Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District
Board of Directors Meeting
MINUTES

Wednesday, March 15, 2023 at 6:30pm

Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District
4201 Guardian Street, Simi Valley, CA 93063 • Activity Room 3
and Teleconferenced from 4243 Thomas Court, Simi Valley, CA 93063

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chair Gray called the Meeting to Order at 6:30pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Dan Paranick.

2. ROLL CALL – Directors Abele, Dennert, O'Brien, Vice Chair Freeman, and Chair Gray were in attendance. Staff in attendance included: Sandee Covone, Jessica DePew, Zen Flores, Ryan Leddy, Richard Lemmo, Zach Lemmo, Jeannie Liss, Zach Miller, Wayne Nakaoka, Dan Paranick, Theresa Pennington, Brian Reed, Alex Stumfall, After School Club Staff, and District Counsel Brian Hamblet. Guests in attendance at this evenings meeting are listed under the appropriate item below.

3. AGENDA REVIEW – Staff had no changes to the agenda.

4. PUBLIC STATEMENTS (ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA) – Gina Gooding asked the Board to approve the replacement of the dedication plaque at Big Sky Field as it is in poor condition. She and her husband offered to replace the plaque at their own time and expense and asked how they should go about it. Paranick thanked her and said Staff would get in touch with her to discuss it.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

    a. Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board of Directors Meeting – March 1, 2023 – Vice Chair Freeman asked that the minutes be amended to reflect that she chose to give up her position at the orientation meeting with the new City of Simi Valley Mayor and Councilmember to Director Abele as he requested. Motion: Director O'Brien moved to approve the Minutes as amended. Vice Chair Freeman seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

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

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 2/28/23 Accounts Payable Check Register and 2/24/23 Payroll Check Register

    b. Approval of Fourth Addendum to Agreement for Joint Use of Grounds, Buildings, Facilities, and Equipment by the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District and the Simi Valley Unified School District

c. Authorization to Solicit Bids for Weed Abatement Services at Various District Parks and Open Space Areas

d. Authorization to Solicit Bids for Tree Trimming and Pruning Services at Various District Parks in Simi Valley

e. Authorization to Solicit Bids for Tree Trimming and Pruning Services for the Activity Center in Simi Valley

Motion: Director Abele moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Director O'Brien seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

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

7. PRESENTATIONS, SCHEDULED ITEMS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. Presentation of the Part-Time Employee of the Month for February 2023 to Ryan Leddy, Site Director – Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration, gave the report. Ryan is the Site Director at Mountain View After School Club and has worked for the District for 4 years; this is his first Employee of the Month award. Ryan has a fun, positive attitude and leads by example and ensures his staff are fully trained in proper protocols and safety procedures. He has an excellent work ethic and is truly invested in the successful future of the ASC. Richard Lemmo, Ryan's former supervisor, said Ryan puts every child first and is a model employee. Director Abele thinks it's great that he sets the example and wishes him congratulations. Director Dennert thanked him for delivering quality programs for kids and commended him for creating a great team. Ryan commented that the award means a lot to him as his first year as a director and thanked his supervisors and co-workers for their support and his staff for being top-tier employees - many of them were in attendance. Vice Chair Freeman thanked him for being creative and involving the parents too.

b. Report on the 2023 Earth Day Event – Verbal Report – Director of Recreation Zach Miller gave the report – The Districts 2023 Earth Day celebration on April 21 will kick-off with a tree planting ceremony at 1:30pm at Strathearn Historical Park and will honor the Busy Hands Garden Club for their generous $1,000 donation which will be utilized to purchase and plant a sycamore tree. At 3:30pm, Chumash Park will host youth activities, environmental education booths and a park beautification project including the removal of unwanted vegetation, planting of native plants, and spreading bark. At 4:30pm a hike and trail clean-up will begin on Chumash Trail with the assistance of Staff and the Trailblazers. Participants are encouraged to bring their own hand pruners. In lieu of an official awards program, members of the Board and Staff who wish to acknowledge a community advocate or business may do so by notifying Staff of those individuals who will be invited to attend the 4/19/23 board meeting to be honored and recognized. Director O'Brien asked how many participants will be attending. Miller said the Chamber Leadership will be participating, and all are welcome. Vice Chair Freeman asked if it will be promoted on social media. Miller confirmed it will be. Director Dennert suggested inviting Poison Free Malibu who educates on anti-coagulants and local wildlife. Miller confirmed he would reach out to them.

Chair Gray requested a five-minute recess at 7:23pm.

