

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor Montgomery and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Geoff Dolan, City Manager

FROM: Richard Gill, Director of Parks and Recreation

DATE: October 21, 2008

During their regularly scheduled meeting on October 6, 2008, the Parks and Recreation Commission made a formal recommendation to the City Council requesting approval to seek permission from the School District for City Staff to conduct a feasibility study for the renovation of Ladera school field for passive recreation.

Please see the attached minutes for the discussion from the Commission that led to the recommendation. If City Council approves, staff would first seek permission from the School District before City Staff conducted a feasibility study for the Ladera school field.

Should City Council and the Manhattan Beach Unified School District want to pursue this project at this time, it should be agendaized for discussion and have the scope clarified. The project could range from minor clean up to a significant capital improvement project requiring a design consultant. Another option would be for City Council to ask the School Ad Hoc Committee to initially review the idea.

CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

October 6, 2008
6:30 P.M.

CONTENTS

	Page
08/1006.2 – Review of Dog Issues in the City of Manhattan Beach.....	1

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Cajka, Fitzpatrick, Gill, Harris, Murray, Nicholson and Rhodes

Absent: None

Others Present: Director of Parks and Recreation Richard Gill, Recreation Services Manager Idris J. Al-Oboudi and recording secretary Jane Grace

AGENDA CHANGES

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the August 25, 2008 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting were approved as written.

CEREMONIAL

None

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None

GENERAL BUSINESS

08/1006.2 – Review of Dog Issues in the City of Manhattan Beach

Mr. Al-Oboudi presented a summary of what has been done in the past several years regarding dog issues in the City of Manhattan Beach.

Mr. Al-Oboudi reported that in March 2004 City Council requested the formation of a dog committee to address dog issues (i.e. lack of recreational opportunities for dogs).

In October 2004, the dog committee presented a series of recommendation to the Parks and Recreation Commission:

- On-leash park walk-through paths in Live oak Park, Sand Dune Park and Parque Culiacan (Bruce’s Beach)

- Five small “neighborhood off-leash play areas (Dorsey Field, Water Tower and three on Veteran’s Parkway)

In November 2004, City Council approved three on-leash park walk-throughs and a dog run at Dorsey Field on a six month trial basis. Council suggested that the committee continue to look for additional locations.

In August 2005, Council approved park walk-throughs and Dorsey Field off-leash dog run as permanent.

In April 2006, the Marine Park Dog run was installed.

In January 2007, City Council requested the Parks and Recreation Commission to explore new walk-throughs.

In November 2007, with the direction of City Council, staff expanded the on-leash walk-through paths in Sand Dune Park to include the upper pathways and established an on-leash walk-through on the western-most path in Polliwog Park.

In November 2007, Bruce’s Beach Park dog access was opened. Staff presented a positive six-month progress report to City Council in July 2008 and an on-leash dog access to the western half of Bruce’s Beach park was made permanent.

Mr. Al-Oboudi reported that next on the agenda for the Community Dog Advisory Committee is:

1. Proposal to add a dog run on the southern end of the Veteran’s Parkway park
2. Investigating the possibility of expanding dog-on-leash areas in parks and pathways

Commissioner Nicholson inquired what new on-leash parks might be proposed. Mr. Al-Oboudi indicated that pathways in Polliwog Park have been discussed, with special stipulations during special events.

Commissioner Gill inquired how the Commission should proceed. Mr. Al-Oboudi indicated that the Committee will return to the Parks and Recreation Commission for discussions on dog access and dog runs. Once the dog committee and commission formulate an approach for steps to be taken, they will proceed with notification to the community. Community meetings would be conducted to get a consensus of what they would like to see; a proposal would be made to the Parks and Recreation Commission and, if approved, proposed to City Council.

Commissioner Harris indicated that she is interested in discussing a different approach, suggesting that some of the support from other groups in the city might best be generated through the Parks and Recreation Commission rather than from just one committee. Commissioner Harris reported that she has taken commissioners on tours of several suggested dog-run locations, i.e. Veteran’s parkway, Hobo Bridge, Water Tower, Polliwog Park and Ladera Elementary School.

Commissioner Harris reported on the following meetings and discussions she has had with various groups:

- Councilmember Nick Tell suggested that the Commission check with the School District, within the context of the City taking over the Ladera site to insure a well maintained area with, of course, neighborhood support.
- Superintendent Bev Roher indicated that Ladera School has been identified on the School Board's list of surplus property but has not considered any of the properties. Ms. Roher suggested that the City discuss the property with the School Board members.
- School Board Member Amy Howorth indicated that, ideally, the issue should go to the City so that the City would lease the property from the School District since the District cannot afford to maintain it. They would like to see the City maintain it as a passive space.
- Roger Cox, Leadership Manhattan and Rotary, and John York both indicated an interest in establishing a community garden at the Ladera site.
- Botanical Garden and Grandview representatives have indicated an interest in establishing a botanical garden at the Ladera site.
- Eagle Scouts have indicated interest in using the Ladera site for an Eagle Scout Project.

Commissioner Harris indicated that she is not suggesting that the dog committee not be involved in this project, but suggested that it has become bigger than just a dog run and other players could be involved.

Mr. Gill reported that groups that have inquired about using the site (i.e. Little League and AYSO) were told that accessibility would have to be provided and the site would have to be ADA compliant.

During a discussion among the Commissioners, the following points were made:

- Commissioner Nicholson suggested that there would be adequate parking in the Sand Dune/Ladera area
- Commissioner Nicholson suggested that the Ladera site would be ideal for a nice size off-leash dog area and a small community garden
- Commissioner Harris suggested that the idea of combining several community needs in one space sounded favorable
- Commissioner Gill suggested that the area is large enough to use for multi-uses, i.e. community garden and dog run
- Commissioner Cajka suggested that the Ladera site would be good for multi use and suggested that the Commission explore what requirements would be needed to proceed with the project
- Commissioner Murray reported that the American Kennel Club has recommended that one acre of land or more is required for a dog run

- Commissioner Rhodes inquired whether the City should get approval from the neighborhood before going to City Council

Marty Friedman, F.I.D.O., suggested that the Ladera neighborhood is sensitive to change and the City should definitely check on the feasibility of the project before going to the neighborhood.

Sue Harrington, near 23rd and the Strand, indicated that dog owners are grateful for any space and don't require anything more than basic and simple.

Mr. Gill reported that City Council approval would be required for City Engineers to provide estimates/costs of improving the site to determine the feasibility of the project.

A motion was made to City Council to request staff to determine the feasibility of developing passive recreation amenities at Ladera School. (MSC: Nicholson/Cajka; Unanimous)

OTHER COMMISSION BUSINESS

Commissioner Murray reported that the City of Manhattan Beach hosted a California Parks and Recreation Society Board meeting in October where Mr. Al-Oboudi presented a video highlighting the Parks and Recreation Department. She suggested that the board is a great resource for our city and encouraged all the Commission to attend the board meetings.

Commissioner Fitzpatrick thanked Idris Al-Oboudi, Richard Gill and the entire Parks and Recreation Department staff for making the Movie Night happen. She reported that it was a fabulous and successful event and heard only positive input from those who attended. Commissioner Murray thanked Commissioner Fitzpatrick for the original suggestion for Movie Night on the Beach.

Commissioner Nicholson thanked staff for a lovely evening at the Chivas event at Home Depot. Mr. Al-Oboudi reported that the City is exploring a long term alliance with Chivas which will benefit our youth program.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.