
8. Reviewed and provided feedback on a pilot proposal to suspend non-subsidized rates for the Belle Haven After School Program and Camp Menlo Program in order to increase participation and improve cost-recovery.
9. The Commission received a presentation regarding recreational programming for disabled adults from Noria Zasslow, a former Parks and Recreation Commissioner who suggested recreational resources and opportunities for disabled adults or those with special needs is limited in Menlo Park. The Commission plans to work with City staff to determine the level of demand and significance of this issue, best practices in other Cities and determining the need for an Inclusion Policy for adults.
10. The Commission received the Aquatics Contractor Annual Report and a presentation by Menlo Swim and Sport at their February meeting. During the meeting the Commission reflected and discussed the performance of the pool contractor and the possibility of recommending a renewal of the lease agreement to City Council in lieu of an extensive RFP process. At their March meeting, the Commission received public comment and after further consideration approved a recommendation to develop a term sheet for a potential renewal of the pool lease agreement with Menlo Swim and Sport.
11. The Commission addressed the issue concerning non-resident fee policy and resident priority registration.

The Commission began to develop new work plan goals in March 2016 and approved them at their meeting on May 25, 2016. In developing their new 2-Year Work Plan, the Commission considered changes in the community over the past two years and those that may occur in the coming years as reflected in the General Plan Update process. In addition, the City will be embarking on two significant planning projects that include both the Bedwell-Bayfront Park Master Plan and the overall Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan which has not been updated since 1999.

Parks and Recreation Commission Work Plan Goals - Proposed for May 2016 to May 2018

1. Research and evaluate the social services and recreation opportunities in the City of Menlo Park, particularly in the Belle Haven Neighborhood resulting in high quality programs and services meeting the diverse and changing needs of residents throughout the City.
2. Study and evaluate, through such means as the Master Plan process, operational planning goals, utilization options, and guidelines for City park and community services facilities resulting in facilities and equipment being properly maintained, upgraded and/or expanded to meet community needs.
3. Research and evaluate improved offerings, new venues, and strengthened City partners and sponsorships that results in high quality educational, recreational, artistic, and cultural programs in the City of Menlo Park.