



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Mel Pincus, 1st District
Marico C. Enriquez, 2nd District
Neil Merrilees, 3rd District
Vacant, 4th District
Michael J. Cooney, 5th District
Henry Ruehl, Youth Commissioner

County Office Building
555 County Center, 5th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063
(650) 599-1393
Brenda Bennett, Clerk
www.eparks.net
www.sanmateocountyparks.org

Parks and Recreation Commission Special Meeting*

Thursday, March 7, 2013

2:30 p.m.

Board of Supervisors' Chambers
400 County Center, Redwood City

MINUTES

Chair Cooney called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call

Commissioners: Cooney (Chair), Enriquez, Merrilees (Vice Chair), Pincus, Ruehl (Youth)

Chair Cooney welcomed Supervisors Horsley and Pine, Board of Supervisors Parks Subcommittee.

Staff: Bennett, Duran, Herzberg, Lockman, Lombardi, Mendez, Porter, Schoof, Scott

3. Oral Communications

There was none.

4. Action Items

A. Review and Make Recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on the Draft San Mateo County Parks Strategic Plan**

Director Porter presented a PowerPoint on the Parks Strategic Plan. He referred to the Parks' Mission Statement and noted that the San Mateo County Parks system had its start in the dedication of Memorial Park on July 4, 1924. He noted that the Parks system receives 1.7 million visitors a year. He said the County's Parks system was unique and blessed with the ocean to the west, the Bay to the east, San Bruno Mountain to the north, and Memorial Park redwoods to the south. He said this

presented great diversity in ecosystems and varied opportunities for people to enjoy the outdoors. He said the Bay side of the County was typically urbanized and the Parks' system has roughly 16,000 acres available to the public. He said both the Bay Trail and Coastal Trail run through the County. He said County Parks system offers both the open space and recreational experience as well as areas of biological significance including endangered species such as the Bay Checkerspot butterfly and the San Mateo thornmint. He said that County Parks could not accomplish what it does without the support of its Friends groups and volunteers.

Director Porter said the first thing done in developing the Parks Strategic Plan was to do work with staff on a SWOT analysis (SWOT stands for "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats"). He said they looked at how Parks were operating now and how they would like them to be operated if they had the resources. He noted strengths of the Parks system including lands, staff, partnerships, and resources such as grants management and the website. He said the needs for the Parks system included opening several closed parks, maintaining facilities and additional natural resources management. He noted the importance of fuel load reduction management noting the adjacency of parks to urban or developed areas. He said other areas that they wanted to address were formal interpretive and educational programs and enhancing staff training. He said that additional funding was needed to address deferred maintenance, capital projects backlog, and replacement of aging equipment.

Director Porter said to engage the public and community in the Plan development, an online survey was sent to anyone who had made a park reservation, to all volunteers and Friends groups, and through the County newsletter. He said there were over 2,000 respondents, who provided input on what they would like to have prioritized in the County Parks system over the next five years. He said to the credit of staff numerous respondents indicated they thought the parks were in good shape. He said there was great interest in volunteer programs. He said the top four community ranked priorities were: recreation opportunities, environmental protection programs, interpretive and education programs, and volunteer programs and community engagement. He said from the information received from the internal and external outreach, three goals and strategies were identified for the Parks Five-Year Strategic Plan: Stewardship, Environmental Literacy, and Community Engagement. He said the Plan has over 25 goals and reviewed the high level goals of the Plan.

Director Porter reviewed the four key steps to implement the Plan and the milestones for each. Under Stewardship, the actions would be to open currently closed facilities, create vegetation management and fuel load crew, restore service levels, perform necessary maintenance work, create and fill a Natural Resources Manager position, and add field staff to enhance operations and provide important safety and emergency response functions. Under Environmental Literacy, the action would be development of a formal interpretive and education program. Under Community Engagement, the action would be to expand volunteer opportunities and formalize partnerships with our Friends groups; and under Resources, the actions would be to explore revenue generating activities, re-evaluate concession agreements, update business systems for

online service delivery, and develop marketing and communications strategies. He said the latter was crucial so that the Parks system was less dependent upon the general fund and could weather cyclical downturns in the economy more robustly. He said milestones were developed to measure success of the implementation of the Plan, and noted that it was funding dependent and staffed at sustainable levels. He said funding would be sought from a variety of sources to move the Plan forward. He reviewed the milestones proposed for year one, the midterm of years two through four, and long term or year five.

