

CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

Parks, Beaches & Recreation Commission Regular Meeting April 6, 2021 – 5:00 PM

I. CONVENE MEETING OF THE PARKS BEACHES & RECREATION COMMISSION TO ORDER – 5:04 PM

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Heather Ignatin, Chair
Diane Daruty, Vice Chair
Hassan Archer, Commissioner
David Granoff, Commissioner- attended via Zoom
Laird Hayes, Commissioner
Walt Howald, Commissioner
Kate Malouf, Commissioner

Staff: Laura Detweiler, Recreation & Senior Services Director
Sean Levin, Recreation & Senior Services Deputy Director
Micah Martin, Deputy Public Works Director
Kevin Pekar, Parks and Trees Superintendent
John Nelson, City Arborist
Mariah Stinson, Administrative Support Specialist

III. NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON CONSENT CALENDAR

Jim Mosher suggested that on page 1 of the minutes, the minutes should reflect that the meeting was held via Zoom. On page 2, he suggested that language be included in the minutes regarding what the award for Lynn Simons was for.

V. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Minutes of the March 2, 2021 PB&R Commission Meeting.

Recommendation: Waive reading of subject minutes, approve and order filed.

Commissioner Malouf disclosed that she did not state during the meeting that a skate park should be installed as is stated in the minutes. She clarified that she encouraged and appreciated Mr. O'Brian's presentation and that a skate park can be looked at in the future.

B. PW Activity Report

Recommendation: Receive/file Activity Report.

C. RSS Activity Report

Recommendation: *Receive/file Activity Report of past and upcoming projects and events.*

Motion by Commissioner Archer; second by Commissioner Howald to accept items V-A through V-C of the Consent Calendar with recommended changes to the minutes. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

VI. CURRENT BUSINESS

A. Community Service Award - Oasis COVID Response Team

Staff recommends that the Parks, Beaches and Recreation (PB&R) Commission approve the Community Service Award recognition of Oasis COVID Response Team to be awarded at a future Parks, Beaches and Recreation Commission meeting.

Director Detweiler reported that the application was submitted by Chair Ignatin recognizing the Oasis COVID Response Team. The Community Service Award's Ad Hoc Committee has reviewed and recommended approval of the application. The Oasis COVID Response Team supported the senior community throughout the pandemic and the team consisted of Friends of Oasis volunteers, Age Well Senior Services, Meals on Wheels Volunteers, and Oasis staff.

Chair Ignatin nominated the team because of their phenomenal outreach to the senior community over the past year.

Chair Ignatin opened public comment.

Dennis Bress, a resident of Balboa Island, supported the nomination.

Chair Ignatin closed public comment.

Commissioner Howald believed that the Oasis COVID Response Team was well deserved of the award and supported the nomination.

Motion by Commissioner Howald; seconded by Commissioner Archer to approved the Community Service Award recognition for Oasis COVID Response Team. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

B. Marine Avenue Special Landmark Tree Testing and Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Parks, Beaches and Recreation (PB&R) Commission consider the following recommendations resulting from the Tree Risk Assessments and Testing, conducted by Gordon Mann, of six (6) Special, Landmark Gum trees located along Marine Avenue, Balboa Island.

A.) Adopt and implement the long-term management strategies, including both the tree well mitigation and improvements, where practical, and annual pruning specifications.

- B.) Implement annual tree evaluations and pruning observations, timed with the City's regular trimming operations, conducted by Gordon Mann, on an annual basis (not to exceed three-years).*
- C.) Bring forth at a later date, the potential replacement of one tree (at 312 Marine Ave.) in poor health, but posing low risk.*

Parks and Trees Superintendent Pekar shared that the Commission had directed Staff in September of 2019 to replace 12 trees, five vacant tree-well sites, three non-eucalyptus trees, and four Special eucalyptus and replace them with lemon-scented eucalyptus with metal tree grates. Also, provide Level Three Testing on six trees. Work began and was completed in October of 2019 to remove and replace seven trees as well as install metal grates. In November of 2019, coordination between Balboa Island Preservation Association and staff took place to craft the scope of work and a decision was made on an arborist who would perform the work. The group decided to test six trees with Static Integrated Method (SIM) Testing on Marine Avenue and Arborist Gordon Mann was chosen to oversee the testing of the trees. Testing was delayed due to COVID which resulted in the change of the type of Level Three testing that was done. Aerial Inspection, lab testing of the soil and growths on the tree, Sonic Tomography, and Resistance Drilling were the various Level Three testing that was completed. It was determined that pruning specifications were needed for future pruning of the trees on Marine Avenue. The testing and pruning were completed in November of 2020 under the oversight of Mr. Mann. Once work was completed, the final report was drafted on January 31, 2021.

