Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District
Board of Directors Meeting
MINUTES

Wednesday, July 20, 2022, at 6:30pm

Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District • Activity Room 3
4201 Guardian Street, Simi Valley, CA 93063 • (805) 584-4400

A video recording of tonight's meeting is available on
the District Website at www.rsrpd.org.

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chair O'Brien Called the Meeting to Order at 6:30pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Zach Miller.

2. ROLL CALL – Directors Abele, Dennert, Freeman, Vice Chair Gray, and Chair O'Brien were in attendance. Staff in attendance included: Laura Ballantoni, Miguel Chavez, Richard Lemmo, Matt Mason, Zach Miller, Eugene Molnar, Wayne Nakaoka, Kelly Negrete, Dan Paranick, Theresa Pennington, David Podchun, Alex Stumfall, Gina Viecco, and District Counsel Brian Hamblet.

   Guests attended tonight's meeting in-person and via Zoom. Those who made public comments are listed under the appropriate Item below.

3. AGENDA REVIEW – Paranick reported an error on page 3 of the Drone's Report, the year should be 2022, not 2002. Paranick suggested moving Item 8.a (Drones) up in the Agenda after Item 7.c., the Board agreed.

4. PUBLIC STATEMENTS (ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)

   Douglas Bamforth commented on water restrictions. In Arizona the parks are bowl shaped to capture rainwater. He suggested some type of water reclamation for the District.

   Dani Sue from Oak Park asked the Board to reconsider adding a shade structure at the Community Garden in Oak Park.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

   a. Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board of Directors Meeting – June 15, 2022 - Motion: Director Freeman moved to approve the Minutes from June 15, 2022. Vice Chair Gray seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

      Ayes: Abele, Dennert, Freeman, Gray, O'Brien
      Noes:
      Abstain:
      Absent:

   b. Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board of Directors Special Meeting – June 23, 2022 - Motion: Director Dennert moved to approve the Minutes from June 23, 2022. Vice Chair Gray seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Abele, Dennert, Freeman, Gray, O'Brien
Noes:
Abstain:
Absent:

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 6/15/22 & 6/30/22 Accounts Payable Check Registers and 6/17/22 & 7/1/22 Payroll Check Registers – Staff responded to questions from the Board. Motion: Director Freeman moved to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Director Dennert. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

   Ayes: Abele, Dennert, Freeman, Gray, O'Brien
   Noes:
   Abstain:
   Absent:

7. PRESENTATIONS, SCHEDULED ITEMS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

   a. Presentation to Eugene Molnar, Senior Grounds Maintenance Supervisor, in Honor and Appreciation of 35 Years of Dedicated Service to the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District – The Verbal Report was provided by Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration.

   Nakaoka stated Eugene oversees Oak Park and the Irrigation Crew. He deals with a lot of issues daily and has done a great job with the recent water restrictions. He is also a great person.

   Paranick thanked Eugene for his outstanding work, adding he is an ultimate team player.

   Eugene thanked everyone, adding he enjoys working with the community. He thanked his crew for their work and his wife for suggesting he apply for this job 35 years ago.

   The Board commended Eugene for his great work adding the Oak Park community is very happy with Eugene.

   Harry Medved from the Oak Park Committee thanked Eugene for his excellent work. The community appreciates him.

   b. Presentation of the Part-Time Employee of the Month for June 2022 to John Manchester, Maintenance Worker IV – The Staff Report was presented by Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration. John has worked with the Planning & Maintenance Dept. for 5 years; this is his 2nd award. John was unable to attend tonight' meeting, he will receive his check and plaque during work hours.

   c. Presentation of the Full-Time Employee of the Month for June 2022 to Miguel Chavez, Accountant – Director of Administration Theresa Pennington presented Miguel with his plaque, and he is eligible for a paid day off. He has been with the District for 6 years; this is his 3rd award. Miguel thanked everyone. He is very proud to be a District employee and

grateful to work with Paranick and Pennington.

Paranick added there are a lot of moving parts involved with the District's finances and Miguel does an excellent job with everything. He has been instrumental in assisting both Paranick and Pennington

Freeman thanked Miguel, adding he is so much more than an Accountant.

Abele stated this award is well deserved. Miguel always has a positive attitude and is a great asset to the District.

Dennert really appreciates the accounting team, especially during these difficult COVID years.

Gray agreed, Miguel has done an outstanding job, thank you.

d. Public Hearing on the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Annual Budget and Planning and Maintenance Projects for Fiscal Year 2022/23 – The Staff Report was provided by Dan Paranick, District Manager. This Item was heard after Item 8.a. Paranick noted 2 changes added at the request of the Board during the May 11, 2022, Budget Workshop.

Chair O'Brian opened the Public Hearing at 8:24pm, there were no comments received.

Chair O'Brien closed the Public Hearing at 8:25pm.

There was no action taken by the Board tonight.

