Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District
Board of Directors Meeting
M I N U T E S

Wednesday, September 6, 2023, 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 Gray called the Meeting to Order at 6:32pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Eagle Scout Leo McDonnell.

2. ROLL CALL – Directors Abele, Dennert, O'Brien, Vice Chair Freeman, and Chair Gray were in attendance. Staff in attendance included: Richard Lemmo, Zach Miller, Wayne Nakaoka, Dan Paranick, Theresa Pennington, 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 – There were no changes to tonight's Agenda.

4. PUBLIC STATEMENTS (ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA) NONE

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

   a. Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board of Directors Meeting – August 16, 2023 – Motion: Director O'Brien moved to approve the Minutes as written. 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 8/18/23 Accounts Payable Check Register & 8/11/23 and 8/25/23 Payroll Check Registers - Motion: Director O'Brien moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Director Abele 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 Certificate of Commendation to Scout Leo McDonnell for Completion of his Eagle Scout Project – Rehabilitation of the Archery Range at the Oak Park Community Center – Verbal Report was provided by Richard Lemmo, Community Outreach Officer. Scout McDonnell thanked the Board for the Certificate. He also thanked District staff members Nikki Collier and Eugene Molnar, his scout leaders, volunteers, and donors.

      The Board members thanked McDonnell for his great work, noting the tasks completed are no small undertaking. Director Abele suggested acknowledging McDonnell at the next Oak Park Committee meeting, as this project was completed in Oak Park. Director Dennert requested staff create a post for social media.

   b. Presentation of the Full-Time Employee of the Month for August 2023 to Santiago Jimenez, Building Maintenance Worker I – Staff Report was provided by Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration. Today is Santiago's 8-year anniversary with the District; this is his first award. Santiago was unable to attend tonight's meeting and relayed his thanks to the Board.

8. CONTINUED BUSINESS - NONE

9. NEW BUSINESS

   a. Approval of Resolution No.2064 Accepting a 148.83 Acre Parcel of Open Space from Dale Poe Real Estate Group Located Along the Southerly Boundary of Simi Valley Adjacent to the Arroyo Simi Equestrian Center, Simi Valley, California – Staff report was provided by Wayne Nakaoka, Director of Planning and Maintenance. After meeting with a representative from the Dale Poe Real Estate Group, District staff determined that the acquisition of this land parcel would be beneficial for the preservation and protection of open space. This acquisition also allows the completion of a vital trail link between the Arroyo Simi Equestrian Center and the Albertson Motorway. David Brody, representative for the Grantor, was available via Zoom to answer any Board questions. Brody thanked Paranick and Nakaoka, adding it has been a pleasure working together.

      O'Brien asked what the risk would be of not obtaining the Phase One Environmental Assessment. Nakaoka responded there could be some concern with possible dumping in this area.

      Freeman asked who the owners of the surrounding property are. Nakaoaka replied, Brandeis Bardin University and Kaufman & Broad. Paranick added Kaufman & Broad will donate their parcel to the District after completion of their project in the area. Freeman asked who would be responsible for the weed abatement. Nakaoka responded it is assigned to the neighborhood HOA. Freeman suggested notifying the HOA about the new acquisition and trail head.

      Dennert is so excited about this land parcel and the ability to connect the trails. He thanked David Brody for working with the District on this acquisition. Dennert is looking forward to the new Trailhead at the Equestrian Center. Preserving Open Space and completing the trails is his dream. He suggested a Press Release to announce the land acquisition and thank the

Donors.

Gray echoed Dennert's enthusiasm and thanked the donors. This is an incredible donation, and legacy building for this community.

Motion: Chair Gray moved to approve Alternate #1 as presented in staff's report. Director Dennert seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following Roll Call Vote:

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

b. Authorization to Solicit Bids for the Rancho Simi Community Park (RSCP) Pool Complex – Pool Deck Replacement Project – Staff Report was provided by Wayne Nakaoka, Director of Planning and Maintenance. In May of 2022 damage to the pool's cantilever deck triggered a shutdown of the Pool Complex. The District's Building Maintenance staff made temporary repairs to allow the Pool to open for the busy summer season. Staff contacted the architectural and engineering firm Jones and Madhavan, who specialize in aquatic complexes, to prepare the plans for the necessary long-term repairs. Funding for this project is included in the District's Preliminary Budget for FY 2023/24 under the Grants Fund Account (Fund 90) in the amount of $1.3 million. To keep disruptions to a minimum, work will be scheduled to commence on December 4, 2023, and complete within 60 days.

Motion: Director Abele moved to authorize the solicitation of Public Bids for the RSCP Pool Complex – Pool Deck Replacement Project. 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:

Chair Gray called a Recess at 7:03pm. Chair Gray called the Meeting back to Open Session at 7:06pm

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS OF NOTE - NONE

11. REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Director O'Brien presented Dennert's idea for High School students to work as docents at Strathearn Historical Park to their committee. She attended CSDA in Monterrey and will send out the information she gathered to her fellow Board members.

Director Abele attended Music in the Park with the Spazmatics. It was a great concert, very entertaining, family friendly, and well attended. Shout out to Danielle June and her staff for their work on the concerts. He made a follow up visit at RSSCC and arrived at the same time as Chamber members looking to schedule a possible event. It was great to see Laura Ballantoni and her staff providing such stellar service. Kudos to the entire staff, it makes him proud to be a Board member.

He is anxiously awaiting the City Council meeting regarding BMX. At this time Abele read a prepared statement into the record. In his statement he acknowledged the different styles Board members bring and the fact that they will disagree. However, there is no circumstance when it is acceptable for a fellow Board member to approach another member in an aggressive or harassing manner outside of the Boardroom. Ignoring this type of behavior sends the wrong message to other Board members, staff, and most importantly the public they serve.

