I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chair Abele called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Theresa Pennington.

2. ROLL CALL – Directors Freeman, Johnson, O’Brien, Vice Chair Dennert, and Chair Abele were in attendance. Staff in attendance included: Alex Barsky, Tracy Engel, Lee Martin, Wayne Nakaoka, Dan Paranick, Theresa Pennington, District Counsel Brian Pierik, and Gina Viecco. Guests included: representatives from local Youth Softball and Baseball Leagues. Those who made comments are listed under the appropriate item below.

3. AGENDA REVIEW – There were no requested changes to the Agenda.

4. PUBLIC STATEMENTS (ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)

Chris Visage from Simi Valley Baseball is wondering about re-opening sports for youth. He feels our County is doing far better and would like to get the kids back to sports, they’ve been at home too long. He would like to work with the District to get things going. They are thinking to start with practices, then some sort of tournament. All of the youth leagues have come together and would like to work together to get things going.

Christine Newman, President from Simi Valley Baseball League, agrees with Chris. They would like to get a plan going, even just to start practices. Any direction or insight would be great.

Nathan Sadowsy, Vice President from Santa Susana Baseball, agrees with the previous statements. They have noticed an uptick in vandalism now that no one is out there using the facilities. At a bare minimum they would like to open practices.

Chair Abele thanked everyone for the comments. He hears what they are saying and agrees with the sentiment. However, this has to be addressed at the County level, there is nothing the District can do immediately. He suggested the leagues get together and send emails, letters, and call County Supervisors. Abele added it is not fair having the children denied sports and physical activity, he is personally on their side.

Director Freeman agrees with Abele’s comments. She thinks this has been a lesson and feels it is time to get back to normal. Not a new normal, just normal. She offered to assist where she can.

Director O’Brien also agreed with Chair Abele’s comments.
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board Meeting – May 7, 2020 – Director Abele requested the correction of the spelling of City Council Member Elaine Litster’s name (from Lister). Motion: Director O’Brien moved to approve the Minutes as amended. Director Dennert seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

6. PRESENTATIONS, SCHEDULED ITEMS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. Status of the Districts Response to the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic – Verbal Report was presented by Dan Paranick, District Manager. There will be various methods to reopen, the District is directed by other governing agencies. Some orders are clear, some are grey, and some provide options. As of now the District will remain generally closed through May 31st. All 6 Special Events in June have been cancelled since large gatherings will not be permitted in June. Basketball and volleyball could be re-opened with social distancing rules. Staff is working to open some type of Summer Camp and Daycare for parents. Team sports, at least at this point, are not allowed. Playgrounds remain closed at the State level as well. Staff is working to provide Summer activities via virtual classes. It appears the no gathering provision may start to loosen; Staff will reevaluate when to relaunch group activities. Paranick is hoping the Guardian and Strathearn locations will be opened soon. The Pool, Community Center, and Senior Center remain closed until further notice.

Freeman stated if there is anything the Board can do as a group to influence the decision makers, she is happy to assist.

Johnson feels the District is just following what we have to do until things loosen up.

O’Brien agreed with Freeman, she would be happy to help.

Dennert supports opening back up but would like to focus on safety. Keeping in mind, some sports are easier to social distance than others. He would like to have safety measures included in any re-opening plans.

Abele requested the topic of a letter to be sent to the County and/or Board of Supervisors be added for discussion at the upcoming Budget Workshop meeting this Tuesday, May 26th. He suggested the callers from earlier send emails individually as well. They are welcome to call into the meeting this Tuesday at 5:30pm to share their comments again. Abele is proud the District has kept hiking trails, parks and public restrooms open. There was only a short closure for the Golf Courses which have now re-opened. Using the outdoors is good for physical and mental health. We are Americans, with a right to freedoms, it is not OK for the Government to force people to stay home. The Community has the right to use parks, it is the right of the people. He would like the basketball and volleyball courts re-opened immediately as he feels social distancing is possible with these activities. He is appalled at the arbitrariness of not allowing the play equipment to be used. There seems to be no good reason for this as studies have shown the virus does not spread through surfaces or outdoors. He would like Staff to look at the possibility of a Concert in the Park for late July or August. He commended City Council Member Litster for attempting to get a 4th of July Event launched. He hopes this can be done; it would be a proud moment for him if the District could be involved with this.

At 7:01pm Chair Abele opened this item to Public comments. There were none at this time.
Dennert added the drafted letter should be focused on Youth Sports only, if needed, a separate letter could be sent for other issues. Abele responded this will be discussed at the meeting this Tuesday.

Paranick added he is willing to meet with and assist the Youth Sports Leagues as needed. Staff will add the requested item to the upcoming meeting.

