



**Recreation and Park Commission  
Davis Senior Center Activity Room, 646 A Street  
Thursday, April 17, 2014  
MINUTES**

Commission Members Present: Ira Bray (Chair), Dawn Einwalter, Cecilia Escamilla-Greenwald, Francis Resta, Charlie Russell, and Travie Westlund

Commission Members Absent: Katerina Robinson and Marq Truscott

Council Liaison Present: None

Staff Present: Rob Cain, Christine Helweg, David Luckscheider, Mitch Sears, Kelly Stachowicz and Brad VonStriver

Public Present: Steve & Mary Amesbury, Stacey Tucker-Blosch, John & Leslie Chuck, Charles Derby, Mark Henderson, Sherelene Harrison, Doug Hinton, William Kenefick, Harris & Mary Liu, Stephanie Malone, Nancy McIntyre, Sandy Page, Lois Sherman, Mike & Carol Stewart and Kurt Yeaman

Chair Ira Bray called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**1. Approval of the Agenda**

The order of discussion items was amended in order to accommodate staff attending other meetings. The amended agenda was approved by consensus.

**2. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes of March 20, 2014 were approved by consensus.

**3. Public Comments**

None.

**4. Written Communications**

Staff provided Commission members with copies of the USA Today article naming the City of Davis as the #1 Best U.S. Cycling Town for 2014.

Staff also provided Commission members with copies of a letter by residents, David Kalb and Nancy Gelbard, complimenting the Parks Maintenance staff on the care of Northstar Park.

**5. North Davis Riparian Enhancement Project**

Mitch Sears, Sustainability Program Manager, provided the Commission with an overview and project status update on the North Davis Riparian Enhancement project currently underway. Many of the plantings for this project have included native plants, increased pollinators, diversity of plantings, and plants that are more effective with fire suppression/control.

The next steps of the project will be including three interpretative areas, located at Senda Nueva Greenbelt, Anderson Park, and the Northstar Connector Greenbelt. Interpretive signage will most likely be consistent with that which is being included in the UC Davis/City Gateway project.

The timeline for the project is still tentative, but will most likely contain:

- Bid solicitation (May)
- Award Contract (June)
- Demolition (July)
- Construction (Sept/Oct)

Resident, Lois Sherman, expressed concerns about ongoing maintenance of the areas, especially the irrigation needs for the plantings.

Resident, Bill Kenefick, also expressed concerns that Area #4 still needs additional work on the plantings and irrigation lines.

T. Westlund – would like to have a clearly defined maintenance plan on the roles and responsibilities for Parks and Public Works staff since the project overlaps into both areas of responsibility for the two departments.

C. Russell – wants to ensure that there are no increased costs for City, and also encourages an Operations and Maintenance manual to be developed that outlines the responsibilities of all parties involved. Due to the ongoing drought conditions, he does support requesting an extension of the grant funding to allow for proper establishment of plantings.

C. Greenwald – strongly supports the interpretative signage.

I. Bray – appreciates staff presenting the information on the project and seeking public input where possible.

## **6. Discussion on Park Amenity Donation Policy**

Christine Helweg, Parks & Community Services Superintendent, provided the Commission with an overview of the City's existing Park Amenity Donation policy, the request received by local residents of Northstar Park to reconsider specific components of the policy, particularly related to Memorial trees.

Sherelene Harrison – asked what are the purposes of the parks? Are they to be enjoyed by neighboring residents? She would like to see more consistent protocols for Memorial trees in City parks and greenbelts.

John Chuck – requested that staff not recommend a template policy from another agency, but to develop a policy that makes proposed memorials in the City great.

Sandy Page – would like to see the program more personalized, possibly a reflective marker of some kind that could be linked to a web site with GPS mapping.

Steve Amesbury – would like the City to consider the memorials as art in the parks.

Harris & Mary Liu – would like to have the City give allowances in the policy to the true intent of the memorial, provided samples of other agency programs (i.e. Palm Springs, City of Grover, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara). Would like to see consistency amongst the markers, and give the donors a courtesy notification when there is damage or an issue concerning the memorial.

Mark Henderson – would just like to thank the City for their re-consideration of this topic.

