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**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**

December 4, 2006
6:30 P.M.

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ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Gill, Harris, Lamb, Lear, Murray, Nicholson and Rachmiel

Absent: None

Others Present: Parks & Recreation Director Richard Gill, Recreation Services Manager Mark Leyman, Peninsula Soccer League representative John Sloway and Recording Secretary Jane Grace

AGENDA CHANGES

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the October 2, 2006 Commission Meeting were approved as written.

CEREMONIAL

None

GENERAL BUSINESS

2006/1204.1 – Presentation Regarding Synthetic Turf for Manhattan Village Field

Recreation Services Manager Mark Leyman reported that the Parks and Recreation Department has been investigating synthetic turf products for several years and, as part of the Capital Improvement Plan (C.I.P.) for 2006/2007, City Council requested staff to research the feasibility of installing synthetic turf at the City’s Manhattan Village Field.

Mr. Leyman reported that at the May 16, 2006 City Council meeting, City Council asked staff to work with community user groups on gathering interest and information on the possibility of installing synthetic turf. A committee of individuals representing AYSO, South Bay Soccer Club, South Bay Peninsula Soccer League, a turf company representative and other interested Manhattan Beach residents was formed in June. Mr. Leyman indicated that the committee has met five times and are supportive of the synthetic turf and have committed \$90,000 towards the initial cost (AYSO \$40,000, SBSC \$40,000, SBPSL \$10,000). The committee determined that for each \$5,000 donated by a resident user group, one hour/week of field space will be guaranteed to that group for the life of the synthetic turf.

Mr. Leyman reported that it is impossible to maintain turf unless we limit the use of the Manhattan Village Field, suggesting the only solution is to re-sod every week or install synthetic turf.

Mr. Leyman reported that Redondo Beach has installed synthetic turf at their Aviation field and has seen tremendous success already with solid bookings at a \$100/hour rate. Other turf fields, i.e. West L.A. College, Crossroads and Orange Coast College, range between \$140-\$160/hour. Starting July 1, 2007, we will be charging \$25/hour for resident teams (70% Manhattan Beach resident) and \$50/hour for non-resident teams.

Mr. Leyman reported that staff believes that the possibility of installing synthetic turf is important for the following reasons:

- Year round play – the field is available seven days per week, 365 days per year. Artificial surfaces don't become muddy or slippery in wet weather. They do not have to be closed June-September for renovation. This will enable new community user groups, which have been shut out in the past, to use the field.
- Fewer injuries - new manufacturing and installation procedures in the synthetic turf industry have increased the safety and playability of the turf. Injury rates are lower on synthetic turf than on natural grass surfaces.
- Environmentally Friendly - Aside from the environmental advantages that come from lower water use, the removal of significant amounts of fertilizer and pesticides means less chance of contaminating groundwater. In addition, synthetic turf is made of recycled materials. The estimated average synthetic soccer/football field uses approximately 45,000 recycled tires that would otherwise take up space in a landfill or tire-waste site.
- Lower maintenance costs - Artificial turf requires no mowing, watering, fertilizing or re-seeding which significantly reduces maintenance costs (weekly raking of the field is recommended).

Mr. Leyman reported the following concerns for a synthetic field:

- Heat on the field – during the summer months, synthetic turf fields can generate up to an additional 15-20 degrees of heat from the field surface. To minimize the heat, irrigation will be installed at the perimeter of the field. Fortunately, the climate in Manhattan Beach is such that this will only be needed several weeks a year.
- Vandalism – to combat vandalism, the field will only be opened when it is reserved. Sections of the turf are able to be replaced, if vandalism were to occur.

