

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Virtual – Zoom meeting
February 28, 2022
4:00 PM

CONTENTS

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 PM.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Karger, Greenberg, Weiner, Doran, McCarthy, Grampp

Absent: Turkmany

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Weiner moved to approve the January 24, 2022 minutes with the following edits:

P. 3, 3rd paragraph – add reference to the Sand Dune building replacement being included in the Sand Dune Master Plan.

P. 3 – after Options for Red House, added – “**Other work plan notes:** The City Council did not include the lighted volleyball courts on the 2022 work plan. The Parks and Recreation Commission will work jointly with the Cultural Arts Commission when considering the Polliwog Park band shell and there will be a discussion with the contractor for the Peck Reservoir project regarding a community garden at Begg Field.”

Commissioner Doran seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Ayes: Karger, Greenberg, Weiner, Doran, McCarthy, Grampp

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Turkmany

D. CEREMONIAL

None

E. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (3-Minute Limit)

None

F. GENERAL BUSINESS

Director Leyman had a family emergency and was unexpectedly unable to attend the meeting. Communications Manager Jessica Vincent presented the first item in his place.

22/0228.1 Special Events Policy – Consideration of Updating the Special Events Policy, Removing the Exclusion of Bruce’s Beach Park and 8th Street and Larsson Street Parkettes as Possible Locations

Manager Vincent presented the item giving a background of the existing Special Events Policy which includes three impact level tiers for special events and an overview of the review

process for events. She informed the Commission that the current Special Event Policy prohibits special events at Bruce's Beach Park and the 8th Street and Larsson Street Parkettes. The removal of the exclusion would allow the City to review applications for events at these locations. As it is currently written, the City cannot consider events and therefore cannot accept applications, which would allow the City to plan for the event and impose requirements on the organizers. She mentioned that there was an event that occurred at Bruce's Beach Park on June 19th, 2021

The commission was asked to consider the following options:

Option 1 – Maintain Special Event Policy language

Maintain the current language in the Special Events policy, which prohibits special events at Bruce's Beach, 8th Street and Larsson Street Parkettes.

Option 2 – Update Special Event Policy to allow applications to be considered

Allow applications for events at Bruce's Beach, 8th Street and Larsson Street Parkettes to be submitted and run through the special event review process. This would allow for review of proposed events, providing time to consider impacts, required City staffing and necessary City services. All events, regardless of size, would require City Council approval. Additional conditions could be set forth including, limitations on number of events, event size, amplified sound, alcohol and other event details. Application does not guarantee approval.

Manager Vincent added that residents within 1000 feet were noticed by postcard, requesting feedback. There were 95 emails received on the item with 73 opposed to removing the exclusion, 21 in favor, and one unclear. Residents were concerned with increased traffic, trash, parking issues, alcohol consumption, and a lack of restroom facilities at these locations.

Commissioner Greenberg addressed the June 19th, 2021 event and the fact that there were porta-potties, some staff resources and some planning that was involved. Sr. Mgmt. Analyst (SMA) Robb reported that in this case, the organizers had contacted the City desiring to obtain any necessary permits to hold this event. Because the Special Events Policy excludes Bruce's Beach Park, staff was unable to run it through the normal special event process and the event was treated as an Expressive Event, more of a First Amendment gathering. Due to the short time frame, the Police Department was notified that there was likely to be a crowd. The City did not provide the porta-potties or and staff was unaware that they were coming until calls were received from residents. Aside from the police response, no staffing was provided.

Commissioner Greenberg stated that he had reviewed the park section of the municipal code and his understanding is that violating the park rules by having an unauthorized event is a misdemeanor, effectively equal to having a dog off leash in a park. SMA Robb confirmed that is the way the municipal code is currently written. Manager Vincent added that there may be other ancillary infractions such as noise or traffic violations that could apply.

Commissioner Greenberg asked if the City has a plan in place to proactively deal with unpermitted special events. SMA Robb replied that currently there is no formal plan. When events are discovered or staff is made aware of events, the Police Department is contacted so that they are aware that there may be crowd and traffic issues. She is not aware of how the Police Department might be planning for these instances.