8. CONTINUED BUSINESS

a. Review and Provide Direction on District's Memorial Policy and Discuss Options to Memorialize Individuals on Park District Property Related to a Community Request for a Rick McClure Memorial – Director of Recreation Zach Miller gave the report – The Board received a request from family and friends of Rick McClure "The Bike Guy" to place a memorial in his honor. Historically, the District has not allowed the placement of plaques, trees, benches, or memorials on District property based on Policy Manual Chapter 9, Section 401. Staff offered alternatives including the installation of a bike repair station, hosting a memorial bike ride event, or installation of a memorial at the possible future location of the BMX track. Staff is requesting direction from the Board on how they prefer to handle the memorial request.

Dan McClure – Rick's dad asked that the District recognize him in some way. Rick was part of the community since 1967 and has been involved in the biking community for years. He feels Rick is Simi Valley.

Monica McClure – Rick's wife asked that the District change the memorial policy. Rick had a great impact on troubled youth, was a friend to all, donated to many charities, and was well known in the community.

Friend Bill Meneray said Rick was a mentor and a role model and feels strongly that the District pursue memorializing him along the Arroyo bike path with signage placed up high to deter vandalism or with a bike repair station as well as something at the future BMX track.

Director Abele asked what would be more meaningful to the family. Monica McClure said a memorial at the BMX track would be meaningful and the repair station too. Director Abele asked if the Board can allow it without having to change the policy. Paranick confirmed yes and noted that anything done along the Arroyo must be approved by the City and County Watershed Protection District since it would be on their property.

Director O'Brien feels the bike ride and repair station are neat ideas.

Director Freeman agrees the District should recognize Rick and likes the idea of a bike repair station which would benefit the community and bike riders, as well as hosting an event to ride in his honor. She's not comfortable with the BMX track option since there is no definitive timeline for completion of that project. She also suggested a ground marker or memorial brick which would not be as prone to vandalism.

Director Dennert attended Rick's memorial and wants to honor him with a bike repair station and a community bike ride along the Arroyo.

Director Abele said he was meaningful to the community and memorializing him falls within the policy and recommends the bike repair station, moving forward with the bike ride event, but wants to wait on the BMX track until the project is closer to being done.

Chair Gray supports memorializing Rick McClure and wants to do what's most meaningful to his family, including an annual memorial bike ride event as it has community benefit.

Paranick recapped the recommendations of the Board and confirmed that Staff will work with the McClure family on a bike repair station location including a memorial plaque on the station, hosting an annual bike ride, and will revisit the BMX memorial at a later date.

9. NEW BUSINESS

a. Consideration of Increasing Park District Funding Contribution for the Annual Community 4th of July Celebration – Community Outreach Liaison Richard Lemmo gave the report – The Kiwanis Club of Simi Valley will again host the annual 4th of July Celebration at Rancho Santa Susana Community Park on July 4, 2023. The event relies heavily on the financial support of organizations within the community to allow it to be a free event that is open to the public. In the past, the District has co-sponsored the event by providing the venue, staffing, and the showmobile, as well as a monetary contribution to partially cover the cost of the fireworks show and related expenses. The estimated cost for the 2023 fireworks show is $60,000. Historically, the City of Simi Valley and Park District have made equal monetary contributions in support of the event. In 2023, the City has committed to increasing their contribution to $30,000. Staff recommends the Board approve a $30,000 monetary contribution from the District in support of the 2023 Annual 4th of July Celebration. Paranick noted that providing for the fireworks show has become increasingly complicated from a regulatory perspective and is more expensive.

Director O'Brien asked if we have money set aside. Paranick confirmed that $20,000 is set aside and there are sufficient funds to provide the additional $10,000.

Chair Gray asked if the District is listed on the marketing materials. Lemmo confirmed yes.

Vice Chair Freeman is in favor of increasing the District's contribution to $30,000 and thanked the Kiwanis Club for stepping up to coordinate it.

Director Abele commented that the District has funded the event up to $25,000 in the past, therefore it's only an additional $5,000. He enthusiastically supports the increase and thanks the City for their contribution and the Kiwanis Club for coordinating; it's an important and patriotic event to the community.

Director Dennert would like to invite the Kiwanis Club to a board meeting after the 4th of July event and present them with a certificate of appreciation for coordinating the event.

Motion: Chair Gray moved to approve that the District provide funding in the amount of $30,000 to the Kiwanis Club of Simi Valley to assist with the cost of the 2023 Annual 4th of July Fireworks Show. Director Abele seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

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

b. Review and Consider Participation in the International Cities of Peace Program and Signing the Initiative – Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration, gave the report – Simi Valley City of Peace liaison, John Baxter, presented the opportunity to sign the initiative to support the International Cities of Peace to the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District's Board of Directors on March 1, 2023. At the request of Director Dennert, staff prepared a report for the Board's further consideration. The International Cities of Peace Program was established in 2009 with a Foundational Vision: To ensure everyone's right to safety, prosperity, and quality of life, the consensus values of global peace. There are currently 375 cities worldwide participating in the program with a goal of reaching 1,000 Cities by 2025. Staff requests the Board review the program and consider signing the initiative on behalf of Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District as requested by Mr. Baxter.

