

# **Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board of Directors Meeting MINUTES**

**Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.**

**Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District  
4201 Guardian Street, Simi Valley, CA 93063 • Activity Room 3  
(805) 584-4400 • www.rsrpd.org  
Meeting Held Via Zoom**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chair Abele called the Meeting to Order at 6:32pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Carolyn Cass-Barton.
2. ROLLCALL – Directors Freeman, Johnson, O’Brien, Vice Chair Dennert, and Chair Abele were in attendance. Staff in attendance included: Miguel Chavez, Tracy Engel, Lee Martin, Wayne Nakaoka, Dan Paranick, Theresa Pennington, District Counsel Brian Pierik, and Gina Viecco.

Guests included residents of Simi Valley and Oak Park who attended the meeting via Zoom, those who gave comments are listed under the appropriate topic below.

3. AGENDA REVIEW – There were no requested changes to the Agenda.
4. PUBLIC STATEMENTS (ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)

Jan Britz-Kurt previously filed a claim for damage sustained to her car while at the Simi Hills Golf Course. The quote submitted seemed high, but due to the work involved for a small dent the cost is higher. She is asking the District to reconsider and submit their claim to insurance.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
  - a. Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board Meeting - August 20, 2020 – Motion: Director Freeman moved to approve the Minutes as written. Director O’Brien seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

6. PRESENTATIONS, SCHEDULED ITEMS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. Approval of Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2020-21 – Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration, introduced Mr. Bassam Mosaad, the Financial Representative from MRCA. Mosaad provided an update to the Budget. This year is unusual due to COVID-19, their income has been reduced due to a loss of events and filming. However, the Budget is balanced due to reductions in multiple areas. They also have received grants to help supplement the gaps in the budget. They are aware this is not a sustainable measure, but this year there were not many options.

Director Freeman thanked Mosaad, she appreciates the greater details, it helps to understand the Budget.

Director O'Brien commented the grant funds seem to have doubled this year. Mosaad responded, yes, it is true, the amount does fluctuate from year to year. In this Budget there was an additional \$7 million that was not included with the Preliminary Budget.

Vice Chair Dennert was not able to attend the last MRCA meeting due to the scheduling in middle of the day, it is much easier to have meetings at the end of the day. Mosaad stated he would be happy to relay the message to the appropriate department.

Motion: Director Freeman moved to approve the Final Budget. Director O'Brien seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

- b. Presentation of the Full Time Employee of the Month for June 2020 to Miguel Chavez – Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration presented Miguel with his plaque and he will receive a paid day off. Miguel is the District's Accountant with the Administration Department. He has worked with the District for 4.5 years; this is his 2<sup>nd</sup> Employee of the Month Award. Miguel thanked the Board for his award, he is proud to work with the District. He is thankful to work with a District Manager who appreciates the budgetary numbers and is especially grateful to work with Theresa Pennington, who is always so supportive. Tracy Engel added, Recreation and Accounting come from 2 different worlds, but Miguel has spent hours working with her and her staff to provide clarification to help them understand the process.
- c. Presentation of the Full Time Employee of the Month for May 2020 to Bill Moritzky – The written report was provided by Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration. Bill is unable to attend the meeting tonight, he will be presented with his plaque during work hours and will receive a paid day off.
- d. Status of the Districts Response to the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic – The verbal report was provided by Dan Paranick, District Manager. The PAL (Play And Learn) program is up and working well, there is still room for additional enrollment. Pre-School registration is now open, so far there are 90 children registered. Recreation will also be adding an Adventure Academy in the afternoon from 2:30-5:30. Youth Sports is beginning to resume again starting with conditioning, however, most of the Fall Leagues have cancelled their seasons. Some religious organizations have been issued permits to conduct outdoor worship services. Paranick was interviewed by the Acorn regarding the fiscal impacts of COVID for all Special Districts. District Revenue is down, as expected due to COVID, he will provide a complete report with the upcoming Final Budget report.

Chair Abele asked if the numbers are down further than expected. Paranick responded, not more, just down as expected.

Vice Chair Dennert asked if there were any updates on the opening of playgrounds. Paranick responded nothing new, the Health Officer has not re-opened any playgrounds.

- 7. CONSENT AGENDA (Matters listed under the Consent Agenda are considered routine and shall be acted upon without discussion by one motion approving the Consent Agenda. If discussion is desired the item may be removed from the Consent Agenda upon a Director's request.)
  - a. Approval of 8/15/20 Accounts Payable Check Register and 8/14/20 Payroll Check Register – Staff responded to questions from the Board.

