MINUTES
RANCHO SIMI RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING, BOARD OF DIRECTORS
KNOLLS FIRE STATION
1262 CYPRESS STREET, SIMI VALLEY, CA
SEPTEMBER 25, 2014

AGENDA
ITEM
I. CALLED TO ORDER: 6:32 p.m.
II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Renee Peace
III. ROLL CALL: Present: Directors Hostetler, Cavanaugh, Vice Chair Freeman, Chair Johnson

Staff: Jerry DeRosa, Douglas Duran, Doug Gale, Karen Garber, Richard Lemmo, Barbara Meinel, Wayne Nakaoka, Renee Peace, Theresa Pennington, Larry Peterson, Brian Pierik, Brian Reed, Robin Walker

Chair Johnson announced that the flowers on the table are for Vice Chair Elaine Freeman, who will be receiving the Humanitarian of the Year Award from the Simi Valley Community Foundation after 45 years of service to the Community.

III. PUBLIC DISCUSSION (ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA):

None

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

(A) Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of August 21, 2014

ACTION: Director Hostetler moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 21, 2014; Vice Chair Freeman seconded the motion. Motion carried with Director Cavanaugh abstaining.

V. SCHEDULED ITEMS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS:

(A) Presentation of the Part-Time Employee of the Month for August 2014 to Terrie Ogarkow 35-14-y

Terrie Ogarkow, Part-Time Employee of the Month for August 2014, was unable to attend the meeting and will therefore be presented with her award at work.

(B) Presentation of the Full-time Employee of the Month for August 2014 to Renee Peace 35-14-z

Director of Administration Karen Garber announced that Renee Peace had been selected as the Full-time Employee of the Month for August 2014. Renee is a Recreation Supervisor in Oak Park, and this is her second award for Employee of the Month.

Renee has a Bachelor's Degree in Communications and recently completed the course work for her Master's Degree in Recreation.

Renee is in charge of everything involved with the running of the Oak Park Community Center. She has to deal with many different personalities every day, while also handling all financial issues for the Center. She is the main liaison with the Oak Park Community and in that capacity has developed excellent and growing relationships with the Oak Park Unified School District, the Kiwanis Club and other community and county agencies. She is constantly creating innovative and unique events for the Oak Park community and has expanded the Center's classes and summer camp programs.
Renee’s responsibilities include oversight of the field maintenance in Oak Park, Before & After School Club programs, over 50 recreation classes and activities at the Oak Park Community Center, and many special events. This year she was responsible for the successful oversight of the Oak Park Unified School District’s “Enrichment” program and the envisioning of the successful launch of the Medea Creek Before & After School Teen Club program.

Renee is hard working and always open to hearing new ideas and continually strives to improve the recreational programs provided by the Park District.

Chair Johnson presented Renee with her award and congratulated and thanked her for her hard work.

Director Cavanaugh stated that being on the Oak Park Committee, she has had the privilege of working with Renee and seeing her interact with the Community. She is really impressed with Renee’s enthusiasm and her wonderful relations with the Community members and her staff. She is the face of the District in Oak Park and “does the District proud”.

Director of Recreation Doug Gale added that he wanted to publicly thank Renee for all her tireless efforts. She has been with the District a long time and still brings tremendous energy and wonderful ideas to the job. Doug really appreciates all her efforts.

(C) A Public Hearing on a Proposed Modification to Extend the Terms of Promissory Notes Made by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority in Favor of Zions First National Bank; and a Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Making a Finding of Significant Public Benefit and other Findings in Connection with the Modification of Promissory Notes of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority 131-14-b

This item was moved back on the agenda to follow Item VIII-A.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA:

(A) Approval of Check Registers: 8/8/14, 8/22/14, 9/5/14 (payroll); 8/31/14, 9/15/14 (payables)

ACTION: Director Cavanaugh moved to approve Consent Agenda Item A; Vice Chair Freeman seconded the motion. Motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VII. CONTINUED BUSINESS:

None
VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

(A) Receive and Consider Public Input in Regards to Park District’s Possible Purchase and Operation of the Knolls Fire Station 178-14-c

District Manager Larry Peterson stated that tonight’s Board meeting is being held at the Knolls Fire Station to make it easier for people to come and testify to the Board regarding whether or not the Park District should negotiate with the City for the purchase of the Knolls Fire Station. District Manager gave a brief history on the Knolls Fire Station and Chair Johnson stated that he would open the meeting for public discussion.

