

Sonoma County
Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission

DATE: Monday, January 26, 2009

PLACE: Board Chambers
575 Administration Drive, 100A
Santa Rosa, California

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Bill Trowbridge called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

All Commissioners led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Bill Trowbridge, John Mills, Karen Collins, Bill Wheeler, and Yancey Forest-Knowles (arrived at 5:27pm)

4. Acceptance of Minutes

VOTED to approve the minutes of November 17, 2008, as follows:

MOTION:	Commissioner Mills	AYES:	4	NOES:	0
SECOND:	Commissioner Collins	ABSENT:	1 (Commissioner Forest-Knowles not present during motion)		

5. Comments from the Public

None

6. Comments from Commissioners

Commissioner Wheeler let the Commissioners know that he met with new Board of Supervisor, Efen Carrillo, and he will be reappointed to the Commission.

Commissioner Mills said that he attended Regional Parks End-of-the-Year Luncheon and as always, he had a lot of fun at a really great event.

Commissioner Trowbridge attended last month's Regional Parks Foundation Board meeting as the ex-officio member. He reported that the Foundation is in dire need of funds. Everyone, please donate. The Foundation Board voted to fund the completion of the Children's Memorial Grove that has been in progress for over 11 years.

Anyone interested in becoming a member of the Foundation Board can contact the Executive Director, Mary Jo Delos.

7. Director's Report

Ms. Burns said that this month's Director's Report is very brief. Ms. Burns and her division managers have been busy working on the budget. She attended the County's Budget Policy Workshop and said that having the two new Board of Supervisors will be like having two new sets of eyes looking at the budget. The County is trying to get the budget in place by July 1st even though it is still not known what the State is going to do with their budget. The County Administrator has asked for Department Heads to submit 5% increment proposed reductions for their departments. Some departments will take higher cuts than others. Because of the focus on public safety, it is likely that the Sheriff's Department would not be considered for cuts as much as other departments. There is going to be a 2-3 year budget reduction cycle. Proposed budget cuts with a description of service reductions are due to the County Administrator on Thursday. Ms. Burns has asked Park employees to submit reduction ideas. So far, she has received 160 suggestions. A number of substantial revenue increases were submitted. Her intention is to engage employees in helping research the suggestions and ideas.

The County has set in motion a new way of paying for employee benefits. It is not really designed to save the County money. The aim is to reduce the rate at which health benefits are growing.

Ms. Burns referred to the Economic Stimulus package in the Commissioner's packet. Ms. Burns said that the version in the packet is not the final list. There have been additions. The projects were picked from Parks' Capital Improvement Plan.

Commissioner Mills said that projects picked were ones that had to be "shovel ready".

Commissioner Collins asked if Cannon Lane is owned by the Kellers.

Ms. Burns said that the 500' at the top belongs to the Kellers. The County claims the remainder of the road is a public road. The Kellers claim that it is not.

Ms. Burns said that she attended a meeting with the Kellers. She thought there was a good step forward in terms of being able to finalize an agreement on everything except for the widening of Cannon Lane and the 500' at the top of the hill. It turns out that they are back to square one again. The matter was set to be heard by the Board of Supervisors and on the last day that you could appeal the mitigated negative declaration, the Keller's filed a lawsuit. A settlement offer is being worked out and could be approved at the February 10 Board of Supervisor's meeting.

8. Action Items

- Review and possible recommendation of nominees for the CPRS District 1 Community Service Award

John Ryan, Volunteer Coordinator, presented the nominees for the California Park & Recreation Society District 1 Community Service Awards on February 23. They are a professional organization that puts on trainings and seminars through-out California. Sonoma County Parks in District 1. This year the ceremony will take place in Santa Rosa at

the Finley Center. District 1 encompasses Sonoma, Marin, Napa and Mendocino Counties. Mr. Ryan has chosen the following three nominees:

Barbie Hoffmann – Barbie was responsible for the Creepy Crawly Room and the Nocturnal Animal Barn at the Tolay Fall Festival. She was the driving force behind the Creepy Crawly Room where you could see rattle-snakes, tarantulas, scorpions, etc. She runs a non-profit that rescues exotic animals. Barbie spent 500-600 hours volunteering to get this room going and came to, and worked at, the festival. She also organized many of the other animal groups that participated along with tirelessly promoting the festival on radio stations and newspaper interviews.

Bob Bellerive – Bob has been a campground host for almost two decades. He has logged over 6,000 hours during the past 18 years. He is a phenomenal host who does everything possible i.e. stocking firewood, restocking bathrooms and painting. He has the ability to head off problems before they arise.