Questions of Staff: Supervisor Horsley said the Capital Budget showed \$9 to \$10 million in projects, and asked how much of that was funded. Director Porter said some of the year one projects had been funded but years two through five were not funded. Superintendent Lockman said there was a backlog of approximately \$18 million in projects and staff was updating the deferred maintenance list. He said there was \$20 million aggregate needed for the Five Year Plan. Supervisor Horsley asked about funding approved for FY 2012-13. Park Superintendent Lockman said for the current fiscal year capital projects of \$8 million were funded including Devil's Slide, Alpine Trail, and Memorial Park water and sewer treatment. Supervisor Horsley asked about the status of the Memorial Park water and sewer treatment process noting Supervisor Pine and he had worked to get \$1 million into the current budget for that work. Director Porter said a Request for Proposals for professional consulting services was conducted for several disciplines, of which sewer and water treatment was one. He said Bracewell Engineering, Inc. was maintaining the water systems in Pescadero and La Honda. He said Parks staff was getting proposals from the same company on design and environmental work necessary on the sewer and water systems. Supervisor Horsley said emergency response was mentioned and asked what was currently available in the parks and what training ranger staff gets. Superintendent Lockman said the rangers receive annual first aid and CPR training and some training with other responding emergency service providers. He said staff treats simple injuries like bee stings, scrapes, falls, and initial response for heart attacks. He said depending on what was required another responder would be called.

Supervisor Horsley asked for example of independent sources of financing. Director Porter said the Department was looking at two different areas. He said they were reevaluating the fee schedules and looking at enhancing donation opportunities either through the website or in the field. He said there were other areas they would like to explore. He said once the Sheriff completed the jail project, staff would discuss with that office whether an existing but closed medium security facility in the La Honda area might be used as some camping type resource. He said the other opportunity area they were looking at was Coyote Point Recreation Area. He said an upcoming project would restore the Promenade at that park and allow opportunities for concessions, such as windsurfing, kiteboarding, and snack bars. He said there was community desire for the Rifle Range to be removed from the park. Supervisor Horsley said he had tried for many years to find another location for that facility. He said there was mention of Frisbee golf. Director Porter said there was a group that had contacted parks about doing such a course, primarily at Junipero Serra Park in San Bruno. He said neighbors

did not want disk golf there. He said there were varying opinions overall on what should be done in the parks system,

Commissioner Enriquez asked about safety standards. Director Porter said the Department and Division had developed a variety of standards for facilities including trails and buildings, which were mostly related to facilities type work. He said staff operates water and sewer treatment plants in Memorial Park with service levels and standards more regulated by state and federal agencies. Commissioner Enriquez asked if the public or Commission would be provided a list of failing infrastructure. Director Porter said there was a list of all facilities and the levels of service. Superintendent Lockman said that evaluation has been made on several levels. He said Parks participates in Facility Condition Index System (FCIS), a Public Works countywide program that looks at all the elements of a building. He said Parks has maintenance standards including graffiti abatement and customer complaint responses. He said also there were general safety standards, and long term considerations such as how long work might be deferred

Chair Cooney said standards for sewer and water treatment were very stringent and costly to comply with. He asked about the water delivery system at Memorial Park. Superintendent Lockman said it was a contained system in which water was taken, treated and distributed by the Park. He said wastewater was collected and treated onsite. Chair Cooney asked if there was an agency nearby that could provide water service. Director Porter said there was not and noted the Park used a 500,000 gallon water tank, which had collapsed. He said temporary 10,000 gallon tanks were being used, which could not continue. He said those systems were located fairly close to La Honda and Pescadero. He said a certified operator was required for water and sewer treatment plants. He said there was one operator and Bracewell was providing backup. He said other entities they have approached were not interested in collaborating on a joint systems operation.

