



CITY OF NOVATO
PARKS & RECREATION

Recreation, Cultural and Community Services Advisory Commission

SPECIAL MEETING

Minutes

Thursday, August 31, 2023 - 6:00 PM

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lacey at 6:00 PM.

Commissioners Present: Chair Erin Lacey, Dennis Bentley, Suzanne Crow, Emily Larsen, Mavi Pilloton, Betsy Ricketts, Beverley Winsor

Commissioners Absent: Vice Chair Weber

Staff Present: Director of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Katie Gauntlett; Senior Management Analyst Drew Bendickson; Recreation Supervisor Alexandra Kambur

B. APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA

Commission Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Weber and seconded by Commissioner Crow, the Commission voted 7-0-0-1 to approve the final agenda.

Ayes: Bentley, Crow, Lacey, Larsen, Pilloton, Ricketts, Winsor

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Weber

Motion Carried

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Trish McCurdy

D. CONSENT ITEMS

D.1. APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES

Commission Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Crow and seconded by Commissioner Larsen, the Commission voted 7-0-0-1 to approve the meeting minutes from the Recreation, Cultural, and Community Services Advisory Commission Special Meeting from July 13, 2023.

Ayes: Bentley, Crow, Lacey, Larsen, Pilloton, Ricketts, Winsor

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Weber

Motion Carried

E. UNFINISHED AND OTHER BUSINESS

None

F. GENERAL BUSINESS

F.1. Receive a Presentation to Review and Consider Providing a Recommendation to Novato City Council Approving The Scottsdale Pond Wayside Signage Artwork By Scientific Illustrator Emma Oyle, for the Approved Public Art Installation at Scottsdale Pond in Partnership with The Rotary Club Of Novato from Community Services Division Manager, Drew Bendickson

Community Services Division Manager Drew Bendickson and Scientific Illustrator Emma Oyle presented two final versions of the signage artwork for Scottsdale Pond. As requested, modifications were made including a light blue background and a white text box behind the informational text.

Division Manager Bendickson noted the white text box may not be necessary, so a second version without it was created for the commissioners to review and decide on a preferred design.

Commissioner Bentley called on Jim Spillman of the Rotary Club of Novato regarding sign production. Jim confirmed the signs would come from the original manufacturer, be graffiti-proof and withstand UV rays for longevity. He added that having the digital files will enable easy reproduction if needed.

After discussion, the commission opted to move forward with the version without white text boxes behind the informational content. They requested Emma also add "Artwork by Emma Oyle" on the "Welcome to Scottsdale Pond" sign.

Emma expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work on this meaningful project for her hometown. Researching the native plants and animals of Novato was a rewarding learning experience for her.

Public Comment:

1. Trish McCurdy

Commission Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Crow and seconded by Commissioner Bentley, the Commission voted 7-0-0-1 to recommend the final version, without the white text boxes to the City Council.

Ayes: Bentley, Crow, Lacey, Larsen, Pilloton, Ricketts, Winsor

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Weber

F.2. Receive a presentation on the 2023 Margaret Todd Senior Center Programming from Recreation Supervisor, Teresa Ehteshami

Recreation Supervisor Recreation Supervisor Teresa Ehteshami presented to the commission about The Margaret Todd Senior Center (MTSC), a community resource for Novato seniors and residents. The facility includes classrooms and an auditorium, next to the Hill Recreation Area. It hosts senior activities and community events. Last year it hosted over 3,500 event hours.

MTSC has 347 members and offers diverse classes including art, yoga, and French. This fall saw a 43% membership increase and 730 participants.

Additional offerings include AARP driving classes, a computer lab, and a library. In partnership with Marin County, the Center provides federally funded lunches through a congregate meal program, twice a week for around 2,000 seniors annually. Special events held throughout the year include flea markets, craft faires, and tournaments, averaging 1,300 multigenerational attendees.

Recreation Supervisor Teresa Ehteshami informed the commission that Margaret Todd Senior Center staff will be representing the senior center at the Marin Senior Info Fair on September 7th. The staff will be among 140 community organization booths at the county event. In honor of the 30th anniversary of the Margaret Todd Senior Center, a survey will be distributed to local adults and seniors to gather input to enhance offerings and services over the next 30 years.

Public Comment:

None

G. COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

G.1. Staff Updates

Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Director Gauntlett provided the commission with a recap of the department's summer programming. The PRCS department operated 9 weeks of summer programming in 2023. Camp Ton-of-Fun served 790 participants at 95% capacity and Gymnastics camps served 540 participants at 99% capacity. The Summer Gymnastics camps had 482 participants.

For Aquatics' inaugural season operating the Hamilton Pool, 273 summer pool passes were sold - a 17% increase from when San Rafael operated the pool. An inflatable obstacle course was added on Fridays to boost attendance. With new lifeguards and swim instructors gaining experience, the department feels well-positioned for next summer season.

The final Hot Amphitheater Night concert took place on August 26th. All concerts were well-attended and we received positive feedback throughout the summer months.

Heading into fall, the Activity Guide launched August 8th with registration opening the same day, achieving a record \$80,000 in revenue within 24 hours. The Gymnastics Center opened its first fall session with over 100 weekly classes. The pool will stay open through October 29th. Youth and adult leagues are kicking off including basketball.

Upcoming events include the Fall Flea Market, Movies at Pocket Park, a Floating Pumpkin Patch at the Hamilton Pool, the Senior Center's Holiday Crafts Faire, Photos with Santa, and Gingerbread Build.

Director Gauntlett mentioned that she will be in contact with the commission about the date for the next Parks Master Plan community meeting where consultants will share findings from the community survey and engagement efforts.

Lastly, Director Gauntlett shared that Dogbone Meadow was selected as the best dog park in Marin County by Pacific Sun readers. Additionally, for the second consecutive year and fifth time overall, the Novato Gymnastics Center was voted the best indoor children's sports center in Marin County.

Public Comment:

None

G.2. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Crow expressed her gratitude and appreciation to the department for the successful summer concert series. She remarked that the concerts were thoroughly enjoyable this year and it was wonderful to see the local community in attendance. Commissioner Crow also noted her appreciation for the pop-up tents that were provided on extremely hot days to keep attendees comfortable.

Commissioner Winsor inquired about the absence of the future agenda item Budgeting for Miwok Park Bocce Courts.

Director Gauntlett explained that approving an item for a future agenda does not guarantee placement on the next agenda due to a number of factors. She noted that presently there is no change to the budget status for revitalizing the Miwok Park bocce courts, as no funding has been allocated. Staff continue to research options in preparation for bringing this item back to the commission at a future meeting.

Chair Lacey referenced the public comment received earlier in the meeting from Trish McCurdy regarding outdoor exercise equipment in parks. She suggested tabling a presentation on this topic until after the results from the Parks Master Plan are available, as community feedback on exercise equipment may be included.

Commission Action: Upon motion by Commissioner Crow and seconded by Commissioner Bentley, the Commission voted 7-0-0-1 to revisit a presentation about outdoor exercise equipment, pending findings from the Parks Master Plan community engagement process.

Ayes: Bentley, Crow, Lacey, Larsen, Pilloton, Ricketts, Winsor

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Weber

H. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 PM.

The next RCCS meeting is on September 14, 2023.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly adopted at the RCCS Commission meeting of _____.

/ Drew Bendickson /
Drew Bendickson, Community Services Division Manager