Director Abele asked Mr. Baxter if the organization is a nonprofit with a Board and if they have any policies regarding what they support politically. Baxter is unsure. Abele is concerned about the policies the national/international organization supports in order to achieve peace. Baxter said the organization is tied to the United Nations and the Rotary Club is behind its simple and subtle peace language.

Director Dennert supports signing it as a Board Member based on the values that were presented and is interested in placing peace poles at the top of hiking trails.

Director O'Brien asked if there is any legal reason they as a Board shouldn't sign it. If not, she thinks it's a good idea. District Counsel Hamblet responded that if the initiative is signed as an action of the Board, then it should be approved by the Board.

Director Abele will not sign it as an individual because he has a lot of questions about the organization as a whole. He can vote to sign it as a Board.

Freeman already signed it as a member of Rotary and is supportive of signing it as a Board.

Chair Gray is happy to vote in favor of it.

Motion: Director Dennert moved to approve singing the International Cities of Peace initiative on behalf of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board of Directors with the option for each Board Member to sign it as individuals if they wish to do so. Chair Gray seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

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

c. Adoption of Resolution No. 2057 Modifying District Policy Manual, Chapter 7 Board Meetings: Rules and Procedures, Section 102 Regarding the Presiding Officer, Including Clarifying the Role of the Chair and Vice-Chair Conducting District Board Meetings – Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration, gave the report – During the COVID 19 Pandemic, Board Members were permitted to attend meetings remotely through Assembly Bill 361. Recently passed Assembly Bill 2449 allows Board Members to continue attending meetings remotely under certain circumstances. The District's current policy does not

address direction for the presiding officer when attending meetings remotely. Pursuant to previous direction, the following policy revision noted in bold format is presented for Board consideration: "The Chair will take the chair precisely at the hour appointed for the meeting and will immediately call the board of directors to order. If the Chair is absent or unable to act, the Vice Chair will call the board of directors to order and proceed as the presiding officer. **The Chair may select another member of the Board to preside over the meeting if the Chair is attending the meeting remotely."**

Director O'Brien feels the reason we have a Vice Chair is to fill in when the Chair is absent.

Vice Chair Freeman would only support amending the policy if it read "If the Chair is attending remotely, and the Vice Chair is unavailable, then another member of the Board can be selected to preside over the meeting" which would have to be cleared in advance.

Director Abele agrees with Director Freeman and with the current policy. He feels if the Chair is in attendance, either in person or remotely, the Chair should preside over the meeting. In the event the Chair is attending remotely and is uncomfortable presiding over the meeting remotely, then the Vice Chair should preside over the meeting. He feels Chair Gray has done an excellent job presiding over the meetings remotely. He will vote no on amending the policy.

Director Dennert prefers the Vice Chair preside over the meeting if the Chair is attending remotely. He also feels the Chair should have the option of presiding over the meeting remotely, however, if the Chair chooses not to, then the Vice Chair should preside over the meeting. He supports changing the policy to allow flexibility.

Chair Gray prefers allowing the Chair flexibility and respects Director Abele's viewpoint.

As requested by Vice Chair Freeman, Paranick recapped the amendment to the policy: "The Chair may select the Vice Chair to preside over the meeting if the Chair is attending the meeting remotely."

Motion: Vice Chair Freeman moved to approve modifying District Policy Manual, Chapter 7 Board Meetings: Rules and Procedures, Section 102 Regarding the Presiding Officer to include the following statement "The Chair may select the Vice Chair to preside over the Board Meeting if the Chair is attending remotely." Director Dennert seconded the motion to approve and adopt the policy as amended. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

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

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS OF NOTE – Staff and the Board received a notice regarding a conflict between a park patron and softball players. Staff Paranick and Miller are investigating the matter and are working toward a resolution.

11. REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Director Dennert – Participated in the Arroyo clean up with students from Royal and Simi High Schools and collected a lot of trash. Attended Simi Valley Girls Softball Opening Day Ceremonies with Director O'Brien. Attended the State of the Schools event as an RSRPD Board member – our partnership with the schools is important. Congratulated Josh and Amy on their wedding.

Vice Chair Freeman – Attended Santa Susana Little League Opening Day ceremonies – great kickoff. Attended Santa Susana Train Depot 120th Anniversary Event – thanked staff for a job well done, a lot of work went into the event, 450 people attended. Attended Historical Society Committee meeting on Monday. Civil War Days event is on April 1st and 2nd. Pat Havens / Meet the Strathearn's event is on May 20th. Pat Havens Scholarship Fund is coming along. Museum Director job description is complete. Attended CARPD and CSDA legislative committee meetings. Several bills will affect the District: Day camps bill will make it difficult for us to operate ASC programs. Another bill may require us to keep public restrooms open 24 hours a day. Another requires increased training, paid sick leave and accruals for temporary staff. Another changes the Public Construction Act. Another requires conversion to 100% zero emissions vehicles by 2035. Paranick noted he and staff have met to discuss and plan for new emissions regulations.

