

**TOWN OF CORTE MADERA  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING  
CORTE MADERA TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
APRIL 22, 2019  
APPROVED MINUTES**

Commissioners

Present: Fred Casissa, Chair  
Nathan Blomgren  
Sarah Elsen  
Eric Engstrom  
Emily Janowsky  
Alden Miles  
Elein Phipps  
Cambry Weingart, Youth Commissioner

Staff Mario Fiorentini, Recreation Director  
Present: Brian Hernandez, Recreation Supervisor

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chair Casissa opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

2. OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

3. PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

There were no Consent Calendar items.

5. BUSINESS ITEM

A. Discussion and Possible Action of Future Dog Park in Corte Madera

Recreation Director Fiorentini presented a staff report. He briefly discussed the Commission's work over the last several years including looking at different locations, the site analysis, and the work done by the landscape design firm (MIG) that was commissioned by the Town. The Commission came up with criteria based on location, proximity to parking, accessibility, ease of project in terms of construction, etc. Three sites were discussed: 1) Grass median along Pixley Avenue (across from the Post Office); 2) Town Park (north of the fence behind the Pet Club); 3) the Porter Cooley site (across the road from the DMV). He noted the Porter Cooley site is mentioned in the General Plan as a potential site for affordable housing. All three sites have advantages and disadvantages. Other sites were discussed including: 1) San Clemente Drive across from the Highway Patrol Station; 2) Montecito Avenue (near the old railroad right-of-way); 3) A possible partnership with the City of Larkspur. The Council is interested in pursuing a dog park in Corte Madera.

Chair Casissa stated the cost of the facility could be up to \$150,000 and he stated the cost of maintenance needs to be considered. A dog park entails more than just "putting up fences".

Commissioner Janowsky stated it is great that the idea of a dog park now has the support of the Council. The Porter Cooley site might be the best fit since people already walk dogs in that area and there is parking under the freeway (by Trader Joes). The Town Park site is used for picnics, etc. and she does not like the idea of taking that area away. She would like to keep Town Park the way it is. She would rank the Porter Cooley site at the top of the list. Chair Casissa referred to the Porter Cooley site and stated there was some parking on the road behind the Tam Ridge apartment complex (parallels the highway).

Commissioner Phipps agreed- the Porter Cooley site has a nice feel to it and it is near the path that people are already using. She would rank this location as her favorite spot. However, the survey indicates that most people like the Pixley Avenue site. Commissioner Janowsky noted the nearby neighbors do not like this site. Commissioner Phipps asked if the DMV parking lot would be available on weekends. Chair Casissa stated “probably” but it was not something that the Town could promote. Commissioner Phipps noted the paths from the east side and west side meet at this area and both sides of Town could get access.

Commissioner Janowsky stated she liked the idea that the Porter Cooley site spreads out and maximizes the Town’s resources. Plus, there would be little impact to the neighborhood.

Youth Commissioner Weingart asked about the Granada site. Chair Casissa noted this location would entail a Joint Use Agreement with the Reed School District.

Commissioner Elsen stated the Pixley Avenue site makes the most sense from an infrastructure point of view but makes the least sense in terms of impacts. This is such an impacted area already and adding a new facility would add to that. Commissioner Janowsky agreed and pointed out the proximity to the playground.

Commissioner Miles stated adding a dog park makes sense but losing park space to create one does not make sense. Chair Casissa asked if this included the area behind the Pet Club. Commissioner Miles stated “yes”- this is an area where kids play soccer and people gather.

Commissioner Blomgren asked how they envisioned the Porter Cooley site being used- there is land on both sides of the bike path. He was not sure they could fence off the bike path to make two, small dog parks. Commissioner Elsen agreed and noted the dog park would be right up against somebody’s fence. Chair Casissa stated they could put it on the other side where the water fountain is located.

Commissioner Elsen asked if there were other available Town owned sites. Recreation Director Fiorentini stated these were the most feasible sites.

Chair Casissa referred to Cove School Park site and stated there would be too many hurdles to overcome since it entails a Joint Use Agreement with the Larkspur/Corte Madera School District.

Commissioner Blomgren referred to the site east of the paved parking lot by the marsh and stated they might want to cross this off the list. Commissioner Janowsky stated there would be a lot of environmental challenges. Chair Casissa stated there would be major parking issues.

