

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Tuesday, September 26, 2023
4:00 PM
Location: City Hall - City Council Chambers
MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER – Chair Doran called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm.

B. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

C. ROLL CALL

Present: Allen, Zimbalist, Chair Doran, McCarthy, Windes, Greenberg*,

Absent: Komatinsky

Others Present: Parks and Recreation Director Mark Leyman, Senior Recreation Manager (SRM) Melissa McCollum, Senior Management Analyst (SMA) Linda Robb, Public Works Maintenance Manager Sean Roberts; Urban Forester Ernest Area, Recording Secretary Rosemary Lackow

*Commissioner Greenberg seated at 4:15

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 28, 2023

It was moved and seconded (Windes/McCarthy) to approve the minutes as submitted.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Allen, Zimbalist, Chair Doran, McCarthy, Windes

Noes: None

Absent: Komatinsky, Greenberg

Abstain: None

Chair Doran announced the motion passed 5-0-2 (Greenberg, Komatinsky absent)

E. CEREMONIAL – None

F. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (3-Minute Limit)

Resident Lee Pace requested that the city consider impacts to migratory birds when removing/replacing trees in Polliwog Park and if possible, re-plant native trees; and that parking and traffic impacts should be looked at for the Begg pool project.

G. GENERAL BUSINESS

Chair Doran announced a reordering of the agenda – that a Public Works project update (**see H. Staff items**) will be considered next - ahead of the General Business items.

At Director Leyman's request, Chair Doran announced that, for item 3 under General Business (Parks Non-Profit Discussion) the attachment to the staff report has been pulled for discussion at this time.

1. **23/0123.02 Work Plan Items Discussion**

a. Dog Parks & Community Parkettes

Commissioner Allen noted that there is no update except the issue of the ineffectiveness of the existing shade canopy at Live Oak Park remains a concern. SRM McCollum stated that staff will discuss possible solutions with David Volz Design and report on this at the next meeting.

b. Explore Repurposing Pay 'n' Play Racquetball Land/Building

Commissioner Windes noted that this project is still on pause, awaiting direction from City Council.

c. Sand Dune Park Master Plan (Nature Areas & Trails, Building)

Commissioner Zimbalist updated that the subcommittee will be meeting with the Volz team (via Zoom) on September 28th to discuss the information received so far from the survey and two public outreach events. As part of the scope of work approved by the Council, another round of public outreach will be done. A concern was expressed that not all information from the two prior outreach events has been made available to the Committee. Commissioner Zimbalist has the survey data but does not have info summarizing the results of an exercise referred to as “the dots.” Director Leyman will look into this.

Director Leyman confirmed that the scope of work for the Volz contract will be to fully develop a conceptual design for the building as well as surrounding area, including ADA compliance and access, confined to the park area at the base of the slope. The project timeline including public outreach will be discussed at this week’s meeting with Volz Design.

d. Explore Community Aquatics Facility

Commissioner McCarthy updated that community meetings will be scheduled in October and November and meanwhile she feels a good working relationship has been established between HMC, the consultant, the school district and the City through meetings which have produced some important feedback. Commissioner McCarthy emphasized that the goal is to use the existing site more efficiently while upgrading 80-year old infrastructure to work better for Polliwog Park and the pool. The target users are city swim teams plus local swim clubs. The term “community” has been added to the project name to clarify that activities will be for local programming, whether one or two pools. The next step will be to gather more focused input from the community – through a survey and community meetings.

e. 2024 Juneteenth Celebration

Commissioner Windes updated that the survey will remain open until September 30; 280 responses have been received so far. Another survey of Mira Costa students is awaiting approval from Principal Gerger. Tentatively, a community discussion has been planned in a couple of weeks to review the survey results and consider how other cities (e.g. El Segundo, Pasadena) have celebrated Juneteenth. The plan is to gather information including survey results and community input, put together some ideas, and present to the Commission in October; so far, discussions have been positive and energetic.

