RANCHO SIMI RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

JOINT PARK DISTRICT/HISTORICAL SOCIETY COMMITTEE
ACTIVITY CENTER - ACTIVITY ROOM #1
4201 GUARDIAN ST., SIMI VALLEY, CA

MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2020
5:30 P.M.

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by RSRPD Director Elaine Freeman at 5:30 p.m. In attendance were SVHS President Alex Walker, Vice President Linda Bosley, Secretary Karen Olson, Past President Vicki Spilka, and the following RSRPD Staff: Strathearn Historical Park Specialist Carolyn Valdez, Director of Planning and Maintenance Wayne Nakaoka, and Administrative Secretary Barbara Meinel.

II. PUBLIC DISCUSSION: None

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2019 MEETING: The minutes were approved as presented by a unanimous vote.

IV. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE INTERVIEW RESULTS FOR THE STRATHEARN HISTORICAL PARK AND MUSEUM CARETAKER POSITION: Director of Planning and Maintenance Nakaoka handed out copies of the results of the Caretaker interviews, and announced that the consensus of the interview panel was that Casey and Cynthia Hancox are the most qualified to meet the requirements of the Caretaker position and would be offered the position with the Committee’s concurrence. The Committee agreed with the interview panel’s determination, and Nakaoka was instructed to notify the appropriate parties. Casey Hancox is a Park District employee, and the District’s Legal Counsel will be drafting a special Caretaker Agreement due to the requirements of AB-5. Cynthia Hancox will also be assisting with some of the Caretaker responsibilities.

Nakaoka then told the Committee that he will be sending a letter to the current Caretaker, Ruby Mellinger, to notify her of the Committee’s decision. The other candidates who were not selected will also be notified by mail that another candidate was chosen for the position. Although Ms. Mellinger’s contract as Caretaker expires on February 28, 2020, she will be permitted to stay in the residence until March 16, 2020. In order to give Ms. Mellinger time to make arrangements for her move, she will not be responsible for performing any caretaker-related maintenance duties at Strathearn Historical Park once she receives notification of the Committee’s decision. All building and grounds maintenance duties will be assumed by Park District staff until the establishment and takeover by the newly selected Caretaker. Nakaoka estimates that it will take two to three weeks to make updates to the Caretaker’s
residence, including installing new carpeting or some type of vinyl flooring. The choice of type of flooring will be left to the new Caretaker. The anticipated start date for the new Caretaker(s) is April 1, 2020.

Ms. Bosley mentioned that there is a large event scheduled at Strathearn Park for the first weekend in March, and Nakaoka assured her that all the building and grounds maintenance duties will be appropriately covered by District staff. Ms. Bosley also mentioned that it might be a good idea to have a meeting with the new Caretaker at Strathearn to go over some of the duties, and Director Freeman suggested inviting the Hancox family to a Board meeting to introduce them to the Board.

Ms. Walker stated that the Historical Society’s next Board meeting is on Thursday, January 9, 2020, and she will advise the Board of the Committee’s decision.

V. DISCUSSION ABOUT CONTINUING WATER DAMAGE TO THE ADOBE ROOF: Ms. Walker told the Committee that the tarps on the roof of the Simi Adobe are not working, and the roof is now seriously damaged. She stated that the highest priority of the Historical Society is fixing the damaged roof and repairing the interior injury caused by long-term water leaks. She added that the continuing harm to the structure has progressively threatened this historic landmark, which is the oldest structure in the community. Nakaoka responded that there is currently no money in the budget for a new roof, and he will need to wait until the new budget cycle begins to request funds for the roof. Ms. Walker responded that she does not believe the problem can be put off for that long, and Director Freeman asked if this could be defined as an emergency. When asked if the Historical Society could contribute to the cost of replacing the roof, Ms. Walker responded that they do not have the necessary funds and they are trying to raise money to finish the inside of the Printz/Powell Colony House. Nakaoka said he would like to modernize the roof, but will need to get any type of modernization approved, and he will have to get approval from the Cultural Heritage Board before the roof can be replaced. Nakaoka stated that for now the District can contact a roofing contractor to obtain costs for repairs to the roof. Ms. Walker requested that Nakaoka keep her informed of any progress being made on this matter.

VI. DISCUSSION OF WIND DAMAGE TO THE ROOF ON THE METAL CAR SHEDS: Ms. Walker told the Committee that the roofs were blown off the metal car sheds where the two Model T’s were stored. The Model T’s have been temporarily moved to the barn. Nakaoka responded that he will have the Building Maintenance Crew repair the metal shed roofs as soon as possible.

VII. INTRODUCTION OF MAINTENANCE PROJECT LIST FOR STRATHEARN HISTORICAL PARK: Ms. Walker distributed a 2020 Maintenance/Repairs Tracking spreadsheet. The spreadsheet summarizes all of the maintenance items that currently need to be done at the park. She said by using the spreadsheet it will be possible to track when things get done and to add new items as they appear. She said the plan is to update the list on a monthly basis. Ms. Walker requested that after the District has a chance to review the list, that Nakaoka send her an e-mail listing any items that the Historical Society can take care of on their own.
One of the items on the maintenance list is the replacement of the picket fence around the front lawn. It is broken in several places, and the Strathearn House is often used in weddings. Nakaoka responded that he will take care of getting the fence replaced. He added that it would be helpful if he does not have to have wood milled to exactly match the current fence and can instead use materials with a similar spire. Ms. Walker responded that this might be possible as the fence is not considered a historical artifact.

The issue of the leaking adobe roof was mentioned again as there is rain in the forecast, and Nakaoka responded that he will talk to the Building Maintenance Supervisor about measures to be taken.

VIII. UPDATE ON THE PRINTZ/POWELL COLONY HOUSE RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT: Nakaoka stated that the project should be completed in about three weeks. The doors, windows, and electrical are all that is left to be done by the Contractor. The ramp layout is currently being worked on. There are four other items to be done which are outside of the contractor’s scope of work, including putting the skirting around the building, which will need to be done to keep creatures and wildlife from going under the house.

Ms. Walker mentioned that the Historical Society received a $1000 contribution from the Busy Hands Garden Club, which the Historical Society can donate towards the cost of the landscaping around the Printz/Powell Colony House. The Garden Club also offered to help with the installation of the landscaping around the house, and Ms. Walker stated that she will let the club members know when it is time to do the landscaping. Museum Director Havens would like the landscaping to be appropriate to the history of the house.

IX. DISCUSSION REGARDING TREES AT STRATHEARN HISTORICAL PARK: The park has lost a few trees due to this year’s heavy winds. Some of the trees’ roots are raised and some of the older trees are getting weak. Nakaoka stated that the Park District has an arborist on staff, and he will have the arborist and the District’s Grounds Maintenance Supervisor go around the park to check the condition of the trees. Regarding the pepper tree east of the Strathearn Adobe that fell due to wind damage, Ms. Walker said she will check with Strathearn Historical Park Museum Director Pat Havens to confirm whether or not she wants a replacement tree planted.

X. OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST: Ms. Bosley told the Committee that there will be training held on Tuesday morning, January 7, and Thursday morning, January 9 for the volunteers who will be assisting with the school tours. The first tour of the season is scheduled for Tuesday, January 14, 2020.

XI. SET TIME AND DATE FOR NEXT MEETING: Monday, February 3, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

XII. ADJOURN MEETING: The meeting was adjourned by Director Freeman at 6:11 p.m.

Wayne Nakaoka
Director of Planning & Maintenance