Gordon Mann, an Arborist, gave a brief background of himself and his credentials. He restated the original scope of work and confirmed that it was delayed due to COVID. He gave a description of the tests that were performed, the pruning he oversaw for the trees and the long-term management options. His final report was written based on the International Society of Arboriculture Best Management Practices (ISA BMP) Matrix-Based Risk Assessment of the six trees tested and Management Strategies for the long-term growth of all the trees on Marine Avenue. Of all six trees tested, all had buried trunk flares but it was found that there was no Armillaria or Phytophthora root decay. There was a moderate risk of falling branches hitting buildings, people and vehicles. There was a low risk of a whole tree falling. The tree located at 312 Marine Avenue is in the poorest condition and was recommended to be replaced with a better performing tree, but not based on risk. He concluded that the challenge with street trees included space, risk, competing infrastructure, pressure of adjacent property owners, and available water and soil compaction.

Chair Ignatin asked what the Annual Tree Evaluation Report would include and what material is suggested for long-term tree well mitigation. Mr. Mann suggested that the trees be visually inspected once a year prior to pruning, determine if pruning is necessary, and visually inspect potential disease. He noted that the most sustainable material for tree wells is a modular material but that a gap should be left around the trunk of the tree.

Chair Ignatin called for public comment.

Jim Maloney emphasized that it was determined that the trees were over trimmed which caused the health to decline in the trees. He appreciated the work Mr. Mann has done for the trees. He requested that the City change the decomposed granite that is around the trees so that the trees can receive more water. He concluded that the trees on Marine Avenue now carry landmark tree status and he did not want to see the tree at 312 Marine Avenue be removed.

Jodi Bole greatly appreciated the work that has happened to protect and revitalize the trees. She noted that all the trees tested were determined healthy trees. She emphasized the importance of not allowing heavy pruning of the trees moving forward. She requested that the City sign a contract with Mr. Mann for future oversight of pruning.

Jim Mosher asked if the trees have a risk of failing due to changes in weather conditions. He wanted to know if the trees that have been removed in the past through the City had shown any fungus and if testing was done before they were removed.

An unknown resident shared that the effort made by the City to support outdoor dining during the pandemic has damaged several trees via patio heaters. She requested the City draft policies and guidelines for outdoor patio heaters.

Patricia Eckhart wanted to hear Mr. Mann's professional opinion regarding wind. She shared that after research was done by herself during three major storms, no damage was done to the trees during those events.

Dennis Bress, a resident of Balboa Island, shared that the community is very happy with the work the City and the Commission have done to protect the trees. He was concerned about the way the trees are watered and suggested that grates be installed immediately.

Mathew Pour, President of Balboa Island Merchant's Association, emphasized that activity has picked up on Marine Avenue. He encouraged the City to move quickly with grate installation as well as replacement of the decomposed granite around the trees. He noted that merchants have been notified that their patio heaters are too close to the trees and the community continued to mitigate any hazards that can cause damage to the trees.

Edward Black, a resident of Balboa Island, loved that the trees have been upgraded to landmark status. He loved the new pruning method of the trees.

Randy Black was impressed with the way the City and Commission is handling the trees.

Chair Ignatin closed public comment.

Deputy Director Martin mentioned that in the temporary permits for outdoor dining it was not specified that restaurants were allowed to use outdoor heaters. Staff has worked with the businesses, the Temporary Use Permits were modified, and clear direction was given on where patio heaters can be located.

Superintendent Pekar shared that staff will continue to remove material from the base of the trees to help discourage fungus growth.

Mr. Mann shared that the average maximum wind speed the City sees is 46 mph but could not make a conclusive determination on how the trees would handle higher wind speeds.

Commissioner Ignatin appreciated the approach that was taken. She advocated for the same cautious approach for the tree located at 312 Marine and because the tree is low-risk, she did not believe action was required other than monitoring it. Superintendent Pekar suggested that the tree at 312 Marine be evaluated in 3-years.