Rick Fish of Live Ride Christian Church addressed the Board and expressed his support for the Park District’s acquisition of the Knolls Fire Station. Mr. Fish stated that the church is adjacent to the Knolls property. The church would be interested in working with the Park District to establish some type of after-school program at the Fire Station for Knolls Elementary School.

Dawn Kowalski stated that she felt the decision on the part of the City to take a County building made very little sense to her. The Knolls is somewhat isolated from the rest of the City and is a community of at least 500 homes. The Fire Station was an integral part of the community and should remain as such. Ms. Kowalski is in total support of the Park District acquiring the Fire Station and perhaps starting an after-school program. To her it makes total sense, especially since there is a Little League field next door which is very heavily used. Ms. Kowalski also mentioned on behalf of Holly Huff, who could not attend the meeting, that Ms. Huff hopes the Fire Station remains the area’s polling location and that the Fire Station exterior is kept in place. It is an older Fire Station and is sometimes used as a set for movies, which would bring in additional revenue.

Marie Mason, Vice President of the Susana Knolls Homeowners, addressed the board and stated that she is attending the meeting as a representative speaker. For years the Susana Knolls Homeowners thought the Park District would be getting the Knolls Fire Station, and they were very surprised when it was announced that the City was acquiring the Fire Station to be used as a meeting location for Veterans Groups. The Park District runs an after-school program at the Knolls Elementary School which is very overcrowded, and the residents were hoping the Park District would use this property for the needs of the children of the community. Ms. Mason added that the Veterans Groups were to come up with the plans and funding to renovate the Fire Station, but in three years no such plans have been produced. She is in total support of the Park District acquiring the property and using it to benefit the needs of the local community. Ms. Mason also stated that if the Park District wants to have Veteran activities at the building, that is the District’s choice, but the Fire Station should remain a community based facility fulfilling the needs of the community.
Sandy Capaldi, a 20 year Knolls resident, addressed the Board and stated that she is very excited about the possibility that the Park District might acquire the Fire Station. She said it would be good not only for the Knolls community, but also for the surrounding communities. The park next door is full of people every weekend, and the Park District would be able to do a lot of different activities which would support a wide range of people.

Gary Selvaggio thanked the Board for holding its meeting at the Fire Station and he thanked the Veterans in the audience for their service. Mr. Selvaggio stated that this is really a big place, and it can be used to fulfill a lot of different interests, from after-school programs, to yoga classes, to a place for the Veterans to meet. But the Fire Station is the last community building left in the Knolls. If the Park District doesn’t get the Fire Station, it will be gone, and there will be no other opportunity for the residents of 500 homes to have a place to meet. One of Mr. Selvaggio’s biggest interests is the fact that since Fire Station 43 has been decommissioned, there is no First Response Team within the Knolls. They have to depend on the tracks being cleared and emergency vehicles going all the way around, sometimes to a point in the Knolls where access is closed off. With the climate changes going on, we can expect heavier winds and more fires, and they will need a way to get people out into the Community to get evacuations started and to act as pathfinders for emergency service personnel. Mr. Selvaggio has been approached to possibly look into a program that is available through the city and other resources that will help set up a trained volunteer team, but they would need a place to do it. It doesn’t have to be a whole building, but a place where a certain amount of equipment can be stored. The Knolls Fire Station would be a perfect place for such a program. Mr. Selvaggio would like the Park District to consider the possibility of opening the building up to the community, using it as a possible meeting place for Veterans, and also act as a launching point for some sort of First Responders Program.

Ken Piper addressed the Board and stated that he has been a resident of the Knolls for about 24 years. Ever since he knew they were going to close the Fire Station, he’s thought it would be a perfect spot for the Park District to expand its presence in the Knolls community. He and other residents in the Community felt that they were blindsided when the original agreement was made to sell the property to the City. Mr. Piper has no issue with the facility being used by various organizations, including the Veterans, but he believes the Park District should be the organization that owns the property.

