



City of Santa Rosa

Finley Center
2060 W. College Avenue
Cypress Room

Board of Community Services Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 13, 2017

4:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gow called the meeting to order at 4:05pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: 6 - Chair Stanley Gow, Board Member Carolina Spence, Board Member Carole Quandt, Board Member Diane Test, Board Member Deb Rock and Board Member Kathy Hayes

Absent: 1 - Board Member Sandra Wandel

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Lisa Landrus has observed ongoing camping and drug use at Doyle Park with little or no law enforcement. She recently reserved picnic sites for a neighborhood get-together, but states the tables were unavailable. She is in favor of having rules applicable to all citizens.

Sandra Van Blair has children attending French-American Charter School near Doyle Park. She has observed drug use, camping, pot-smoking, altercations, refuse and needles on picnic tables, benches, and in the grass. She and many neighbors are concerned that this public park is no longer safe. A neighboring day care center and others have stopped using the park due to unlawful activities. Van Blair urges this Board to place Doyle Park on an agenda in the very near future.

Duane DeWitt expressed his gratitude that Mr. Nutt and others attended the December 2nd Roseland Creek Community Park (RCCP) neighborhood meeting. De Witt referenced a Press Democrat article referring to the benefits of nature for all. He is in favor of RCCP being kept as natural as possible. He suggested that the neighbors of Doyle Park do what he and others have done at RCCP and ask unlawful people to leave the park and refrain from camping there.

Brad Childs has walked his dog daily at Doyle Park for many years. The park has become increasingly dangerous due to illegal activity including encampments, excessive noise with radios, off-leash dogs without tags and human waste in the park. The population residing in the park congregates near the restrooms. He is not in favor of going to a public park and feeling the need to protect himself or his animal from other citizens. He is in favor of this Board visiting the park around 7am

and 4pm to see firsthand how the population and activities change.

Carol Cranston has lived near Doyle Park for 15 years and walks her dog there regularly. She has observed people camping under picnic tables where she recently found a needle. She had an encounter with a park patron with two aggressive dogs. Cranston became afraid and called Police after a verbal confrontation with the patron. A friend who works in a nearby office observes that the new population enters the park at the time she leaves for the day, heading to the creek area for the night. Cranston is in favor of this park being cleaned up immediately.

Linda Ward is a regular visitor to Doyle Park for 40 years and states most homeless are respectful but others are scary. Unfortunately, the public is not able to enjoy the beautiful area on the west end of the park where two creeks merge or use the new play structures any longer due to the new park residents. She feels Doyle Park is no longer clean or safe and is in favor of utilizing an empty lot on Mendocino to shelter the homeless.

Pat Dunlap has lived in Santa Rosa for over 40 years and lives near Doyle Park. She is in favor of having existing park rules enforced to eliminate camping, but doesn't believe citizens policing other citizens is safe. She drives to Spring Lake to walk her dog now and avoids Doyle altogether to avoid the elements there. Dunlap is in favor of the City providing an alternate space for the Doyle Park residents and eliminating encampments.

Emily Winfield, whose property is adjacent to Doyle Park, received a letter from Mayor Coursey, assuring her that Doyle Park has been deemed a priority for cleanup. She has observed the public vomiting down the creek embankment, toilet paper in the creek and tree branches being used as toilet paper. She states that homelessness is not a new issue and doesn't understand why it has not been addressed before now and why the City has allowed beautiful parks to become campgrounds.

Gregory Fearon, Board Member of Armstrong Redwoods State Park and member of Homeless Action, understands no one wants homeless in parks, but being homeless is not criminal. The high cost of living coupled with the lack of affordable housing has contributed to homelessness. Fearon is not in favor of sending a message to the homeless that they are not welcome anywhere. He is in favor of helping find and develop alternate living arrangements for the homeless.

Connie Cloak walks in Doyle Park daily and thinks park staff have done an amazing job in spite of being overloaded and understaffed. Staff have been gracious, patient and compassionate. Witnessing human misery in the park is

most difficult. The state of affairs was sad before the fires but more desperate now. Cloak feels the homeless are doing best they can and that Parks staff and Police are doing the best they can. The priority is providing park residents with alternate living arrangements.

Scott Wagner, active in homeless issues for several years, applauds attention to this effort, sympathizes with neighbors experiencing heartaches and challenges, and shared Robert Frost poem regarding the 'better right' of people. Wagner is in favor of Doyle Park to be a free, unfettered place for families. He is in favor of sanctioned tent-like communities of a maximum of 30 people that are self-sustained and self-organized. This successful concept can no longer be considered strange or uncomfortable by city governments.

