Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board of Directors Meeting

MINUTES

March 1, 2018
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 at 6:30 pm by Chair Johnson. Doug Gale led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. ROLL CALL – Directors Abele, Hostetler, Johnson and O’Brien were present. Director Freeman was absent. The following staff members attended the meeting; Doug Gale, Tracy Engel, Wayne Nakaoka, Renee Peace, Theresa Pennington, Larry Peterson, Brian Pierik, Brian Reed and Gina Viecco. Joe Wade attended the meeting as well as approximately 50 other guests. The guests that turned in a speaker card are noted below.

3. PUBLIC STATEMENTS (ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA) – NONE

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

   a. Regular Meeting – February 15, 2018 at 6:30 pm– Director Abele presented six revisions to the minutes and provided a written copy of his suggested changes to staff. Director Abele moved to approve the amended minutes. Director O’Brien seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

5. SCHEDULED ITEMS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

   a. Presentation of the Part-Time Employee of the Month for January 2018 to Michael Munro – Michael Munro was unable to attend the meeting. Golf Course Manager Brian Reed will present him with his plaque and check for $75.00.

   b. Presentation by Historical Society President – Joe Wade presented an update regarding the Historical Society and Strathearn Historical Park. The following items were highlighted. There is more activity with the School District. The Gift Shop has been revamped and is now known as the Simi Store and is under new management. There is a new website and video telling the story of Simiopolis. Revenue has increased, the facility is almost completely booked. Strathearn is one of the only free field trip locations available for school students and attendance has increased. The Civil War event just took place in February 2018 and those numbers are slightly down. The History day in June was only one person short of meeting the top attendance year of 2015. Dia de Los Muertos was not rained out this year and had solid attendance numbers. Rocket Day, a one day interactive event, was mostly a reunion for Aerospace workers. Efforts are underway to replace a number of retiring docents and Board
Members. Mr. Wade then provided a big thank you to the Park District Board Members, and District volunteers and staff members who help make the Historical Society successful.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Approval of Check Registers: 2/15/18 (Accounts Payable); 2/2/18 (Payroll) - Staff responded to questions from the Board. Director Abele moved to approve the consent agenda. Director Hostetler seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

7. CONTINUED BUSINESS – NONE

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Review, Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Construction of Pickleball Courts at Rancho Simi Community Park – Director of Planning and Maintenance Wayne Nakaoka presented the staff report. He discussed having 2 tennis courts converted to 6 pickleball courts and renovating the remaining 6 tennis courts at RSCP at a cost of $156,975 for the conversion and $131,272 for the renovations, the total cost would be $288,247 for the project.

Director Abele questioned the pricing, he remembers that converting 4 tennis to 12 pickleball courts was quoted at $187,000. The thinking was that converting 2 to 6 would be less, now it appears that the costs have tripled. Director Abele reviewed proposals from September, one of the interests was Rancho Madera Community Park, he inquired if this is also just an estimate. He asked if we should assume RMCP would also be 2 or 3 times the cost. The current estimate for conversion appears to be 3 times the previous amount. Nakaoka explained that the previous estimates that were provided considered the cost to construct pickleball courts and did not include the costs associated with making improvements to existing tennis courts, the amount of which is estimated to be $131,272. The current estimate for conversion is based upon construction documents, which were not prepared at the time staff evaluated all of the possible locations. Director Abele stated that the 2 issues he had inquired about at the previous meeting were #1 the cost of the pickleball conversion and #2 the cost of the upgrades to the tennis courts.

Bill Clark – he stated pickleball is growing and tennis is waning, pickleball is the future. He suggested changing all RTCP courts to pickleball as this is the busiest pickleball area in valley. It is always busy morning, noon and night, let’s keep it that way and add more pickleball courts.

Glenn Suffern – Suggested that the 8 RSCP tennis courts be kept as a tennis facility, that was what they were created for and upgrade with new lights, resurfacing, fencing, etc. The pickleball community needs their own center, built with 10 courts or more and suggested ample parking. Parking is already limited at RSCP, additional pickleball courts would further impact parking. Popularity of pickleball is growing, he suggested finding land and building a nice modern center.
Flo Trapani – It would be wonderful if pickleball could have their own courts. A tennis pro has been hired to help bring tennis back, obviously it does not have the growing popularity of pickleball. Pickleball has done so much for people’s lives and she hopes the District will go forward with more courts.

