



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES
Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers
8200 Westminster Blvd., Westminster, CA 92683

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Chair Jason Gray, Vice Chair Jessica Lostaunau, Commissioner Kenneth Abell, Commissioner Christine Hernandez, and Commissioner Tim Hogan

Present: Chair Jason Gray, Vice Chair Jessica Lostaunau, Commissioner Kenneth Abell, Commissioner Christine Hernandez, and Commissioner Tim Hogan

Absent: None.

Staff Present: Vanessa Johnson, Community Services and Recreation Director; Tuan Pham, Assistant City Engineer; Ron Weber, Police Deputy Chief; and Tammy Huynh, Senior Administrative Assistant.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG: Vice Chair Lostaunau led all those present in the salute to the flag.

INVOCATION: Commissioner Hernandez led all those present in the Invocation.

1. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

1. Moe Galal addressed concerns regarding electric bikes at Bolsa Chica Park.
2. Terry Rains spoke about item 3.1, Park Check List Reports and Assignments, and asked the commission to represent all the parks to ensure inspection at every park. She also spoke about item 3.3, Updates from Commissioners regarding “green curb” at Margie L. Rice Park and expressed her concerns about specialized parking additions. Furthermore, she shared her enthusiasm for item 4.1, Park Ranger Update, expressing excitement for the implementation of that program.
3. Pam Gremling spoke of the squirrel issue at Margie L. Rice Park, proposing the installation of signs prohibiting the feeding of squirrels in the park. Additionally, she spoke of safety concerns related to a sunken portion of the rubber matting on the playground.
4. Kim Springer expressed her gratitude to the Public Works Department and addressed her concerns about the squirrel problem at Margie L. Rice Park. She suggested posting signs prohibiting squirrel feeding and emphasizing its legal

ramifications. Additionally, she also mentioned that the squirrels have dug large holes in the park and addressed her concerns about the presence of a large RV frequently parked at the park.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2.1 Meeting Minutes – March 12, 2024

Motion was made by Chair Gray, and seconded by Vice Chair Lostaunau, to approve the minutes from the March 12, 2024, Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting. Motion carried 5-0, with the following vote:

AYES: ABELL, HERNANDEZ, HOGAN, LOSTAUNAU, GRAY
NOES: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE
ABSENT: NONE

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

3.1 Park Check List Reports and Assignments

Vice Chair Lostaunau requested to be assigned to the following parks: Land Park, Community Pocket Park, Blakey Park, and Cloverdale Park.

Commissioner Hernandez requested to be assigned to Coronet Park.

Chair Gray requested to be assigned to Elden F. Gillespie Park.

Commissioner Hernandez reported that the Sigler Park Playground has been busy and parkgoers have been enjoying the new playground. She also spoke about helping with outreach efforts to enhance awareness about Mendez Park as well as the Conservation Garden at Coronet Park. Additionally, she asked if there's anything being done about the parking lines at Bolsa Chica Park as they are not visible; staff informed her that the parking lot belongs to the school district.

Commissioner Hogan addressed concerns regarding the presence of holes and the electric bike issues at Bolsa Chica Park. He also spoke about the squirrel issue at Margie L. Rice Park, noting that the squirrels are emboldened since they are being fed at the park and that they are digging underneath the mats at the playground, creating deep holes. He proposed potential closure of the park to address the squirrel issue.

Staff informed the commission that they will discuss the proper course of action for dealing with the squirrel issue at the park and mentioned they will look into the possibility of signage to deter the feeding of the squirrels.

Staff encouraged commissioners to contact the Police Department non-emergency phone number to report the issues regarding electronic bikes and squirrels.

3.2 Project Updates

Tuan Pham gave a presentation on upcoming projects such as the playground renovations, pickleball courts, soccer fields, and the community garden project.

Commissioner Hernandez inquired about the Sigler Park soccer fields project, leading to a discussion about the project. Staff informed the commissioners about the upcoming Outreach Meetings for the project.

3.3 Updates from Commissioners regarding “green curb” at Margie L. Rice Park

Commissioner Hogan raised concerns about the construction of an apartment complex near the park and the potential development of a larger complex that could lead to residents occupying parking spaces at the park.

Commissioner Hernandez reported that she spoke to residents near the park, and they did not see a need to enforce “green curbs” at the park, however, they addressed other issues at the park. She expressed that this item does not merit action at this time, however, it is something that the commission can monitor over time.

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.1 Park Ranger Update

Police Deputy Chief Ron Weber briefed the commissioners on the introduction of the new Park Ranger Program. He outlined the specific job responsibilities assigned to the two Park Rangers. Additionally, he urged the commissioners to utilize the Police Department's non-emergency phone number and advised them to encourage residents to do the same, as the department is currently not receiving many calls about the parks. He emphasized that calling would lead to a faster response compared to using the city app.

4.2 Next Meeting Date and Time

Staff requested the next Commission Meeting to be held on July 16th instead of July 9th.

Motion was made by Commissioner Hernandez and seconded by Commissioner Abell, to hold the next Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting on July 16th at 4 p.m. Motion carried 5-0, with the following vote:

AYES: ABELL, HERNANDEZ, HOGAN, LOSTAUNAU, GRAY
NOES: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE
ABSENT: NONE

5. REPORT FROM STAFF

5.1 Upcoming Events

Vanessa Johnson updated the commission on various upcoming events and activities, including outreach meetings, summer events, Senior Center activities, the Senior Center Spotlight, Family Resource Center events, and highlighted that July is “Parks Make Life Better Month”. She also mentioned the upcoming Fall Festival and the ongoing recruitment of vendors and sponsors. All relevant flyers and information will be sent to the commissioners via email.

Commissioner Hernandez inquired about vendor goals for the Fall Festival; staff discussed the amount of vendors at last year’s festival and mentioned that staff is going to work on diversifying the vendors this year.

6. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Hernandez reported that she reviewed the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan and inquired about how art in public places is being incorporated into our projects now and inquired about the Cultural Arts Commission. She also expressed gratitude to the staff for organizing Outreach Meetings and collecting community feedback.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m. The next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 16th at 4 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Huynh, Senior Administrative Assistant
Community Services & Recreation