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

- Commissioner Lear inquired whether an increase in fees would affect user groups' financial ability to use the fields. Mr. Sloway indicated that he has surveyed several user groups and they indicated that for having the privilege of playing on a field like the one proposed, they consider \$100/hour a bargain. He suggested that synthetic turf fields would not be installed on fields open to the public for security purposes.
- Commissioner Lamb inquired whether the cost estimates were based on vendor estimates or actual installation costs by other cities. Mr. Leyman indicated that the total cost for the installation of the synthetic turf is based on various estimates but on the top end for similar installations.
- Commissioner Nicholson suggested that staff is overstating the costs and wondered why. Mr. Leyman reported that staff is building in contingencies and at the mercy of the bid process. Mr. Leyman reported that there are probably 50 turf companies out there but only three that have stood the test of time.
- Commissioner Lamb inquired about the requirements for the frequency of hosing down the field. Mr. Gill suggested that it would be required more often in the hot summer months and staff is investigating various irrigation systems.
- Commissioner Nicholson inquired whether there would be any opportunities for additional organizations to provide seed money for the project. Mr. Sloway indicated that there are people who have unofficially expressed an interest.
- Commissioner Harris inquired about other potential sites for synthetic turf. Mr. Sloway suggested Marine soccer field and Mira Costa (which is a school district field) would be potential sites.
- Commissioner Gill indicated that the school district will possibly be selling properties and inquired whether the City has the money to fund the turf project as well as buy school property, i.e. Begg Field. Mr. Gill reported that with the Facility Strategic Plan in process, with an outcome of a cost of millions of dollars for some type of facility, the question is should we save for a contribution to the strategic plan project or spend money on the turf project.
- Mr. Gill reported that the window of opportunity to install this synthetic turf would be in the summer so that soccer could use it in the fall.
- Mr. Gill reported that the synthetic turf project was on the C.I.P. list but indicated that there is not a lot of money available in the C.I.P. funds at this time. Commissioner Gill inquired whether the Commission needs to worry about where the money for the project would come from if a recommendation were made to City Council. Mr. Gill suggested that the Commission could indicate that they have a concern about the finances but would recommend the project, subject to funding limitations.

Mr. Leyman reported that the total cost for turf installation would be \$900,000 minus the start up revenue of \$90,000, totaling a net cost of \$810,000. The total additional revenue of \$122,361 (including additional field revenue and maintenance cost savings) times seven years would equal

\$856,527. Mr. Leyman indicated that the estimated costs and revenues are conservative; and additional field time is also not factored in to the estimate.

- Commissioner Nicholson asked why the statistics and estimates presented were so conservative. Mr. Gill indicated that he felt more secure reporting actuals, rather than predictions. Commissioner Nicholson suggested that in future presentations, realistic numbers on the upside, which we have every reason to believe might happen, should be at least reported in a foot note.
- Commissioner Nicholson asked about the warranty for the turf installation. Mr. Leyman reported that companies should be investigated to see how many years they have been around; some vendors use a third party for the insurance. Mr. Gill reported that most warranties run from 8-10 years or as much as 12 years. When necessary, the turf can be replaced at about 1/3 the price.
- Commissioner Rachmiel reported that he has played on synthetic turf in northern California, and never experienced overheating problems or injuries.

A motion was made to recommend to City Council that they adopt the staff report and fund the synthetic turf project for the Manhattan Village Field. (MS: Harris/Murray).

A second motion was made to recommend to City Council that they recognize the staff report and fund the synthetic turf project for the Manhattan Village Field. (MSC: Lear/Murray; Unanimous)

OTHER COMMISSION BUSINESS

Commissioner Nicholson inquired whether there was any new information regarding new dog runs. Mr. Gill indicated that a discussion could take place at the joint City Council/Parks and Recreation Commission on January 9.

Commissioner Gill asked the status of the Bruce's Beach monument sign. Mr. Gill reported that the new language for the plaque goes to City Council on Tuesday, December 5 for final approval. Commission Harris inquired about the disposal of the old monument sign. The Commission decided that the old monument sign should be offered to the Historical Society.

Commissioner Gill reported that he received an inquiry from a Sand Dune neighbor reporting on an ad he saw for the G.I. Joe Workout sponsored by the City. His perception was that nothing commercial was allowed on the dune. Mr. Gill reported that the department started the G.I. Joe class in order to combat all the illegal trainers using the dune and a way to control the people who want to train on the dune. The G.I. Joe classes are held during a time when the dune is underused and our contractor takes enrollment and knows the etiquette of the dune, which he passes along to the students.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.