Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board of Directors Meeting

MINUTES

July 6, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Rec Room, Sycamore Drive Community Center
1692 Sycamore Drive, Simi Valley, CA 93065
(805) 584-4400; www.rsrpd.org

1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - The meeting was called to order by Chair O’Brien at 6:30 p.m. The pledge of allegiance was led by Paula Williams.

2. ROLL CALL – Directors Abele, Freeman, Hostetler, Johnson and O’Brien were present. The following staff members were in attendance: Doug Gale, Theresa Pennington, Larry Peterson and Brian Pierik.

3. PUBLIC STATEMENTS
   Deborah Dennert described an incident that occurred at Rancho Simi Community Park, and her concern with the safety at the park. She stated her son was brutally attacked on June 23, 2017. He was fishing at the park when a group of eight kids attacked him, kicked him in the face and one kid pulled a gun on him. She said a group of kids were on long boards and raced to a SUV, and could be the group that attacked him. Her son was taken to the emergency room; it was determined that his nose was broken in four places. The Simi Valley Police Department took a report. Her son identified two of the kids the following day; they were arrested and released to their parents. The police department is trying to escalate the incident to a felony due to the injury. She wants the parks to be safe. She stated it is not an isolated incident and indicated there have been other issues with homeless and drug addicts. This group of kids are at the park every day. She wants to see if there can be a crack-down, community watch or more part-time ranger coverage.

   Ryan Valencia – is involved with Simi Valley coalition with the goal to protect our hills. He stated there is a big issue regarding the rim of valley project. He would love to see ecotourism in our community and federal funds to support trails. He stated he would appreciate this Board’s endorsement on legislation. Director Freeman responded indicating the District has been participating through different agencies such as MRCA.

   Daeton Dennert stated there is a problem with the fish that is stocked at Rancho Simi Community Park. He stated the trout die because they are meant for mountain areas and suggested cat fish or bass would be better fish to stock in the lagoon.
Jennifer Van Laar stated she supports the Dennert family and would like the Park District to address safety at Rancho Simi Community Park. She stated people are smoking pot, and would like a faster response and would be grateful if safety in the parks could be addressed.

Director Abele asked District Manager Peterson to place the matter of safety on an agenda so it can be addressed. Peterson confirmed.

Kim May, Daeton Dennert’s aunt, stated that park safety is a concern, she spoke to a ranger at Rancho Santa Susana Community Park, one ranger stayed in the vehicle, the other ranger said he is trying to get a copy of the police report related to the incident involving Daeton Dennert.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular Meeting – June 15, 2017 – Director Freeman moved to approve the minutes for the Regular Meeting of June 15, 2017; Vice Chair Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

b. Budget Workshop – May 25, 2017 – Director Abele moved to approve the minutes as amended from the Budget Workshop of May 25, 2017; Director Freeman seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

5. SCHEDULED ITEMS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. Presentation of the Full-Time Employee of the Month for June 2017 to Dennis Hemenway – Dennis Hemenway was unable to attend the meeting, his plaque will be delivered to him in person.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Approval of Check Registers: 6/9/17 (payroll); and 6/15/17 (accounts payable)

b. Approval of Notice of Completion and Final Acceptance for Tree Pruning Services at Various District Parks

Director Freeman moved to approve the Consent Agenda; Vice Chair Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

7. CONTINUED BUSINESS - None

8. NEW BUSINESS

Item c. was called by the Chair before item a. in consideration of the guests in attendance.
a. Approval of Resolution Establishing the 2017-18 Appropriations Limitation in Accordance with Article XIII B of the Constitution of the State of California – Director Freeman moved to approve Resolution 1937 to Establish the 2017-2018 Appropriations Limitation in Accordance with Article XIII B of the Constitution of the State of California; Director Hostetler seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Directors Abele, Freeman, Hostetler, Johnson and O’Brien
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

b. Approval of Resolution Modifying District Policy Manual, Chapter 12. Facility Use, Fees and Conditions; Employee Use of District Facilities - District Manager Peterson presented the staff report and explained the newly streamlined procedure for full-time employees to access select facilities at no charge. Director Freeman asked if the procedure would be too much pressure on pool staff. Peterson reported the procedure was reviewed with the Pool Manager, Bryan McQueen, and he is in agreement with the procedure. This may facilitate additional employee use of the pool. The same concept will apply at Rancho Santa Susana Community Center and the Recreation Supervisor for the facility is in agreement with the approach. Vice Chair Johnson moved to approve Resolution 1938 to Modify District Policy Manual Chapter 12, Facility Use, Fees and Conditions: Employee Use of District Facilities; Director Hostetler seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Directors Abele, Freeman, Hostetler, Johnson and O’Brien
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

c. Presentation of a Concept to Receive Feedback Regarding Conversion of Four Tennis Courts at Rancho Simi Community Park to Twelve Pickleball Court - Director of Recreation Gale presented the staff report, the following comments were made in response to the report:

Tom Fuhrmann – stated there are top players in Simi Valley and there is a strong influence in the community. Pickleball draws people to Simi Valley. He asked the Board to consider a 5 year plan, allow pickleball to be the story of Simi Valley and put it on the map. He indicated high profile events could be scheduled in Simi Valley.

