

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
LARKSPUR PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
OCTOBER 17, 2013

COMMISSION: PRESENT: Chair McNally, Blauvelt, Hauser, Matteo

ABSENT: Friedel

STAFF: PRESENT: Recreation Director Whitley
Recreation Supervisor Clegg
Public Works Director Houlihan

Chair McNally called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT CALENDAR

Approval of Minutes of September 19, 2013

Commissioner Blauvelt stated she would need to abstain from voting on the minutes.

M/s Blauvelt/Matteo, to approve the Consent Calendar with the continuation of the September 19, 2013 minutes due to the lack of a quorum.

Ayes: All Absent: Friedel

OPEN TIME

There were no comments

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Protest Hearing of Heritage Tree Permit Application at 323 Wilson Way

Recreation Director Whitley presented a staff report.

Chair McNally opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Elon Ginzburg, applicant, stated the tree was leaning over the house and there were strong winds coming from the ridge. A branch had previously fallen barely missing the deck. There were a lot of trees on the property. He recently trimmed the tree and would need to continue to trim it each year.

Commissioner Blauvelt asked if the tree was healthy. Mr. Ginzburg stated “yes”.

Commissioner Blauvelt asked if the tree has been shown to be a host to the Sudden Oak Death pathogen. Mr. Ginzberg “no” but the arborist would need to spend more time confirming the absence or presence of the pathogen.

Mr. Steven Nielsen, Wilson Way, stated he lives two houses from the applicant. He discussed the physics of a tree cantilevered over a living space. He is concerned about the wind in the area and the tree falling down on the house. This is a life-saving issue. There are plenty of other trees on the property. He supported the removal of this tree.

Chair McNally closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Blauvelt stated the Heritage Tree Ordinance does not deal with “potentials” but rather trees that are unhealthy or dangerous. The lean on the tree is minimal. She noted the tree was recently trimmed and the applicant should continue this type of maintenance. She did not see this tree as a danger. The Commission’s job is to protect the trees in Larkspur and to approve the removal of trees only if there is a compelling reason.

Commissioner Hauser stated the ordinance allows anyone to file an objection. He agreed with the comments made by Commissioner Blauvelt and stated this tree does not meet the criteria for removal listed in the ordinance. The arborist report talks about “potentials” and gives no indication that this tree is not healthy. He could not make the findings.

Commissioner Matteo stated this application poses a dilemma in terms of property owner’s rights and the Heritage Tree Ordinance. He agreed that it did not appear that the tree did not post any risk or danger. He could not support removal of the tree.

Chair McNally stated he was concerned that the tree could be a host to the Sudden Oak Death pathogen. Commissioner Blauvelt stated this has not been proven. Chair McNally stated he could rationalize that the tree poses a “hazard with respect to disease, danger of falling...” due to the lean.

M/s Blauvelt/Matteo move to deny the request to remove the California Bay Laurel at 323 Wilson Way due to the inability to make the findings.

Ayes: Commissioner Blauvelt, Hauser, Matteo

Noes: Chair McNally

Absent: Friedel

Recreation Director Whitley stated there was a 15-day appeal period.

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Update to Mini Parks Master Plan

Public Works Director Houlihan made a PowerPoint presentation that included the following: 1) Larkspur Mini Parks- Upgrade Action Plan; 2) Mini Parks; 3) Funding and

Manpower sources; 4) The Plan is in Action; 5) Greenbrae School Park; 6) Piper Park; 7) Data Collection & Asset Assessment; 8) Public Outreach Plan; 9) Public Workshops; 10) Plan Development; 11) Bon Air Park; 12) Questions.

Commissioner Blauvelt asked who the City uses for tree management and assessment. Public Works Director Houlihan stated the City uses Mr. Bob Morey from Marin Tree Service.

Commissioner Blauvelt had questions about KLA Landscape Architects.

Chair McNally asked if the City goes out to bid on these services. Public Works Director Houlihan stated “no” since this was a consultant selection.

Public Works Director Houlihan stated staff and the consultants had tentatively scheduled a “Heatherwood Park Presentation” on Saturday, November 9th.

Commissioner Matteo asked if the plan was to do the smaller, community parks first and then do the other parks. Public Works Director Houlihan stated Niven and Dolliver serve more than the surrounding community. Heatherwood and Greenbrae School have a different feel to them and it seems to make sense to invite the community for input.

Chair McNally asked if the workshops would occur at each park. Public Works Director Houlihan stated “yes” with the Larkspur Community Room as a backup.

Public Works Director Houlihan stated staff was also looking at more public workshops with the Commission in order to get some ideas from the public. Staff is going to post a Mini Parks Webpage for outreach with a suggestion box, a questionnaire, etc.

Chair McNally asked Public Works Director Houlihan to elaborate on the community projects. Public Works Director Houlihan stated staff was hoping to have the first “Beautification Day” in the spring. Staff would be asking resident for their time and possibly money.

Public Works Director Houlihan stated the Commission would review the Mini Parks Master Plan and recommend the Final Mini Parks Master Plan to the City Council.

The Commission thanked Public Works Director Houlihan for her efforts. Public Works Director Houlihan stated she really wants this to be an “action” plan.

Recreation Director Whitley briefly discussed the Measure “A” funds (approximately \$70,000 per year) that could be used for these projects. Commissioner Matteo asked if this money had to be spent within a certain timeframe. Public Works Director Houlihan stated they have to identify the plan

Public Works Director Houlihan referred to Bon Air Park and stated there was a funding source through the Bon Air Bridge Project. The Bay Conservation and Development

Commission (BCDC) has a requirement in all of their permits to improve and increase public accessibility to the waterways. She noted both docks at Bon Air Park would be made ADA accessible. Commissioner Blauvelt stated this was very good news.

Commissioner Blauvelt thanked Public Works Director Houlihan for her enthusiasm and advocacy for the parks in Larkspur.

It was the consensus of the Commission to direct staff to move forward with the Mini Parks Master Plan.

RECREATION DIRECTOR'S ORAL REPORT

Recreation Director Whitley reported the City Council approved the southern location (adjacent to the Central Marin Police Authority building) as the site for relocation of the Canine Commons Dog Park. Staff is working on the design and will bring it to the Commission for review. As directed by the Commission, he sent a letter of commendation to the Friends of the Corte Madera Creek and Super Cool Summer School Directors Erin Duggan and Beth Seuss.

Recreation Supervisor Clegg reported on the very successful Teen/Tween programming: Ice Skating, Roller Skating, a Piper Park "Sleep Over", Sand Castle Building at the Beach and many more. Commissioner Matteo asked if the participants were mostly middle school students. Recreation Supervisor Clegg stated "yes". Chair McNally asked if the programs were open to Larkspur students only. Recreation Supervisor Clegg stated "no" and noted they get a lot of Kent Middle School students.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

There were no reports.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Toni DeFrancis Recording Secretary