Director Abele – Responded to comments from the last meeting that he runs the meeting like a courtroom and conducts interrogations which he feels is untrue. He asks direct questions to obtain useful information to do what is good for the District. The first meeting he attended at the District there were people out the door from the baseball leagues regarding fields. He proposed solutions that allowed the leagues to come to an agreement. The same scenario occurred with the pickleball/tennis courts, the tree in Oak Park, golf fees, Strathearn rental fees, and recently the CVMM group and nonprofit pickleball fees, all of which have led to progress and resolution. He will continue to do that. He loves getting along with everyone on the Board and the Staff, but his full loyalty is to the people, our residents, and our constituents. He and Chair Gray attended the orientation meeting with Mayor Thomas and Councilmember Rhoads. Commended Paranick on preparing a good presentation. Wished Chair Gray congratulations on his wedding.

Director O'Brien – Attended the Historical Society Committee meeting as well as the CSDA Fiscal Committee meeting. She attended the Santa Susana Train Depot 120th Anniversary Event – the model train setup is amazing. Suggested keeping Board Member comments to 20 minutes or less to keep meetings shorter as requested. Wished congratulations to Josh and Amy on their wedding day.

Chair Gray – Had an excellent meeting with the Mayor and Councilmember and commended Staff Paranick and Lemmo on an excellent job. Thanked Director Abele for attending in person. His wedding was outstanding and magical. He and his bride are very grateful to Staff who did an outstanding job working with them and their vendors to create a perfect day despite the rain. He specifically wanted to thank Staff Jeannie Liss – she made the wedding happen. Also thanked Staff Casey Hancox, Jacob Marsh, Ranger Abner, and Wayne Nakaoka for their help at Strathearn on his wedding day. Apologized for not being able to attend the next board meeting and will be attending in person the meeting after that.

12. REPORT BY DISTRICT MANAGER – Report was given by District Manager Dan Paranick. Elks Lodge is applying for a grant on the District's behalf that will help fund the Space Force flag project at RTCP. The Cal Fire Grant has been submitted for $1.68 million – will keep the Board informed of the grant status. Several Staff attended State of the Schools events. He is focused on open space

acquisitions for trails and hiking. Staff are refining cost estimates for field lights which will be discussed at the budget workshop in May. Working with IT staff to replace outdated cameras on the Guardian facility at an estimated cost of $14,000. Director of the Ventura Museum interested in forming a partnership with the District between the regional museum and Strathearn. Staff is working on the 23/24 budget over the next few weeks which will be presented in May. The May 10th budget meeting will be focused on capital projects and will engage the community to receive feedback. In mid-April Staff will send a letter to stakeholder groups inviting them to send a representative to attend the meeting and briefly comment on their funding requests. Staff will promote the Budget Workshop with a press release in the 4/28/23 issue of the Acorn and with three social media posts. Paranick will call stakeholders directly and invite them to attend. Orientation meetings are scheduled with Supervisor Parvin on 3/30/23 and Supervisor Gorell on 4/4/23. The State of the City Address invitation will be sent to the Board once received. Director Abele will present on behalf of the District.

Future Board Meetings: The meeting on 4/4/23 is cancelled and the 4/19/23 meeting will be light.

Follow Up Items: Board meeting structure and length in July, equestrian fees on May 3rd, and golf fees and the assessment at the first meeting in June.

Committee Meetings: The Oak Park Committee meeting will be held on 4/13/23 in Oak Park. Wished Josh and Amy congratulations on their wedding on behalf of all RSRPD Staff.

Vice Chair Freeman asked if we were able to adjust the lights on the softball fields. Staff Nakaoka said the leagues haven't been playing ball, but he plans to visit the fields at RSCP at the end of this month when the new season starts.

Director Dennert asked for an update on the fallen tree at the Sinaloa ballfields. Paranick said the District is working with the Ventura County Watershed District since it's their responsibility. They are coming out tomorrow morning and have been in contact with the league president to explain the situation who is in agreement with the plan. There are eight other trees involved - we are relying on their arborists and staff to solve the problem. Director Dennert also offered to contact legislators regarding the day camp bill and asked Staff to provide him with the bill information.

Chair Gray thanked everyone for their wedding well wishes.

13. CLOSED SESSION – NONE

14. ADJOURNMENT – Chair Gray adjourned the meeting at 8:47pm.

Dan Paranick, District Manager / District Clerk