Vice Chair Freeman attended the Celebration of Life for Bill Davis, past Planning Commissioner, City Council Member, and Mayor. She was so impressed by his family; they are a great group of people. She attended CSDA with O'Brien and provided information for her fellow Board members. She attended several informative breakout sessions and recommended attending the Conference if the opportunity arises. Elaine Magner (from Camarillo/Pleasant Valley) was elected for a 2nd term. Freeman acknowledged that all Board members do have different styles. Abele's comments were regarding her attempt to speak with him in the parking lot after the last Board Meeting. She wanted to talk to him regarding his comments and Abele refused. If this is considered harassing, then she is sorry. It is unfortunate and she is sad to see the situation come to this position.

Director Dennert attended the Spazmatics Concert in the Park; it was a fun concert with audience participation. He appreciates the extra amount of work put in by staff for these events. He would like to see Yachtley Crew make an appearance again next summer. He met with an Eagle Scout who completed his project installing benches at Tapo Canyon Trail. Not to minimize depression but when you're on your feet it gives you a fighting chance, and sometimes being out on a trail can change a person's perspective. He rode the Arroyo with the Rangers and suggested providing District Rangers with E-Bikes to facilitate their patrolling of the Arroyo and trails. Dennert asked Director of Recreation Zach Miller how they are balancing the pool usage amongst the different groups. Miller responded the Pool is a super popular amenity in Simi Valley especially in the Summer with swim lessons. They are scaling back a bit for Fall keeping it to school swim teams and recreational laps. Staff are constantly balancing and trying to accommodate all of the groups. He believes effective Board members are hard on the process, but not on the individuals. He did witness the interaction between Abele and Freeman. If there are unresolved conflicts, he would like to see some resolution so the Board can move forward and bring out the best in each other.

Chair Gray stated we are all human and sometimes it is okay to not be okay (as written on his t-shirt.) September is National Suicide awareness and prevention month; it is best to be prepared with phone numbers (National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK.) O'Brien suggested the District add these numbers to our website. He would like to visit a few After School Club (ASC) sites and invite any other Board members who are interested to come along. He is interested in seeing the metrics for the ASCs with ELOP now that the school year is underway. Every interaction he has had with District staff members has been fantastic. He is excited to work with all the employees and appreciates the hard work, as it too often can go unsung. He met with the District Auditors, and they have his notes. He is excited about meeting this Friday to discuss the Children's Bill of Rights. He is interested in "growing the tree map and shrinking the heat map." He is looking for information on canopy coverage, and tree or heat maps for the Simi Valley area.

Chair Gray presented Dan Paranick with his 5-year Service Award as the District Manager. The Board commended Paranick for 5 years of great work. They have been through a lot of challenges and change over the 5 years with the pandemic and natural disasters and he appreciates the Board's support and direction. Paranick thanked the Board and is looking forward to continuing the good work in the community.

12. REPORT BY DISTRICT MANAGER – Comments were provided by Dan Paranick. He provided an update regarding the ASC's enrollment during COVID compared to the current year. Current enrollment is close to pre-pandemic levels. School enrollment will also effect ASC enrollment and he feels the numbers will continue to grow as the school year progresses, especially with ELOP now available. Fire season is upon us, however, good news, this year the District area is below the normal risks for fire and Santa Ana winds. He will be meeting in Oak Park with some of the Committee members regarding confusion with weed abatement and some other items. District staff are currently looking at some grant opportunities for Oak Park. He spoke with MRCA regarding a master trail mapping project. They are interested but there is currently no funding source available. In the beginning of November, the CAPRI Board will be holding one day of meetings here and one day in Conejo. He was interviewed by Spectrum regarding the challenges with the geese at Rancho Tapo Community Park. He will be meeting with Rotary regarding International Day of Peace to see if there is an option to work together. Chair Gray had inquired about the District's emergency management, specifically with active shooter situations. There is some extensive information that Paranick will review with Gray and other Board members if they are interested. The Simi Valley Samaritan Center works together with the District to address homelessness. They are having an upcoming fundraiser dinner, Executive Assistant Sandee Covone will send the information to the Board members.

    Future Agenda items: final Budget presentation, bids for vehicle purchases, closed session items, Pickleball courts in Oak Park, update on Golf Courses, formal Equestrian agreement, and a policy change.

    Committee Activity: Historical Society meets the first Monday of every month.

    Upcoming events: Wheels in Motion, a power wheels race for children will be held Sunday September 17th at RSSCC From 9am to 2pm. The Oscar Mayer Frankmobile will be in attendance.

    Dennert asked Paranick if there are any conflict resolution workshops he could recommend. Paranick replied, yes, there are retreats/workshops that can work with a good facilitator leading it. Abele added he is less concerned about the happenings in the Boardroom as he feels they can all handle themselves in that venue. His issue is with unwanted contact outside of the Boardroom.

13. CLOSED SESSION – Chair Gray announced Closed Session at 7:45pm.

    a. Closed Session Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.95
       Claimant: Teresa Simpson c/o The Schurmer Firm
       Agency Claimed Against: Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District

    b. Closed Session Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957:
       PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION
       Title: District Manager

c. Closed Session Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6:
CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS
Agency Designated Representative: District Counsel
Unrepresented Employee: District Manager

Chair Gray called the Meeting back to Order at 10:38pm.

Reportable Action: The Board voted unanimously to reject the claim for Item 13.a. There was no other reportable action.

14. ADJOURNMENT – Chair Gray adjourned the meeting at 10:39pm in honor of Pat Montoya.

Dan Paranick, District Manager / District Clerk