F. Resta – recommends City consider policy that evaluates all requests, and includes an anti-graffiti product on the marker to prevent vandalism.

C. Greenwald – encourages staff to research other agency programs.

C. Russell – has seen vandalism on memorials around the City. Newer materials are available now that could ease the ongoing maintenance concerns of any markers. He does like some type of limitations or guidelines on the memorials, not necessarily limiting plaques to only memorial groves. Would like to see consolidation or more consistency between donation and sponsorship policies.

D. Einwalter – supportive of memorials in general, assist in the establishment of creating a sense of place or connection with a particular site, would like to see standardized format, but also flexible enough to accommodate varying personalities and interests. Memorials can be overwhelming to some in the public spaces.

T. Westlund – needs uniformity and quality with markers, consideration must be given to staff for the placement, mowing and maintenance needs of the area, encourage staff to research other agencies, and need to incorporate the real costs for installation and maintenance of markers.

I. Bray – policy needs to be clear and consistent in a way that does not generate conflict, does not want to see staff be placed in a difficult situation in interpreting a policy with a concerned resident.

**7. Discussion on Citywide Sponsorship and Donation Policy**

Kelly Stachowicz, Deputy City Manager, discussed the City's current sponsorship and donation policies, the recent interest by the City Council to further clarify the City's sponsorship and naming policies.

F. Resta – recommends that the City aggressively pursue sponsorships with contests to generate increased revenues.

C. Greenwald – signage at Playfields Sports Park is OK. Concerned about having too much commercial advertising in City parks, possibly expand upon the Adopt-A-Park program to assist with offsetting ongoing parks maintenance costs, sponsorship policy needs boundaries and guidelines possibly something like the Adopt-A-Highway program.

C. Russell – would not like to see the City's parks and open spaces become commercialized like Nascar (alcohol related products). Policy needs to have flexibility to accept one-time sponsorships versus long term sponsorships, desires to have ongoing maintenance funding guaranteed by City and not replaced through sponsorships, overall mixed feelings.

D. Einwalter – the City should be cautious about having naming rights imply programming rights at the site, would like to see sponsorships involve local community and businesses for the local amenities.

T. Westlund – concerned about ongoing maintenance, not interested in naming parks, but specific amenities (like benches) would be OK. Would not like for the City to get locked into any long term sponsorship contracts. Maintenance offsets are needed the most.

I. Bray – new policy is going to introduce a new burden, small or large, to existing staff workloads, City Council and Commissions should consider the value of the donation or sponsorship prior against available City resources, it could appear that the sponsorships are creating a charity view for City services, does not want the City to be absolved of its public responsibility to provide many of these basic City amenities or sold to the highest bidder – he feels it could devalue the service or amenity that the City has to offer.

#### **8. Quarterly Update on Slacklining Pilot Program**

David Luckscheider, Parks Manager, provided an informational report on the new Slacklining Pilot program that was implemented this past January at Oak Grove and Covell Park and Greenbelt areas.

Commission suggested possibly marking the approved areas with signage and a QR Code that could provide additional information to interested individuals. Areas or specific trees need to be identified for the public.

#### **9. Review and Discussion of Playfields Sports Park**

This discussion item was deferred until the next regular meeting due to the late hour.

#### **10. Commissioner Announcements/Comments**

T. Westlund – concerned about City and Contractor’s ability to keep on top of weed abatement. Several areas, including Moore Blvd, Wright Blvd, Pioneer Park, Mace Ranch Park have excessive amounts of weeds that are not being addressed. Would like to see staff aggressively encourage the Adopt-A-Park program.

F. Resta – several street trees are blocking speed limit and stop signs. Referred to Rob Cain, Urban Forest Manager.

C. Greenwald – signal light at Cowell & Mace is not working properly. Referred over to Public Works.

#### **11. Liaison Reports**

City Council Liaison – no report.

Open Space & Habitat Commission – no report.

Finance and Budget Commission – no report.

#### **12. Staff Reports/Updates**

Staff reviewed the ongoing work plan for the Commission and discussed agenda topics for the coming months.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Christine Helweg  
Community Services Superintendent