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# AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Sabrina B. Landreth  
City Administrator

**FROM:** J. Nicholas Williams  
Director, Parks, Recreation  
& Youth Development  
Department

**SUBJECT:** Report from the Parks and Recreation  
Advisory Commission

**DATE:** February 16, 2018

City Administrator Approval

Date:

3/1/18

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report From The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This informational report from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) contains an update on PRAC activities during the 2017 calendar year.

## ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Receive an informational report from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Dana Riley, Assistant Director at 510-238-6495.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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J. Nicholas Williams  
Director, Parks, Recreation & Youth  
Development Department

Prepared by:  
Dana Riley, Assistant Director  
Parks, Recreation & Youth Development  
Department, Administration

Attachments (1): A - Report from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

Item: \_\_\_\_\_  
Life Enrichment Committee  
March 13, 2018

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL  
FROM THE OAKLAND PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**MANDOLIN KADERA-REDMOND, CHAIR**

**February 2018**

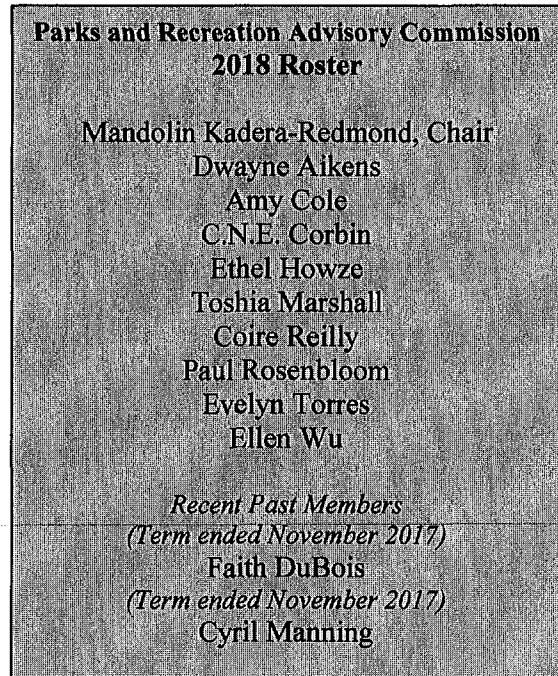
**Introduction**

For nearly five decades, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) has advised the City Council on the management of parks and delivery of recreational services in Oakland. PRAC's enabling legislation requires that the Commission provide periodic status reports to the City Council. As newly appointed Chair of the Oakland Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC), it is my pleasure to submit this report on PRAC's activities during calendar year 2017.

PRAC made firm commitments in 2017 through committees and citywide task forces to update policies and recommend procedures to include equity and shared efforts and resources. We aim to work collaboratively with individuals and organizations to enhance the assets, increase access, safety and mentorship in the City of Oakland park system.

PRAC is currently operating with 10 members. The current Commission includes three members appointed in 2012, two members appointed in 2015, and three members appointed in 2016 and two appointed in 2017. We are currently reviewing candidates for current and upcoming vacancies. PRAC meetings take place on the second Wednesday of each month at 4:30 PM at the Marsha J. Corprew Garden Center in Lakeside Park. PRAC's monthly agenda covers a broad range of business items, including the permitting of special events in parks, collection of funds on-site for such events, permitting of capital improvements and new facilities, tree removal permit appeals, and commemorative naming of benches and other park facilities. PRAC meetings also provide an opportunity for Commissioners and the public to discuss important policy issues relating to open spaces, parks and recreation in Oakland.

We consider our partnership with Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development (OPRYD) staff, The Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation and the public necessary in order to provide the quality services and community involvement for a safe and successful park environment.



## **Park Improvements Considered by PRAC**

One of PRAC's most important functions is to review and evaluate proposed improvements to Oakland's parks and facilities. PRAC makes recommendations to the Oakland Planning Department on major and minor conditional use permits for a variety of facilities, and its hearings are the primary opportunity for public comment on these open spaces, park structures and facilities.