Dennis Hart – Dennis works hard to organize Spring Clean event put on by a group of churches in Santa Rosa, Windsor and Petaluma. The volunteers come out in masses for one day to do community projects. An incredible amount of work is accomplished. Dennis coordinates the Windsor effort and he really does a good job. He is a pleasure to work with and makes sure that all of the volunteers are well prepared for the event.

The award recipient will receive a plaque and an invitation to this year's banquet.

Commissioner Forest-Knowles asked if all three recipients could be awarded.

Mr. Ryan said that it is important to select only one.

The Commissioners ask for Mr. Ryan's recommendation. Mr. Ryan recommends Barbie Hoffman only because the service she provided was so specialized. She really made the Tolay Fall Festival exciting and exposed children to learning something so unique. She was able to teach children how to recognize rattle-snakes and stay away from them.

The Commission would like to recognize all three with resolutions.

VOTED to nominate Barbie Hoffman for the CPRS District 1 Community Service Award and acknowledge all three nominees with a resolution of appreciation for their services:

MOTION: Commissioner Mills AYES: 5 NOES: 0
SECOND: Commissioner Wheeler ABSENT: 0

The Commissioners asked that recognition/awards be tabled for discussion at the next Commission meeting in February.

- Review/comment on proposed trailhead design and hear comments from interested community members – West County Regional Trail/Ross Station Road Trailhead

Ken Tam, Park Planner, discussed the proposed West County Trailhead located between Graton and Forestville. The trail is a 13-mile multi-use trail. Along the section of trail, there are two existing trailheads. One is in Santa Rosa off of Sebastopol Road and the other is off of Graton Road. There are two future trail heads planned. One is off of Highway 16, and the other near downtown Forestville. The project we are discussing tonight is the Ross Station Road Trailhead. The site was originally part of a former railroad right-of-way, later acquired by the County. There is an existing conservation easement on the property (in favor of Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District) and an existing utility easement (in favor the Graton Community Services District). The existing West County Trail is located east of the site and runs north and south.

In September of 1997 the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors adopted a Negative Declaration for the West County Phase V. In that study, parking areas were discussed. In September 2006 the Ross Station Road was identified as a possible trailhead location. There was an addendum to the previously adopted initial study per section 15162 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. Mr. Tam referred to the maps that show existing site locations. A matching grant was received for \$88,000 from the Open Space District, plus another \$12,000 from Park Mitigation fees, to develop the trailhead.

It is currently proposed that a 7-stall parking lot be installed with one stall for the disabled and a bike rack for six bikes. In addition, there will be two picnic tables.

Commissioner Trowbridge said that this trailhead is in the middle of the whole trail. What is the reason for this placement?

Mr. Tam said that everyone has their favorite spot that they use for access. People already use this site.

Mr. Tam said that adding a trailhead near Forestville by the new housing development is a possibility, and another further south near the O'Reilly business park (off of Highway 116) is being looked at.

Commissioner Mills asked if the trees have been selected.

Mr. Tam said that a tree selection has not been made.

Commissioner Mills suggested that the picnic table be shaded in the summertime by shifting the table to the other side of the tree and moving the tree further south to ensure shade in the summer and sun in the winter.

There is discussion regarding the need for restrooms along the trail.

VOTED to approve moving this project forward, as follows:

MOTION: Commissioner Forest-Knowles AYES: 5 NOES: 0

SECOND: Commissioner Mills

ABSENT: 0

Mr. Tam mentioned that the County-Wide Bicycle Plan is being updated.

- Election of Officers

Commissioner Mills nominated Bill Trowbridge as Chair and Bill Wheeler as Vice-Chair.

VOTED to approve Commissioner Trowbridge as Chair and Commissioner Wheeler as Vice-Chair of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission for 2009, as follows:

MOTION: Commissioner Mills

AYES: 5 NOES: 0

SECOND: Commissioner Forest-Knowles

ABSENT: 0

Commissioner Mills congratulated Jim McCray on his promotion to Deputy Director of Sonoma County Regional Parks.

Commissioner Mills said that there was a dedication of the Blue Star Memorial plaque at the Santa Rosa Veteran's Memorial Building. The Blue Star Memorial honors veterans past, present and future. It was a great ceremony. Many thanks to Donna LaGraffe for helping with the event.

Mary Jo Delos, Executive Director of the Regional Parks Foundation Board, introduced Al Gilmour, a Foundation Board member. Mr. Gilmour has also been a community volunteer and has been active with the Kenwood Education Foundation, the Santa Rosa Police and too many others to mention. Mr. Gilmour is being honored as a volunteer by the Kenwood Education Foundation at their "Big Hearts" ceremony on February 11 at the Oakmont Golf Club.

9. Reports and Division Updates

None

10. Adjournment

Adjourned at 6:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Laura Cordes, Executive Secretary