Jim Draeger feels the real issue at the west end of Doyle Park is black tar heroin use. He states he has witnessed individuals injecting themselves with it and smoking it. He expressed an understanding about the homeless encampments, but noted that the black tar heroin issue is a major concern.

Jamie Lynch lives in the Doyle Park neighborhood and states that Doyle Park is surrounded by children in two City elementary schools, a City after-care that no longer uses the park, a City pre-school on another side of the park, and notes that in the summer months, the City's Camp Wa-Tam uses the park as well. She wonders what will happen if this issue isn't resolved soon.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 August 23, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the August 23, 2017 meeting were approved as submitted.

4.2 September 27, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the September 27, 2017 meeting were approved as submitted.

5. UPCOMING EVENTS AND REPORTS ON ACCOMPLISHED EVENTS

None

6. DIRECTOR UPDATES

Jason Nutt introduced himself to the Board as Acting Director of Recreation and Parks and Director of Transportation and Public Works. He explained that there is no anticipated end date to this dual-duty tenure. On the Director's behalf, Jen Santos will present a briefing on what occurred during the firestorm events in terms of impact to Recreation & Parks.

6.1 PARK DAMAGE ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Deputy Director Jen Santos will provide an update on fire damage to local parks.

Recommended Action: Information

Deputy Director Jen Santos provided a presentation and brief update relating to fire-affected areas in the parks, including 73 acres of burned parks and open spaces, and 13 acres of department-owned landscapes. Also burned were some electrical and irrigation components, bridges, benches, fences, picnic tables, retaining walls, trash receptacles, play structures, concrete pathways and park signage. Recreation and Parks staffed the Logistics section of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Santos provided details of EOC operations, including evacuation centers, shelters, re-entry sites and recovery efforts, and noted the extraordinary tasks performed by some Recreation & Parks staff who assisted others while their own homes were burning.

7. SCHEDULED ITEMS

7.1 CAMPS, SPORTS & CONTRACTED PROGRAMS

Recreation Supervisor Amy Rocklewitz and staff will present highlights from our fee-based recreation programs.

Recommended Action: Information

Recreation Coordinator Ryan Shepherd reviewed traditional day camps (Wa-Tam, Yu-Chi, and Doyle), specialty day camps (Spring Break day camp, Winter Break camp and Kamp Kennedy), and the summer teen work experience program through which teens volunteer over 30,000 hours.

Recreation Coordinator and USA Softball Commissioner of Northern California, Brandon Hamann, highlighted the department's youth programs, including soccer, basketball, baseball, T-ball and summer clinics. The department hosts the largest adult summer softball league in northern California for 2,000+ players and a fall league for approximately 900 players.

Supervisor Rocklewitz reviewed the application process for field permits serving over 2,800 adults and 5,500 youth with limited field availability. Rocklewitz is the liaison between Police and Rec & Parks to resolve any sports-related conflicts, including field maintenance issues.

Recreation Coordinator Patti Azeka-Poor reviewed contracted off-site programs created and run by independent businesses with a variety of subjects requiring special equipment or specific skill sets which go beyond what the community center and City staff can provide. Some of these specialized offerings are tennis, fencing, climbing and gymnastics camps, drama, theater, teen babysitting, engineering and KidScience camps, and taiko drums. Azeka-Poor also reviewed the recruitment process for contract instructors.

7.2 NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

Recreation Supervisor Sherinne Wilson will provide an update on Neighborhood Services programs.

Recommended Action: Information

Recreation Supervisor Sherinne Wilson introduced staff and provided an overview of the Neighborhood Services programs for disadvantaged, underserved youth and families. All programs are either free or \$10, supplemented by Measure O funding. Wilson distributed the bi-lingual Block Blast Newsletter to the Board, which goes out to a target audience. Recreation Coordinator Skip Wallace provided a presentation of Neighborhood Services programs which included testimonials of ways these programs have helped individuals with positive life choices over the years.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

8.1 Mayor's Lunch for Committee/Board Chairs

Recommended Action: Information

Gow reported discussion on the fires.

8.2 Santa Rosa Waterways Advisory Committee

Recommended Action: Information

Gow reported on discussion regarding a variance on a setback on Montgomery Drive for an established subdivision. Informational only. Subdivision didn't need variance after all. Merit award committee representatives have gone.

9. WRITTEN AND/OR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Zest Newsletter, CPRS Magazine, Doyle Park email regarding cleanup, Block Blast Newsletter

10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Gow adjourned the meeting at 5:52pm. The next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday, January 24, 2018 at 4:00 p.m.

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Any writings or documents provided to a majority of this meeting body prior to this meeting regarding any item on this agenda are available for public review in the Recreation and Parks Administrative Office, 55 Stony Point Road, during normal business hours.