

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH  
MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

July 23, 2007  
6:30 P.M.

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**ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Gill, Harris, Lear, Murray, Nicholson, and Fitzpatrick

Absent: Commissioner Shambaugh

Others Present: Director of Parks and Recreation Richard Gill, Recreation Services  
Manager Idris J. Al-Oboudi, Recording Secretary Jane Grace and others  
(see attached list)

**AGENDA CHANGES**

None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the June 25, 2007 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting were approved as written.

**CEREMONIAL**

None

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

None

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

07/0723.1 – Review of City of Manhattan Beach Pumpkin Race Festival to be held  
October 28, 2007

Mr. Al-Oboudi reported that the Parks and Recreation Department is hoping that this proposed event will be a hallmark family-fun event which should bring joy and happiness to the community and strengthen our community image and sense of place.

Mr. Al-Oboudi reported that the Manhattan Beach Pumpkin Race Festival event was created in Manhattan Beach on Halloween Eve 1990 when Karl Rogers, Michael Aaker and John Holliday invented the Pumpkin Racecar design and developed the Halloween Pumpkin Race format for guests attending Mr. Rogers' birthday party.

Mr. Rogers reported that the event has grown steadily for 17 years. He reported that in 2006, approximately 850 members of the community attended the Halloween Pumpkin Race at 1602 8th Street, Manhattan Beach – the official birthplace of the Halloween Pumpkin Race. A total of 122 hand-crafted pumpkin racecars competed in the race which began at 5:30 p.m. and ended at 8:45 p.m. Mr. Rogers indicated that the core values of the event are safety, good old fashioned family fun, equality and fairness and creativity and ingenuity.

Mr. Rogers reported that the creators of the event met with Parks and Recreation Department staff in September 2006 to look into the possibility of this event being an official event of the City of Manhattan Beach Parks and Recreation Department with the assistance of the creators of the event and many volunteers that assist in putting it on. He suggested that their goals for City partnership would be to find a safe, long-term site for the Halloween Pumpkin Race, to enhance the sense of family and community during Halloween, to raise awareness and funding for important community programs benefiting the health, education and wellbeing of our community, raise awareness and goodwill for downtown businesses in partnership with the Downtown MB Business and Professional Association. Mr. Rogers suggested that the event brings the entire family together and that the creators are not expecting any financial gain but just a nice place to host the event.

Mr. Rogers reported that through several discussions with staff and the creators, it was decided to incorporate the Halloween Pumpkin Race into a festival and to coordinate it with the Downtown Manhattan Beach Business and Professional Association's Safe Trick or Treating special event. On April 12, 2007, staff and creators of the event met with the Downtown Manhattan Beach Business and Professional Association to present the proposal of coordinating this event with them. The proposal was met with great support from the DMBB&PA.

Mr. Rogers reported that the preliminary plans include the following:

- Date – Sunday, October 28, 2007
- Location – Manhattan Beach Blvd. & Ocean and upper north pier parking lot
- Event hours – 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Qualifying races and kid's activities  
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Break for Downtown Safe Trick or Treating  
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Quarters, semis, finals
- Race schedule – 250-300 race entrants anticipated  
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Single elimination qualifier and exhibition races  
6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Quarters, semis & finals
- Pumpkin Pit Row – Help attendees quickly and easily enter the race and catch the Halloween Pumpkin Race spirit! Showcase area for Pumpkin Racecars
- Activity Booths – Non-profit fundraiser booths run by volunteers from local organizations

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

1. Commissioner Lear questioned whether we might reach a saturation point for attendance. Mr. Al-Oboudi indicated that the pier lighting event attracts approximately 1000 people and this event will provide a larger viewing area. The sidewalks will not be blocked and we should be able to accommodate a larger crowd. He anticipates approximately 1400 attendance.

2. Commissioner Murray reported that the Safe Trick or Treating is well attended, but not as large as the DMBB&PA would like; she suggested that this event would be a great compliment to the event and help add to the attendance which would be advantageous to the downtown businesses.
3. Commissioner Gill asked whether there would be a need for additional lighting. Mr. Al-Oboudi reported that Public Works would be involved in providing additional lighting.
4. Commissioner Nicholson suggested that the proposed schedule would work with only a one-hour break for trick or treating. He suggested that it would be safer to conclude the event at sunset for safety reasons. Mr. Al-Oboudi indicated that staff will work with Downtown Business to refine the schedules of both the races and the trick-or-treating.
5. Commissioner Harris inquired whether additional streets would be closed off for the event. Mr. Al-Oboudi indicated that the only additional street closure would be Manhattan Beach Blvd. from Ocean to the pier as well as the lower parking lots and the north upper parking lot. Commissioner Harris suggested that additional streets should be closed for the trick-or-treating to make it safer. Mr. Gill reported that the DMBB&PA has requested that additional streets not be closed but instead created two safe zones in the Metlox Town Square area and Manhattan Avenue between Manhattan Beach Blvd. and 9th. Commissioner Harris suggested that the subject of closing off additional streets should be revisited due to the increase of attendance expected for the Pumpkin races.
6. Commissioner Fitzpatrick inquired whether the Pumpkin Races will require support. Mr. Rogers reported that they have a good operating group but always hope for volunteers to man the information and activity booths.
7. Commissioner Gill inquired whether there is a plan to limit media: Mr. Al-Oboudi indicated that we will keep this a local event by timing our press releases in local papers only.