Jane Forrester – Believes that some of the costs quoted for tennis court improvements are too high. She provided the Board with a printout showing top of the line nets that sell for $164; this would be a savings over the quoted budget amount of $400 per net. She suggests less screening for the courts for additional savings. The money saved absolutely needs to go to chain link partial fencing between the odd/even tennis courts to diminish interference with the adjacent courts. Fencing has been on their wish list for decades and feels it’s time to implement.

Mike Roblin– Thanked the District for the signs posted at the tennis courts with the meeting date. He believes that tennis is not waning, it is the perception. Tennis is on TV and a worldwide, as well as Olympic sport while pickleball is not at this time. He inquired if the Royal High School courts are in play. If yes, then he suggests converting 6 at RSCP. He suggested that 4 be devoted to pickleball and 4 for Tennis at RTCP. He also commented that it is hard to get a hold of Park Rangers and is not sure how to contact them. Kids ride on courts and cause damage.

Debra Singer – Offered the option to the pickleball community to fundraise which is a no harm solution. The cost of $300,000 for only two more pickleball courts, doesn’t seem to make sense. In her opinion, the pickleball courts are not full, she doesn’t feel the need is as urgent as others are stating. She is wondering why no one has asked about other options – possibly the pickleball players could travel to other courts. Tennis courts are money makers, some revenue stream is lost if courts are cut back and not available to collect reservation fees which are estimated at $12,000 per year. Tennis players wish they had the same support as the pickleball players appear to have from the District. She requests that Option 3 be considered which would be to go back to the drawing board and come up with options that do no harm and make sense financially.

Libby Santos – Loves both sports and sees the need for both tennis and pickleball courts to be available. She feels that tennis is not waning and states that RMCP courts are used solidly with people waiting to play all the time. Also, no one wants to play at RSCP because of the lack of dividing fences between courts. They need a short 3 or 4 foot fence for the divider, this was part of the compromise to improve the remaining tennis courts.

Cathy Kaufman – Has played pickleball for 5 years and has never seen a tennis player waiting for a court. She does not feel that fundraising is a good option. She appreciates the availability of the pickleball courts. And suggests taking a survey of the courts and feels that pickleball will come out ahead of tennis. She stated that RTCP has 4 courts that are multi-use and are heavily used. She appreciates the Board and District for considering the pickleball players.
Tom Fuhrmann – Thank you for the opportunity for letting both tennis and pickleball players talk. He stated that pickleball is growing at the rate of 19.2%, there are 300,000 players in California alone. He is not aware of any reports of tennis growing at this rate. The need a venue to support the rapidly growing pickleball community, with at least 12 Courts and lights. Pickleball courts are always full with people waiting which is not the case with the tennis courts.

Collette Berney – Stated that in California, there are 7 new tennis venues per month while pickleball has 68 new venues that open each month. She likes that it is a sport that older people can play and that it keeps them healthy as they get older. Pickleball is the future and the growing sport.

Nicole Munro – She encouraged the Board to go to Sinaloa and RTCP any Saturday from 7 am to noon and check out the usage. There are friendly people and all of the courts are being used, weather permitting. Simi Valley’s future is pickleball and she hopes that the District will give pickleball a chance.

Jason Munro – Says that it seems competitive between tennis players and pickleball players, he would like to concede both are equally important. He suggested separate areas for tennis and pickleball. He also suggested 12 pickleball courts at RSCP and take away the temporary courts at RTCP.

Mark Barker – Lives in Thousand Oaks and comes to Simi Valley to play pickleball at RTCP which has really become the mecca. In June, 6 courts were opened in Thousand Oaks and are overwhelmingly used. It is easier to learn pickleball than tennis and younger people are now starting to play as well. You can be proficient faster in pickleball than tennis. The sport is attracting more and more younger people which will keep it growing for a while.

Director O’Brien had questions for Director of Recreation, Doug Gale: What were the findings of the survey done RTCP? Gale responded: there were two surveys (one official sanctioned by the Board, one informal). The informal survey sent different staff members out for two weeks in the mornings and evenings, only twice in those two weeks were 4 courts were being used, at other times only 0, 1, 2, or 3 were being used. Director O’Brien asked the results of the other official survey. Gale stated that a Board member, staff member or volunteer went out every hour of the day at RTCP only. He did not remember the exact results of this survey but feels that there were approximately 2/3 pickleball players compared to 1/3 tennis players.