Between January and December 2017, the Commission convened hearings for the following improvements: Conditional Use Permit for Phase 2 ADA Improvements at Woodminster Amphitheater, Conditional Use Permit for FROG Park improvements to existing playground, Informational Report on Sausal Creek Erosion Control Restoration Project in Dimond Canyon Park, Friend of Sausal Creek (FOSC) Report \$540,000 grant from California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Urban Streams Restoration Program funded by Proposition 84, Minor Conditional Use Permit for Peralta Hacienda Historical Park Phase 4A improvement project and Final Development Permit (FDP) for Brooklyn Basin additional acres for new park space.

In addition to major changes to park facilities PRAC also approved great examples of innovative collaboration with Friends of Sausal Creek, Oakland Trails, Oakland Park Patrol and Eagle Scout candidates and volunteer network. Results include trail switchback improvements, trail safety fencing and gate installation and Redwood restoration in Dimond and Joaquin Miller Parks as well as trail naming at various locations in the Joaquin Miller Park/Dimond Canyon trail system.

PRAC provided a space for feedback for updates to citywide park signs to be more inclusive and inviting.

## **Collection of Funds**

Much of PRAC's regular agenda involves reviewing requests from organizations to sell goods or collect money in Oakland parks. These activities, which include concerts and performances, fund-raising events by non-profits, community gatherings, local festivals and cultural events, require PRAC approval under the Oakland Municipal Code 12.64.080. The funds collected at park events typically cover donations, entry fees, food and beverage concessions, and local vendor sales.

## **Special Events**

In 2017, PRAC considered requests for 31 special events. These events included 10 fundraising walks or runs around Lake Merritt. Each Run/Walk generated charitable donations to promote health, fitness, education, the arts, and the well-being of Oakland children and families. PRAC also conducted hearings and approved requests for popular community events of various themes.

## **Organizations, Themes and Community Groups**

Marketplace at Splashpad Park, 350 Bay Area Climate Education Rally at Lake Merritt Boulevard Amphitheatre, PRF BBQ at Mosswood, Cool Water Event at Jack London Aquatic Center, Burger Boogaloo Weekend Music Festival at Mosswood Park, Vegefest at Lake Merritt Boulevard Amphitheatre, SoOakland Cultural Exchange at Garden Center, Eastside Art Alliance

Malcolm X Jazz Festival at San Antonio Park, Oakland Carnival at Mosswood Park, Ador of Hope Fundraising event at Jack London Aquatic Center, McClymonds Action Committee Annual Reunion at DeFremery Park, Youth Speaks Life is Living Community Event at DeFremery Park, Oakland Black Cowboys Association 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Festival and Parade at DeFremery Park, Bay Area Black Market Community Marketplace at Lakeside Garden Center to benefit Ador of Hope, Afrocentric Oakland 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Oak Fam Bam Gathering at Lake Merritt Boulevard Amphitheatre to benefit Pan African Festival held annually for free at Mosswood Park, Jamaican American Association of Northern California Picnic at Joaquin Miller Park, San Francisco Mime Troup event at Lakeside Park, Oakland Movement Fitness Festival held at Lakeside Park Pergola to benefit The Men Touring Project, Global Communication Service and the East Oakland Collective, Beers Without Borders Music Festival at Lake Merritt Boulevard Amphitheatre benefit, St. Mary's College, Off the Grid, US Marine Corps, Alameda Point Partners, USS Hornet Museum, Youth Adolescents Coming Together basketball event at Brookdale Teen Center, Autumn Lights Festival, Lake Merritt Rowing Club Regatta at Lake Merritt Sailboat House, Queer Gym Community Event at Lakeside Park Pergola, Native Plant Nursery Plant Sale at Joaquin Miller Park, Iron Souls Motorcycle Club 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Holiday Party, Rebuild Together Oakland Fundraiser at Lake Merritt Sailboat House, The California Dragonboat Association 21<sup>st</sup> annual event at Lakeside Park and Sailboat House, and Redwood Heights Elementary School PTA fundraiser at Joaquin Miller Park Community Center.