Johnson asked what the School District may have planned for the Summer. Dennert responded Summer School will be online only.

Dennert added while he agrees it is harder to spread the virus outdoors, he does not support that it cannot be spread at all.

Abele responded there is evidence that it cannot. Regardless, we know that it is healthy to get outdoors, the Government cannot take away that right from people. Government does not direct the people; the people direct the Government.

In regard to budget and finances, Paranick will provide more information at the Budget Workshop Meeting this Tuesday. Daycare opening will come with flexibility in the Fee structure. This will be a challenge as the restrictions for social distancing will change the costs and expenses of running the program.

Freeman understands this will be a challenge but feels Child Care is an important service the District needs to provide.

Johnson and O’Brien both felt this should be a Staff decision.

Dennert asked if there will still be a discount offered to families in need. Paranick and Engel both responded they are trying to keep the numbers the same and discounts available.

b. Presentation of 15 Year Service Award to Director of Administration, Theresa Pennington – Dan Paranick presented Theresa with her commemorative plaque and check. Paranick is ecstatic this presentation could be done during a Board Meeting. While all the Directors have been great to work with, Theresa has done an outstanding job in assisting Paranick with his transition to District Manager. He thanked her on a personal level for everything she has done to assist with the transition.

Tracy Engel has found Theresa to be the model of a great leader. She has a brilliant mind in addition to being so kind. She appreciates everything she has learned working with her.

Wayne Nakaoka added not only does Theresa do an excellent job, she is a lot of fun to work with. Even though they don’t always agree, it is a pleasure to work with her.

Gina Viecco stated working for Theresa is a real pleasure. She is such a great leader, always so calm, collected, and never loses her cool. She feels fortunate to have worked with Theresa for 7 of the 15 years she’s been with the District.

Director O’Brien can’t image what the District would do without Theresa.

Director Johnson thanked Theresa for all of her hard work.
Director Freeman thanked Theresa for all the dedication, hard work, and hours she puts into the District, she really appreciates her.

Vice Chair Dennert congratulated Theresa, she really deserves the recognition. He added he has only seen her during Fires, Floods, and Pandemics so he can’t imagine how calm she is under normal circumstances.

Chair Abele stated Theresa is an outstanding Director of Administration. He also loves her as a friend, in the time he has been a Board Member he has benefited on so many levels by their association. Congratulations Theresa, the accolades are well deserved.

Theresa thanked the Board and Staff. She loves her job and the Park District; she is honored to work with everyone. Thank you!

7. 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 5/15/20 Accounts Payable Check Register, and 4/24/20 & 5/8/20 Payroll Check Registers – Staff responded to questions from the Board.

b. Approval of Notice of Completion and Final Acceptance for the Oak Canyon Community Park Tot-Lot Replacement and Playground Resurfacing Project – The written Staff Report was provided by Wayne Nakaoka, Director of Planning and Maintenance.

Motion: Kate Director O’Brien moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Director Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

8. CONTINUED BUSINESS

a. Second Reading - Amendment to Ordinance No. 3 Authorizing Use of Bicycles, Skateboards, Roller Skates, Rollerblades and Scooters at District Park Locations – The Staff Report was presented by Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration. District Counsel provided the second reading of the Amendment.

Director Dennert is excited about the change to this Ordinance. He suggested posting an announcement in the Acorn.

Motion: Director Dennert moved to approve the Amendment and waive further reading by District Counsel. Director O’Brien seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 4 to 1 vote with Director Johnson voting no.

9. NEW BUSINESS

a. Amendment to Ordinance No. 3 Prohibiting Vaping in all District Parks – The Staff Report was presented by Theresa Pennington, Director of Administration. The Board had previously voted to prohibit Smoking at Parks. It would be helpful to include “No Vaping” in the existing Ordinance to assist the Rangers in enforcing vaping along with smoking. They exception to this rule would be at Golf Courses and special designated areas. There would be no current change to the Park signage as smoking would now include vaping.
Director Dennert asked if the verbiage could be updated as the signs are changed. Nakaoka responded that can be done.

Director O’Brien asked if there is any information on 2nd hand Vape smoke. Pennington responded the documentation from the CDC is in the Board Packet. O’Brien feels if people are not making a mess or effecting others, the District could consider letting it be.

Director Freeman is happy to get this documented, she felt Vaping was already in the existing Park Rules.

Director Johnson was in agreement with Freeman.

District Counsel read the Amendment for the 1st time. The 2nd reading and vote will be held at the next regular Board meeting.