8. CONTINUED BUSINESS

a. Second Reading and Adoption of Amendment to Ordinance No. 3 and Consideration of Adoption of Resolution No. 2038 Approving a Policy Regarding the Usage of Drones in the Simi Valley and Oak Park Areas of the District – The Staff Report was provided by Dan Paranick, District Manager. This topic is being brought back to the Board for further discussion and to receive comments from the public. The Oak Park Committee voted 3 to 2 to not allow Drones anywhere in Oak Park.

Abele asked about possible fire regulations. Paranick replied that has now been added to the Ordinance. Freeman added she is happy to see the safety measures for fire, some of these areas are high risk.

O'Brien would like the operators to receive and review the safety measures, possibly with signage at the allowed locations.

Chair O'Brien opened the Item to public comment at 7:09pm.

Brian Gordon works with Allied Studios next to Corriganville Park. They have existing issues with drones due to noise and disruptions to the talent on set. They would like the Board to remove Corriganville from the allowed locations.

Liz Folb was happy to see the fire safety measures included but she is still concerned about some of the high-risk areas.

Diane Gideon from Montgomery Ranch thanked the Board for the due diligence in hearing their concerns, they especially appreciate Freeman's perspective. Fire issues and Public safety are top concerns.

Douglas Bamforth shared that water will not put out a drone fire, dirt is the best option.

Jim Nagle suggested a disclaimer for the drone operator to be held responsible for any damages.

Sherry Wentworth from the Oak Park Committee thanked the Board for their time and effort. She is in the parks most days and it has been thumbs down by most people on allowing drones. She is concerned about noise, privacy, wildlife, and fire. She would have voted "no" if she had been at the Committee meeting.

Dan Cooper is against drone usage anywhere in Oak Park and Simi Valley. He doesn't consider them a recreational activity; they are just a nuisance and a hazard.

Danielle S.is not in favor of allowing drones. Why risk a fire now when there is no water, it doesn't make sense to her.

JL Diaz from the Oak Park Committee stated people need a place to practice with drones, he feels we should find a location for the operator. There are some positives to be found with drones.

Harry Medved is so grateful for everything done by the District. He doesn't feel the District's mission statement supports drone usage.

Michael Honeymar made a strenuous objection to drones. Fire and privacy are the top concerns. Oak Park is a fire area and there are known risks due to drones, it doesn't make sense to him why they would be allowed. He doesn't understand how JL Diaz can be the Chair of the Oak Park Fire committee and be pro drones.

JL Diaz replied fires need dry conditions and wind to ignite. It would be easy to restrict flying during these times. He added there is no proof of drones causing wildfires.

Paranick read an email from Susan Fleczok against drones into the record.

Dennert suggested the removal of Corriganville from the allowed areas.

Freeman thanked Staff for all the work done on this topic. She has not been in favor of drones from the beginning and doesn't see any benefit to allow them within the District.

Abele feels drones are a recreational activity for some groups. He agrees with Dennert on removing Corriganville, he is okay with the other locations.

Gray also agrees with removing Corriganville from the allowed areas. He appreciates Staff's work on this, and that the Ordinance is flexible and can be adapted. Gray had engaged with drone users in the area who were looking for a place to fly which prompted him to bring this to the Board. Years ago, skateboards were considered a menace and now we have a Skate Plaza. It is possible to highlight our parks and beauty through responsible drone usage.

Paranick summarized the Board's request to remove Corriganville and Tierra Rejada from the approved areas, add the fire safety provisions, and add verbiage regarding the responsibility of the drone operator.

Motion: Vice Chair Gray moved to have the 2nd reading, waive further readings, and adopt Ordinance No.3. Director Freeman seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Abele, Dennert, Freeman, Gray, O'Brien
Noes:
Absent:
Abstain:

Motion: Vice Chair Gray moved to adopt Resolution No. 2038 as amended (removing Corriganville and Tierra Rejada, adding fire safety and liability verbiage.) Director Dennert seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Abele, Dennert, Gray, O'Brien
Noes: Freeman
Absent:
Abstain:

Motion: Chair O'Brien moved to have Staff bring back the amended Ordinance and Resolution to the Board for clarity. Director Freeman seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Abele, Dennert, Freeman, Gray, O'Brien
Noes:
Absent:
Abstain:

Chair O'Brien called a Recess at 8:09pm.

Chair O'Brien called the Meeting back to Order at 8:18pm. Item 7.d was heard at this time.

9. NEW BUSINESS

a. Approval of Permit Agreements for Use of Recreational Facilities with Simi Youth Soccer and Simi Valley Girls Softball League – The Staff Report was presented by Zach Miller, Director of Recreation. Simi Youth Soccer is requesting a permit for the use of the Apollo High School/Simi Institute Campus fields. Simi Valley Girls Softball will continue to use the Big Sky complex.

Motion: Director Gray moved to approve the Permit Agreements. Director Freeman seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Abele, Dennert, Freeman, Gray, O'Brien
Noes:
Abstain:
Absent:

b. Approval of Resolution No. 2039 Modifying District Policy Manual, Chapter 2 Personnel:

Sections 800, 900 and 1500 Regarding Employee Benefits – The Staff Report was presented by Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration. As a result of the 2022/23 employee negotiations these changes to the policy manual are necessary.

