



County of Santa Cruz

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES

979 17TH AVENUE, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95062

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JEFF GAFFNEY
DIRECTOR

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, April 13th, 2026
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 by Chair Konevich at 5:00 PM.

Present: Alexis Konevich (District 1), Nick de Sieyes (District 2), Jeremy Sanford (District 3), Elizabeth Hernandez (District 4) & Anne Less (District 5)

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

2. **AGENDA MODIFICATIONS** No modifications.
3. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** 1 member of the public.
4. **ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA** (items 9-10)

Approved consent agenda – Motion/Second: de Sieyes/Hernandez

AYES: 4
NOES: 0
ABSTAIN: 0
ABSENT: 1

Regular Agenda

5. **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

District 1: Acknowledged contentious Floral Park/Dirt Farm Park items and expressed appreciation for the passion Pleasure Point residents have for their parks. Shared excitement about additional parks receiving attention in the near future. Also noted that a member of the public collaborated with County Parks to organize a volunteer day at Anna Jean Cummings County Park.

District 2: Reported on the continued active use of County Park playing fields, with activity increasing as weather conditions improve. Observed hundreds of families utilizing the fields for soccer and other sports activities. Shared that maintaining park resources for public use was one of the reasons for joining the Commission. Also noted ongoing maintenance challenges due to a limited number of County pesticide applicators and gopher activity impacting playing fields. Expressed appreciation for seeing families actively using park resources.

District 3: Arrived late; no report provided.

District 4: Reported on the first Valle del Pájaro (VDP) Master Plan workshop, which emphasized community engagement, and noted a second workshop scheduled for May 2nd. Participated in habitat restoration and data collection efforts at Scott County Park in partnership with Watsonville Wetlands Watch. Additionally reported increased dumping and flood damage concerns along Paulsen Road.

District 5: Reported on the significant volunteer-led effort at Pace Trails, highlighting opportunities to connect people with free outdoor recreation space. Noted that the park consists entirely of trails. Also shared that construction on the Pump Track at Felton Covered Bridge County Park is expected to begin later this month. At Highlands County Park, soccer and softball seasons have brought high levels of use which presents challenges related to parking and restroom access that could be areas of opportunity.

6. PARKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Gaffney reported that the lap pool is temporarily closed due to a failed circulation pump, with repairs underway. He discussed impacts related to the hiring freeze, including reduced service levels, and noted staff continue working to provide services with existing resources. Updates were provided on the Poetry Scavenger Hunt across 16 County Parks, coastal access improvements and overnight accommodation planning at Greyhound Rock, and continued progress on the Rail Trail project, including parking lot development at Panther Beach and Davenport Landing. Director Gaffney also shared that volunteers would be recognized by the Board of Supervisors on April 14th, expressed appreciation for the AmeriCorps team assisting with the Pace Trail Project, and invited commissioners to participate in the May 9th Pitch In All-County Cleanup Day at Pinto Lake County Park. Additionally, he reported that approximately 30,000 vehicles entered five regional parks over the course of approximately one month, with data collection efforts planned to continue throughout the County park system.

7. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. **Draft County FY 2026-27 Budget Presentation** – Ryan Friedrich, Senior Admin Analyst, CEO

Senior Administrative Analyst Ryan Friedrich presented an overview of the Draft County FY 2026-27 Budget, including the County's current fiscal challenges, such as rising operational costs, reduced federal and state funding, and ongoing structural budget deficits. He provided an overview of the County's annual budget development process, explained how the County Parks budget is incorporated into the overall County budget, and discussed how ongoing fiscal challenges could impact the County Parks budget and department operations.

8. ACTION ITEMS

a. Approved names for the trails at the Pace Family Wilderness Park as proposed by County Parks staff – Motion/Second: Sanford/de Sieyes

AYES: 5
NOES: 0
ABSTAIN: 0
ABSENT: 0

Public Comment

- 4 members of the public.

b. Elect Nick de Sieyes as Commission Chair and Jeremy Sanford as Vice-Chair – Motion/Second: Less/Konevich

AYES: 5
NOES: 0
ABSTAIN: 0
ABSENT: 0

Scheduled Item – 06:00 P.M.

Scheduled Departmental item – 6:00 PM or thereafter

c. Approve amendment to the Floral County Park Master Plan to include a basketball court in lieu of the dog park – Motion/Second: Sanford/de Sieyes.

AYES: 5
NOES: 0
ABSTAIN: 0

ABSENT: 0

Public Comment

- 28 members of the public.

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 9th, 2026**..... page 7.
- 10. **Consider Reports:**
 - a. Aquatics Section Report..... page 10.
 - b. Arts and Cultural Services Report..... page 11.
 - c. Maintenance Section Report..... page 13.
 - d. Planning Section Report..... page 15.
 - e. Recreation Section Report..... page 20.
 - f. Reservations Section Report..... page 23.
 - g. Volunteer Section Report..... page 24.

Written Correspondence Listing

- I. Email from Anne Johannes – Floral Park
- II. Email from Dan Haifley – Item 8 (c) on 4/13/26 Parks Commission Agenda: Floral Park
- III. Email from David Schwartz – Floral Park
- IV. Emails and Letter from Greg Fontana – Mountain Lion
- V. Email from Kathy Welch - 1/2 Basketball Court at Floral Park/ 18 ft. statue at Dirt Farm
- VI. Email from L Solomon – Floral Park 1/2 basketball court
- VII. Email from Matthew Balkman – Support of the Basketball Court and Other Needed Projects
- VIII. Email from Nina Donna – Simpkins Family Swim Center
- IX. Email from Save Pleasure Point – April 13 Discussion
- X. Email from Steve Miller – Low Stem Time
- XI. Email from Surely Iam Love – Half Basketball Court at Floral Street Park

Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 7:44 PM.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:00 PM Monday, June 8th, 2026

Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms

LATE ADDITIONS – MON. APRIL 13

Written Correspondence Listing

- XII. Email from Amber Jones – Support half basketball court at Floral Park
- XIII. Email from Ashley Muller – Yes for half basketball court at Floral Park!
- XIV. Email from Derek Draper – Enhancing Pleasure Point Park: A Proposal for Our Local Youth
- XV. Email from Jeff McGee – Floral basketball park
- XVI. Email from Julie Howard – Concern Regarding Process and Proposed Amendment to Floral Park Master Plan
- XVII. Email from Kevin Keet – Basketball court at floral
- XVIII. Email from Phoenix O'Neill – Floral park
- XIX. Email from Terry Corwin – Floral Park Half Court Improvement
- XX. Email from Yolanda Garcia – Concerns Regarding Proposed Half Basketball Hoop at Flora Park