

CITY OF PETALUMA
RECREATION, MUSIC AND PARKS COMMISSION
MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, January 15, 2003

Petaluma Community Center

5:30-6:30 p.m.

320 North McDowell Blvd

Meeting Rooms A-D

Commissioners Present: Hagen, Kinsella, McCoy*, Moynihan, Ramirez, Tarr

Commissioners Absent: Kates

Staff Present: Jim Carr, Director of Parks and Recreation
Ed Anchordoguy, Parks and Landscape Manager
Jan Mandrell, Supervisor, Parks and Recreation
Sara Stewart, Admin. Secretary, Parks and Recreation

Chair*

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Ken McCoy welcomed Councilmember Bryant Moynihan as the City Council's liaison to the Commission and invited the public present to participate on a series of community workshops to discuss the Park Master Plan process and the future of the Parks and Recreation Department. The first meeting will start at 7 p.m. tonight

Ken McCoy indicated that because of recent correspondence received by staff, the City Attorney is recommending that the Commission does not make a recommendation tonight with regards to the weekend hours to exercise dogs at Oak Hill Park. He invited the public present to provide their comments and assured them that the Commission will be taking action as soon as they receive the green light from the City Attorney. The item will be discussed at the next meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *December 18, 2002*

Bruce Hagen –

1) Page 3, Line 12 – Re: Robbers Cave Rock – Correct: “*Prospective owners*” instead of current owners.

2) Re: Lafferty Park - Include: Bruce Hagen requested that Carr ask the City Attorney about the possibilities of placing a sign on or behind the fence at Lafferty Park.

Elaine Ramirez –

Page 4, Line 47 – Re: Penry Park – Include: She reported about an illegal sign erected in the park. Elaine Ramirez moved, seconded by John Kinsella to approve the minutes as amended.

AYES: 4, ABSTEIN: 2, ABSENT: 1

PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

1 **PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

2
3 Carr received a letter from Toni Larsen addressed to the Commission regarding Oak Hill Park.

4
5 **OLD BUSINESS**

6
7 **1) Presentation by Petaluma Boys and Girls Club regarding their indoor pool – Alan Anspach,**
8 **Executive Director**

9
10 **Carr** – Introduced Alan Anspach who will be retiring in February after twenty years as the Executive
11 Director of the Petaluma Boys and Girls Club.

12
13 **Alan Anspach** – Introduced Jennifer Weiss as the new Executive Director of the Petaluma Boys and
14 Girls Club starting in February

15
16 Gave a background history of the club and informed the Commission about the problems encountered
17 with the indoor pool built at the Lucchesi branch of the club, which was in operation from 1993 to
18 November 2000. The main reason to close down the pool was the lack of funds to maintain it and the
19 escalating energy costs.

20
21 Mr. Anspach reported that the County will be allocating 2.5 million dollars to various areas of Sonoma
22 County which could only be used for after school and summer programs. Consequently, the Boys and
23 Girls Club has applied for \$193,000, which is the total amount allocated for the Petaluma area. The
24 club hopes to obtain at least a portion of those funds to help reopen the pool. The County will be
25 making a decision in May 2003.

26
27 The Boys and Girls Club Board is reluctant to operate the pool for other than youth programs. They
28 will be willing to proceed with the project if other agencies can run programs for other than youth, and
29 if they obtain additional capital money. They plan to ask the City for some assistance and partnership.
30 The Santa Rosa Junior College has also expressed interest to use the pool to run their aquatic
31 programs.

32
33 **Bryant Moynihan** – Members of the community are looking for a year-round aquatics program and
34 the City is having a difficult time trying to keep the Swim Center open year round. It sounds that if
35 there is cooperation, the Boys and Girls pool could be integrated as one of the facilities for the City's
36 aquatic programs.

37
38 **Bruce Hagen** – Asked about costs.

39
40 **Alan Anspach** - The original estimates received to renovate the pool, the bathrooms, and redo the
41 system, amounts to approximately half a million dollars.

42
43 **Bryan Moynihan** – Asked Mr. Anspach about the amount of funds he would like to obtain from the
44 City.