2. 23/0926.01 Consideration of a Fallen Soldier Project in Lieu of Veterans Recognition Wall

Director Leyman provided a background, noting the evolution of the proposed project. The initial concept was to install street pole banners to recognize city veterans, a program that arose from discussion about developing an umbrella donation policy and donation program options. The concept of a Military Wall was identified as a donation program and was separated from donation policy discussions to be considered as a separate program. The purpose of the Wall was to provide a way for residents to honor veterans and active military personnel and was proposed to be located at the site of the existing Veteran's Memorial (15th Street/Valley Drive). However, as the Parks and Recreation Commission Ad-Hoc committee worked with staff, concerns arose, most significantly, how to establish guidelines for applicants. Subsequently a Manhattan Beach resident and military veteran has proposed as an alternative, for Commission consideration, that a "Fallen Soldier" Memorial replace the Military Wall concept. The Fallen Soldier Memorial would honor Manhattan Beach residents who have given their lives in service to our nation and could be used in an annual Memorial Day event.

Gary McAulay, past president of the Manhattan Beach Historical Society addressed the Commission regarding this concept which he has proposed. He is a veteran with deep roots in the military and in honoring service members as well in the history of Manhattan Beach. He believes that the Military Wall concept would be very difficult, with perhaps thousands of potential applicants over the 100+ years since the city was incorporated. He believes that since the city already has a Veterans Monument that recognizes all veterans broadly, the city might focus instead on a memorial that recognizes the ultimate sacrifice of its citizens in service. He believes, from research he has done that the number of fallen soldiers will be relatively smaller, possibly only 25 or 26 but there is always a possibility that new information will arise that could result in more names being added that are not on the list he has compiled.

Mr. McAulay discussed with the Commission various aspects of eligibility including what "in service to country" covers, and the qualifying relationship to Manhattan Beach.

Director Leyman requested that the Commission provide direction on the Fallen Soldier project as a work plan item, in lieu of a Military Wall. Procedurally, with such direction, staff will then bring this to the City Council for concurrence. Upon concurrence by council, an Ad-Hoc committee will be formed by the Commission to work out details.

Commissioner McCarthy stated that she likes the idea of a Fallen Soldier memorial; Commissioner Windes agreed.

It was moved and seconded (Windes/Greenberg) to recommend a Fallen Soldier Memorial program in lieu of the Military Wall.

Roll Call:

Ayes:	Allen, Zimbalist, Chair Doran, McCarthy, Windes, Greenberg
Noes:	None
Absent:	Komatinsky
Abstain:	None

3. 23/0926.02 Parks Non-Profit Discussion

Commissioner McCarthy reported that the committee continues to meet to work on many aspects such as finding community resources for assisting in many areas (legal, grant writing, accounting, website design, etc.) as well as developing the bylaws, considering possible names for the entity, and other matters.

4. 23/0926.03 Enhanced Holiday events and Checklist

Commissioner Windes reported that the Ad-Hoc committee has met and has compiled a list of holidays/events provided by City Council. She proceeded to describe each of these and existing or suggested new enhancements for each. The events and/or holidays on the list include: Memorial Day, July 4th, Veterans Day, Labor Day, 9/11 Memorial, Flag Day, Salute to the Troops, and the Holiday Season. She noted that during COVID-19 many events were paused and the City Council is very positive about resuming events. Development of this list will involve public outreach and as per Council direction, additional events or recognitions beyond this list could be brought to the City Manager and Mayor for approval to refer to the City Council. Director Leyman clarified that the Fallen Soldier Memorial could be added to the list as a Memorial Day enhancement for Memorial Day.

Commissioner Windes noted that as a next step staff will provide a report to the City Council noting the suggested enhancements as described and council will provide further direction to Director Leyman on proceeding.

