

CITY OF OAKLAND
AGENDA REPORT

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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
OAKLAND

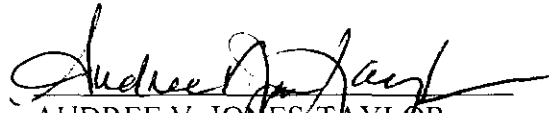
2005 JAN 13 PM 8:20

TO: Office of the City Administrator
ATTN: Deborah Edgerly
FROM: Office of Parks and Recreation
DATE: January 25, 2005

RE: **ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY
COMMISSION**


Attached is the annual report provided by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission. A representative from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission will be available to answer questions.

Respectfully Submitted,


AUDREE V. JONES-TAYLOR
Director, Office of Parks and Recreation

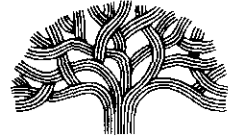
Attachment

FORWARD TO THE
LIFE ENRICHMENT COMMITTEE


OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Item No. _____
Life Enrichment Committee
January 25, 2005

CITY OF OAKLAND



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January 25, 2005

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Life Enrichment Committee
Oakland City Council

Subject: Annual Report of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

To Chairperson Chang and Members of the Committee:

This is the annual report of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) to the City Council covering the period from January 2004 to December 2004.

In accordance with the Committee's recommended guidelines, this report addresses the budget issues as they relate to the Commission's activities and duties.

With the addition of four new commissioners and a new Director of Parks and Recreation, the composition and focus of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission has been significantly revamped. We are pleased with the performance of the new director, and she has worked closely with the commission to implement the vision of OPR, and the new commissioners are committed to engage the park user groups and to reach out to non-user constituents of the parks and facilities.

Some of the significant issues we have addressed are:

1. **Public-private partnerships:** PRAC has supported efforts by the Department to partner with private entities to assist in the operation and/or maintenance of park facilities or programs. For example, the Commission has approved the concept of Girls Incorporated to use Concordia Park, and recently voiced support for the Ray and Joan Kroc Foundation proposal for Ira Jinkins Recreation Center. In addition, the Commission has closely followed the progress of the City's contract negotiations with the Zoological Society and Children's Fairyland, Inc., as well as the RFP extended to prospective concessionaires at City Stables.

Budgetary implication: We believe that strong partnerships with capable nonprofit organizations have the potential to allow the City to both save money and to provide more effective programs, and encourage the City to explore further opportunities. Services and programs that have been economic burdens in the past can be reduced through partnerships with committed and capable organizations such as Camps in Common for Feather River Camp and Jack London Aquatic Center, Inc.

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2. Fee waivers/co-sponsorship requests: PRAC has received and considered numerous requests for fee waivers and/or co-sponsorship requests from nonprofit organizations seeking to use Oakland parks and recreation facilities at a reduced or subsidized rate. This is a controversial issue, and PRAC is re-evaluating its co-sponsorship policy in order to ensure fair and consistent application of the rule in a way that will not lead to wholesale approval to every worthy local organization.

Budgetary implication: When groups are permitted to use facilities at a reduced or subsidized fee, the City loses money, and PRAC is sensitive to potential lost funds. However, the commission also recognizes that events by certain worthy nonprofits add to the quality of life among Oakland residents, and that some of these events would be truncated or eliminated if the full fee were required. We continue to evaluate the policy, and expect to recommend a revised policy by Spring 2005.

3. Sale of items in parks: Several organizations that have reserved park space or facilities have requested permission to sell arts and crafts items and/or commercial merchandise in the parks as a way to raise money for the organizations. The Commission's policy is to oppose for-profit sales, but to permit the sale of arts and craft items unique to the organization or event. PRAC is evaluating this policy to determine whether to charge a fee for such sales.

Budgetary implication: The City can raise money by requiring a fee or percentage of sales from items sold in the park. The Commission remains opposed to the sale of strictly commercial items, such as T-shirts and CDs, on public land.