Director Hostetler asked how many pickleball courts are at RTCP. Gale stated there are 4 tennis and 4 pickleball, however 2 of the tennis courts are multi-use with portable nets. Director Hostetler feels that the court usage at Rancho Simi is terrible, he does not see any tennis players at all. He also does not see any pickleball players at Hillside or Valley View. A member of the public stated that the schools do not allow them to use the courts. Director Hostetler suggested that they go to the School Board and request that they allow them to use those courts. Gale interjected that a primary concern is a lack of lighted courts at the Middle Schools. Sinaloa and RTCP are being heavily used with people waiting to play but the players need more lighted courts to play on.
Director Hostetler stated that we don’t have the money to build a dedicated pickleball center, which is why he suggests going to the School Board. We’re doing our best to help because pickleball is growing. He suggested taking 4 courts from Rancho Simi which would provide 12 pickleball courts and refurbishing the remaining tennis courts. Tennis is not generating income via reservations, they are just not needed. Sports go up and down and tennis is down.

Jane Forrester stated the pickleball courts at RTCP are so close in proximity to the courts at Valley View Middle School that pickleball could hold a huge tournament.

Director Abele asked Nakaoka the pricing of the 3 foot fencing between the tennis courts. Nakaoka stated that the divider fencing would be 5-6 feet and would not cost a lot, it’s not that expensive. Director Abele asked for an estimate. Nakaoka responded that a divider fence would be approximately $400 each section. 2 sections per court, total of 6 sections, so $2,400.

Director Abele asked Nakaoka about the pricing estimate of $187,000 from the presentation in September for converting 4 tennis courts to 12 pickleball courts at Rancho Simi; he asked if the cost would be higher now and would this be the same as converting 2 tennis to 6 pickleball courts including the upgrades to the tennis courts. Nakaoka stated that the estimate would be roughly double now, so approximately $300,000 to convert the 4 courts to 12 pickleball. It is approximately $287,000 to convert 2 courts to 6 pickleball with the improvements.

Director Abele said this matter began and was discussed in July, we came back in August because tennis was not prepared and wanted to be heard. Another agenda item was added in September where both tennis and pickleball could have their say and have further discussion of pickleball courts. Our Advanced Planning Committee met in October; he has reviewed the minutes of all of these meetings and has attended all of the meetings aside from the Planning Committee as he is not on that committee. He has done some other things as well, he has made multiple visits to RMCP and RTCP to assess the situation. Rancho Simi became his second home due to this situation. He has gone there at all possible times of the day, driven by and made planned visits. He appreciates that the tennis players love their courts. He played high school tennis there 40 years ago himself. But those courts are not being used. He stated you’re lucky if you see 1 or 2 being used, it does not matter what day of the week or time of the day. The District is on a budget and that is something that has to be considered. He sees as many if not more people playing horseshoes as he does tennis players. We have to be realistic about what’s going on, people are playing pickleball. It doesn’t mean that people are not playing tennis, he is aware that lots of tennis is being played at RMCP. We can’t keep the same quantity of tennis courts just for the sake of keeping them if they are not being used. This is after 7.5 months of looking at them and nothing has changed, they just are not being used. As a Park District, we take care of soccer, baseball, seniors, and youth; we have programs for everything you can imagine. As a District we do a great job. There is money and labor spent on that, people are putting all their hearts into what they are doing. There is a lot of activities we take care of, a lot of facilities and parks that we take care of and we have an extremely limited budget. As an example, Simi Valley has one BMX track here and the past two meetings there were people going out
the door fighting for one track location here. We have to be realistic about this situation. The other thing to be aware of, we have had to make budget cuts recently and that is probably the direction things will be going in the future. So we have to be careful with the money we are spending, this is one of the reasons he was disappointed that estimates came in high. He wasn’t trying to give Nakaoka a hard time, he wanted to illustrate the reality of what we are dealing with. Regarding any major project that was completed in the last 14 months, the costs were more, they are not costing less. He is urging the Board to take some action tonight. The need for more pickleball courts is clear and the lack of use of the tennis courts at RSCP is abundantly clear. The only issue in his mind right now, is it a wiser decision to go from 2 tennis to 6 pickleball and improve the remaining tennis or go from 4 tennis to 12 pickleball. He acknowledges that tennis does have longevity so is leaning toward the option of converting 2 tennis courts to 6 pickleball courts and improving the tennis courts. He is confident that the pickleball courts will get a lot of use and is hopeful that this will improve the tennis situation.