- b. Approval of Notice of Completion and Final Acceptance for the Berylwood Park Skate Plaza Project – The written report was provided by Wayne Nakaoka, Director of Planning and Maintenance.

Motion: Director Freeman moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Director Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

## 8. NEW BUSINESS – NONE

## 9. CONTINUED BUSINESS

- a. Reconsideration of August 6, 2020 Agenda Item – Consideration of Tree Removal at Mae Boyar Park. Chair Abele will be making a motion to re-consider the vote from the previous meeting. District Counsel Pierik suggested item 9.a only be the discussion to reconsider the previous vote. Discussion of rescinding the previous vote and the merits of keeping or not keeping the tree should be discussed under the following item 9.b.

Chair Abele asked if any member of the Public would like to comment on the Board's reconsideration of their previous vote.

The following people via Zoom requested the Board reconsider their previous vote regarding the tree removal at Mae Boyar Park: Stella (no last name), Carolyn Cass-Barton, Richard Caster, Jana Orkney, Jay Kapitz, Derek Ross, Molly McCarthy, Susan Meyers and Maryann Rush.

Director O'Brien added given the bad phone connection at the August 6, 2020 meeting, it would be wise to reconsider.

Chair Abele called a 10-minute Recess at 7:16pm.

Chair Abele called the meeting back to Order at 7:23pm.

Motion: Chair Abele moved to reconsider the previous Board vote from August 6, 2020 regarding the Mae Boyar Park tree removal. Director Freeman seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

- b. Consideration of Tree Removal at Mae Boyar Park – The staff report was presented by Dan Paranick, District Manager. Paranick provided the 3 alternatives given at the previous Oak Park Advisory Committee meeting and at the previous Board of Directors meeting.

O'Brien asked if it was possible to remove the rubber padding and build up soil or replace with wood chips. Paranick responded this would still be a safety hazard, as well as cost prohibitive. O'Brien also asked if it is possible to keep the trees, and get a liability waiver release signed by the park patrons somehow. Paranick responded the practicality of implementing this would be very difficult.

Freeman stated it was not a unanimous vote to remove the tree. She is in favor of saving the tree. She asked about using wood chips as opposed to the rubber padding. Paranick responded, yes, wood chips would provide some savings.

Johnson added there is a pattern of calling this a historical tree. Wayne Nakaoka, Director of Planning and Maintenance stated there was a mass tree planting in 1971 which is likely when these trees were planted. The Mae Boyar Park dedication was in 1960. The trees are not Historic but they are Heritage trees due to the trunks being larger than 90 inches.

Director Abele opened the topic to Public Comments at 7:46pm.

Jay Kapitz thanked the Board for reconsidering. Oak Park is rallying around this item and he would like the Oak Park Advisory Committee's vote of 4-2 in favor of saving one of the trees have more weight. He has no problem with wood chip in the play area, he urged the Board to take their time with the decision.

Linda Kapitz, would like the tree saved, wood chips in the play area is fine.

Derek Ross stated the community is passionate to save trees. He would have voted to save the tree had he been in attendance at the Oak Park Advisory Committee meeting.

Cory (no last name) is in favor of saving the tree and read several quotes about the merits of trees.

Harry Medved is grateful for to the Board for reconsidering. Oak Park has trees for sentimental, historical, and emotional reasons. He would like the tree saved.

Janice Smets thanked the Board for reconsidering. She feels there should be money in the Budget to go towards saving the tree.

Janna Orkney stated 3 different arborists feel the tree is safe. This has been big news in the Acorn, on the front page and 4 additional pages inside. She prefers wood chips and added in the Bay Area they have better chips which are rounded.

Carolyn Cass-Barton thanked the Board for reconsidering. Oak Park is located in an unincorporated area of Ventura and there is a County Ordinance in place to protect Heritage Trees. She feels it is a minor root problem, exacerbated by the rubber play area padding. They have over 1,000 signatures in favor of saving the tree.

John Watts thanked the Board for reconsidering and he appreciates the community being passionate about the trees. He supports option #3 along with wood chips.

Mary Wisebrock thanked the Board for reconsidering, as a member of Save Open Space she supports saving the tree and likes wood chips.

Marleen Ribis thanked the Board for reconsidering. She feels the tree has sentimental value and was there before the play structure so it should be saved. She prefers wood chips.

Molly McCarthy loves the tree and wants it saved; she likes wood chips better.

Michael Green urged the Board to reconsider and save the tree.

Maryann Rush thanked the Board for reconsidering. She prefers wood chips and feels

the rubber mat is the problem. The tree is part of the community and provides a legacy for Oak Park.

