



# Richmond Recreation & Parks Commission

## MINUTES

**Wednesday, December 1, 2021 6:00 PM**

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### **CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Meeting called to order by Chair Joey Smith at 6:02 P.M.

### **ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Joey Smith, Soheila Bana,\* Brendan Havenar-Daughton, Maryn Hurlbut, Catalin Kaser, Aaron Rowden, Pardip Saini, and Eleanor Thompson

\*Arrived after Roll Call

ABSENT: Allison Blakeley

Vice Chair Brendan Havenar-Daughton requested that the Commission embrace a sincere acknowledgement that the City of Richmond was situated on land occupied by the Huichin: Confederated Villages of Lisjan, Chochenyo Ohlone Territory, made up of the seven Tribes of Lisjan (Ohlone), Karkin (Ohlone), Bay Miwok, Plains Miwok, Wappo, Delta Yokut and Napien (Patwin) whose territory included Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano, Napa and San Joaquin counties. He advised that he personally had contributed to the Shu'umi Land Tax as a relatively low cost way to support the native community members in their work.

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

### **AGENDA REVIEW**

Motion by Commissioner Hurlbut to approve the agenda, as shown, seconded by Vice Chair Havenar-Daughton, and carried by a voice vote, with an abstention by Commissioner Rowden.

### **OPEN FORUM**

Gary Hurlbut, President of the Richmond Tennis Association (RTA), reported that youth and adults had been able to get back on the tennis courts with folks from the Recreation Division and volunteers from RTA for the full month of July at MLK Park, and two women's teams that had won the East Bay Championship had participated in sectionals in Sacramento.

Cordell Hindler, Richmond, reported that *Home for the Holidays* would be performed at the Contra Costa Civic Theater on December 3 and 5 at 7:30 P.M. He also reported that there would be some new deputy directors in Richmond as a result of the passage of the City's Reorganization Chart.

Jan Mignone advised that the baseball portion of Wendell Park was being used for undesirable activity walking back and forth. As a result, she requested that the opening at 26<sup>th</sup> Street be gated. She added

that she had been working to get more lights in the park to help address the issue.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS THROUGH THE CHAIR**

1. Chair Smith advised that the Next Commission meeting would be held on the second Wednesday of January, January 12, 2022 via Zoom.
2. The balance in the Commission Trust account was reported to be \$413.08, with an additional \$1,000 in the Trust for the RTA Snow Ball account.
3. Chair Smith welcomed new Commissioner Aaron Rowden to the Recreation & Parks Commission.
4. Anyone wishing to speak during this meeting was encouraged to send an email to [rec.parkscommission@gmail.com](mailto:rec.parkscommission@gmail.com) by 12:00 P.M. the day of the meeting with the subject line "rec&parks commission speaker." State your comments as "Open Forum" or "Staff Reports" as an example of the topic to be discussed.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

### **Approve Minutes of the November 3, 2021 Meeting**

Motion by Commissioner Kaser to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2021 meeting, as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Hurlbut, and carried by a voice vote with an abstention from Commissioner Rowden.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS FOR INFORMATION**

Public Works Department Reports:

Jose Urquilla, Superintendent, Facilities and Greg Hardesty, Superintendent, Parks & Landscaping provided oral and visual reports and responded to comments from the Commission, including the status of the signage previously approved by the Commission.

Community Services Department:

Ranjana Maharaj, CSD Administrative Manager, provided oral and visual reports and responded to comments from the Commission.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

### **Update on Pickleball Program – Darlene Drapkin**

Darlene Rios Drapkin, USA Pickleball Association Ambassador, East Bay Pickleball Association noted that the Commission had voted in June 2021 to allow the conception of a Pickleball Program. She pointed out the multi-purposing that had been made to the two existing tennis courts at Booker T. Anderson, Jr. Park for six temporary pickleball courts. She referred to court fees paid to the City and requested that the City consider waiving those fees. She noted that a theft of temporary equipment in November had crippled the program.

Ms. Drapkin explained that there were few pickleball courts in Richmond. She proposed a solution to meet the existing demand for pickleball in Richmond was to place two pickleball courts using the existing lines to allow two dedicated courts. She requested that the Commission repurpose one tennis court in the park so that two permanent pickleball courts could be installed at no cost to the City.

Gary Hurlbut, Richmond, stated that while he was a pickleball supporter, the loss of one tennis court would leave only one court for tennis at the park. He explained that the tennis courts at the park had been utilized by Richmond youth programs, with 230 youth on the courts in 2019.