A motion was made to approve the Pumpkin Races in conjunction with the Downtown Manhattan Beach Business and Professional Association Safe Trick or Treating Event.  
(MSC: Murray/Nicholson – Unanimous)

07/0723.2 – Tentative Approval of Conceptual Designs for the Replacement of Play Equipment at Manhattan Heights, Marine Avenue and Village Field Parks

Mr. Gill reported that this year's Capital Improvement Project Plan provides for the replacement of play equipment at Manhattan Heights, Marine Avenue, Village and Polliwog Parks. The conceptual plans for Polliwog Park will have a separate community meeting in early September. If reaction from the community is positive, the Polliwog plans will be forwarded to the Parks and Recreation Commission in early October. All recommendations from the Commission will then be forwarded to the City Council for their approval.

Mr. Gill reported that staff entered into an agreement with David Volz Design (D.V.D.) for the replacement of play equipment at Manhattan Heights, Marine Avenue, Village and Polliwog Parks. Because the funds are tight and the footprint of the play areas at Manhattan Heights, Marine Avenue and Village are fairly small, it was decided to replace the existing play equipment elements on a one-to-one basis with the exception of Marine Park. The replacement of a large rocket ship in Marine Park was cost prohibitive, so a small rocket ship is being proposed, along with the other play elements such as swings, slides and climbing elements.

Jody Rios, with David Volz Design, thanked the city staff for their interest in creating super neat parks for children. The City has charged D.V.D. with creating namesake parks for each of the three parks; Manhattan Village, Manhattan Heights and Marine Avenue.

Ms. Rios noted that Manhattan Village is being used by children from nearby neighborhoods as well as the brothers and sisters of those using the Village Soccer Field. The plans are the replacement of the fun elements in the park with modern up-to-date equipment that meets the ADA and safety regulations. There are two separate areas planned for ages 2-5 and 5-12. The equipment has been chosen for its durability and great play value and the surface is wood chips which are ADA accessible.

Ms. Rios reported that for Manhattan Heights Park, staff and D.V.D. held a workshop with the children involved in the playground program and allowed them to design and select the play equipment, including swing sets, towers, climbing walls and spring riders for ages 2-5 and 5-12. The equipment being placed in Manhattan Heights includes new and challenging pieces.

Ms. Rios reported that they plan to maintain the theme of Marine Avenue Park, more commonly called Rocket Ship Park. The two areas for 2-5 and 5-12 year olds contain a rocket ship, swings and a climbing structure with an outer-space theme.

Ms. Rios indicated that some of the structures (funnel net and spider web climbers) are made with airplane cable encased in very durable plastic, and is very flexible with joints. The life of the equipment is between 10-20 years. Merry-go rounds are not being replaced because they no longer meet safety regulations. The slides are made with plastic that holds color well. Manufacturers used are companies that D.V.D. has had long relationships with. The Commission suggested that they visit other cities that have the proposed equipment.

Ms. Rios reported that wood chips are used for the surfaces because they are ADA accessible and rubberized surfaces are extremely expensive.

## **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

Craig Torrey questioned the balance of equipment for age groups at Marine Avenue Park. Ms. Rio reported that the two areas have been switched; the larger area is being used for ages 2-5, with equipment including swings, slides and activity panels; the smaller area has a large piece of equipment geared for 5-12 year olds. Mr. Torrey also reported that the trees between the playground and the village neighbors had recently been torn down, thereby removing a sound barrier and causing a noise issue. Mr. Torrey asked that the City consider replacing the sound barrier with bushes and trees.

June Wang voiced concern about parking and traffic problems that might materialize with the new play equipment in the Village Field Park. Mr. Gill indicated that he anticipated no change in the traffic due to the fact that the equipment is being changed out but not increased in size.

The Commission asked staff to conduct site visits to other cities that have installed playground equipment similar to the proposed equipment.

A motion was made to approve the conceptual designs for the replacement of play equipment at Manhattan Heights, Marine Avenue and Village Field Parks; and to recommend that staff consider landscaping at Marine Avenue park due to citizen concerns regarding noise.

(MSC: Nicholson/Murray; Unanimous)

## **OTHER COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **Commission Attendance at City Events**

Commissioner Murray has attended several Concerts in the Park and reported that they were outstanding.

Commissioner Nicholson attended Shakespeare in the Park and reported the performance was good and well attended.

Commissioner Fitzpatrick attended the Grand Prix Bike Race, reporting it was a great event that she plans on attending again next year. Commissioner Harris suggested that next year signs should be placed on the Live Oak Dog Run indicating that the area will be closed due to the Bike Race.

**REPORTS**

Mr. Gill reported that the 9/11 Memorial will be dedicated on Tuesday, September 11 at 10:00 a.m. on the corner of 15th Street and Valley Drive.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

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Jane Grace  
Recording Secretary

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Lynn Harris  
Commission Chair

Parks & Recreation Commission  
July 23, 2007

David Ibarra, Senior Recreation Leader  
Karl Rogers  
Mary Kimball  
Cheri Torrey  
Craig Torrey  
June Wang