### **Run/Walk**

Oakland Running Festival at Eastshore Park, Native American Health Run at Lakeside Park, National Multiple Sclerosis Society at Lakeside Park Bandstand, Hemophilia Foundation of Northern California walk at Lakeside Park Pergola, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention walk at Lakeside Park Pergola, Eastbay Agency for Children walk at Lakeside Park, Hip Hop Run at Lakeside Park Bandstand, Spectrum Queer Media 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Oakland Pride Run and Expo at Lake Merritt Boulevard Amphitheatre, East Bay Front Runners and Walkers Run/Walk at Lake Merritt Boulevard Amphitheatre, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Bay Area Run/Walk at Lake Merritt Boulevard Amphitheatre.

As in years past, Lake Merritt has been the site of most of the special events coming to PRAC. Mosswood, DeFremery, and San Antonio parks also experience very high levels of demand. The PRAC hearing process provides an important forum for discussing event-related issues such as public safety, restrooms, and traffic. PRAC does not simply "rubber stamp" events - the Commission spends time with each applicant at its hearings to avoid potential conflicts, mitigate concerns, ensure good park stewardship, and create success for event organizers, participants, and the City of Oakland.

## **Review of Plans and Programs**

The PRAC reviewed reports providing details on:

- Policy Recommendation Report on Dogs in Oakland parks, an industry study concluding in recommendations of best practices to address policy and process for future dog play areas.
- 2016 Community Report Card on the State of Maintenance in Oakland Parks presented by Susan Montauk of the Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation.
- OSCAR presentation by Barry Miller, OSCAR contributor and past PRAC Chair, for understanding long term obligations to the city, the citizens and open spaces.

## **Liaisons to the Community**

Each PRAC Commissioner serves as an ambassador to the community. Commissioners are assigned the role of liaison to recreation centers across the city. Commissioners meet with Recreation Center Directors, Recreation Advisory Councils, and “Friends” organizations to listen, advocate, and report back to PRAC on outstanding issues. Our Commissioners also serve as liaisons to the Oakland Zoo, Dunsmuir House and Gardens, Oakland Unified School District, Rotary Nature Center, sports and athletics interest groups, boating and aquatics groups, and local community gardens.

PRAC continued its commitment to build strategic approaches to park programming and maintenance funding in 2017. Recognizing the individual talents and skills of Commissioners, loyal members of the Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation, Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development staff and PRAC focused efforts in committees and task force groups outside of regular public meeting have provided actionable results.

PRAC Commissioners also advocate for parks and recreation at special events and meetings, both at the neighborhood level and citywide. Individual Commissioners participated in meetings relating to public safety, budgeting, development, equity, and other topics to ensure that parks have a seat at the table, and that the unmet needs of Oakland parks are not forgotten.

Commissioners assist City staff in marketing, social media, meeting facilitation, and direct communication with constituents and user groups. Several Commissioners have served on citywide task forces.

## **Tree Appeals**

The Oakland Municipal Code designates PRAC as the appeal body for non-development related tree removal permits and City-owned tree removal permits. The property owner or adjacent property owner may appeal staff’s decision to allow or deny a tree removal permit application. In such instances, PRAC weighs staff’s recommendation against the case made by the appellant. There were no tree appeals heard in 2017.

We believe it is important that the dialogue continues on the value of trees and Oakland’s urban forest is more broadly recognized. In this spirit, we believe the Council should consider creating a separate hearing body for tree appeals comprised of arborists and landscape professionals.

### **Commemorative Naming and Naming Rights**

PRAC is charged with considering requests for the commemorative naming of benches, recreational facilities, trails, and other park features. In 2017, the Commission approved commemorative naming of 4 benches and the installation of several commemorative plaques. With support from Neighborhood Improvement Association PRAC dedicated a grove in The Glenn W. Daniel/King Estate Open Space Park in memory of Clyde Grimes Junior.

