

**DRAFT**

**PIEDMONT PARK COMMISSION**

Regular Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, June 2, 2010

A Regular Session of the Piedmont Park Commission was held June 2, 2010, in the City Hall Council Chambers at 120 Vista Avenue. In accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2(a) the agenda for this meeting was posted for public inspection on May 27, 2010.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman King called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Brian Cain, Randy Deutsch, Sue Herrick, Teddy King and Chris Kukula

Absent: Commissioners Mary Geong and Jukka Valkonen (both excused)

Staff: Parks & Projects Manager Mark Feldkamp, Public Works Superintendent Dave Frankel and Recording Secretary Chris Harbert

**PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no speakers for the public forum.

**REGULAR CALENDAR**

The Commission considered the following items of regular business:

**Minutes**

**Resolved**, that the Park Commission approves as submitted its meeting minutes of May 5, 2010.

Moved by Deutsch, Seconded by Kukula

Ayes: Deutsch, Herrick, King, Kukula

Noes: None

Absent: Cain, Geong, Valkonen

Commissioner Cain arrived at 5:35 p.m.

**Weed Abatement**

Mr. Feldkamp advised the Commission of staff's intention to use the services of *Goats R Us* next spring, on a trial basis, for weed abatement in Blair Park and the Corporation Yard. He provided a brochure detailing the company's environmentally friendly vegetation management techniques and services in using goat herds to eradicate weeds and undesirable plant species as well as provide public education opportunities for school children in urban environments to learn about agriculture. Mr. Feldkamp stated that the cost of using goats to clear overgrowth, including poison oak/ivy, is much less than the City's current practice of hand weeding.

The Commission unanimously endorsed the use of *Goats R Us* next spring, suggesting that (1) homeowners in the vicinity of areas to be cleared by goats be notified in advance as a courtesy; and (2) the School District also be notified in

advance of the arrival of the goats so that teachers can avail themselves of the educational services offered by *Goats R Us*.

### **Street Tree Planting**

Mr. Feldkamp advised the Commission of a suggestion raised by Councilmember Wieler at the City Council's May 22nd budget work session that consideration be given to requesting homeowners to partially or entirely fund the cost of planting new street trees in front of their properties. Mr. Feldkamp stated that typically a street tree and its planting materials cost approximately \$230 and labor costs to plant the trees is usually \$205 per tree. The Commission discussed this suggestion, voicing the following concerns:

- a homeowner who is required to pay for a street tree may insist on a tree variety of his own personal choice rather than abide by the City's long-standing tradition of designating particular street trees for specific block. This could result in a mish-mash of tree appearances along City streets. In addition, homeowners may insist on trees that are not well-suited to the particular conditions of individual planting sites and neighborhoods;
- the City could lose control over the trimming and proper maintenance of street trees;
- the City's urban forest is an important community asset and should remain under the control of the Commission and park staff to preserve and protect this valuable amenity -- street trees benefit the community as a whole and as a consequence should be considered a public, rather than private possession;
- this is not an appropriate time for the Council to impose this type cost on residents;
- there does not seem to be any compelling reason to deviate from the City's long-standing and very successful street tree planting policy;

In addition to the concerns mentioned by the Commission, Mr. Feldkamp noted staff's questions as to: (1) whether homeowners would be required to pay only for the cost of materials (trees, stakes, tubes) and City crews would continue to actually plant the trees at no cost to residents; (2) will new trees be planted on "demand" or continue to be batched and planted in the fall/winter months as is currently done; and (3) what will be the procedures for replacing trees damaged by storms or vehicles -- will the City or homeowners pay for tree replacements? As a side issue, the Commission noted that if the Council feels that because of financial constraints it cannot fund the current tree planting policy in FY 10-11, it consider imposing a moratorium on tree planting as an alternative to changing the existing policy.

The Commission unanimously and strongly supported retaining the City's established street tree planting policy.

**Linda Beach Tot  
Lot Improvements**

Mr. Feldkamp stated that staff is considering using ADA grant funding to improve handicap access to the Linda Beach Tot Lot. He noted that in addition to improving the existing handicap ramp to the tot lot, a rubberized surface will be added around the play structures similar to what was done at the Children's Play Area in Dracena Park. The Commission supported the proposed improvements. Chairman King urged staff to take note that the Linda Beach Tot Lot is in a much sunnier location than the Dracena play area and therefore a rubberized play surface may become uncomfortably hot. Mr. Feldkamp agreed to consider this issue in the project's design, adding that staff may plant trees to provide more shade at this very popular tot lot.

**Update Reports**

Street Tree Pruning -- the FY 09-10 street tree pruning contract has been completed, with approximately 1,100 trees pruned.

Annual Color-- a list of the types of colorful annuals planted throughout the City's medians and parks was provided as an informational item.

Tea House Restoration -- the Piedmont Beautification Foundation is raising money to fund the complete restoration of the Japanese Tea House in Piedmont Park. It is estimated that the renovation project will cost approximately \$85,000 to \$90,000, with all funding being provided by private donations.

Clean Water -- the City has designated Bushy Dell Creek in Piedmont Park as its *hot spot* water way clean-up project this year. The California Water Resources Board requires municipalities to designate specific watershed trash reduction projects to improve water quality as a condition of the Board's regional permitting process.

**Staff Report**

Mr. Frankel reported on park crew activities for the month of May, noting in particular annual color planting throughout the City, sprucing up Piedmont Park in advance of the community's annual celebration of July 4th, infill planting around the overlook and the release of over 300,000 beneficial insects to control aphids in City landscape and park areas. He also responded to a question raised at last month's meeting regarding the owl boxes installed in Piedmont several years ago as an *Eagle Scout Project*. Twelve barn owl boxes were originally installed, some have been vandalized over the years, and one barn owl has been observed.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Boy Scouts -- The Piedmont Boy Scout Council is observing the 100th Anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America by proposing to rebuild the fire pit behind the Community Hall. A sketch of the proposed project will be submitted for Commission review at the July meeting. It is estimated that the cost of the project will range between \$100,000 to \$120,000.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman King adjourned the meeting at 6:25 pm.