Commissioner Elsen asked if Skunk Hollow Park has been considered- there is an open area behind the playground. Recreation Director Fiorentini stated this site has never been discussed relative to a dog park. Commissioner Blomgren noted this area is not used much. Chair Casissa stated it was somewhat isolated plus they are planning to renovate the playground.

Commissioner Blomgren stated the Porter Cooley site seems to be one of the only real potentials and perhaps they should ask the Public Works Department to come up with the cost of installing fencing, putting in a picnic table, and providing some shade. Chair Casissa wondered if the ground needed to be leveled and if they needed to provide ADA access. It could entail more than “throwing up a fence”.

Commissioner Weingart asked about the triangular piece of land near the path to the marsh. Chair Casissa stated that was part of Bayside Park. There is very limited parking and putting in ADA access would be very expensive.

Commissioner Janowsky stated they could present the Council with several options for the Porter Cooley site including a “bare bones” approach that would include work done by the Department of Public Works.

Chair Casissa noted there were no public comments (nobody in attendance).

Recreation Director Fiorentini stated the Commission could focus its discussion on the Porter Cooley site and staff would notify the surrounding neighbors for input. Chair Casissa asked staff to prepare a simple schematic with several options. Recreation Director Fiorentini stated the issue could be discussed by the Executive Advisory Committee at its next meeting.

## B. 2019 Volunteer of the Year- Commissioner Nominations

Recreation Director Fiorentini presented a staff report. He noted there were two awards- Senior Volunteer of the Year and Youth Volunteer of the Year.

Commissioner Janowsky stated she would like to nominate Ms. Pauline Angelman again as the Senior Volunteer of the Year. Ms. Angelman recently turned 110 years old and is the most generous person in Town.

Youth Commissioner Weingart stated she would like to nominate Mr. Drake Goodman, President of the Redwood High School Senior Class. He does a lot for the community and recently formed a not-for-profit organization called Recycle for Africa. Commissioner Janowsky stated Mr. Goodman lives in Tiburon- he must be a Corte Madera resident.

Commissioner Phipps stated she would like to nominate Mr. Liam Anderson who is President of the Search and Rescue Team.

Commissioner Blomgren stated it would be great to publish the names of all the nominees as a way to give them some recognition for the wonderful things they do.

Chair Casissa noted there were no public comments (nobody in attendance).

Chair Casissa asked the Commission to send ideas to Recreation Director Fiorentini.

## C. Commissioner Wish List Update

Recreation Director Fiorentini presented a staff report. He noted the list has been revised by Recreation Supervisor Hernandez due to the completion of some of the projects.

Commissioner Engstrom asked for a status report on the tennis court lights. Recreation Director Fiorentini stated the Public Works Department is looking at some retrofit kits. This project is on the top of their list. Commissioner Engstrom asked about the bench. Recreation Director Fiorentini stated it is in the Corporation Yard, ready to be installed.

Commissioner Elsen asked if they could plant some trees to provide some shade for the play structure. The shade structure covers the picnic area but not the play structure. Chair Casissa asked if the Beautification Committee would support this project. Recreation Director Fiorentini stated they do have a tree donation program. Chair Casissa asked if this would be more of a maintenance item. Commissioner Janowsky stated they should add this to the "punch list".

Chair Casissa stated he would like to add the following: 1) Re-stripping the Town Park Parking Lot to add more parking; 2) Signage entering the Community Center; 3) Bocce ball court (next to Café Verde).

Commissioner Miles asked if they could add some doggy bags in Town Park. Chair Casissa stated this is a "punch list" item. Recreation Director Fiorentini stated the Public Works Department has plans to do this given the new leash-law in Town Park. Commissioner Miles stated the picnic tables in Town Park need some attention or to be replaced. The surface around the tennis court backboard also needs some attention.

Commissioner Elsen asked about the constraints, other than cost, to adding bathrooms to Town Park. Recreation Director Fiorentini stated cost and space are the constraints. How to run a water and sewage line would need to be figured out. Chair Casissa stated they looked at this several years ago and it was cost prohibitive. Commissioner Miles asked if they could do something to the existing bathrooms to make them more pleasant. Recreation Director Fiorentini stated they could talk to the Public Works Department about this.

Commissioner Janowsky stated she would like to review the Park Master Plan at a future meeting.

Chair Casissa noted there were no public comments (nobody in attendance).

