

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

## **M I N U T E S**

**Thursday, January 21, 2021 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 Dennert called the Meeting to Order at 6:31pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jordan Downey, a member of the National Junior Honor Society at Sinaloa Middle School.
2. **ROLLCALL** – Directors Abele, Freeman, Gray, Vice Chair O’Brien, and Chair Dennert were in attendance. Staff in attendance included: Laura Ballantoni, Nikki Collier, Santiago Erazo, Danielle June, Richard Lemmo, Wayne Nakaoka, Kelly Negrete, Dan Paranick, Theresa Pennington, Alex Stumfall, Gina Viecco, and District Counsel Brian Pierik.

Guests attended tonight’s meeting via Zoom. Those who made comments are listed under the appropriate item below.

3. **AGENDA REVIEW** – Dan Paranick, District Manager, reported discussion from the Oak Park Advisory Committee meeting will be included on the February 4, 2021 Board Agenda. Eagle Scout Johnny Contreras was unable to attend tonight’s meeting so Item 7.b will be rescheduled. The Board was sent an updated draft letter for Item 9.b.
4. **PUBLIC STATEMENTS (ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)**

Simi Valley resident Mark Johnson inquired about wind damage at the local parks. Paranick will address this issue during the District Manager comments.

### 5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board Meeting – January 7, 2021** – Chair Dennert requested a change on page 3, the Blood Drive will be held at Rancho Santa Susana Community Park not on the school campus. Motion: Director Abele moved to approve the minutes as amended. Director Freeman seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

### 6. **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 12/31/20 Accounts Payable Check Register and 12/31/20 Payroll Check Register** – Staff responded to questions from the Board.
- b. **Approval of Contract with SCI Consulting Group for Professional Consulting, Engineer of Work and Levy Administration Services for the Parks, Recreation and Open Space**

Maintenance and Improvement District for Fiscal Years 2021-22 to 2023-24 – The written staff report was submitted by Dan Paranick, District Manager.

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

## 7. PRESENTATIONS, SCHEDULED ITEMS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. Presentation of the Part-Time Employee of the Month for December 2020 to Santiago Erazo – Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration, presented Santiago with his plaque and check. Santiago is a Maintenance Worker IV and has worked for the District for 1 year, this is his first Employee of the Month Award. Director Freeman congratulated Santiago and encouraged him to keep up the good work. Director of Planning and Maintenance Wayne Nakaoka added Santiago is a very hard worker and thanked him for his efforts. Santiago thanked everyone for his award, he was very grateful.
- b. Presentation of Certificate of Commendation to Eagle Scout Jonny Contreras – Jonny was unable to attend the meeting tonight, this item will be rescheduled.
- c. Status of the District’s Response to the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic – The verbal report was provided by Dan Paranick, District Manager. There were no current changes to the Stay Safe at Home order, it continues to be in force at this time. The District has not realized approximately \$3.5 million in revenue due to COVID closures. Staff has been doing an excellent job mitigating the lost revenue by keeping expenditures down. President Biden has introduced a \$1.9 trillion Stimulus Bill, staff will be tracking the progress of this Bill. VCSDA sent a request on behalf of all special districts to Ventura County outlining extra costs due to the Pandemic.

Mark Johnson inquired if anyone in the District has tested positive for COVID. Paranick responded since March 2020, approximately 10 employees have tested positive, with 6 or so just in the last couple of months. All of these employees contracted the virus elsewhere and there has been no spread within the District.

Chair Dennert asked if there is a legal reason an employee cannot drive their own cars, as opposed to District vehicles. Legal Counsel Pierik responded the District would have some liability regardless of the vehicle driven. He suggested staff check with CAPRI to look into the matter further. Dennert added during COVID he would like staff to be able to drive their own car if they prefer. Paranick responded staff will handle the request and will check with CAPRI prior to any change in policy.