Lee Cirocco - stated he is for pickleball.

Mike Gennette – stated he is for tennis, he is a coach at California Lutheran University, he runs city and park programs including Conejo Recreation and Park
District and is the current contract tennis instructor in Oak Park for Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District and has recently returned to the Simi Valley community to build up the tennis program on behalf of the District. He recommends building more pickball courts.

Jim Anglon—stated that the courts can’t be used for tennis if they are reserved for pickball. He suggested changing the sign to allow tennis players who get out early to play tennis, and build more courts.

Chris Alessi—stated pickball is way to get involved, it is a growing sport, and more courts are needed.

Glen Suhffran—is a tennis player and stated the courts at Rancho Simi Community Park are not in great condition. He indicated the tennis group contributes revenue towards courts and more tennis courts are needed such as a tennis center with pickball courts.

Jane Forrester—is for tennis and feels it is necessary to restore the courts at Rancho Simi Community Park to their original condition to include fixing lights, cleanup bird droppings, the spikes are not up to task, the bathrooms need better lighting and need to be maintained. On courts 7 and 8 the back boards need to be cut out, install back court fencing between courts 1 and 2, 3 and 4 and 5 and 6. In addition, she does not feel comfortable using the restrooms at Ranch Simi Community Park.

Libby Santos—loves both sports, wants a win-win long term solution and stated it is worth the cost. Rancho Simi Community Park is not popular due to the lack of fences, the long term solution is to invest in more courts, upgrade Rancho Simi Community Park courts, and stated the reservation fees paid should help maintain courts.

Flo Trapani—she is for pickleball, she does not see many tennis players in the evening, pickleball has grown and is a sport that someone with an injury can play.

Scott Bennett—stated he has enthusiasm for pickelball, all levels can play, one does not have to be a perfect athlete, the players patronize businesses, he is an average guy, that loves the sport and benefited from it.

Cathy Kaufman—is the USA pickelball ambassador for Simi Valley. She suggested taking four tennis courts from Rancho Simi Community Park for pickelball and allow the use of six tennis courts at Royal High School.

Bill Clark is for pickelball, many people can play pickleball in the same time it takes to play one tennis match. It is a more social and inclusive sport.
Cariene Rivas – is for pickleball. She said she is a younger player who lost weight playing pickleball. She stated the lines at Rancho Tapo Community Park are confusing.

Dave Mendelson – is for tennis, he captains teams and has about 50 -60 players who submitted e-mails in favor of tennis.

Jason Monroe – is for pickleball and mentioned there is an upcoming tournament. People are renting hotels, visiting the community and spending money. He suggests building a compound.

Mel Welch – participates in tennis league teams, he facilitates permits for use, and brings in an excess of $10,000 for facility use permits.

Director Abele asked if the eight tennis courts at Rancho Simi Community Park will be repaved and re-fenced either way and asked the status of the Royal High School courts. Director of Recreation Gale stated the courts would be repaved either way and did not see a problem getting permission to use the Royal High School tennis courts on weekends. Abele asked what the District has done regarding a study of the use of the courts and asked the results of the study. Gale reported that a staff member conducted a count at Rancho Madera Community Park and Rancho Simi Community Park for two weeks from September to October 2016. The research indicated there was heavy use at Rancho Madera Community Park and only four courts were in use during the study period at Rancho Simi Community Park. Abele asked if the Rancho Madera Community Park courts were more desirable and extensively used. Gale confirmed the courts are more desirable and more extensively used.

Director Freeman asked if the Rancho Simi Community Park tennis courts were upgraded, would there be greater play on them; and if the District was doing anything to improve the tennis program. Gale stated there are thirteen teams and only two of them have a majority of Simi Valley residents. He stated Mike Genette was brought back to Simi Valley to improve the tennis program. Freeman suggested taking the matter into consideration and a determination could then be made regarding more courts or more options.

Director Hostetler asked the cost to build eight tennis courts and suggested the District may need to charge more for the use of the courts. Gale stated that Conejo recently spent $400,000 on tennis courts.

Vice Chair Johnson stated the District would never collect enough user fees to offset the cost. He is committed to providing the best possible recreational amenities for the people that live in the community. He stated additional facts need to be gathered so a decision can be made. He suggested the residents stay in contact via the website.
Chair O'Brien asked if the courts at Rancho Simi Community Park were used more frequently if it would reduce the amount of issues and riff raff at the park and if so she is in favor of increased use of the courts.

Director Abele stated it is ideal to come up with a win-win solution but almost impossible with a limited budget. Although he grew up playing tennis, he is leaning towards supporting the need for more pickleball courts due to the growth in popularity and based on his tours of the courts he observed minimal use of the tennis courts.

Director Freeman asked for staff to provide the cost, install fences and resurface the courts and to possibly consider converting two courts to pickleball.

District Manager Peterson stated he would schedule an Advanced Planning Committee meeting to further consider the matter.