Commissioner McCarthy inquired about what happens when a planned event exceeds the

approved size and scope. SMA Robb informed that as part of the special event process, meetings are held with the organizers before and after their events. Generally the organizers do not want more people than expected and for their events get out of control. To date, there has not been a planned event that has gone so far away from what was expected that it would not be allowed again. The purpose of meeting after the event is to discuss what went right and wrong and figure out how to fix things for the future.

Chair Karger asked if there have been any events in Polliwog Park that were unpermitted and how they were managed. SMA Robb reported that could not recall any specific events at Polliwog that were unpermitted. However, they may have been rallies that would have fallen under the Expressive Events policy. These events are allowed under the First Amendment and do not require a permit to gather. It is the hope that organizers will give the City some notice so that the Police Department is aware of the gathering.

Commissioner McCarthy asked if there are specific guidelines for each park that are followed when reviewing special event applications. SMA Robb replied that there is not a formal set of guidelines but that the applications are reviewed by every department and the members of the Special Events Committee are familiar with the size and surroundings of every park and look at the events from many different aspects.

Commissioner Weiner mentioned that the 2018 Special Events Policy needs a lot of work but thinks that all parks should be included in the policy allowing for events to be reviewed and approved if appropriate. He also mentioned that there is no mention of publicly advertised vs. private events.

Commissioner Greenberg asked if the City Council addressed this issue at all when it appeared on their February 1st agenda. Manager Vincent replied that when reviewing the February 1st agenda, the City Manager thought that it would be beneficial to gather community input and push out additional information to residents surrounding these parks. It was recommended that the City Council refer this item to the Parks and Recreation Commission for review and recommendation before they discuss.

Chair Karger opened the floor to public comments. The following individuals spoke:

Lucia La Rosa Ames
Michelle Reniche
Amy Howorth
Mike Michalski
Kim Brant-Lucich

The floor was closed to public comment.

Commissioner Greenberg thanked everyone in the community who took the time to send feedback and come to the meeting and participate in the process. He offered that like one of the commenters, he lives by Live Oak Park and believes that when somebody chooses to live by a park it is a wonderful thing but it comes with pluses and minuses. For most days of the year, he lives next to a beautiful park but for about 5 days a year, there are porta-potties and dumpsters set up for the Hometown Fair. While he is very sympathetic to the disruption that events can cause, parks are a public resource. He believes that residents surrounding Bruce's

Beach Park and the parkettes would benefit from these parks being included in the Special Events Policy so that events can go through an approval process and be approved or denied. He added that a set of parameters should be set up for each park that would include a limit to the number of events allowed annually. His recommendations are as follows.

1. Option 2 – include Bruce’s Beach Park, 8th Street and Larsson in the Special Events Policy with a specific set of parameters around the types of events that would be allowed
2. Recommend that City Council review the municipal code and implement stronger penalties and enforcement
3. Recommend that City Council direct City staff to develop a playbook involving multiple departments to proactively address unpermitted events that come to light and prevent them from happening.

Commissioner Weiner stated that parks are well set up for normal daily use as far as trash cans, etc., but the normal set up will not accommodate larger crowds for events. These issues could be addressed if events need to go through the special events process. He believes that there needs to be a rework of the process that would take capacities into account. He added that we need a clear set of expectations from the event promoter as well. He views the inclusion in the Special Event Policy as support for the surrounding residents, so that the City can be prepared and trash needs, parking and traffic issues, amplified sound and security, can be addressed ahead of time. This benefits the residents as well as the promoters as there would be no surprises. Lastly, he added that with unpermitted events, enforcement would require the Police Department to get involved, and that may be avoided with an application up front.

Commissioner Grampp agreed with Commissioners Weiner and Greenberg. He believes that as long as there is vetting process to ensure that the event is suitable for the location, coupled with punitive measures if the event gets out of hand, it would be acceptable to include these parks in the Special Events Policy.