Director Dennert has thought a lot about the differences between smoking and vaping, he feels there needs to be an example for teenagers who think vaping is not dangerous. He asked about the location of the designated Smoking Area. Pennington responded there is a Smoking Area at the Concerts in the Park.

Motion: Director Freeman moved to approve this Amendment and waive further readings by District Legal Counsel. Director Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

b. Approval of Award of Contract for the Rancho Santa Susana Community Park Phase Two Parking Lot and Rancho Tapo Community Park Ballfield Parking Lot Renovation Project – The Staff Report was presented by Wayne Nakaoka, Director of Planning and Maintenance. The District Board authorized the solicitation for bids at the April 20, 2020 meeting. Staff received 8 bids and the apparent lowest bidder is Universal Asphalt Co., Inc. of Santa Fe Springs, CA. They have successfully completed many projects for the District. Staff recommends the Board award a contract to Universal Asphalt.

Motion: Director Johnson moved to award the contract to Universal Asphalt Co., Inc. of Santa Fe Springs, CA. Director O’Brien seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS OF NOTE – Paranick received correspondence regarding the Youth Baseball and Softball Leagues which was discussed earlier in the meeting.

11. REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Director Freeman attended CSDA Legislative Days she provided her fellow Board Members with an update on the various items discussed and how the COVID situation has affected them. All of the informative breakout sessions are recorded; anyone can listen at any time on their website. She hiked at Corriganville Park, the weeds are terrible, and some trails are overgrown. She received a call from a couple who visited all 33 District parks in 3 days. They were so impressed, it really made her feel good. She thanked Carolyn Valdez for the emails with historical information.

Director Johnson thanked Carolyn Valdez from Strathearn for the Historical Simi Valley posts. CARPD will be holding a virtual Conference on May 28th and 29th. They have held a mock conference
approved as written

and he was amazed; it was much better than he thought it could be done. If the Board has time, feel
free to join and listen.

Director O’Brien hiked at Rocky Peak and agreed with Freeman about the Mustard Flowers. She also
thanked Carolyn Valdez; she enjoys reading the Historical posts as well. Gordon is back in the hospital
with complications from a broken wrist. She will provide his contact information to Paranick for
anyone who would like to call.

Vice Chair Dennert visited several parks, everything looks great. The Skate Plaza and Apollo Fields
are looking good. He is encouraging everyone to discuss how to re-open with safety in mind. He
suggested Social Media posts highlighting different trails in Simi Valley and Oak Park. He is excited
to attend the Hot Air Balloon drive through event this Sunday. Linda Brown notified him of an issue
with bees swarming. He asked about the progress with the BMX track.

Chair Abele attended the teleconference COVID-19 meeting for Ventura County. He applauds the
Supervisors for voting to move forward with the Phase 2 re-opening. He does feel this all needs to
move faster, the people are in charge, not the Government officials. He thanked the Maintenance Staff;
the parks are looking great.

12. REPORT BY DISTRICT MANAGER – Comments were provided by Dan Paranick. He and Nakaoka
met with the City of Simi Valley to discuss reducing the cost of building the BMX track. There is also
a proposal from the Catholic Diocese to purchase and build at the location where the track would be
built. He will provide more details at the upcoming Budget Workshop. Simi Youth Soccer League is
very appreciative for the Board’s efforts with the Apollo Fields. The new chairs for the Board Meetings
will be here for the next meeting. He thanked Sandee Covone and Douglas Duran for working on the
Grant for Phase 4 of the Arroyo Bike Trail project. He feels the District will be successful in procuring
the Prop 68 funds for the project. The Simi School District has asked the Park District to operate three
additional After School Clubs. If anyone is interested Staff can setup an area in the office for the virtual
CARPD Conference on the 28th and 29th. He and Nakaoka will be doing a walk-through of the Madera
Landfill, looking for insurance funding to help with the costs. City Council will be discussing the 4th
of July and possible fireworks event at their June 8th meeting.

Upcoming Events: Drive through Hot Air Balloon Glow Event this Sunday, the Drive-in Movie has
been okayed with State required restrictions.

Future Agenda Items: the June 3rd Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday; the Board wants to
stick with that day. Other items include possible drive through Graduations plans, Rules for the new
Skate Plaza, the June 18th Meeting will focus on Budget items.

Committee Activity: May 26th will be the Budget Workshop; Staff will amend the Agenda to bring
back the discussion of resuming Youth Sports. There will be a need for Advanced Planning Committee
meeting to discuss the Guardian Activity Center Phase 3 design and concept.

13. CLOSED SESSION - NONE

14. ADJOURNMENT – Chair Abele adjourned the Meeting at 8:05pm.

Dan Paranick, District Clerk