Chair O'Brien thanked the residents for coming to the meeting.

The Chair called a 5 minute recess at 8:34 p.m.

The Chair reconvened the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

d. Recommendation to Approve Lease Agreement for Xerox Photocopier – Director Hostetler moved to approve the new Lease Agreement for the Xerox Photocopier; Director Abele seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

e. Approval of Resolution 1939 Modifying District Policy Manual, Chapter 2 Personnel: Section 1304 Regarding the Uniform Allowance and 1310 Other Benefits – Director Hostetler moved to approve Resolution 1939 Modifying District Policy Manual Chapter 2, Personnel Section 1304 Regarding the Uniform Allowance and 1310 Other Benefits; Director Freeman seconded the motion; the motion carried with the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Directors Abele, Freeman, Hostetler, Johnson and O'Brien
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

9. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS OF NOTE - None

10. REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Director Abele attended the Concert in the Park, the band Acromyth performed. He stated he felt for Doug because he had to leave early and although the band was not the greatest and it was a low turnout, the crowd grew and the band improved as time went on and it was not as bad as it seemed. He mentioned he and District Manager Peterson are fans of
Guns n’ Roses and a cover band for that band may be a good option in the future. He also toured the Rancho Simi Community Park; the tennis courts were not in use before or after the concert and stated the horse shoe players out numbered tennis players. He attended a baseball meeting with Director Johnson and Director of Recreation Gale along with representatives from Simi Youth Baseball and Santa Susana Baseball. There were complaints about field sharing, and it was reported that bathrooms and fields were trashed when Simi Youth uses them. There are rumors of merging the organizations, however, Santa Susana is not interested. In addition, they reported Simi Youth doesn’t make use of the fields, the Simi Youth presentation was awkward. They are playing games on the fields, they could be fully utilized if they could be used for practice also. Simi Youth said they request use of the fields every day, all the time, but then backed off on the request and stated the organization would be consulted in regards to the request. Santa Susana said the fields were not being used for play but to force a merger and recruit players. Abele stated Simi Youth should take pride as they are a good organization, and do it for the right reasons with the one goal - all kids have a field to play on. He also attended the Stars and Stripes Festival; it was set up well, the soccer fields didn’t seem beat up, he spoke with Daryl who stated they were satisfied with the addition of the July 3rd day but that it didn’t meet their high goals. Hopefully it was profitable and worthwhile. Abele stated it was his 30th Anniversary with the DA’s office, his job is ok but he loves the community stuff and hopes he is still doing this when he is done with the DA.

Director Freeman - missed the CSDA legislation meeting; she is following two park bonds. There is a third bond that is related to water and open space and unrelated to parks. She attended the Stars and Stripes Festival and reported the fireworks were good, however, there was no music playing and the fireworks were in the distance. She also reported that she received a letter from a Royal High School student regarding maintenance and dead animals, drug use and homeless in the park. She asked if rangers were using bicycles. District Manager Peterson confirmed the rangers are utilizing the bicycles for patrol on occasion. In regards to the project at Sycamore Drive, they are still reviewing the project and the soils person is being proactive in their development proposal.

Director Abele asked if staff could streamline topics for a discussion regarding safety, take immediate action and include the matter on an agenda ASAP. Director Hostetler suggested two cops covering the park for 30 days and be proactive. Director Freeman suggested the District include the City as it is a community matter. District Manager Peterson said he will direct the rangers to increase patrol at Rancho Simi Community Park immediately.

Vice Chair Johnson attended the Youth Sports meeting regarding baseball and stated there are 664 players at Simi Youth, 130 of them are non-residents. The fields were empty on Sunday, Simi Youth could play games on Sunday and the fields were only used for half of the day on Saturday. Knolls is only used for practices. He also attended the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy meeting. He will be out of town from the 8th to the 17th.

Director Hostetler stated he will be out of town on the 18th and 19th of July.
Chair O'Brien had no meetings. She stated she heard a complaint regarding Rancho Simi Community Park; the water was low in the lagoon and there was excrement everywhere as well as dead animals. She interviewed on the radio show The Ranch regarding the Stars and Stripes Festival. She stated the fireworks were too far away and down too low. She also reported that she has a CSDA fiscal committee conference call on August 18th.

11. REPORT BY DISTRICT MANAGER – District Manager Peterson informed the Board that the closed session items may be pulled from the agenda as there are no updates at this time.

12. CLOSED SESSION - Cancelled
   
a. Closed Session Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.8

   Conference with Real Property Negotiator

   Re: Land Acquisition: Property Located in Ventura County Northeast of the Intersection of Tapo Canyon Road and Bennett Road in Simi Valley, Ca

   Assessor Parcel Numbers: 620-0-320-095

   Negotiating Parties: District Manager, Director of Planning and Maintenance and Legal Counsel

   Report and Instructions to Staff Regarding Price and Terms of Payment

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 Case

13. ADJOURNMENT – Vice Chair Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 pm; Director Hostetler seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Larry Peterson, District Clerk