4. Use of Oakland Parks: PRAC consistently addresses plans, requests or proposals regarding the use of Oakland parks and facilities. For example, ODOG has appealed to PRAC to endorse the establishment of another dog park in Oakland, in addition to the sole dog park at Hardy Park. The Oakland Rotary has proposed putting a clock tower at Lake Merritt to commemorate its centennial. The Commission has received updates on the waterfront pathway under development. As the Commission considers the requests, we attempt to balance the desires of the applicants with the needs of potentially competing user groups, in order to benefit the greatest number of park users, including those who do not frequently use the park but who may be enticed to visit the parks more often.

Budgetary implication: Questions regarding the use of parks have little, if any, increased financial costs to the City. There is a potential for increased maintenance costs associated with new uses. However, maintenance costs would be a precondition to approval for any organization seeking to use a park in a particular way.

5. OPR/PWA Realignment: In the past, PRAC has advocated that the Department of Parks and Recreation remain intact, while shifting responsibility for median strips to Public Works. The view of the Commission was that OPR was better suited to respond to public complaints and to maintain the parks and facilities. Since the realignment, PRAC will continue to monitor the performance of the Department, and continue to advocate for better maintenance

of our facilities. In addition, PRAC assumes that it will continue to have jurisdiction to hear tree appeals under the Protected Tree Ordinance.

Budgetary implication: The Commission has not reviewed any data to suggest whether realignment costs money or saves money. As such, it is still too early to draw any conclusions, and PRAC has no view on the budgetary implications.

6. PRAC Retreat: The commissioners held a one-day retreat on Saturday, October 23, 2004, to orient new commissioners and to assess the long-term direction of the Commission. At the retreat, the Commissioners committed to reaching out to the community by becoming more involved in the recreation center advisory councils, and holding public PRAC committee meetings more frequently. The Commissioners believe that public ownership and involvement is key to improving the condition of the parks and facilities, and that PRAC can serve as a conduit between the Department, City Council and members of the public.

7. Finally, PRAC continues to address the ongoing issues that it has faced over the years, including cutbacks in maintenance leading to dirty, unsafe and unattractive facilities; protecting Oakland's trees, especially natives, through careful interpretation of the PTO; and review of the Integrated Pest Management Policy.

Budgetary implications: PRAC believes that the Department has been understaffed and under-funded for several years, and the problems are mounting. We believe that safe, welcoming parks in all of our neighborhoods is a significant quality of life issue, that it will take additional resources to improve the system, and that a budget increase may be necessary. In the alternative, PRAC believes that a re-evaluation of the IPM policy, specifically to fill the vacant position of IPM compliance officer, which is mandated under the ordinance, and, further, to explore limited use of herbicide spraying may offset the need for increased funding for gardeners and grounds crews.

Respectfully submitted,



Matthew J. Webb, Chair
Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

**PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
ATTENDANCE REPORT - 2004**

Commissioners: Abad, Armendariz, Hahn, Juarez, Magid, Nelson, Ricards, Tate (resigned), Taylor, Tong, Webb

	ABAD	ARMENDARIZ APPT. 5/4/04	HAHN	JUAREZ	MAGID	NELSON	RICARDS APPT. 7/6/04	TATE APPT. 5/4/04 RESIGN 11/04	TAYLOR APPT. 5/4/04	TONG	WEBB
1/14/04 - D, NQ											
2/11/04	P		A	A	P	P				P	P
3/10/04	P		P	P	P	P				P	P
4/14/04 - NQ	P		A	A	P	A				A	P
5/12/04	P	P	P	P	P	P		P	P	P	P
6/9/04	P	P	A	P	P	A		A	P	P	P
7/14/04	P	A	P	P	A	A	P	P	P	A	P
9/8/04	P	P	A	P	A	P	P	P	A	P	P
10/13/04	P	P	A	A	P	P	P	A	P	A	P
11/10/04	P	A	P	A	P	P	P	resign	P	P	P
12/8/04	P	P	A	P	P	A	P		P	A	P
present / total meetings	10/10	5/7	4/10	6/10	8/10	6/10	5/5		6/7	6/10	10/10

Note: Meetings are every second Wednesday. No meeting in August.

Key:

P present

A absent, including excused absences

D meeting deferred

NQ no quorum

Rosa Armendariz appointed 5/4/04

Brad Ricards appointed 5/4/04

Ben Tate appointed 5/4/04 resigned 11/04

Jeffrey Taylor appointed 5/4/04