45
46 **Alan Anspach** - Would like to obtain a third of the funds needed from the County, a third from the
47 City, and a third from private donors.

1 **Ken McCoy** – The Commission is committed to work on the aquatics program in Petaluma, whether it
2 will be with the existing pool or in combination with the Boys and Girls Club - The Commission will
3 do whatever they can to participate in the project.
4

5 **2) Dog run area at Oak Hill Park – Schedule Consideration - Carr**

6
7 **Ken McCoy** – Opened the floor for public comment.
8

9 **1) James Land** – Has been using the park since 1993. Spoke in favor of the dog owners that frequent
10 the park and mentioned the work they do to keep the park in good condition. He advocated expanding
11 the hours in the lower area of the park.
12

13 **2) Pat Cameron** – Complained that dogs are loose around the reservoir and that she had problems
14 with dogs on a couple of occasions. She does not visit the park anymore because she does not want to
15 have confrontations with people.
16

17 **3) Trish Kinsella** – Asked for Commission’s support about the problems that have been ongoing for
18 about three years at Oak Hill Park. The situation is getting worst and neighbors are tired of being
19 harassed by A.J. Levis. People feel threatened and unsafe in the park because his anger has escalated.
20 The attacks against dog owners, especially women continue, even though he is no longer a resident of
21 Petaluma.
22

23 Mrs. Kinsella suggested that the City issue a restraining order against Mr. and Mrs. Levis and family
24 so they are not allowed to enter the park or harass people that are using the park. She indicated that the
25 police have not been very responsive to the neighbors’ complaints.
26

27 **4) Barbara Webb** – Spoke in favor of keeping the current weekend schedule to exercise dogs at the
28 park.
29

30 **5) Susan Martin** – At the December meeting, she asked the Commission to consider changing the
31 weekend hours for dogs off leash from 11 to 3 p.m. because it gets dark after 5 p.m. and nobody uses
32 the park during the day. She spoke in favor of Trish Kinsella’s suggestion about the City issuing a
33 restraining order against Mr. Levis.
34

35 **6) Jennifer Cannon** – Started using Oak Hill Park 4 years ago after she obtained her dog and found
36 community with people that frequent the park. People that use the park care about animals and the
37 environment. She asked that the Commission reinstate all original hours on weekends so that people
38 can have access to the park at all times.
39

40 **7) Barbara London** – Requested that the Commission reinstate the Saturday and Sunday off leash
41 hours.
42

43 **8) Diane Faraone** – Met A.J. Levis four years ago, when she visited the park with her puppy and they
44 established a cordial relationship at that time. Mr. Levis indicated at that time, that Oak Hill Park
45 would not be a dog park much longer. She requested that the Commission reinstate the weekend hours
46 during the winter time.
47

48 **9) Eric Gravem** – Has seen a number of positive changes in the 16 years he has been using the park -
49 vandalism and drug dealing have been greatly reduced. He is sad that one person who has been caught

1 doing many negative things to disturb the park is getting so much attention. In order to avoid
2 confusion about the weekend hours, Mr. Gravem requested that the park be opened 24 hours, seven
3 days a week. He supports Trish Kinsella on her request to the City about issuing a restraining order
4 against somebody who threatens people's safety.

5
6 Since the Commission cannot make a decision tonight, he requested that the Commission consider how
7 many people at this meeting are in favor or against reinstating the hours at the park. He presented
8 concerns that opinions of interested people may not be considered at future meetings, since some of
9 them are unable to attend all the meetings.

10
11 **10) Marjoire Helm** – Spoke in favor of reinstating the hours on the weekends. She goes to the park
12 on a daily basis with her dog and has noticed the positive changes that have occurred in the park since
13 the increased use. She also has noticed an increase in community and stewardship of the park.

14
15 **11) Elizabeth Pond-McPherson** – Lived in Petaluma since 1991 and over the years has seen positive
16 changes that have occurred in the park. A.J. Levis has been sending her e-mails to scare her and
17 therefore she does not visit the park.

