



County of Santa Cruz

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES

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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Monday, April 14th, 2025
5:00pm – 7:00pm
Regular Meeting

Simpkins Family Swim Center
Community Rooms
979 17th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Introductory Items

1. **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL** Meeting called to order at 5:06 PM.

Present: Alexis Konevich (District 1), Nick de Sieyes (District 2), Jeremy Sanford (District 3), Elizabeth Hernandez (District 4)

Vacant: District 5

Staff: Jeff Gaffney, Rebecca Hurley, Juan Perez Alvarez, Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha

2. **AGENDA MODIFICATIONS** No modifications.
3. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** 3 members of the public.

Mariah Roberts: Executive Director of County Park Friends (CPF). Voiced concerns about the rezoning of County parcels that are being proposed to the Board of Supervisors and importance of the Commission being involved in conversations.

Lynn Dunn: Spoke to concerns about ADA compliance in the Live Oak Library Annex.

Cynthia Denny: Chair of the Sierra Club. Introduced herself to the commission and spoke briefly about the committee's hopes of being more active in the community and involved with the Commission.

4. **ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA** (items 9-10) **Motion** to approve: Sanford/2nd: de Sieyes/All in favor.

Regular Agenda

5. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

District 1: Lots of communication happening in District 1. The issue of rezoning at Winkle Farm Park has come up. Lots of improvements in the local park and maintenance (bathroom painting, etc.).

District 2: Brand new to commission. Proud of progress made at the fields at Polo Grounds County Park.

District 3: Quiet, nothing to report.

District 4: Attended the Mesa Village beautification with Watsonville Wetlands Watch Participants got a fruit tree for participating, so there were around 60 people that attended. This volunteer event made the park more inviting.

District 5: Vacant

6. PARKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board (COAB) will be meeting for the first time on Wednesday, April 16th at 5:30p. We had over 500 kids participate in Spring Break programs. Getting ready to do fuel reduction work at the Miller Property. We are recruiting for the Park Planner position, hoping to have that filled within the next 4-6 weeks. Working on adding new pollinator gardens at Felton Discovery Park and considering other parks to do the same. This would help reduce water usage and create pollinator habitats. Starting outdoor recreation program at Quail Hollow. The Parks team remodeled the cottage to be used as an outdoor education center. In April there will be a ribbon cutting for the Polo Grounds Score board. The Hidden Beach restrooms are expected to be completed/open in May. Parks Staff received recognition by CPRS. We have started developing the Pace Wilderness Property. Jody McGraw is assisting training staff/volunteers on trail developments. The artwork at Ben Lomond Transfer Station was approved by the Board of Supervisors. The artists is making a humongous fungus made of "reclaimed materials."

7. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. ~~Oral~~ Presentation on Updated Parks Department Communications Plan – Sarah Shea, Parks Superintendent

Sarah Shea, Parks Superintendent, presented on the newly developed County Parks Communications Plan. The plan is still a work in progress, but it streamlines how and when information is shared with the public.

- **Commission Sanford:** *What do you need from the Commission? Advocacy to Supervisors or support, etc?* Getting the word out so the public knows where to find us and find information. Look at the Activity Guide and share the various programs with others.
- **Chair Konevich:** *Does the department ever need help sourcing content?* If you have an idea or story to share/highlight, please let staff know, so they can work to promote/share it and have feedback regarding what type of content others want to see.
- **Commissioner de Sienes:** *Suggested encouraging tagging County Parks on social media.*

8. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Discussion on the upcoming Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors hearings to remove Park Designations for parcels in Santa Cruz County.

Director Gaffney discussed the proposed rezoning for 47 parcels of land, 5 of which are currently designated as Parks/Open Space. This is a Public Hearing item being presented to the Board of Supervisors on April 29th, 2025. The Parks Department and Commission were not consulted regarding the proposed parcels.

- **Commissioner Sanford:** *Is Brommer Street County Park becoming housing?* No, it's a parcel at 7th and Brommer St.
- **Commissioner de Sienes:** *Can you expand on the few acres at Par Three that will continue to remain open space/park land?* There was a stipulation during the housing element that a previous district 2 Supervisor made sure that 2-4 acres of that parcel would stay public land (although it did not have to remain public land).
- **Commissioner Hernandez:** *What can the Commission do moving forward?* As a Commission, you could write a letter to the Board of Supervisors. Individually, you could talk to your District Supervisor.
- **Chair Konevich:** *Asked for clarification between County Parks owning land and/or a Parks designation on a parcel near Winkle Park.* County Parks owns the land adjacent to Winkle Park. The Par Three land is not County owned, but has a Parks designation, meaning it was intended to be developed into a park. *If land is owned by Parks, how can it be taken away/changed?* The land is owned by the County of Santa Cruz through the Parks Department. So the County can ultimately decide its use/designation. *As the Planning team of the Parks Department is built up, should the Master Plan be revisited and what advice/direction do you have for the Commission to help move that forward?* Becoming more engaged, meeting regularly with the Supervisor that appointed you, future meetings with Deputy Director Hurley. This would be a long-term project, so continuing to be engaged with the department and community.

Public comment: 4 members of the public.

- **Chair Konevich:** *Do impact fees from development go to certain parks?* Impact fees were updated in 2021-22 but were not able to be collected until recently so a backlog exists. The fees collected go all together in one “bucket” and are used throughout the County. The Board of Supervisors decides the spending of this money.
- **Commissioner de Sieyes:** *Is the County’s plan to rezone the parcel near Winkle Park and sell it to a developer for the Housing Element?* There are many scenarios that could play out, but selling is a harder process.

Motion to have Chair Konevich and Commissioner de Sieyes write a letter, in collaboration with Parks staff, that conveys the Commission’s concerns regarding rezoning parcels from Parks land: Sanford/2nd: Hernandez/All In favor

- b. Review, discuss, and assign Commissioners to 2024-25 Commission Work Plan goals... pages 19-20.

Commissioners reviewed the existing work plan, made changes to the wording on some goals, and reassigned members to each goal. The commission liaison was designated to make the changes and return the amended Work Plan to the Commission during the May meeting.

Motion to amend the existing work plan: de Sieyes/2nd: Sanford/All in favor.

Consent Agenda

Consent items include routine business that does not call for discussion. One roll call vote is taken for all items. Only a Commissioner may pull items from Consent to Regular Agenda. Members of the public must request that a Commissioner pull an item from the Consent Agenda prior to the start of the meeting.

9. Approve minutes from February 10th, 2025..... pages 3-4

10. Consider Reports:

- a. Aquatics Section Report..... page 5
- b. Maintenance Section Report..... pages 6-7
- c. Planning Section Report..... pages 8-12
- d. Recreation Section Report..... pages 13-14
- e. Reservations Section Report..... page 15
- f. Volunteer Section Report..... pages 16-18

Adjournment **Motion** to adjourn at 7:03 PM: Sanford/2nd: de Sieyes/All in favor.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:00 PM Monday, May 12th, 2025

Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms.

The County of Santa Cruz does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities. The Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms, located at 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA, are an accessible facility. If you are a person with a disability and wish to participate in the meeting and require special assistance in order to participate, please contact the Parks, Open Spaces, & Cultural Services Department at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting to make arrangements. Persons with disabilities may request a copy of the agenda in an alternative format.