Kathy LaForce addressed the Board and stated that she has lived in the Knolls community for almost 20 years and she is an art instructor. For the past 10 years she has taught art classes in the City of Ventura and fine arts and photography classes in the after-school programs. One of the first things to be cut from schools are the art and music programs. It is very close to her heart to work with young children between kindergarten and fifth grade and to show them that art is wonderful and
therapeutic. She thinks the Park District would be perfect to host classes of this sort at the Knolls Fire Station.

Cari Caruso addressed the Board and stated that she agrees with everything everyone has said. She just wanted to add that if the Park District owned the building, as was originally thought would happen, there are a multitude of things that could be held there. It would just be a matter of making it accessible to the Veterans and everyone else. It seems reasonable to her that the Park District should own the property.

Al Lansdale addressed the Board and stated that everyone already knows that the Veterans have been interested in acquiring the property. He believes everyone already feels that the Veterans are a part of the community, whether it be city, county, Knolls, Ventura, whatever. The Veterans he speaks for agree with those who say, “let’s work together”. The Veterans don’t have the money to renovate the building, so if everyone is in agreement that Parks and Rec should have the building, the Veterans would like to know if they will have a chance to use the facility.

Ben Valenzuela addressed the Board and stated that he kind of agrees with everyone who has spoken, although it sounded like some people felt that the Veterans had tried to sneak in and steal the property, which they did not do. People have spoken about preserving the Knolls Community, but the Veterans serve an even bigger purpose. They serve the community of Southern California, and also act as first responders. Whenever someone has an event and needs a color guard, or when an honor guard is needed, the Veterans are there. The Veterans serve not only the Knolls community, but any community you can name in Southern California. They need a place where they can gather and meet. They need to practice color guards and honor guards. They have been like nomads and they need a home. They need a place where all Veterans can meet and call home. From their hearts, the Veterans will serve any community. If they are asked to act, they will. He is asking that the needs of the Veterans be considered regarding any disposition of the property.

Scott Post addressed the Board and stated that he is a local Knolls resident. He added that the Knolls is different from most other communities nowadays. They are a very tight knit community and they love having a community hub such as this building, which can be used for things such as emergencies, boy scouts meetings, cub scouts, baseball, etc. He is not sure what the plans are for the building, but he is hoping that it will be used to serve the needs of the surrounding community, especially the children.
Debra Brekke addressed the Board and stated that she agreed with everything Ms. Mason said. Ms. Brekke also believes that the Park District should own the property but she doesn’t think it should be either or – pitting the Park District against the Veterans. We are all family, but the Veterans had a deadline that they were unable to meet, so the Park District should take it over and it can be a venue that the Veterans can use.

Chair Johnson thanked the audience for their comments and added that the Park District has always been a supporter of the Veterans, as the Veterans have been a supporter of the Park District.

District Manager Larry Peterson added that anyone who would like to can contact him directly regarding the Knolls Fire Station. District Manager added that even if the Board directs staff to enter into negotiations with the City, it will take some time to know the conclusion of any negotiations. Finally, Mr. Peterson pledged to provide information on the status of this on the District’s website.

V. (C) A Public Hearing on a Proposed Modification to Extend the Terms of Promissory Notes Made by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority in Favor of Zions First National Bank; and a Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Making a Finding of Significant Public Benefit and Other Findings in Connection with the Modification of Promissory Notes of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority 131-14-b

This item was moved back on the agenda.

District Manager gave a brief explanation on the proposed modification to extend the terms of promissory notes made by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority in Favor of Zions First National Bank.

Chair Johnson opened the public hearing at 7:15 p.m. and stated that the MRCA is of great benefit to the general public.

Director Cavanaugh asked if the MRCA had a good rate on the two loans, and Sheryl Lewanda, Management Services Administrator for Conejo Recreation and Park District, responded yes, 75% of prime on the larger loan (approximately $3M), and 110% of prime on the smaller one ($1M). Director Cavanaugh agreed that these are good rates.

As there was no further discussion, the Chair closed the public hearing at 7:19 p.m.