Dennert asked where the After School Club employees fit into the timeline for COVID vaccinations. Even though it is not required, he would like to encourage employees to receive a vaccination as soon as possible. Pennington spoke with the County Health Department; they did not offer to work with the District as an Employer. Staff has provided letters to staff members stating they are active employees and work in Childcare or as a Park Ranger.

Director Gray asked if we have offered any District locations for vaccinations. Paranick is on a Committee to determine viable locations within the community, we will offer sites if needed.

## 8. CONTINUED BUSINESS

- a. Continued Follow-up Discussion Regarding New District Logo and Community Outreach and Promotion Plan Logo Applications, including Potential Direction or Re-Direction to Staff – The staff report was provided by Dan Paranick, District Manager. During their Meeting of December 17, 2020, the Board expressed concerns that the follow-up information presented was not in-keeping with the direction provided by the Board at a previous meeting on November 19, 2020. Due to these concerns, the Board had a follow-up discussion during the January 7, 2021 meeting and directed Staff to work with the District’s Marketing Consultant to evaluate additional logo variations and any associated costs.

O’Brien asked the amount of money the District has spent to date. Paranick replied nothing has been spent directly on the logo, Mustang Marketing provided this as part of the package. Approximately \$17,000 has been spent for all work to date.

Abele asked what the typical cost of doing a full logo exploration would be. Paranick replied the County of Ventura spent approximately \$90K, the School District approximately \$65K, and the City of Thousand Oaks approximately \$40K. Abele stated the quote received from Mustang Marketing appears to be a good deal then. Paranick agreed, the quotes are a very good deal.

Simi Valley resident Mark Johnson feels it would be irresponsible to spend additional funds with the current losses due to COVID. He doesn’t think it would make sense to spend additional money now. He added 4 of the 5 Board Members previously voted to approve the proposed logo and it should be majority rules.

Abele feels updating the logo and promoting the District is important. He doesn’t feel \$7,500 would be too much to come up with something special. This could be a good opportunity to rebrand.

Freeman stated the trees became part of the logo in the late 60s. She does not feel we need a re-branding; she feels this logo is the branding. The addition of the hills represents both Oak Park and Simi Valley as we are surrounded by hills.

Gray is conflicted regarding the logo. In regards to branding, if you take away the words, the image itself should represent the entity. As a child growing up in the District programs, he does not recognize the trees on their own. He is tempted to explore other options for the logo.

Dennert added he likes the option of looking at new logos but is afraid after spending additional money, the Board will still vote for the current one.

Abele feels the proposed logo is just too busy and will not be helpful for District branding.

Oak Park Committee Member Harry Medved is thrilled the Board is discussing the logo. He doesn’t feel the trees in the current logo are effective, he would like to see trees that are more representative of what we have in the area.

Paranick added if the trees are changed, District signage would then be inconsistent as the current trees are used in most locations.

O’Brien feels the trees are important for District branding.

Freeman feels these trees are symbolic to the District, she does not want to waste funds updating signage.

Dennert asked if it's possible to redirect funds from within the Marketing and Outreach Program towards the logo. Paranick responded, it is a possibility, since all advertising funds are not being used currently with the shutdown.

Medved suggested it could be possible to find someone in the community who would do the work pro-bono, just to freshen up the logo and fix the current trees.

Motion: Director Abele moved to approve Option #1, including an offset of the costs within the funds currently budgeted for the Outreach program. Chair Dennert seconded the motion. The motion did not carry with the following Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Abele

Noes: Dennert, Freeman, Gray, O'Brien

Abstain:

Absent:

Gray does not love the current logo and would like it to be more impactful, but he would like any changes to be done properly. He does not want to spend a partial sum to re-hash what we currently have.

Abele pointed out the majority of Board Members are about to vote for a logo, that could stay with the District or a long time, one that they do not feel is great or fantastic.

Freeman does not take this decision lightly and she is happy with the Board's previous decision. She feels the Board is doing a good job and does not like the implication they are not.

