



CITY OF RICHMOND
Recreation & Parks Commission
MINUTES

Wednesday, August 2, 2023, 6:00 PM
403 Civic Center Plaza (Bermuda Room)

This meeting is held in a building that is accessible to people with disabilities.

Board Members: Joey Smith, Chair; Aaron Rowden, Vice Chair; Allison Blakeley, Secretary; Vacant, Treasurer
Commissioners: Maryn Hurlbut, Catalin Kaser, Dani Lanis, Samantha Torres

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Meeting called to order by Chair Joey Smith at 6:03 pm

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Joey Smith, Allison Blakeley, Catalin Kaser, Dani Lanis, Aaron Rowden, and Samantha Torres

ABSENT: Maryn Hurlbut (Excused)

Chair Smith provided a brief overview of the meeting procedures and the Mission of the Recreation & Parks Commission.

AGENDA REVIEW

Vice Chair Rowden requested to remove agenda item 10 b regarding the city support of native stewardship of Ookwe Park and return this item once there is more information to report.

Motion by Vice Chair Rowden to approve the agenda with the amendment, seconded by Commissioner Kaser, and carried unanimously by a voice vote.

OPEN FORUM

Email from Cordell Hindler was introduced inviting all to the Richmond Rotary Club meeting on August 11th, at 12:30 pm, located at the Richmond Country Club, where Christopher Whitmore will present on the Richmond Promise. Mr. Hindler suggested revisiting the idea of having youth on the commission.

Alejandra Perez Orozco from Richmond, spoke to follow up on the BTA courts from the previous Recreation & Parks Commission meeting, as there was to be temporary solutions in place for the residents having access to the tennis courts, and to date, there still in only pickleball courts in place and is hoping for a timeline to address this concern. Ranjana Maharaj, Deputy Director for Community Services-Recreation, shared that staff is currently working through solutions and hopes to have further updates in September.

ANNOUNCEMENTS THROUGH THE CHAIR

- a.) Chair Smith advised the Next Commission meeting will be held September 6, 2023
- b.) The balance of the Commission Trust Account is \$413.08
- c.) No membership changes

CONSENT CALENDAR

Commissioner Kaser requested amending the minutes to add the staff responses to the Open Forum, as to the BTA court concerns.

Commissioner Torres motioned to approve the minutes of July 12, 2023, adding the requested missing information in staff reports, seconded by Commissioner Lanis, carried with an agreed voice vote with Vice Chair Rowden abstaining.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

Public Works – Facilities

Tawfic Halaby, Deputy Director of Public Works for Operations and Maintenance, shared a verbal and visual report of the Parks and Landscaping updates. Mr. Halaby answered questions from Chair Smith as to how the percentage of parcel taxes is received by the county for our work crews.

In addition, Secretary Blakeley reviewed her notes from July as to Greg Hardesty's promise to order the pickleball "caps" for BTA to ensure the courts are available for both pickleball and tennis and asked for an update. As Greg Hardesty, Superintendent of Parks and Landscaping, was not in attendance, Mr. Halaby and Ms. Maharaj provided updates as they are aware and advised they will reach out to parks staff. Chair Smith emphasized the need to take immediate action at BTA to ensure our community's concerns are made a priority. Vice Chair Rowden also voiced his support to expediently get the issues at BTA resolved.

Commissioner Torres shared her appreciation for Public Works staff who worked to make the July 20th, Thrive Thursday event, at MLK Park shine and she was pleased to see usually closed gates open, allowing more available space to be utilized for sport activities.

Commissioner Kaser thanked staff for the clean-up and weed abatement at the eastern side of the Greenway. In addition, she asked for an update on the legal rights to access school district grounds. Ms. Maharaj shared there are current plans and meetings taking place and hopes to have an update in September. Lastly, Ms. Kaser, asked for information on the parks assessment and getting the Master Parks Plan properly updated. Mr. Halaby advised he will further research the issue and report back.

Commission Torres suggested developing a committee to oversee how parcel tax are being utilized. Chair Smith asked Mr. Halaby for a report in September as to the funds used to involve partnerships with outside organizations to help maintain the city.