Shoshana Grammer, Richmond, a pickleball player, noted that 1,300 people had come out in the last few months to play pickleball and there were options to consider, which could include building new pickleball courts.

Michelle Temple, Richmond, stated that pickleball had come to Richmond with a smash in August and since then hundreds of players had come in and the sport had united people of all ages in a healthy activity.

Ahmad Anderson, a Richmond Economic Development Commissioner and son of Booker T. Anderson, stated the issue was about inclusiveness and a way to join both tennis and pickleball together. He advised that pickleball had increased participation, inclusion and engagement. He appealed to the Commission to help move the program forward.

Cheryl Maier, with Richmond Friends of Recreation, a non-profit agency helping the City by stewarding special funds for parks and recreation at the request of the City, emphasized the need for some compromise.

Debra Bernhardt, echoed the comments of others and noted that all the tennis courts at Indian Wells would be temporarily converted to pickleball courts for the Nationals, where 2,800 pickleball players would participate from children to 90-year olds, disabled and others. She emphasized that pickleball would be a good addition to the community.

Eduardo Martinez, a member of the Richmond City Council, noted that while he had initially been skeptical about pickleball, he had seen what a great community building vehicle it was. He stated a lock box would not be a solution and there was a need to create a situation to help pickleball grow and be established in the City of Richmond.

Phillip Moss, Richmond, stated the permanent pickleball courts would give everyone the opportunity to play pickleball in a walk-on, play and leave situation. He requested the support for the two pickleball courts given the informal, inexpensive effort involved.

Commissioner Hurlbut pointed out that the Nystrom area was a very large unused area that would be a perfect permanent location for pickleball courts where there could be six courts instead of two. She objected to having to remove lines that had already been paid for to convert the courts from tennis to pickleball.

Ms. Drapkin clarified that the two courts would be placed on the existing lines and while she supported use of the Nystrom area, she explained that would be a long-term and not a short-term solution and would involve a lot of investment.

Commissioner Saini asked if the proposal would interrupt those who wanted to play tennis.

Tetteh Kisseh, Recreation Program Coordinator, clarified that for the proposal to be approved it would first require approval from the neighborhood council and the Recreation & Parks Commission. He noted that both programs had equal power and if approved there would be pickleball on one side and tennis on the other evenly distributed. In response to Commissioner Bana as to whether pickleball could be considered in the El Sobrante Valley area or at De Anza High School, he stated that the City had been

exploring other possibilities of expansion in Richmond.

Ms. Temple spoke to the popularity of pickleball throughout the Bay Area. She urged the Commission to offer some permanent solutions to the situation where over \$2,000 had been lost in the theft.

Mr. Anderson commented that while the pickleball organizers had contacted the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) with respect to the use of the tennis courts on school properties, there were issues with respect to WCCUSD control and insurance that had made the use of those courts difficult if not impossible.

Mr. Martinez confirmed that it would be unwieldy to do anything with the WCCUSD unless it was with respect to tournaments or something special.

Ms. Drapkin reported that Don Low, former Executive Director of the YMCA in Richmond, had submitted a comment on Chat to request a permanent pickleball course in Richmond.

Ms. Bernhardt pointed out that the money being collected for pickleball was being submitted to the City of Richmond.

Ms. Drapkin requested that the comments submitted to the City be shared with the pickleball organization.

### **Master Fee Schedule – Hope Lattell**

Hope Lattell, Senior Accountant, presented updates to the Recreation & Parks Department portion of the Master Fee Schedule and stated this year the updates were fairly minimal. She identified the changes requested, the fee updates that were all fairly minimal, and pointed out the fees involved to make the department more self-sufficient.

Vice Chair Havenar-Daughton commented that some of the fees appeared to be low, such as alcohol sales at the convention center. He asked about the criteria used to determine the relative increase and requested a report on the amount of revenue generated for each of the line items.

Ms. Lattell stated that information could be provided. She added that the idea was to slowly present an incremental increase to get close to being self-sufficient.

Commissioner Kaser requested that the slides be presented to the Commission ahead of time given that the Zoom presentation was too small to read. She noted the difference between raising revenue and covering costs, and with respect to the policing of events, she wanted to make sure that Richmond residents could still get together for a protest, ceremonies, or block parties, among others.

Ms. Lattell noted the delicate balance of making a little bit of money to help offset the free programming to allow the City to continue to provide the programs. She had done cost recovery calculations on every program offered and was very mindful of the impact to residents.