18
19 **Nancee Taveras** – As Manager of the Petaluma Animal Services, she supervises the Animal Control
20 officers. Since the park hours have changed, there have been three calls about dogs off leash being in
21 the park at the wrong hours and the three calls have been from A.J. Levis, although he refused to
22 identify himself. There have been no incidents reported involving dogs getting in fights or going after
23 people. Officer Dwayne Meredith patrols the area and in almost one year, has seen only one group of
24 people having a picnic in the lower area.

25
26 From the Animal Control perspective, there are not enough places for dogs off leash. At Oak Hill
27 Park, neighbors police themselves and she does not see any problems. Animal Control and Parks and
28 Recreation Departments will be conducting off leash dog training classes in the Spring.

29
30 **Ken McCoy** – The Commission will be making a decision about the hours as soon as they are legally
31 able to do so. At this point, the Commission has heard enough about the issues, so people should not
32 feel that they have to be present at every meeting when this issue is discussed. He thanked everyone
33 for attending the meeting.

34
35 **Carr** – Received a letter from Toni Larsen, who is an Oak Hill Park neighbor and a Tiny Tot's mother,
36 asking the Commission not to change the current hours for the dog run at Oak Hill Park, and to address
37 the problem about the few owners that continually allow their dogs to run at the top of the park without
38 leashes.

39
40 **12) Claus Brigman** – Gave a report about an incident that occurred between him and A.J. Levis's
41 wife. He indicated that the Mrs. Levis lied to the police about what took place and the police treated
42 him as if he was a criminal. He commented that the police officers have no idea of what is going on in
43 the neighborhood. He hopes that once and for all staff deals with the Levis' family.

44
45 **Carr** – Would like to hear about the incident regarding the woman being chased by A.J. Levis.

46
47 **13) Barbara Welch** – Reported that last Saturday, she left the park and unfortunately, had not leashed
48 her dog properly. She went across the street to set her dog on the leash and A.J. Levis came out of his
49 house and said that he wanted to help her. She commented that this is the same person whose wife had

1 tried to run her over with her car. She did not want A.J. to help her, and instead wanted him to leave
2 her alone because she is afraid of A.J. He kept on following her despite her objections; and then she
3 swore at him. He became angry and started chasing and harassing her, yelling, screaming, and calling
4 her names. She told him to stop harassing her and ran as fast as she could to get out of there. He ran
5 after her –

6
7 **John Kinsella** – At that moment he walked up while holding his daughter, and he is glad that he
8 happened to be there, because if he had not intervened, he thinks that a bad incident could have
9 happened. He saw when Barbara was being chased down the street.

10
11 **Ken McCoy** – Encouraged the neighbors present to call the police if an incident occurs at the park.
12 Even if the police does not do anything at the time, the report is on record. Staff can use those
13 recorded incidents as support information or evidence when they want to take an action.

14
15 **Carr** – After the last series of incidents, Police Chief Parks, Nancee Taveras, Dwayne Meredith, and
16 he went to the park to meet with A.J. Levis and for some reason A.J. had another appointment, so they
17 met with his wife. Since then, there has been a change of leadership in the police department and he
18 will be bringing up the incident reported to the attention of the new police chief and pointing out its
19 seriousness. At one time, Councilmember Mike Healy had suggested the idea of a restraining order
20 against A.J. Levis and Carr plans to pursue the suggestion.

21
22 **Bruce Hagen** – Assured the people present that the Commission wants to work with the neighbors,
23 and are committed to making it work for everybody.

24
25 **Commissioners Reports**

26
27 **1) Bryant Moynihan** – Encouraged the Commission to write a letter to the City Council
28 recommending that for the mid-year budget review, they consider using the Petaluma community
29 facilities funds to pay off the Community Center debt service. He said that it will be helpful if the
30 Commission can make some recommendations about different projects and ask the City Council for
31 some direction regarding specific amounts for the projects.

32
33 Marja Tarr moved that the Commission recommend to the City Council to consider paying the
34 Petaluma Community Center debt service out of community facilities fees. The motion was seconded
35 by Bruce Hagen, unanimously approved.

36
37 **Carr** – Will be writing a letter to the City Council regarding the Commission’s recommendation.

38
39 **ADJOURNMENT**

40
41 It was the general consensus of the Commission to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

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