H. STAFF ITEMS

Public Works project updates (heard prior to General Business items)

Ernest Area, City Urban Forester, provided an update regarding a major tree maintenance project being planned for Polliwog Park. Within the next few months, a total of 15 trees, mainly due to poor health caused by either disease (pine pitch canker) or insect damage (eucalyptus longhorn bore) will be removed and replaced by a total of 56 trees in various areas including along Redondo Avenue and Manhattan Beach Boulevard, and in various locations in the park interior. Since the initial survey was done, three additional trees have been identified as needing removal. Trees along Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Redondo Avenue will be chosen based on their proximity to public sidewalks. Besides the parkway trees, liquid ambers which can tolerate flooding, will be planted near the lagoon and some sycamores near the dog park which will be good for shading.

Replacement trees will be minimum 36" box size, averaging between 12-14 feet in height. The plan is to stack the new trees while awaiting planting, on site near the "red house" and a sandwich board sign as suggested will be placed at that area to inform about the overall plan.

Within five years there will be significant growth. The city is discussing the plan with the school district and will obtain school board approval for a fully developed detailed plan. The project is expected to be done by the end of the year.

Provision for shade in the area of the future expansion of the dog park was briefly discussed. Mr. Area noted that so far new shade trees have been planned for the east side (front) of the dog park. As he is part of the discussion regarding plantings, he will look into addressing shade also on the west side.

Mr. Area additionally reported: in Sand Dune Park 3 trees recently have been replaced by new (“silk oak”) trees; along the Veteran’s Parkway 15 olive trees that have been lost to disease will be replaced, and at the corner of Valley and Manhattan Beach Boulevard, two 48-inch box pine trees will be installed which will be 17-20 feet in height.

Sean Roberts, Public Works Maintenance Manager noted that Public Works will coordinate public outreach and notification with the City communications team.

Commissioner McCarthy suggested that, given the extensive tree plantings throughout the city (Polliwog, Sand Dune, and Valley/Ardmore) there is a good opportunity for positive “good news” messaging to the community. Perhaps the City’s communication team can work out ways to inform of the extensive tree work being done in the city.

City Council Recap and Parks and Recreation Department Updates

Director Leyman made announcements covering recent past and upcoming events and activities:

- Recruitment for a marketing specialist is still underway.
- Ribbon cutting ceremonies have been held for: Polliwog Park Playground, The Strand Par Course, and new Peck Avenue reservoir.
- Upcoming events: Hometown Fair on October 7-8; Manhattan Beach 10K run October 6 and Halloween carnival October 22; next MBAC art exhibit opening October 20; and the Skechers Friendship Walk and Pumpkin Race October 29. Commissioner Windes invited all commissioners to join her in designing and making a Parks and Recreation Commission sponsored pumpkin (possibly Begg Pool related) and also to cheer at the race on October 29.
- Commissioner McCarthy suggested that the Public Works Department consider adding landscaping, such as a corridor of trees, to buffer the view of the new reservoir from Begg as it appears very stark. Director Leyman will pass this comment on.
- Commissioner Windes congratulated Director Leyman on the Polliwog Playground ribbon cutting.
- Director Leyman informed resident Lee Barr in the audience that the NFC exercise equipment is scheduled to begin construction in Fall, 2023 and be completed in Spring, 2024 and he is awaiting a timeline for the digital wall project at City Hall which he will be happy to share once he received an update.

I. COMMISSION ITEMS

Older Adult Program Update. (McCarthy) Commissioner McCarthy reported input from the older adults group: appreciation for the improvements at Sand Dune Park, strong interest in the Begg pool project, enthusiasm for the city park photo contest and appreciation for council work being done to address e-bikes.

School District Update (Komatinsky) No report.

Student Update (Greenberg) Commissioner Greenberg reported that he visited the Black Scholars group on campus to inform regarding the planning for the Juneteenth celebration.

J. ADJOURNMENT

At 5:30 p.m. it was moved and seconded (Windes/Zimbalist) to adjourn to Monday, October 23rd at 4:00 p.m. The motion passed 6-0.