Chair Johnson stated it comes down to doing something at RMCP, we promised to do something to that area and we can’t go back and change that now, as a Park District we always keep a promise. When we pass an assessment and promise something, that is exactly what it has gone to. This current situation is reminiscent of soccer against baseball but we’re 50 years older than that. His ideal situation is that the RTCP courts should be converted to pickleball since it is close to the senior center and there are courts already there. He suggests improving RSCP courts to the same standard as Rancho Madera so people will want to play on them. He has been personally going to RSCP and stated the tennis courts are not used during the day or at night. Having been at every park, every day for a month it is clear to him that RTCP is used all the time by pickleball players, it is hard to get a court to play on. He is in favor of splitting the courts but concerned that taking away too many courts from the tennis population will hurt everybody. He is in favor of taking 2 courts for pickleball and bringing the tennis courts at RSCP up to standard so people will want to play there.

Director Abele stated the whole idea of converting 2 tennis courts to 6 pickleball courts at RSCP and improving the tennis courts started as a way we can actually afford to do something that will help both sides. By improving the tennis courts, you are enticing more tennis players to use the courts. This idea is something we can afford at the District as well as help pickleball and tennis players, as opposed to pitting one side against the other.

Director Hostetler stated that he prefers converting 4 tennis courts into 12 pickleball courts. Over the years the tennis courts have just not been used, no matter how nice we make them. They have never been full.

Director Abele asked Nakaoka to confirm that board action option #1 refers to the plans for converting 2 tennis courts to 6 pickleball courts and making improvements to the tennis courts. Nakaoka confirmed that is correct.

Director Abele moved, with the understanding that as part of the improvements to the tennis courts the District includes the short extension fencing, for the board to approve the estimated construction budget, for staff to move forward with selecting bids and the
District Manager to use funds allocated from the Golf Course Enterprise Capital Outlay to fund the project. Director O’Brien seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Board Chair Johnson called a meeting recess at 7:55 pm

Board Chair Johnson reconvened the meeting at 8:07 pm

b. Approval of Agreement with Thirtieth Street Architects, Inc., for the Design and Construction Drawings for the Printz Colony House Restoration Project - Director of Planning and Maintenance Nakaoka presented the staff report. Director Abele inquired as to how the quoted price compares to what was expected. Nakaoka responded stating that the price is low, he expected the amount to be double. Director Abele asked if the overall project estimate is still over half million dollars. Nakaoka confirmed it is. Director Hostetler moved to approve the agreement. Director O’Brien seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

c. Rejection of Bids Received for the Mayfair Park Play Area Equipment Replacement Project. - The staff report was presented by Director of Planning and Maintenance Nakaoka. He suggests rejecting all bids as they came in approximately $40,000 over budget. He requested that the project be put back on as a priority for next year’s budget with a higher projected cost of $260,000. Bids came in over the current budget amounts; $224,000 is the lowest bid. Director Hostetler asked staff to clarify that the recommendation is to reject the current bid of $246,620 and then increase the allocation in the budget to $260,000. Nakaoka confirmed that was the recommendation. Director Abele stated he cannot understand why the District would want to rebudget this project at a higher amount, he cannot support that idea. Nakaoka explained that instead of spending the money this year, the idea is to rebudget allowing for the higher costs. Director Hostetler stated that the project will only be higher next year. We are looking at $260,000 next year or $246,000 this year, he doesn’t see much of a difference. District Manager Peterson stated if it is budgeted higher then it is more likely that the project would come in under budget and result in less criticism. Nakaoka stated that the difficulty is finding additional funds to reallocate for the overage. Director O’Brien inquired if the upgrades are mandated and Nakaoka stated they are not. He reminded the Board that other areas of the park have been upgraded: a new exercise station was installed, the basketball court was coated and the irrigation was upgraded. This is the final piece of the project. Director O’Brien inquired if the equipment is falling apart and asked if the District had received complaints. Nakaoka responded that it is ugly and starting to fall apart but would last for a couple more years. Chair Johnson added that this is an older wooden play structure. District Manager Peterson stated that residents have complained about the splinters. Director Abele said he will not vote for rebudgeting the project with the higher amount. Director Hostetler feels that the project is cheaper now and will only become more expensive next year. The District already has the $200,000 so it is only another $46,000 needed. Chair Johnson suggested getting it done, it is a popular and well used park.
Director Hostetler moved to approve the project at $224,000 with a contingency at a total of $246,620 and take the difference from the Enterprise Fund. Director O’Brien seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