Linda Estrin is in favor of saving the tree, she would like organic wood chips.

Nicole Lelie wants to save the tree. She prefers rubber over the wood chips and suggested rubber chips that are now available.

Melanie Bremberg thanked the Board for reconsidering. She was raised in Oak Park playing under the tree in question. Three generations of their family have now enjoyed this tree, she feels it's a witness tree, it's been there through it all.

Chair Abele asked if there were any further comments from the public, no one else spoke up at this time.

District Manager Dan Paranick read emails that were submitted to the District. These are included with the Minutes.

Director Freeman agrees with all the public comments and the Oak Park Advisory Committee recommendation. She was at the dedication ceremony for the Mae Boyar Park and feels we need to respect the opinions of the Community. She is in favor of option #3 along with wood chips.

Director Johnson agreed with Freeman's comments.

Vice Chair Dennert supports option #3 and appreciates the community's passion for saving the tree. Their community is aware the additional funding comes from postponing a project in their area.

Paranick added it is not certain only one piece of playground equipment will need to be moved.

Chair Abele stated District staff does an excellent job performing the work and making appropriate decisions. He feels, all the logic says the tree should be removed, everything points to that. However, there comes a point when the outcry from the Community becomes overwhelming.

Motion: Vice Chair Dennert moved to rescind the previous Board action of August 6, 2020, and move forward with Option 3, remove 1 tree, keep 1 tree, and move a section of the playground away from the tree roots. Director Freeman seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

## 10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS OF NOTE – NONE

## 11. REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Vice Chair Dennert attended the Advanced Planning Committee and is excited about the plans. There is an upcoming community event the Importance of Pollinators. He attended the drive-in movie, the Candidate Orientation for the upcoming Election, and the Memorial Service for Greg Stratton.

Director Johnson did not attend any meetings. He visited the Skate Plaza and observed a lot of younger kids without helmets or protective gear, which is concerning.

Director Freeman regretfully was not able to attend the Memorial for Greg Stratton, they were great friends for over 45 years. Freeman suggested Paranick review the Budget again at the next Oak Park meeting.

Director O'Brien attended the Memorial for Greg Stratton, it was very nicely done. She attended the Candidate Orientation and found it very informative. She had no other meetings.

Chair Abele attended the Memorial event for Greg Stratton, he had an impact on so many areas in the Community, he has left an amazing legacy for future generations. He also attended the Advance Planning Committee meeting, the group took a tour of the area, he felt it was a productive meeting.

12. REPORT BY DISTRICT MANAGER – Comments were provided by Dan Paranick. Staff is working to enforce the rules at the Skate Plaza for anyone under the age of 18. So far there are 711 skaters registered in our system. There are still some issues with a group of teenagers (approximately 20-30) hanging out and not following the Park Rules. The Rangers will continue to be out there to monitor and enforce the rules as needed. Paranick participated in a conference call with other Park Districts Countywide, they are trying to get information on when larger outdoor events will be possible. District and General Managers statewide held a Zoom meeting to discuss the impact of COVID, some of the Districts reported having serious budgetary issues. Filming in the area is currently doing great. Thanks to Tracy Engel and especially Nikki Davy, who has done a great job reaching out to production companies.

Upcoming Events: The Park Pollinators event will be held Sept. 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, additional Drive-in Movies are scheduled for October, the Senior Games will be held Oct. 13<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> with a modified events schedule, staff will be meeting with the Veteran's group to discuss the upcoming Holiday, and the Activity Center will serve as a polling location this year.

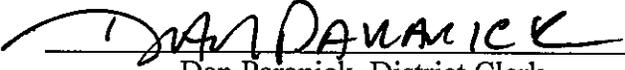
Future Agenda Items: Caretaker residence bids, closed session at the next meeting, discussion regarding the Martin Luther King Day of service and Earth Day ideas, and information regarding grants. The Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> meeting will be moved to Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> and the Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> meeting will be moved to Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> due to scheduling issues. The Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> meeting is scheduled to be the first televised meeting.

Committee Activity: Historical Society meeting will be held Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>, the second Advance Planning Committee meeting will be scheduled, and there will be a Golf Committee meeting scheduled.

Dennert asked if the Rangers are going to start issuing citations at Berylwood and the Skate Plaza. Paranick responded, yes, it is the same group of kids and if warnings are not working then the Rangers will move on to citations.

13. CLOSED SESSION – NONE

14. ADJOURNMENT – Chair Abele adjourned the meeting at 8:55pm.

  
Dan Paranick, District Clerk