ACTION: Vice Chair Freeman moved to approve Resolution No. 1891 Making a Finding of Significant Public Benefit and Other Findings in Connection with the Modification of Promissory Notes of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority; Director Cavanaugh seconded the motion. Motion carried with the following roll-call vote:
Ayes: Directors Hostetler, Cavanaugh, Freeman, Johnson
Noes: None
Absent: Director O’Brien
Abstain: None

VIII. (B) Approval of Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2014-2015 131-14-c

ACTION: Vice Chair Freeman moved for Approval of Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2014-2015; Director Cavanaugh seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

(C) Rejection of Bids for the Rancho Simi Community Park Lagoon Renovation Project and Authorization to Solicit Bids for the Rancho Simi Community Park Lagoon Renovation Project After Reducing the Project’s Scope-of-Work and Separating the Project Into Two Separate Bid Packages 43-14-c

ACTION: Vice Chair Freeman moved for Rejection of Bids for the Rancho Simi Community Park Lagoon Renovation Project and Authorization to Solicit Bids for the Rancho Simi Community Park Lagoon Renovation Project After Reducing the Project’s Scope-of-Work and Separating the Project Into Two Separate Bid Packages; Director Cavanaugh seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

(D) Consideration and Action on Claim Filed by Jake Steven Austin 30-14-c

Legal Counsel Brian Pierik gave a brief history on a claim filed by the law firm of Parker Stanbury on behalf of Jake Steven Austin. The claim alleges that Jake Steven Austin sustained personal injuries on July 4, 2013 when fireworks exploded and injured him. Counsel Pierik also explained the deadlines for filing claims and stated that Mr. Austin’s claim had been received six months after the last filing deadline.

ACTION: Vice Chair Freeman moved to approve that Jake Steven Austin’s claim be returned as untimely; Director Hostetler seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

(E) Approval of Resolution Nominating Candidate to Serve as the Alternate Special District Member of the Ventura Local Agency Formation Commission for Term Beginning January 1, 2015 46-14-a

No action was taken on this item.
IX. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

None

X. REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS:

Director Hostetler reported that he attended the Simi Valley Days Parade and thanked Payroll and Volunteer Coordinator Jeannie Liss and all the volunteers for their help.

Vice Chair Freeman added that she also wanted to thank Director of Planning and Maintenance Wayne Nakaoka and the Maintenance staff for all their assistance with the parade.

Director Hostetler reported that he also attended the Veterans POW-MIA Ceremony held at the VFW Post 10049 Military Museum and stated that it was a very moving event.

Director Cavanaugh reported that she also attended the Simi Valley Days Parade and congratulated staff on the wonderful job they did.

Director Cavanaugh attended the annual AWA (Association of Water Agencies) event at the Reagan Library. It was a very nice event and they had a very good speaker.

While on vacation, Director Cavanaugh attended a Challenger game at the Little League World Series. It was wonderful to see the children playing, and she is proud to be part of a Park District that has a Challenger field.

Vice Chair Freeman reported that she attended a CSDA Board meeting. CSDA is in good shape with a balanced budget. She will also be attending the CSDA Conference, which begins on Monday, September 29 and runs through Thursday morning, October 2. Vice Chair Freeman will be chairing a meeting at the conference on networks and how they will be able to reach out to other Special Districts to improve communications and have a more cohesive group of people who will have a way to interact and share ideas and problems.

Vice Chair Freeman attended a Joint Park District/Historical Society Committee meeting along with Director O'Brien. The main topic at the meeting was the September 14 Historical Society 50th Anniversary Celebration, which she attended. It was a wonderful event and so much work was put into it.

Vice Chair Freeman reported that the Ghost Tours will begin on October 10 at Strathearn Historical Park.

Vice Chair Freeman attended a meeting at the now closed Simi Elementary School. The SVUSD has expressed some interest in having the Park District take over the abandoned building. Another meeting is scheduled for October.
The Chair reported that there was no reportable action on this item.

(B) Closed Session Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9

Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation
Significant Exposure to Litigation Pursuant to
Subdivision (b) of Section 54956.9: One Care

The Chair reported that there was no reportable action on this item.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT:

Vice Chair Freeman moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m.; Director Cavanaugh seconded the motion. Motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Larry Peterson, District Clerk