Dennert added he likes to listen to all Board Members and work together to find a compromise.

Motion: Director O'Brien moved to approve Option #3, reaffirming the Board's previous decision. Director Freeman seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Dennert, Freeman, Gray, O'Brien

Noes: Abele

Abstain:

Absent:

## 9. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Discuss and Consider Approving Board Member Input / Involvement in the Recruitment and Selection of Department Head Positions in the District – The staff report was provided by Dan Paranick, District Manager. At the January 7, 2021 Board Meeting, Director Abele inquired into the possibility of Board involvement in the hiring process for Department Heads at the District. Paranick provided several options for involving the Board in the scope and timing of the recruitment process.

Director O'Brien commented, she doesn't want the Board to be micro-managing staff. It may be best for the Board to weigh in on the top candidates only.

Simi Valley resident Mark Johnson only remembers 1 time in his 30 years on the Board that they were involved. The Board weighed in at the last step when the field was narrowed to the top candidates.

Oak Park Advisory Committee Member Harry Medved commented the District always hires excellent people. It would be great for the Board to be involved at the right time.

Abele does not want the Board being involved in all hires, only at the Department Head level. He does not see this involvement as micro-managing. He feels the ultimate recommendation should come from the District Manager. As an evolving Board that spends more time engaging with Department Head employees, it would be shame if they did not participate in the hiring process.

Dennert does not support ranking the candidates and wants them to know the final decision lies with the District Manager. He also would like to be clear that Board favoritism would not be a factor in the decision. Paranick stated the process would not be made public until the staff recommendation comes to the Board during a meeting.

Freeman expressed concern about providing verbal comments on candidates during a Public Meeting. Paranick replied the Board can hold a Closed Session to discuss final Candidates.

Abele suggested having 2 Board Members involved in the interview process with an Ad Hoc Committee. They would be able to ask questions of the top candidates and then provide input only to the District Manager without any type of a ranking system.

Freeman asked if it should be the Chair and Vice Chair on the Ad Hoc Committee. Dennert stated he would rather see Board Members assigned that would be able to provide appropriate feedback based on the open position.

Motion: Director Abele moved to create an Ad Hoc Committee to provide input only on the final candidates for Department Head positions within the District. Director O'Brien seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Chair Dennert called a 5-minute recess at 8:07pm. Chair Dennert called the meeting back to Order at 8:12pm

- b. Consideration and Approval of Letter to Southern California Edison (SCE) Regarding Community Resource Center (CRC) Operations During Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) – The staff report was provided by Dan Paranick, District Manager. SCE has committed to operating CRC locations during PSPS events to provide services and needed assistance to residents left without power for extended periods of time. Current locations in Simi Valley are the Simi Valley Senior Center and Boys and Girls Club. The operation of the CRC locations has been inconsistent at best and at times non-existent during PSPS events. Specifically, in December 2020 the power was shut off to the assigned backup location. The City then reached out to the District for an alternate location. Staff opened Rancho Santa Susana Community Center as the alternate backup, SCE then shutoff power to this location as well.

Gray appreciates the work by staff, he likes the stronger tone of the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter. He suggested adding in the COVID situation as well. Paranick felt this was a good point and will add to the letter.

O'Brien suggested SCE could provide generators at the designated sites in case of losing the power there as well.

Laura Ballantoni agreed, the response by SCE has been very disorganized. It is disappointing to be unable to offer the needed services to the public during the outages. Paranick added, SCE is supposed to be responsible for providing the staff at the backup locations.

Abele is concerned about the level of the District's involvement and if it is appropriate for a letter to come from the Board.

Abele, Freeman, and Dennert made suggestions on changing the content of the letter.

Dennert asked if Paranick felt the issues are with the City of Simi Valley or SCE. Paranick feels this has been an ongoing issue with SCE.

Gray has been affected by these outages heavily as a resident of Simi Valley. He feels it is unfair for District Staff to have to step up when SCE drops the ball. Especially with the COVID situation, residents have to risk exposure or no power.