Commissioner Saini wanted to be able to utilize the Richmond Auditorium more efficiently and asked about the occupancy of the auditorium.

A discussion developed on the protocols involved in the renting of the auditorium to ensure the safety,

security and maintenance of the facility.

In response to Commissioner Bana, Ms. Lattell detailed the fees that depended on the size of demonstrations, and the fees related to administrative work related to coordinating the events.

## **AD HOC COMMITTEE STATEMENTS**

### **Urban Green Canopy Committee (Brendan/Catalin/Maryn)**

Vice Chair Havenar-Daughton reported that the committee had met last week and had recommended a renaming to the Sustainability and Climate Responsiveness Committee to engage with and support the work to develop the Richmond Greenway in connection with the interest in offering an update to the Parks Master Plan. The Committee had been discussing ways to engage and support local community-based organizations doing work on the Greenway and interfacing with City staff with respect to the development of the Greenway. The Committee was also focused on tree planting, supporting the green canopy, and the best way to go about tree planting.

### **Willie Mays' Day (Maryn/Eleanor/Joey)**

#### **Willie Mays Field Committee (Maryn/Eleanor/Joey)**

#### **Kiosk Concept Paper for a "Walk of Honor" Committee (Maryn/Eleanor/Joey)**

Commissioner Hurlbut referred first to the draft Kiosk Concept Paper for a "Walk of Honor" and stated the committee would meet to review the paper before making a presentation to the Commission. With respect to Willie Mays Day, she described the meeting with Willie Brown and Nat Bates in San Francisco to discuss a kick-off to get input from Willie Mays on what he would like the day to be. A concept paper had been written about Willie Mays Day for a life tribute for his many contributions on or around his birthday on May 6, 2022. She presented a list of those expected to participate in the event being called "Hands Across the Bay" to make it more of a national event, to include a wide range of participants including Charles Cavenes who had initially recommended the event.

Commissioner Hurlbut asked that a copy of all the screens just presented be submitted to the rest of the Commission for review. She reported that meetings would be set up in the next two weeks for both the Kiosk Concept and Willie Mays Day and how the kiosk might be incorporated as the first kiosk prototype.

### **Associate Commissioner Committee (Maryn/Allison/Joey)**

Commissioner Hurlbut stated that she had tried to reach out to the Mayor's and City Manager's offices to invite both to the next naming committee meeting to ask about the status of an approved concept that was supposed to have been submitted to the City Council.

Vice Chair Havenar-Daughton reported that LaShonda White had reached out to him about Y-PLAN, and she had expressed a willingness to meet with anyone interested in that program. He would meet with her to explore how the goals associated with the Associate Commissioner could blend with Y-PLAN.

## **Statement of Policy and Guidelines for Naming or Re-naming of Parks, Facilities and Streets**

There was no discussion.

## DISCUSSIONS & ACTION ITEMS

- a. **Approve** a request to rename the South 37<sup>th</sup> Underpass to *Juneteenth Freedom Underpass* – Stephanie Ny

Chair Smith verified that Commissioners had reviewed the documentation involved and there were no questions with respect to those documents.

Motion by Commissioner Kaser to rename the South 37<sup>th</sup> Street Underpass to *Juneteenth Freedom Underpass*, seconded by Commissioner Bana, and carried unanimously by a voice vote.

- b. **Coordinate** an open conversation on how the city can support the native stewardship of Ookwe Park

- i. Recreation and Parks Commission
- ii. Sogorea Te' Land Trust
- iii. Arts and Culture Commission
- iv. Planning Commission

Vice Chair Havenar-Daughton reported that he had touched base with the Sogorea Te' Land Trust, which was interested in having a conversation. Given all those involved, he stated it made sense to defer the conversation to the third or fourth week in January 2022 to coordinate all those interested. Another update would be provided in January.

## COMMISSIONER LIAISON REPORTS

There were no reports.

## COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Ms. Maharaj shared with the Commission that the Recreation Division has a token of appreciation which needed to be individually picked up by Commissioners. She said during non-COVID times, the Division would generally host a reception for the Commission. Commissioners were asked to coordinate the pick up of the token with Christine George, the Executive Secretary.

Commissioner Saini verified with the Chair that the final meeting of his Commission term after nine years would be the January 12, 2022 meeting.

Chair Smith advised that an event in Commissioner Saini's honor would be scheduled in the near future.

## AGENDA SETTING FOR NEXT MEETING AND FUTURE TOPICS

There was no discussion.

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Anita L. Tucci-Smith  
Minutes Clerk