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CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

January 24, 2005
6:30 P.M.

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ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Bohner, Cohen, Guirguis, Lamb, Lear and Weber

Absent: Commissioner Spazek

Others Present: Parks and Recreation Director Richard Gill and others (see attached list)

AGENDA CHANGES

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the October 25, 2004 Commission were approved as written.

CEREMONIAL

None

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

GENERAL BUSINESS

05/0124.1 – Lions Club Request for Installation of Braille Trail in Polliwog Park

Mr. Gill indicated that the Manhattan Beach Lions Club is requesting approval for a service project – “Braille Trail , A Path for the Blind”

Dan DuRoss introduced members present from the Lions Club. He indicated the proposed location of the project is in the triangular area at the northwest end of Polliwog Park. A sign would be placed at the entrance to the path. At the edge of the cement path beyond the sign, upright pedestals would be placed about 20 feet apart. Tactile tiles would be placed at the foot of each pedestal to alert visitors to the site of the station. Each pedestal would be topped by a

plate (possibly of composite material) with raised narrative in Braille as well as lettering describing the history of the park and current activities that are held there. Pedestals would be about 36 inches high.

Mr. DuRoss indicated that the Lions Club will pay for the pedestals but is requesting that the City install them as part of the new sidewalk that will be installed in this area in the spring.

Marge Crutchfield indicated that teachers and other agents who work with the blind and partially sighted would be invited to escort their clients along the path. Preliminary surveys of the blind and partially sighted populations in the South Bay indicated that there are a number of students who can benefit from a program such as this. She indicated that the pedestals will also have English text for sighted persons. Every effort will be made to build awareness of the program within the community and the greater community of the South Bay.

Mr. DuRoss reported that Helen Keller, speaking at a Lions Club International Convention in 1926, challenged Lions to become Knights of the Blind. That challenge continues today. He suggested that their proposed Braille Trail can become one avenue for enriching the lives of the visually handicapped as well as other citizens in our community and the surrounding areas.

Commissioners Guirguis and Weber expressed concern because the M.B.M.S. P.E. classes run through the proposed area on Wednesdays. Commissioner Cohen suggested closing the trail on Wednesdays because of the P.E. classes.

Mr. Jim Forgette stated that there is nothing like this in the South Bay and because it is so unique he hoped the Commission would approve the project. He suggested that this program will bring the blind and partially sighted out, where right now we have nothing for the blind and partially blind neighbor.

Ms. Lori Herold told the Commission that the school district has a deaf and hard-of-hearing class and this could be an expansion of that program. Ms. Herold suggested that it was a great opportunity for the City.

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

- Commissioner Lear suggested that this would be a great project when looking at it regionally. It's a way for Manhattan Beach to give back to those less fortunate.
- Commissioner Cohen suggested that it serves as an awareness.
- Commissioner Weber suggested that the project should be set back from the path because of concern for all the M.B.M.S students running through the park.
- Commissioner Lamb suggested that the City should retain the right to relocate or remove the project in the future if problems occur.
- Commissioner Guirguis restated the concern for the middle school students running in the proposed area.

A motion was made to recommend approval to the City Council for the Braille Trail proposal, with the condition that staff first gain approval from the school district regarding their use of the area. (MSC: Guirguis/Lear – Unanimous)

05/0124.2 – Presentation of Parks and Recreation Department 2003-2004 Annual Report

Mr. Gill presented a promotional DVD representing the Parks and Recreation Department 2003-2004 Annual Report, including Mission Statements.

REPORTS

None

OTHER COMMISSION BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m. to the next scheduled meeting on February 28, 2005

Parks & Recreation Commission

January 24, 2005

1. Lori Herold
2. Jim Forgette
3. Bonnie Cohn
4. Marge Crutchfield
5. Sigel Davis
6. Dan DuRoss