Abele feels the letter is better with the suggested revisions and would like to see it more focused on Gray's concerns. He added the situation with the City seems to be a District Manager issue as opposed to the entire Board.

Paranick will incorporate the requested changes from the Board's comments tonight and re-draft to take the focus off the one outage event in December. The letter will be signed and sent by the District Manager with the support of the Board.

Motion: Director Dennert moved to have the District Manager amend the letter as requested by the Board. The letter will be signed by the District Manager with Board support and copied to the appropriate agencies. Director Gray seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

- c. Approval of Award of Contract for the Mae Boyar Park Playground Repair Project – The staff report was provided by Wayne Nakaoka, Director of Planning and Maintenance. During the Board Meeting on December 17, 2020, the Board authorized staff to solicit bids. The apparent lowest responsible bid appears to be from JTEC Corp. from Westlake Village. After research into the Company, staff is confident in the ability of JTEC Corp. to successfully complete this project.

Dennert asked how often we use contractors as opposed to in-house staff. Nakaoka responded typically if a project is over \$25,000 or would require more than 1 week to complete, we then contract outside services. Paranick added, in his experience, more District projects are completed in-house than other agencies may do.

O'Brien asked if JTEC Corp. was given a chance to review their bid. Nakaoka responded they did review.

Oak Park Committee Member Harry Medved thanked the Board for moving ahead with this project.

Motion: Director Freeman moved to award the contract to JTEC Corp. with a contingency not to exceed \$9,375. Director Abele seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

- d. Approval of Award of Contract for R.P. Strathearn Historical Park – Simi Adobe Roof Replacement Project – The staff report was provided by Wayne Nakaoka, Director of Planning and Maintenance. During the Board Meeting of October 20, 2020, the Board authorized staff to solicit bids. Due to initial low interest in this project, the bidding period was extended to January 12, 2021. The apparent lowest bidder is Chapman Coast Roof Co., Inc. from Fullerton, CA. After researching the Company, Staff is confident in their ability to successfully complete this project.

Freeman was happy to see the 2 bids for this project.

Abele added Nakaoka is the hero tonight with 2 projects coming in under budget, he made his night.

Dennert applauded Nakaoka for the great work.

Motion: Elaine Director Freeman moved to award the contract to Chapman Coast Roof Co., Inc. with a contingency not to exceed \$10,000. Director O'Brien seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS OF NOTE – Paranick received two requests for memorial benches, these are not allowed on District property. There was correspondence received about the Oak Park Medea Creek Project, this will be on the February 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting Agenda. He also received a request for some significant improvements at the Sycamore Disc Golf Course.

#### 11. REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Director Freeman had a special meeting with VCSDA. We should take pride in our District Manager Paranick who worked with other Special Districts in the County and formed a group to go to the County requesting funds due to added expenses related to COVID. She attended the Oak Park Committee Meeting with Abele, there was a lot of discussion regarding tree maintenance.

Vice Chair O'Brien also had a VCSDA meeting with Freeman. She came across an article about the CA Emergency Preparedness Campaign and suggested the District could look into this. She agreed with Dennert, blood donations are important and she will be donating on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February.

Director Abele attended the Oak Park Advisory Committee meeting, they are interested in Dennert's idea of adding a youth member to the advisory committee. Abele recited a Martin Luther King Jr. quote regarding service. The MLK event exceeded his expectations, it was a great event, they may have been limited by size but not by enthusiasm. All the volunteers were great and seemed to enjoy themselves. Laura Ballantoni and Kelly Negrete did a great job. Thomas Dobrich was especially great working with the families, he really hit a home run with the event. Big pat on the back to Dennert for his vision, it was a wonderful idea and he's excited to see where it goes in the future. He suggested providing certificates to the participants for this year as it was the inaugural MLK Day event. Paranick responded that's a great idea, he will have staff work on it.