PRAC's role has focused on commemorative naming rather than the use of naming rights and sponsorship to generate a much-needed revenue source for the OPRYD department. A task force was formed and the solidifying members of the naming rights task force, working in collaboration with OPRYD staff and the Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation made a firm committed to address the issue. PRAC members recognize the importance of having clear guidelines for raising money through sponsorships, gifts in kind, and naming rights. At the same time, the Commission is sensitive to public perceptions that parks and recreational facilities are "for sale" to the highest bidder. Looking forward, PRAC is prepared to work to form the future naming rights policies and procedures. PRAC can serve as a hearing body for final recommendations of new guidelines, insuring they are vetted before being forwarded to the City Council.

### **Policy Issues**

During the last year PRAC has continued to stretch its role as a policy advisory body, assisting City staff and the Council on several key issues identified below.

### **Park Rules and the Regulation of Sound and Permitted Events**

Working with OPRYD staff, a PRAC task force began meeting regularly to rewrite various sections of the OMC relating to park use rules and regulations including topics such as grilling, bicycles in parks, and limits on amplified sound. PRAC convened a public hearing on proposed changes to the OMC in September 2016, and its Park Rules Task Force convened a follow-up hearing in November. More than 35 people spoke at each hearing. Much of the focus was on drumming at Lake Merritt—the conversation was emblematic of broader community concern about displacement, gentrification, and the loss of Oakland's cultural heritage. PRAC is still working with the community to achieve a balance between the right to cultural expression and the desire of neighbors for quiet. Our public hearings have been notable for the respectful and civil quality of the dialogue. We are listening to all perspectives and are committed to achieving workable outcomes.

### **Equity**

PRAC frequently engages in discussions of social equity, particularly with respect to its review of new specific plans, capital projects, and public safety. The Commission strives for greater investment in parks serving low income communities and communities of color, and seeks to improve access to recreational and cultural services across the city. Oakland's parks play a critical role in youth development and public safety. At the same time, parts of the city are critically deficient in park acreage and recreational facilities. While Commissioners are generally

supportive of programs to improve park security (through measures such as gates and volunteer patrols), such changes must not be exclusionary or make parks feel less welcoming. PRAC also seeks humane approaches to addressing homelessness in parks, an issue of growing concern to all of us.

### **The Strategic Action Parks Coalition**

The Coalition is a partnership between the Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development, The Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission to create and foster a park system for Oakland that is safe, inclusive and well-maintained. The park environment respects the history and culture of the various communities while protecting and improving the City's assets (parks, facilities and open spaces). Oakland Parks will provide equitable programs and services, promote the overall health, wellness and well-being of all Oaklanders and adopts climate change/severe weather strategies for the future.

### **Looking Toward the Future**

Oaklanders love their parks. As Parks and Recreation Commissioners, we see firsthand that parks make life better in Oakland. At each Commission hearing, our parks are described as places of refuge, joy, peace, and celebration. When the Golden State Warriors won their championships, Oakland celebrated at Lake Merritt Park. Parks are shelter to the houseless, and public restroom heavy use, and host to many cultural events. Our parks show the impact of the amount of love our parks endure.

As Parks and Recreation Commissioners, we embrace our role as park advocates and champions. We will continue to push for increased funding, more robust partnerships, and greater awareness of the value of parks and recreation in our City. We recognize that Oakland faces many urgent priorities. But too often we have seen park needs pushed down the priority list as funds are steered toward other critical needs such as housing and transportation. Investing in our community means investing in the common grounds that connect our neighborhoods and bring us together. More funding is needed for park maintenance, recreation and youth development staff, sports facilities and recreational centers, park safety, land acquisition, recreation programming, and strategic planning.

There is much to be done. PRAC stands ready to assist the Mayor and City Council as Oakland faces new opportunities and challenges in the coming year.

### **This report is dedicated In Memory to**

Anne Woodell, in Celebration of her life and long advocacy to parks statewide and City of Oakland Park, Recreation And Youth Development.