



CITY OF RICHMOND
Recreation & Parks Commission
MINUTES

Wednesday, January 10, 2024, 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 6:01 pm

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Joey Smith, Allison Blakeley, Maryn Hurlbut, Catalin Kaser, Dani Lanis, and Samantha Torres

ABSENT: Aaron Rowden

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

AGENDA REVIEW

Motion by Commissioner Hurlbut to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Kaser, and carried unanimously by a voice vote.

OPEN FORUM

Email from Cordell Hindler was introduced to invite all to the New Years's Mega Mixer on January 22, 2024 from 5:30-7:30pm at LaStrada Restaurant and hosted by the Bayfront Chamber of Commerce for \$10.00 for non-members and the El Cerrito Chamber Luncheon on January 24, 2024 from 11:30am – 1:00pm at Los Moles Beer Garden. In addition, Mr. Hindler shared the new Administrative Services Coordinator will be coming on board tentatively in the Spring.

In addition, it was shared that there were 14 emails received in support of pickleball that were sent to the commission prior to the meeting and placed on the City of Richmond website.

Ron Gay from Fairfield, who represents the Kings Accountability Group, in conjunction with the West County Salesian Boys and Girls Club, who spoke about the need for athletics, specifically pickleball and baseball in Richmond, that can give kids new opportunities. He invited everyone to a free clinic on January 27th, at the youth club which will show case pickleball.

Leela Del Rosso from Richmond shared her positive experience with pickleball and feels there has been "push back" from city government and is unclear on the resistance. Ms. Del Rosso also shared that while the BTA courts are multi-use, she has not noticed tennis users on the courts, however there are many participants wanting to play pickleball and believes the community should be enhancing and promoting this sport.

Garry Hurlbut of Richmond, and President of the Richmond Tennis Association, provided an update on the success and growth of the RTA program, specifically as it pertains to the amount of youth involvement.

David Arriaga, Director of Operations of the West County Salesian Youth Club, shared his collaboration with the Kings of Accountability Group and the East Bay Pickleball Association, with the goal to grow the sport of pickleball in the community and to provide sport services to our youth.

Marilyn Wilts from Richmond shared her positive experiences with pickleball and would like the commission to consider installing permanent nets/posts at the BTA courts as she was recently injury and would like to avoid issues like this in the future.

Sanford Chan from Richmond also shared his experience with pickleball and assisted in getting the BTA court resurfaced and would like to have permanent pickleball courts in place.

Karen Hilliard of Richmond spoke on how pickleball has created enjoyment and a sense of community for both the elderly and youth to come together.

Darlene Drapkin of Richmond and an Ambassador of the East Bay Pickleball Association shared the many accomplishments of the EBPA and is pleased the contracts to provide pickleball services have been renewed and there is a new collaboration with the Salesians Youth Club. She expressed there is a need to have permanent courts at BTA as was previously expressed at the Recreation & Parks Commission meeting in September by the many pickleball supporters.

ANNOUNCEMENTS THROUGH THE CHAIR

- a.) Chair Smith advised the Next Commission meeting will be held February 7, 2024
- b.) The balance of the Commission Trust Account is \$413.08
- c.) No membership changes

CONSENT CALENDAR

Commissioner Hurlbut voted to approve the minutes as written for the December 6, 2023 meeting, seconded by Secretary Blakeley, carried with an agreed voice vote, with Commissioner Hurlbut abstaining.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

Parks & Landscaping Division

Greg Hardesty, Superintendent of Parks and Landscaping, shared a verbal and visual report of the Parks and Landscaping updates throughout the city.

Commissioner Torres asked for an update on the Shields Reid field lighting and Mr. Hardesty suggested contacting LaShonda White, Deputy City Manager for Community Services as she recently led a meeting on the issues. In addition, Ms. Torres asked for the updates on BTA Community Center and Troy Porter, Recreation Supervisor, shared the latest information.

Commissioner Lanis asked for updates on Humphrey Playlot's flooding concern and Mr. Hardesty advised he recently met with the Public Works Director and it may be an engineering problem specifically around the swing areas. In addition, Mr. Lanis suggested if there is a way to meet the demand for dedicated pickleball courts within the city by creating a new court in an effort to not take away from tennis users.

Community Services Division – Recreation & Neighborhood Services

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

Recreation activities.

Commissioner Hurlbut shared the recipients of the Snow Ball Scholarships will receive their checks at a reception being held on February 3rd from 2-5:00 pm. In addition, Mrs. Hurlbut shared a recent endeavor to show how tennis courts can lower the nets for pickleball standards enabling courts to be shared by all.

Council member Robinson spoke to reiterate the allocation of funds approved by City Council and she hopes perhaps some of these funds can be used to improve the issues at Shields Reid (lighting) and Humphrey Playlot (flooding) and suggests the commission could advocate where the money should be spent. Commissioner Lanis suggested having a plan by the commission to discuss ideas on disbursing fund ideas and Chair Smith stated she would reach out to Ranjana Maharaj, Deputy Director of Recreation to add to the agenda.

AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

No updates provided

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

No updates provided

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

a.) Nominate Committee for Election of Officers

Commissioner Hurlbut and Commissioner Torres volunteered to be on the committee with Ms. Hurlbut asking as chair.

b.) Richmond Parks Master Plan Checklist Update

Garry Hurlbut spoke on ways both pickleball and tennis can share courts and nets, reiterating the examples offered by Ms. Hurlbut. In addition, Mr. Hurlbut questioned some of the items on the Master Parks Plan in which Mr. Hardesty provided clarification.

Commissioner Kaser expressed appreciation on the checklist, however as it is possibly 10 years old, she asked for the status on the updated plans going forward. Mr. Hardesty advised there are currently other assessments taking place and it was advised to reach out to get the equity parks report to provide clarity.

COMMISSIONER LIAISON REPORTS

Secretary Blakeley discovered a friend of hers plays pickleball in Oakland and was told they share courts with tennis by having courts lined for both sports.

Commissioner Hurlbut updated on Snow Ball and shared that sadly there were no 2023 donations outside of the Hurlbut Benevolent Foundation and she will be proposing they take over management of Snow Ball to include marketing and outreach. However, Ms. Hurlbut did share that despite this disappointment, there will still be a Snow Ball reception taking place on February 3, 2024 at Lara's Fine Dining Restaurant from 2:00 pm -5:00 pm.

Commissioner Kaser shared that on the city of El Cerrito's website there a listing of current projects which provides clarity and transparency which is something Richmond should consider. In addition, Ms. Kaser, along with Commission Lanis, on January 1st, led a group of youth riding bikes visiting many of the local parks in the north and east areas.

Commissioner Lanis reminded everyone to participate in MLK's day of services as there are many opportunities within the city.

Commissioner Torres questioned if the East Bay Pickleball Association has received their ECIA grant and feels there needs to be a clear understanding of what has happened at BTA so there can be discussions going forward to reach a resolution. Ms. Torres visited the MLK vacant lot with staff and shared an update. She asked for clarity on the sports officiating contract, as it appears Recreation staff is still officiating at recent Futsal events.

Chair Smith visited many of her parks with Stewart Playlot still having drainage issues when it rains and was pleased to see how Nevin Park is being used. Ms. Smith is looking forward to the year ahead and the exciting things to come, sharing the positive feedback she has received from the community.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine George
Executive Assistant