Commissioner Doran agrees that Option 2 is the right choice but is concerned that residents believe that if Option 2 is chosen, it would result in large special events in the parkettes and Bruce’s Beach Park when the reality is we are just trying to put a process in place to handle potential events while keeping residents safe and mitigating disruption. He added that setting parameters for each park as well as consequences are both very important.

Commissioner McCarthy thanked everyone for their input. She is sympathetic but acknowledges that these parks are public spaces. She is in favor of Option 2 for a couple of reasons. The reality is that if there are no parameters, events will happen anyway, and it behooves the City to have a published set of parameters and guidelines that, if not followed, will result in enforcement. She advocates for Commissioner Greenberg’s recommendation and added that there should be some reference to the manner in which social media is used to promote the event and how penalties are assessed if organizers are able to be identified.

Commissioner Karger is in agreement with Option 2 so that the City can set parameters for events and have recourse if not followed. She agrees that parameters should be set for each park and that there should be municipal code enforcement.

Commissioner Greenberg moved to recommend the following to City Council.

1. Recommend Option 2 to update the Special Event Policy to include Bruce’s Beach Park, 8th Street Parkette and Larsson Street Parkette
2. Update Special Event Policy to specify distinct parameters for special events to include frequency of events, size of events, amplification of sound and other considerations.
3. Review Municipal Code with respect to appropriate penalties against violators of the code, specifically with respect to conducting unpermitted events or organizing events that exceed the parameters of their permit.
4. Recommend City Council direct staff to create a play book to proactively address unpermitted events.

Commissioner McCarthy requested to add a fifth element to request that City Council discuss the implications of events that are organized using social media and if that should be addressed in the Municipal Code.

Commissioner Grampp agrees that social media should be addressed and referenced a recent event in Huntington Beach that went viral and thousands of people showed up. He mentioned that it would be good to see how Huntington Beach handled that situation which was shut down very quickly.

Commissioner Greenberg added a fifth element to his motion to include:

5. Recommend that staff and City Council consider the impact of social media on any updates to the municipal code, the staff playbook and the Special Event Policy.

Commissioner Weiner seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Ayes: Karger, Greenberg, Weiner, Doran, McCarthy, Grampp
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Turkmany

Discussion of 2022 Workplan Items:

Chair Karger relayed the updates she had received previously from Director Leyman.

El Porto Family Park (Greenberg, McCarthy, Turkmany) – Director Leyman contacted LA County Operations Director and will provide an update. SMA Robb believes that the County representative indicated that the County would not pay for any new equipment, but may allow minor improvements. Commissioner Greenberg reminded that City Council direction was to reach out directly to the County Supervisors office.

Nature Areas and Trails – (Greenberg, McCarthy, Turkmany) Director Leyman has met with Public Works and did a walkthrough of the area with Councilmember Hadley. Parks and Rec is working closely with Public Works to create a laundry list of what is needed, along with cost estimates to bring the park up to standards.

Commissioner Greenberg reiterated City Council’s direction to conduct public outreach to create a long-term vision for what the park will be. He believes that creating the laundry list is putting the cart before the horse and that the public outreach should be done first.

SMA Robb clarified that the laundry list is part of the larger maintenance and repair list that

will help prioritize projects, especially if they involve safety issues.

Manager Vincent added that there are two separate tracks. One is to develop a plan for the future and one is to fix the items that are in disrepair.

Commissioner Greenberg stated that maintenance and repair is not in the scope of the Parks and Rec Commission and as far as an update on the progress that the subcommittee has made, there has been no progress because information is needed from staff. The subcommittee is awaiting assignment of staff resources so that they can pursue the direction received from City Council to conduct public outreach and develop a strategic plan for the future of the park.

SMA Robb announced that the new Sr. Recreation Manager will be starting with the City on March 14th, which should help with moving these projects forward.

Dog Runs/Parkettes – The area behind third base at Marine Avenue Park was reviewed by staff but there is no further update. SMA Robb stated that no decisions have been made but installing a dog park at that location would require a large amount of cement removal and possible landscape removal. This location should be discussed once the disposition of the Pay N’ Play is known.