Chair Casissa asked the Commission to contact Recreation Director Fiorentini with any "Wish List" or "punch list" ideas.

#### D. Commission Meeting Calendar for 2019

Recreation Director Fiorentini presented a staff report. Staff would like to reschedule the May meeting a week earlier (May 20<sup>th</sup>) since the Regular Meeting lands on Memorial Day. Staff would also like to reschedule the June 24<sup>th</sup> meeting to June 17<sup>th</sup>. Staff is also recommending cancelling the December 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting but hold the November 25<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Commissioner Elsen suggested they reschedule the November meeting to the 18<sup>th</sup>. The Commission agreed.

Commissioner Janowsky stated she likes the idea of scheduling meetings in advance since they have a lot going on and she did not want to cancel any meetings except the one in December.

Chair Casissa noted there were no public comments (nobody in attendance).

#### E. Approval of March 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes

M/s, Janowsky/Weingart and approved unanimously to approve the March 25, 2019 meeting minutes as submitted.

#### 6. Director of Recreation and Leisure Services and Commissioner Reports

- Director of Recreation and Leisure Services
  - Community Center
  - Outdoor
  - Neil Cummins Gym
  - Summer Playground Program
  - Special Events
  - Capital Projects
  - Corte Madera Age Friendly Intergenerational Center

Recreation Director Fiorentini reported staff, along with Commissioner Janowsky and Public Works staff, had a very productive meeting regarding the rehabilitating the Town Park Basketball Courts. They are in the final phases of the plan. He discussed the proximity of the courts to Neil Cummins and stated they are talking about eliminating the lower level hoops that currently exist. The plan is to change the design to provide for one full-court with two hoops. Commissioner Janowsky discussed how the design has changed. Chair Casissa asked if it would be the existing footprint. Commissioner Janowsky stated “yes”. Commissioner Blomgren stated if there is a lot of demand they can add the short, full-courts. Chair Casissa stated they could take a look at this when they review the Park Master Plan. Recreation Director Fiorentini reported the Council adopted the new Town Park Leash-Law which will go into effect 30 days after its adoption. Public Works is getting ready for the deluge of dogs! He reported the Summer Playground Program Director would be making a presentation at the May meeting.

Recreation Supervisor Hernandez stated he has been meeting with the Beautification Committee for several months about revamping the Menke Park sign. He distributed a drawing of the proposal along with site locations. They want to move the sign from the back of the park to the front of the park. He would prefer the corner location next to the bus stop because it has fewer trees. The committee also wants to rename the park to “Old Corte Madera Square”. The committee will pay for any costs associated with the change (signs, Website, City documents, etc.). Staff also plans to get community input. Recreation Director Fiorentini stated he spoke with the committee and the Town Manager about the process. Commissioner Janowsky stated it did not seem too controversial. Recreation Director Fiorentini reported that Breakfast with Bunny was very well-attended and everyone had a great time. The Commission thanked Recreation Supervisor Hernandez for a great job!

Recreation Director Fiorentini reported staff is holding a community outreach meeting for the Skunk Hollow Park Project at the park itself on Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. The playground designers will not be in attendance. The idea is to get a lot of input from the community and then place the item on the May 20<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting. Staff plans to start advertising on NextDoor, email blasts, the Town Website, etc.

- Commissioner Reports
  - March: Town Council Update

Chair Casissa stated there were no Recreation Department of Commission related items on the Council agenda.

- Executive Advisory Committee

Chair Casissa stated the committee met with Recreation Director Fiorentini last Friday to discuss the agenda.

- CMPR/IGC Programming Ad-Hoc Committee

Recreation Director Fiorentini stated the committee will meet in May and July.

- Individual Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Elsen stated her kids started the Chess class at Neil Cummins and they loved it!

Chair Casissa reported the Lions Club painted the Community Center kitchen cabinets.

## 7. ROUTINE AND OTHER MATTERS

### A. Future Agenda Items

Chair Casissa stated the following items would be on an upcoming agenda: 1) Skate Park Rules; 2) Volunteer of the Year; 3) Setting Commission Goals.

### B. Items for Yearly Review

## 8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m. Chair Casissa stated the next meeting was scheduled for Monday, May 20, 2019 in the Council Chambers.

Respectfully submitted  
Toni DeFrancis  
Recording Secretary