



CITY OF RICHMOND
Recreation & Parks Commission
MINUTES

Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 6:00 PM
440 Civic Center Plaza

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 6:10 pm

ROLL CALL

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

ABSENT: Maryn Hurlbut (Excused), Catalin Kaser (Excused)

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

AGENDA REVIEW

Motion by Vice Chair Rowden to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Secretary Blakeley, and carried unanimously by a voice vote.

OPEN FORUM

Email from Cordell Hindler was introduced to invite all to the Senior Winter Ball on Saturday, December 16th, from 6:00 pm - 10:00 pm at the Richmond Auditorium; in addition, Mr. Hindler shared the new Administrative Services Coordinator will come aboard in 2024 and he asked that the Recreation & Parks Agenda be released on Friday before the meetings.

ANNOUNCEMENTS THROUGH THE CHAIR

- a.) Chair Smith advised the Next Commission meeting will be held January 10, 2024
- b.) The balance of the Commission Trust Account is \$413.08
- c.) No membership changes

CONSENT CALENDAR

The Commissioner voted to approve the minutes as written for the November 1, 2023 meeting, carried with an agreed voice vote, with Vice Chair Rowden abstaining.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

Parks & Landscaping Division

Tawfic Halaby, Deputy Public Works Director, shared a verbal and visual report on behalf of Greg Hardesty with the Parks and Landscaping updates throughout the city. As part of the presentation, it was reported

there is now caution signage posted due to a mountain lion concern at LaMoine Park. Vice Chair Rowden inquired as to how reports are authenticated to not alert the public to any untrue reports and Mr. Halaby will take this issue into consideration; however, in this case, Secretary Blakeley advised there were pictures to document the claims at LaMoine Park as factual.

Commissioner Torres asked for an update on Shields Reid lighting concerns and asked about the potential to convert perimeter lighting around the sports fields directly onto the fields and Mr. Halaby stated he will look into the issue.

Community Services Division – Recreation & Neighborhood Services

Troy Porter, Recreation Supervisor, provided a detailed oral and visual report on upcoming and recent Recreation activities.

PRESENTATIONS

a) RECEIVE an Update on the Universally Accessible Garden Project

Marcia Vallier from CSW ST2, along with Arleide Santos of Urban Tilth, together presented updates and schematic designs on the Urban Tilth ADA Garden at Unity Park and answered several detailed questions from the panel.

AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Secretary Blakeley stated along with Commissioner Torres the idea of banning single use plastic water bottles and having water bottle refill stations in parks, specifically sports fields like MLK Park, to reduce single plastic usage. Commissioner Torres presented the idea to educate and encourage youth into recycling. It was also suggested offering free water bottles as an incentive but not with more plastic as a replacement.

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

No updates provided

COMMISSIONER LIAISON REPORTS

Vice Chair Rowden commended the staff at the Parchester Community Center for their Halloween activities as it was well received in the neighborhood and a big hit in his household.

Secretary Blakeley forwarded photos of the Nevin Park grand opening ceremony of the Resilience Hub sharing photos with staff and continues to reach out to add members to the FRESHIR (fire safe trees) group.

Commissioner Lanis shared the Dirt Work Bike Park should be open in the beginning of 2024.

Commissioner Torres provided soccer field funding updates that was approved by City Council as well as updates on the JPA Tom Bates turf fields for Richmond soccer team usage; she attended the COR Winter Futsal League information night and reiterated her request to have policy signs posted at sports locations with Spanish translation specifically as to etiquette.

Chair Smith stated she has been visiting her parks and noticed that Stewart Playlot has new wood chips and she hopes they will not be lost when the rains come like last year's storms. In addition, she learned that on November 14th, there was a Ruby Bridges Walk to School event beginning at Solano Playlot to

Michelle Obama Elementary School.

AGENDA SETTING FOR NEXT MEETING AND FUTURE TOPICS

Chair Smith will follow up with Ranjana Maharaj, Deputy Director for Community Services-Recreation, to arrange a presentation on the Brown Act rules, as well as arranging a parks tour in early 2024. Ms. Smith was advised that an email for park tour dates was sent to the Commission for their availability.

Vice Chair Rowden would like a report on what is happening on the park signage issue that will display park guidelines in multiple languages to ensure equality to park users. Mr. Halaby further inquired as to what is needed from Public Works and a brief history was reintroduced, specifically addressing the need to have signage at all park entrances and a discussion continued including signage for field/court usage policies.

Councilmember Robinson encouraged the Recreation & Parks Commission to create a working group/task force with members of Recreation to create a current signage policy and Public Works will put them in place. In addition, Ms. Robinson recommended that Recreation staff could reach out to council to get consultation and financial support. Lastly, Ms. Robinson provided a detailed update on the ARPA funding allocations approved by City Council, with the majority going to park improvements.

Commissioner Lanis appreciated the Master Parks Plan checklist added to the Agenda Packet and would like monthly reports on the progress as part of the agenda. Mr. Lanis would also like to have an update on Humphrey Playlot, which incurred severe flooding last year, and he would like an update on what actions have been taken to avoid these issues. Commissioner Torres also expressed interest in having the Master Parks Plan checklist as an agenda discussion item.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine George
Executive Assistant