Motion: Director Abele moved to approve Resolution No. 2039. Chair O'Brien seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Abele, Dennert, Freeman, Gray, O'Brien
Noes:
Absent:
Abstain:

c. Approval to Prepay the District's CalPERS Pension Plan's Unfunded Accrued Liability for Fiscal Year 2022/23 – The Staff Report was presented by Miguel Chavez, District Accountant. CalPERS offers a discount on the annual member contributions if prepaid in July. This would save the District approximately $36,915.

Dennert thanked Miguel for staying late and saving the District money.

Freeman added, as an Agency, our District is ahead of others. Thanks for the great work.

Motion: Director Dennert moved to approve the prepayment. Director Gray seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Abele, Dennert, Freeman, Gray, O'Brien
Noes:
Absent:
Abstain:

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS OF NOTE

Staff received a letter from Oak Park resident Michael Honeymar regarding the weed abatement. Nakaoka is working with the contractor and county to address the issues.

11. REPORTS BY BOARDMEMBERS

Director Abele attended two of the Concerts in the Park. Both concerts were enjoyable, he was hoping for more attendance. He also attended the 4th of July event but did not stay for Fireworks. The event and entertainment were great. He had several meetings with District employees including Theresa Pennington, Zach Miller, and Jeannie Liss.

Director Freeman attended the 4th of July event. The Kiwanis did a great job and the traffic control worked extremely well this year. The Movie at Corriganville was a lot of fun, she hopes we do that again. She attended the Oak Park Committee meeting; it was very long but productive. She also attended the retirement luncheon for District employee Jim Johnson. Freeman requested tonight's meeting to be adjourned in honor of Shari Schultz who just passed away.

Director Dennert is excited about the acquisition of the Poe Ranch property, thanks to assembly member Valladares for working on this. He attended a Concert in the Park and passed out Trail Guides, he thanked Staff for all the work on these events. Another Eagle Scout project was completed, this time a bike repair station at Rancho Tapo Park. Dennert suggested a representative from the Oak Park Committee provide a report to the Board regarding the Committee meeting.

Vice Chair Gray attended the Oak Park Concert in the Park. The show was fantastic and had great attendance. He attended the Oak Park Lagoon groundbreaking and the Soccer Foundation meeting. He met with Paranick at the Equestrian Center to discuss more utilization of the Center.

Chair O'Brien attended the 4th of July event, the Fireworks were great, the Kiwanis did a great job. On Sunday the 4th the Samaritan Center here in Simi Valley will be holding a fundraiser. O'Brien's niece married her longtime boyfriend last weekend.

12. REPORT BY DISTRICT MANAGER – Comments were provided by Dan Paranick. There have been no recent issues at the Skate Plaza. The graffiti issue is continuing, Staff is working with the Police regarding this matter. A contractor for the emergency Gym floor replacement at Rancho Santa Susana Community Center has been secured. Staff will be implementing some of the requested improvements at the Pickleball courts at Rancho Tapo Community Park. Paranick commended the Recreation Staff (Danielle June, Richard Lemmo, Laura Ballantoni) for their recent fundraising efforts, Toyota and Sifi Networks are two of the larger donors. Staff will be starting the installation of permanent Audio/Visual equipment for the Board meetings. Staff is also researching tasers and night vision binoculars for the Rangers. The first Intern was hired 6 months ago in the Recreation Department, Staff is currently looking to hire additional Interns for other departments. Programming options for the Special Needs community has been increased. Staff is looking to increase outdoor programming as well. Letters of congratulations to newly elected officials will be sent, as requested by the Board. Paranick suggested honoring Pat Havens from Strathearn at a Board Meeting, the Board members agreed. The Activity Center Phase 3 plans have been approved by the City of Simi Valley and the Architect can move ahead now. The Equestrian Center is scheduled for upgrades in the Fall/Winter. Staff is in discussions with the City of Simi Valley regarding the property for the BMX Track. The County has a Grant for the Oak Park campground on Easy Street, there is a possibility of including a Disc Golf Course. The Rangers have been checking the handicap parking at Rancho Santa Susana and have not witnessed any issues lately.

    Future Agenda Items: Oak Park Committee topics and the next Budget Public Hearing will be heard during the meeting of August 3rd, MRCA Final Budget, Record retention update, Grant funding for maintenance equipment, Youth Golf fees, Motorized vehicles, and District Manager's review.

    Committee Activity: Historical Society meeting the first Monday in August.

    Dennert suggested the District recognize the Kiwanis for hosting the 4th of July event.

    Freeman requested the Speaker Podium be moved as it is difficult to see the speakers.

13. CLOSED SESSION – NONE

14. ADJOURNMENT – Chair O'Brien adjourned the Meeting in honor of Shari Schultz at 9:07pm.

Dan Paranick

Dan Paranick, District Manager / District Clerk