Commission Lanis questioned if a street cleaner can access the Greenway and if so, is there a maintenance schedule in which they can include the Greenway. Mr. Halaby will again provide follow up.

Community Services Division with – Recreation & Neighborhood Services

Ranjana Maharaj provided a detailed oral and visual report on upcoming and recent Recreation activities.

Vice Chair Rowden shared his child's experience participating in Recreation Summer Programs and commended the staff for their leadership and teaching skills. Commissioner Torres also shared her child's successful participation in these activities and shared the positive feedback she received on the outdoor camps.

PRESENTATIONS

None

AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

a.) Sustainability and Climate Responsiveness Committee (Catalin / Maryn / Allison / Samantha)

Secretary Blakeley shared they are collecting data and have found another list to coordinate with called the Western Fire Chiefs Association and are reviewing the information.

b.) Coordination to support the native stewardship of Ookwe Park (Aaron)

Removed during Agenda Review

c.) Youth & Associate Commissioners Initiative (Joey / Maryn)

Chair Smith advised she has spoken to Guadalupe Morales and hopes to have more to report in September.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEM:

a. Receive and APPROVE an update on the Shields Reid Park schematic plans

Spence Koehler from PlaceWorks shared a detailed verbal and visual presentation for the Shields-Reid Park renovation project. On August 9th, PlaceWorks will present to the Design Review Board and would like to have the Recreation and Parks Commission to sign a letter of support.

Mr. Koehler answered questions from all Commissioners as to the lighting, fencing and wheelchair accessibility.

Commissioner Kaser motioned to approve the 30% schematic plans as presented, seconded by Vice Chair Rowden with a unanimous voice vote with a letter of support to be completed by Chair Smith.

At this time (8:19 pm), Commissioner Kaser advised of the need to vote to extend the meeting. Chair Smith called for a motion to extend beyond the scheduled 8:30 pm time, which was motioned by Vice Chair Rowden to extend 15 minutes (8:45 pm), seconded by Commissioner Torres, and carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Councilmember Robinson shared she has reached out to the City Attorney for legal clarity on the previously mentioned pickleball and West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) concerns and is scheduled to meet with them tomorrow (8/03/23). In addition, Councilmember Robinson, shared the history of the Greenway grants and the city's commitment to maintenance. She also hopes to provide clarity on the Park Master Plan and is looking to make this an agenda item for City Council in September.

Ms. Robinson advised that there is movement on the MLK Center development plans and there are early talks to establish a Farmers Market at the Richmond Marina on Sunday's with more to follow.

Lastly, Councilmember Robinson was recently informed as to the status of the parks assessments, which is currently on hold, but Marcia Vallier is evaluating the recommendations on soccer field usage to present to City Council. Chair Smith asked if prior to submitting the proposal to city council, it would be greatly appreciated if the information can first be presented to the Recreation & Parks Commission and Ms. Robinson stated she will reach out to Ms. Vallier, who responded prior to the close of the meeting, that she will provide a presentation in September to the Recreation & Parks Commission.

At this time (8:45 pm), Vice Chair Rowden offered a motion to extend 5 minutes (8:50 pm), seconded by Commissioner Lanis and carried with a unanimous voice vote.

COMMISSIONER LIAISON REPORTS

Commissioner Torres updated the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) Gilman Fields in Berkeley in which Richmond Soccer Clubs have been given practice times on their request field challenges. She offered how the soccer organizations, and the school board will be meeting on August 23rd, to discuss sport field usage and access. Lastly, Ms. Torres voiced concerns of having the MLK scoreboard repaired or replaced.

Chair Smith visited the BTA courts and shared that the Willie Mays Memorial at Nicholl Park was tagged and thanked staff for getting it cleaned so quickly.

Commissioner Kaser invited everyone to attend a Clean-Up Event, sponsored by the Richmond Bicycle Advisory Committee, on August 14th at 5:30 pm on the eastern span of the Greenway at 5:30 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine George
Executive Secretary