

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

February 22, 2010
6:30 P.M.

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ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Cajka, Fitzpatrick, Gill, Nicholson and Rosenthal

Absent: Commissioners Harris and Murray

Others Present: Parks and Recreation Director Richard Gill, Recreation Services Manager Mark Leyman and Recording Secretary Jane Grace

AGENDA CHANGES

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the December 14, 2009 and January 7, 2010 Parks and Recreation Commission Meetings were approved as written.

CEREMONIAL

None

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

GENERAL BUSINESS

09/1026-1 – Status Report from the Parks and Recreation Commission Subcommittee Regarding the Request from Manhattan Beach Little League to Rename Marine Park and Install a Commemorative Wall within Marine Park that Recognizes Our Youth and Adults Who Have Contributed to Youth Sports in Manhattan Beach

Recreation Services Manager Mark Leyman gave an update on the progress of the subcommittee including the following meetings:

- November 3 – Initial meeting
- November 9 – Walkthrough on site at Marine Park
- November 24 – Walkthrough on site with Landscape Designer
- January 25 – Walkthrough with Manhattan Beach youth
- February 22 – Review of preliminary conceptual design

Mr. Leyman reported that the subcommittee consists of Commissioners Gill, Harris and Rosenthal and representatives from AYSO, Manhattan Little League, Manhattan Beach Youth Basketball, Mira Costa Pony Baseball and the Pearson and Wilhite families.

Mr. Leyman reported that initially the directive was to install a commemorative wall and rename the park. After the subsequent subcommittee meetings, the project has evolved into a living, interactive walk. The subcommittee's theme or universal concept of the project is "Connecting with the Kids." The Landscape Designer Gabrielle Newmark, who has done a variety of community projects, has enlisted feedback from the subcommittee members as well as Manhattan Beach youth to provide a preliminary conceptual design of the project.

Mr. Leyman reported that the subcommittee plans to develop a park name that ties in with the theme, with the possibility of missions and messages throughout the park that resonate with the name. The subcommittee has broken up the project into three phases:

- Phase I includes the entryway to the park, pavers, new trees, removing the shrubs along the center field fence and adding a berm in center field area
- Phase II includes the wings on first and third base sides, focusing on private donors with the ability to buy pavers to fund park projects
- Phase III includes the larger scale items such as a skate park

Since the project has changed since the initial directive from City Council, Mr. Leyman is aware that the Commission wants to update the Council on the status of the project and obtain their feedback as to how the Commission should move forward. It was suggested that Commission Chair Nicholson could attach a memo to the Commission's minutes to update the Council on the direction and changes that the subcommittee has come up with.

During a discussion among the Commissioners, the following points were made:

- Commissioner Gill confirmed that the first phase includes the entrance way which would convey the theme and sense of place, possibly a donated water wall, clearing of the shrubs and building a berm in the center field area. Commissioner Gill suggested that if the skate park was eventually built, the berm would form a separation between the field and the skate park where people could picnic and watch a game. New trees to be planted would be uniform types that would bring color and symbolism to the park. He indicated that the second phase would include the installation of donated pavers and the third phase would be to install a skate park and possibly to turf the soccer field and baseball field
- Commissioner Rosenthal added that it was also suggested that benches be added along the soccer field for parents to sit and watch a game.
- Commissioner Gill indicated that the subcommittee also suggested that two foul poles be added to 1st and 3rd base lines as a tribute to Henry Pearson and Jon Wilhite.
- Commissioner Gill reported that the subcommittee does not want to determine a name for the park until we have come up with a cohesive theme.
- Commissioner Gill suggested that this project could be tied into the City's centennial.
- Commissioner Gill reported that Tom Tyrer, Manhattan Beach Little League, suggested that there are a lot of local sponsors that would be willing to donate to this project.
- Commissioner Fitzpatrick asked who would be responsible for the project if Council approves the privately funded portion of the project. Director Gill stated the City would still be responsible.
- Commissioner Gill indicated that he doesn't want phase three to kill phase one and suggested that if only phase one is completed, we wouldn't have an unfinished park.
- Commissioner Cajka suggested that the walkway be expanded to circle the soccer field, if space is available.
- Commissioner Fitzpatrick suggested that the park needs to be a destination and a draw for youth to be successful and get the messages such as drinking and driving across to our youth.

The Commission suggested that Commissioner Nicholson write a memo to City Council, to be attached to this meeting's minutes, to update the Council on the direction and changes that the subcommittee has come up with for the project.

COMMISSION ITEMS

Commissioner Gill asked about the status of Sand Dune Park. Mr. Gill reported that the dune is closed. Staff will be going to City Council on April 20 with options for repurposing the dune which do not include exercise; planted with a possible nature area where people can walk. A soils expert will report on the possibility of creating a planted area where people can walk without the need for massive retaining walls.

ADJOURNMENT

The Commission adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Jane A. Grace
Recording Secretary

Steve Nicholson
Commission Chairperson

TO: Honorable Mayor Ward and Members of the City Council
FROM: Steve Nicholson, Chair, Parks and Recreation Commission
DATE: February 23, 2010
SUBJECT: Status Report on the Re-Naming of Marine Avenue Park and Commemorative Wall

Dear City Council,

As you may recall, at the October 6, 2009 City Council meeting, you directed the Parks and Recreation Commission to look into a request from Manhattan Beach Little League to change the name of Marine Park and build a small commemorative wall. This request came to us after two former Manhattan Beach Little Leaguers and Mira Costa High School baseball stars were involved in a terrible accident that took the life of one and critically injured the other. Two other young passengers in the car were killed.

The Parks and Recreation Commission set up the Marine Park Subcommittee comprised of three Parks and Recreation Commissioners and representatives from AYSO, Manhattan Beach Little League, Mira Costa Pony Baseball, Manhattan Beach Youth Basketball and the Pearson and Wilhite families. The Commission and Subcommittee met several times over the last five months.

The reason for this memo is that the Commission and Subcommittee have changed the scope of City Council's original request. The Commission wanted to update the City Council on the status of the project.

After much discussion and feedback from the Subcommittee and Manhattan Beach youth, the project has evolved into a living, interactive/commemorative walk. The Subcommittee plans to develop a park name that ties in with the theme, with the possibility of missions and messages throughout the park that resonate with the name. The Subcommittee and Commission felt that a commemorative wall was limiting and a community walk has few limits. The walkway would allow families and children to purchase pavers to be installed in the sidewalk throughout the park that will communicate park themes or messages that are still to be determined. The Commission is excited about how the project is progressing and the potential impact that these changes can make on our youth in Manhattan Beach. All Manhattan Beach youth groups have stepped up with ideas and are committed to working with the City on this project. The Pearson and Wilhite families are also supportive of the direction of this project.

The general idea is that the City is committed to laying the initial inspirational message at the entryway of Marine Park. This is in place of the commemorative wall. Families, children and private sponsors will fund the interactive/commemorative walk as they participate.

When the final concepts are designed and the details have been finalized, the subcommittee will then discuss the renaming of the park.

Additionally, the subcommittee has noted that the amenities in the park lend themselves to the 12-18 year age group and, as such, are looking into the idea of a skate park just beyond the centerfield fence at Big Marine Field. The subcommittee is aware of the lack of funds for such a project and realize that this may only come to fruition in the future when funds become available. The subcommittee feels a skate park in this location would add to the amenities for this age group and act as a magnet to draw teens to this location.