Vice Chair Daruty encouraged the public to bring forward any issues they notice with other trees to staff.

Commissioner Archer was happy with the progress that has been made. He wanted to understand if the trees should be rated with a letter grade in order to see if progress is made throughout the year. Superintendent Pekar noted that would be an additional scope of work that would take place in the evaluations but felt that could be possible. Mr. Mann suggested a simple checklist could be drafted to show the progress.

Commissioner Hayes thanked the residents of Balboa Island for their hard work in protecting the trees. He encouraged the residents to raise their concerns about the patio heaters to the restaurants. He requested an update on the new trees that were planted and Superintendent Pekar answered that the new trees have grown approximately 3-feet. He shared that the watering of the mature trees, though the watering method would preferably be out away from the trees and the current method can cause runoff, the tree roots are still receiving sufficient water and that the drought initially affected the trees.

Commissioner Malouf loved the collaboration between the City and residents. She asked if there is a better way to water the trees. Also, she asked what is a good option for those trees where the grates do not fit them. Mr. Mann shared that tree grates are a popular solution and provided alternatives to grates to provide adequate space for the trunk.

Commissioner Granoff thanked Mr. Mann for his evaluation and for working with City staff and residents. He encouraged the City to have Mr. Mann do his evaluation again prior to future pruning as well as an evaluation done on the tree located at 312 Marine annually.

Commissioner Howald agreed that the collaboration between residents and staff was remarkable.

Chair Ignatin saw the new guidelines, pruning, tree well improvements and annual evaluations as a win for the community and supported all those recommendations.

After discussion, it was recommended that staff recommendation C be changed to read continue to monitor the tree at 312 Marine Avenue with reasonable health mitigation

measures and reevaluate it with Level Three Testing at the 3-year mark done by Mr. Mann.

Motion by Chair Ignatin, seconded by Commissioner Malouf to approve staff recommendation A, B, and C as stated. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

PB&R Commission / staff announcements/ Ad Hoc Committee updates or matters which Commissioner members would like placed on future agendas for further discussion (this is a non-discussion item).

Director Detweiler shared that summer camp registration has opened and over 1,600 campers have registered so far. The City is offering over 400 summer camps. In working with Commissioner Malouf, a new worn flag deposit box will be located in front of Mariners Library. The Grand Howald Park Renovation Project is on schedule and is scheduled to be completed in May of 2021. She recognized Commissioner Hayes for his accomplishment of winning the Overall Net Super Senior Champion award in a recent golf tournament. She shared that Commissioner Howald is nearing the end of his second term on the PB&R Commission and that the application process is open for his chair, and all of the City's Vacant Commission seats, and applications are due on May 15th, 2021. In conclusion, the next Commission meeting will be held in May of 2021.

Deputy Director Martin shared that City staff has started to move into summer mode, which includes increased trashed collection, trash pick up and other things. He announced that several events are coming up including the Shedding Waste Event on April 24, 2021, and the Compost Give Away event on June 5th, 2021.

Superintendent Pekar disclosed that an informal Arbor Day will take place on April 30th, 2021.

Commissioner Howald shared that Commissioner Archer and himself visited Grant Howald Park. He was impressed with the plaque that labeled local fish.

Commissioner Malouf announced that Chair Ignatin will be representing the Commission at Speak Up Newport on April 14th, 2021.

Chair Ignatin called for public comment.

Jim Mosher was pleased to hear that the compost event is coming back. He wanted to know what happens to the green waste that the City's landscape and tree contractors produce. He wondered if there is a program for residents to access that product and use it at their homes.

Chair Ignatin closed public comment.

Deputy Director Martin noted that there is an annual mulch event where residents can access products that is produced from the City's landscape and tree contractors. The

City also uses the products for new landscape projects. Superintendent Pekar added that all of the green products are recycled.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Public comments are invited on non-agenda items generally considered to be within the subject matter jurisdiction of the PB&R Commission. Speakers must limit comments to three (3) minutes. Before speaking, we invite, but do not require, you to state your name for the record. The Commission has the discretion to extend or shorten the speakers' time limit on non-agenda items, provided the time limit adjustment is applied equally to all speakers.

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT – 6:48 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Mariah Stinson, Administrative Support Specialist

Approved by: _____
Heather Ignatin, Chair