Commissioner Weiner would like for Public Works to add existing dog park improvements to their list, and that the suggestion of a larger dog run at Polliwog be considered.

Exploring Repurposing the Pay N Play Racquetball Courts – (Karger, Turkmany, Greenberg) No updates at this time.

Exploring the feasibility of developing an aquatics center – (McCarthy, Weiner, Doran) Commissioner McCarthy stated that she had a number of questions for Director Leyman and is trying to understand how the questions in the community survey were developed.

She stated that it was recommended at the City Council joint meeting that a statistically valid survey be conducted to determine whether the community is supportive of having a renovation done, a new aquatic center or repair the current facility and add more water. She was dismayed by the pool and parks being lumped into basic city services for prioritization. She would like direction on how to go about getting a new survey done and how fast it can be done, as she would like to get the survey rolling as directed in order to get a true read on what the community wants.

Manager Vincent stated that the community survey would be used to help prioritize budget discussions. As for the subcommittee’s survey, to use a consultant to conduct a statistically valid survey, City Council would need to allocate money in the budget. FlashVote is being considered by the City Manager’s office. A supplemental budget request for FlashVote funding in the next fiscal year has been submitted, but has not yet been approved. Separately, there will be two budget study sessions that will allow the public to weigh in and provide feedback on potential projects.

Commissioner McCarthy will speak with Mark to find out if funding for the survey can be accelerated because she does not want the project to lose momentum. The subcommittee has met with various consultants and businessmen who were involved at various levels in previous efforts to improve aquatics facilities through a bond measure. There was some

interest in contributing to a public-private partnership to help fund the project. She received additional recommendations for people to talk with regarding funding and is also working with the subcommittee that is exploring the creation of a 501c3 to accept donations for Parks and Recreation projects. There are a number of documents and a meeting requested.

1. Manhattan Village site deed – review environmental restrictions that may be connected to the Chevron donation
2. Ground leases connected to the parking lots and Country Club, possibly updated in 2018
3. Request meeting with representatives from MBUSD to discuss Begg pool and what they are thinking regarding the site.

Commissioner McCarthy reported that Redondo Beach is discussing an overhaul of their Parks and Rec infrastructure and are starting to talk about an aquatics complex. They are contacting members of Manhattan Beach staff to gauge interest in a joint project at Aviation Blvd. on the site where the track and Performing Arts Center are located.

Commissioner McCarthy emphasized that the subcommittee is unable to move forward until there is a conversation with Director Leyman that is to include next steps from the City Manager and additional feedback from MBUSD.

Donation Policy and Programs – (Turkmany, Karger, Weiner) Chair Karger reported that the update to the donation policy itself has been placed on hold, and energy has been focused on the development of the 501c3 Foundation. The subcommittee is developing a rough draft of the mission statement and bylaws, and creating a template for the process and procedures for selecting projects, fundraising and exploring the public-private relationship between the City and the Foundation. The subcommittee has reached out the City Council for feedback, and also members of the community to gauge interest in supporting financially, or serving on the Foundation Board. The goal is to present the proposal at the March commission meeting and present to City Council in May.

G. STAFF ITEMS

Manager Vincent recapped City Council actions and gave the following updates.

Mayor Stern will be speaking at the State of the City event on March 17th at the Joslyn Community Center.

Police Chief Abell has announced his retirement but will serve as Interim Chief until the recruitment of the new Chief is complete. The City solicited input from the community on what they are looking for in a new chief.

Registration for spring and summer camps begins March 7, for residents.

H. COMMISSION ITEMS

School District update (Greenberg) – no update

Older Adult Program update (McCarthy) – The department is continuing to increase the number of activities open to seniors while being extremely cautious and adhering to health protocols. Attendance has been good for the programs that have been reinstated.

Student update (Grampp) – Masking rules have been lifted on campus. A successful blood

drive was held and Costachella and Winter Formal are coming up.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Greenberg moved to adjourn. Commissioner Doran seconded the motion. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 PM to Monday, March 28, 2022.