d. Authorization to Solicit Bids for Weed Abatement Services at Various District Parks and Open Space Areas - Director of Planning and Maintenance Nakaoka presented the staff report. He stated the Fire Department will come down hard on the District this season due to the recent Thomas Fire. Nakaoka stated that the cost is approximately $70 – $110,000 per year for abatement. Director Hostetler moved to approve the solicitation of bids. Director Abele seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

e. Supplemental Report for Review and Discussion to Determine Official Name and Conceptual Monument Sign Alternatives for District Owned Building Located at 4201 Guardian Street, Commonly Referred to as the Guardian Building - Director of Planning and Maintenance Nakaoka presented the staff report. The Board discussed their preferences. Director Hostetler moved to approve the design shown on Exhibit A as Option 2. Director Abele seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

f. Approval of New Letterhead Design - Director of Administration Pennington presented the staff report. The Board discussed their preferences. Chair Johnson moved to approve Option B. Director Hostetler seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

g. Discussion and Possible Approval of a Fifth Amendment to the Purchase and Sale Agreement Between the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, Area Housing Authority of the County of Ventura and USA Properties Fund, Inc. – The staff report was presented by District Manager Peterson. He stated that this amendment to the purchase and sale agreement allows for an extension of the payment date, the District’s receipt of a portion of the deposit monies, the possibility of a month-to-month lease for the BMX track after the closing date and the payment of park dedication fees. Director Hostetler moved to approve the amendment. Director Abele seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

9. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS OF NOTE - NONE

10. REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Director Abele – Attended one event, the Simi Youth Baseball opening day for baseball. Congressman Knight and Council Member Mashburn were there. It was a big crowd which was great to see. It turned out to be a beautiful day, this is the second year in row he was in attendance, they were extremely gracious to the Park District. The second best part of the day was Vin Scully being the guest speaker. He gave a wonderful speech about loving your mother and father and respecting teammates and other teams. He met him for first time ever and got some pictures. He is a legendary announcer, the first thing he did was to introduce Abele to his wife. The best part of
the day was when Doug Gale received recognition and a nice award from the League, it is well deserved and he should be proud.

Director Hostetler – Attended Santa Susanna Boys Baseball opening at Houghton Park, there are approximately 178 players this year. They appreciate the Park District. They will be asking for fencing to reduce vandalism and keep kids from wandering off.

Director O’Brien – Attended the opening for Girls’ Softball at Big Sky Park. She attended a wedding at the Knolls Station. She mentioned a guest almost fell out back, and suggested painting yellow lines on the uneven pavement. Tracy Engel asked if there was any issue with the acoustics. Director O’Brien reported no problem with acoustics. She received a call from The Acorn about Larry’s resignation, she spoke to them briefly.

Chair Mark Johnson – Attended opening day and said it was fabulous having Vin Scully there. The Soccer Foundation meeting has a little tension sometimes, they are happy about lights and the master plan; the lights should be done by August or September. He attended a two hour CSDA meeting, there was nothing to report.

11. REPORT BY DISTRICT MANAGER – Peterson stated there is no need for closed session.

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 54956.8

   Conference with Real Property Negotiator

   Re: Land Disposition: Property Located in Ventura County at 1692 Sycamore
   Drive, Simi Valley, Ca

   Assessor Parcel Numbers: 642-0-231-285
   642-0-231-295
   642-0-280-075
   642-0-280-085
   642-0-280-095
Negotiating Parties: District Manager, Director of Planning and Maintenance and Legal Counsel

Negotiating Parties: Area Housing Authority/USA Properties

Under Negotiation: Price and Terms of Payment

13. ADJOURNMENT – Director Hostetler moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:53pm, Director O’Brien seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Larry Peterson, District Clerk