



**Recreation and Park Commission
Davis Senior Center Valente Room, 646 A Street
Thursday, May 21, 2015
MINUTES**

Commission Members Present: Ira Bray (Chair), Cecilia Escamilla-Greenwald (Vice Chair), Emily Griswold, Katerina Robinson and Travie Westlund

Commission Members Absent: Dawn Einwalter, Francis Resta and Will Arnold

Council Liaison Present: None

Public Present: Leslie Hunter

Staff Present: Christine Helweg

Chair Ira Bray called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

1. Approval of the Agenda

A motion was made by E. Griswold, seconded by T. Westlund to approve the agenda, and was approved by consensus.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 16, 2015.

A motion was made by T. Westlund, seconded by E. Griswold to approve the meeting minutes with the following amendments:

- On page 2, Item #6 under I. Bray – his comment clarified to say that due to the City’s loss of the staff person who handled the majority of the GIS maps, he has concern about the City’s lack of availability to utilize this tool in the future.
- On page 2, Item #6 under I. Bray, second comment – No water conservation information on the front page of the City’s web site.

The motion was approved by consensus; with Commissioner C. Greenwald abstaining due to the fact that she was present at last month’s meeting.

3. Public Comments

Resident Leslie Hunter had come to the commission meeting to hear the discussion on the Northstar Pond management plan. This item is scheduled for review by the Commission in July 2015.

4. Written Communications

Superintendent Helweg announced the National Park and Recreation Association’s Cover Photo contest for July as National Park and Recreation Month, of which the City of Davis is a finalist. Public voting via the NRPA Facebook page runs from May 18-22, 2015.

Superintendent Helweg provided a brief summary and background related to the Observations and Recommendations Report conducted by former City Manager, John Meyer on government operations for the City of Davis.

Superintendent Helweg provided an update on the City's current Facility Asset Assessment project that is being conducted jointly between the Public Works and Parks divisions.

Commissioner Bray suggested that staff could possibly consider adding the number of public use hours associated with the public facilities so there can more readily see a cost benefit to what is being expended in ongoing maintenance.

5. Presentation on Conceptual Design Plan for Central Park Oak Tree Stage & Picnic Area

Superintendent Helweg provided the background and overview of the proposed conceptual design plan for the Central Park Oak Tree and expanded picnic areas that had been formerly damaged by arson last year. City Council will be considering this proposal on Tuesday, May 26, 2015, and if approved, staff will proceed with construction documents and bidding, with an anticipated completion date of late fall 2015.

T. Westlund – suggested adding a small ramp at the side of the proposed stairs to accommodate strollers, hand carts, wheelchairs, etc. Also suggested adding a concrete walk at the base of the rock wall – water currently collects there and is a maintenance issue.

E. Griswold – expressed her frustration with the design process and lack of community outreach to other stakeholders, such as the original designers Mark Francis and Skip Mezger. Would have like to have incorporated their comments and thoughts about the space to honor the award winning facility and to honor the Heritage Oak tree more appropriately. Additional concerns include:

- more sittable space around the perimeter of the oak tree
- the fencing around the oak tree creates dead space for the park site and does not encourage public access near the tree
- would like to see wood mulch or other permeable material around the trees in lieu of decomposed granite which could prevent water from accessing root zone
- Concerned about the overall health of tree – maybe consider having an assessment completed by a Master Arborist
- Fencing may be a concern with homeless storing their personal belongings on the interior area near the base of tree
- Fenced area may also be used as a child play area by some parents
- Would like staff to consider some type of seating wall around the perimeter of Oak tree to facilitate more community gathering space – maybe a design that could serve similar purposed or design as the paver stones
- The picnic area is pretty much a gathering space for the homeless

C. Greenwald – also concerned about fencing around tree, would like staff to stop the design process, and solicit input from original designers and protect the tree more effectively.

K. Robinson – like the idea of using more native grasses and boulders around the base of the tree, would like to have staff consider more seating where applicable.

I. Bray – would also like to see some type of seating wall in lieu of metal fencing.

Leslie Hunter (Resident) – concerned about the public backlash due to the lack of community input on the overall design plan.

A motion was made by C. Greenwald, seconded by K. Robinson that the Commission recommends to the City Council that:

- Seek more community input within a brief, designated timeframe, including input from original park designers Mark Francis and Skip Mezger;
- Consider alternatives to the decorative fence, including seating that is more community oriented and flexible;
- Consider alternatives to decomposed granite surrounding the tree for the health of the Heritage Oak (i.e. mulch or native plants).

The motion was passed unanimously.

6. Upcoming City Hall at the Market Booth

Superintendent Helweg provided information on the upcoming City Hall at the Market booth which Commission members expressed interest in attending on Saturday, June 13, 2015. The following Commissioners volunteered to assist with the booth during the following hours:

T. Westlund – 8:30-9:30 am
K. Robinson – 9:30-10:30 am
E. Griswold – 10:30-11:30 am

Other commissioners interested in attending during these times are welcomed and encouraged.

7. Review and Discussion of Toad Hollow Dog Park.

Commissioner I. Bray showed a brief slide show of photographs taken of the Toad Hollow Dog Park. The following comments were provided:

K. Robinson – this site is beloved by residents, would like to see potentially more doggy bag dispensers and dog fountains (although they tend to clog easily), very little shade in the park, would like to explore possibly adding additional shade trees and more seating.

C. Greenwald – no comments.

E. Griswold – staff may want to consider better striping in the parking lot to improve efficient parking during peak use periods, need more shade, and some users expressed the desire for night lighting at the facility.

T. Westlund – staff may want to consider adding some type of barrier (i.e. wood) to the base of the fencing near the water fountain to contain the rock in the area, potential of increased lighting off the corporation yard fencing.

I. Bray – consider adding more additional seating and shade at the facility.

8. Commissioner Comments.

T. Westlund – The Exploit Science Center was not selected as a finalist for the Brooks Painting contest. Expressed concern about the level of weeds at the Mace Ranch Passive Recreation area – this was supposed to be a City showcase project, that does not appear to have been that successful.

E. Griswold – provided a brief overview of the Arboretum Gateway Garden Celebration that she spearheaded on Sunday, June 3, 2015.

I. Bray – was very complimentary of Commissioner Griswold and her role in the Arboretum Gateway Garden Celebration and completion of the project in its entirety.

9. Liaison Reports

- City Council Liaison – no report
- Finance & Budget Commission – T. Westlund reported that the commission is discussion and reviewing a User Fee Study which includes program and facility fees for the Parks & Community Services Department. Other discussion topics included the proposed Innovation Centers and preliminary review of the upcoming FY15-16 budget.
- OSHC – no report

10. Staff Reports/Updates

None.

Meeting adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Christine Helweg
Parks & Community Services Superintendent