Director Gray also attended the MLK Day Event, it was fantastic. He thanked the Staff present at Corriganville: Paul Friedeborn, Greg Laranjo, Mike Martinez and Zech Agraz, they did a great job. It was a bit of hike to get up there to cover graffiti and it was great that staff had the supplies up there. He suggested letting the volunteers know in advance about the hike. He agreed with Abele, Thomas Dobrich was great, he was enthused and revved up the volunteers. He liked the "I volunteered" sign for Social Media, unfortunately they did not have one at Corriganville. He suggested having more projects available at the future events. Thanks to Dennert for this idea, it was fantastic, everyone enjoyed it and had fun. He thanked Staff for being patient as he has not been able to follow up on filming information. He reported people are excited about the Arroyo Bike path improvements and having televised meetings.

Chair Dennert stated Martin Luther King wanted to build communities together and coming together to complete simple projects could be the start of bigger things. He would like to see this become an annual event. He requested the signs from the event, if they are available. He thanked Staff for working so hard on the event, especially Nikki Collier, Wayne Nakaoka and Laura Ballantoni. In addition to the staff mentioned above, Mario Delgado and Josh Barragan helped with the event. He attended the Open Space roundtable with Linda Parks, they discussed butterflies wintering in the area. He asked Paranick if the BMX group has reached out to the District. Paranick responded they have not. Dennert suggested his fellow Board Members and Staff interact with District Social Media posts, you can become a "Top Fan" of our page. He also suggested a challenge for the public, possibly in conjunction with local restaurants to pick up food and eat at a local park. Paranick will have Staff work on this idea for both Simi Valley and Oak Park. Dennert suggested it would be convenient if a District park or location could be used for COVID testing or a vaccine site. Dennert requested a future Agenda Item to discuss plans for Earth Day.

12. REPORT BY DISTRICT MANAGER – Comments were provided by Dan Paranick. Due to the recent wind event all parks were generally impacted. There were significant impacts at 3 locations and moderate impacts at 12 other locations. Rancho Simi, Sinaloa Golf Course, and Verde Park all had large tree damages, costs should be covered through insurance. Staff has already begun working on cleanup starting yesterday. Thank you to Nakaoka and his staff for tackling this so quickly. There was no structural damage to buildings, but a lighting arm was damaged at RSSCP. Some exciting news, the conceptual design for phase 4 of the Rancho Santa Susana Community Park project will be starting soon. The MLK Day event was a great success with lots of good comments. It appears to be time to purchase a new Show Mobile. This is our portable stage for concerts and other community events. The old one is inoperable and there are a lot of upcoming events through the end of this year. He attended the Open Space roundtable with Dennert. Staff is currently working to find an Architect to design the Activity Center, so that is moving along. There are some challenges with staffing and pay at the Golf Course, more information will be forthcoming. There are currently 4 nominations for the Oak Park Advisory committee election with 3 open seats. Paranick reviewed several items that Staff is currently working on and will bring back to the Board in the future. Finally, the District's 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday is this October, Staff will start preparing for this event.

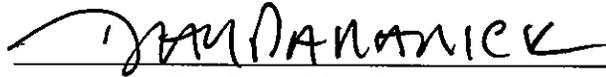
Upcoming Events: The Rotary and Kiwanis clubs are planning some upcoming events.

Future Agenda Items: After-School Club fees, Golf staffing, pay, and fees, Oak Park Advisory Meeting follow up, new agreement with the Train Depot, and a Ranger policy change.

Committee Activity: The City has received funds from the Murphy Estate and there will be a meeting with Freeman and Dennert on February 2<sup>nd</sup> to discuss, the Special Needs Ad Hoc Committee will meet on February 17<sup>th</sup>, and the Golf Committee will be scheduling a time.

13. CLOSED SESSION – NONE

14. ADJOURNMENT – Chair Dennert adjourned the meeting at 9:48pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "DAN PARANICK". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D".

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Dan Paranick, District Clerk