Commissioner Pincus asked if the costs associated with implementing the Plan were based on current costs or projected. Director Porter said it was based on current costs, and that the CPI over the past five years had remained fairly flat.

Commissioner Pincus said there was mention of increasing staff in the field. He asked how the projects could be implemented without increasing internal staff. Director Porter said they were recommending a high level natural resources position to oversee the natural assets the County has. He said they discussed adding a planner position noting there was currently one planning person overseeing programs who was fairly overwhelmed and not able to do the volume of work that they currently have. He said internally they have discussed a position similar to a construction manager. He said currently the Department relied on the Engineering and Capital Projects sections to manage projects. He said they would like to expand the volunteer program. He said the existing volunteer program coordinator does a yeoman job but if they were to enhance the program and do marketing, more support was needed. He said the intent was to make sure the field was adequately staffed and facilities and staffing brought up

to a good level of service. He said in parallel they would like to strengthen the office staff to manage the many programs, enhance the community outreach and the volunteer program, and accomplish the goals in the Plan well.

Commissioner Pincus said projects often were delayed because of the red tape between agencies. He said the County might consider how to reduce the red tape involved and include that in the Plan. Director Porter said they deal with federal and state agencies for permits and they were constantly required to meet CEQA and NEPA requirements, and get permits from Fish and Game, Fish and Wildlife, and other agencies. He said all agencies' budgets have shrunk. He said they have found it very difficult to get regional, state and federal permits due to staff reduction and turnover at the various agencies. He said one of the benefits of bringing Parks with Public Works together was to co-locate engineering and parks staff working on capital projects, which helped speed those efforts up. He said an appendix in the Plan looked at organizational structure and that would be taken to the Board of Supervisors and they would make the decision as to whether to keep the current organization, break Parks off into a standalone department, or a hybrid with a separate programming department that would handle environmental stewardship, volunteer coordination, and office support and break out the maintenance function and separate from the programming function.

Commissioner Enriquez asked about the savings for the County from moving Parks into Public Works. Director Porter said Public Works has a robust administrative section and took the Parks administrative group and melded positions. He said they deleted positions, including a Director's position. He said Parks receives general funds and Public Works is a restricted fund department. He said the administrative division is funded through an overhead charge to all of the operating divisions, of which Parks pays 16% of the total overhead. He said the Department has personnel, payroll, fiscal and clerical services that Parks can tap.

Supervisor Pine thanked staff for pulling together the data and said they were at a turning point for parks, which was exciting, and was a recommendation from the Board to invest in the parks. He said page 26 listed the five year capital needs totaling about \$11.5 million. He said in the current capital budget the Board had authorized about \$9 million toward that and most of this list had committed funding. He said it appeared that the items at the bottom of the page were not in the current capital plan. Director Porter said that was basically correct. Supervisor Pine asked if additional capital funding was requested how that would be prioritized. He noted that some of the historic assets were not on this list. He said the Board would have to consider how much additional capital and how much additional operating funding to authorize. Director Porter said there was a list of all of the capital projects. He said on an annual basis senior and ranger staff prioritize what is on that list or what has come up during the year. He said their primary goal was to repair and upgrade existing facilities. He said Sanchez Adobe and the Woodside Store both needed fairly major rehabilitation. Supervisor Pine said looking at the list of capital projects already funded at about \$9.8 million including enterprise funds and about \$8 million from general fund that historically it seemed there was difficulty getting the work done. He said they had carried over \$5 million of work last year and

had authorized another \$3 to \$4 million to get to the \$8 or \$9 million. He asked how much of this work would be done in year one and how much would be multi-year. Director Porter said they have changed processes over the past year. He said in the past Parks had hired individual consultants for project design, which design then went to Public Works Engineering to review the plans. Capital Projects would then take the project out to bid, and then it would get built. He said for Parks, Engineering, and Facilities they have now hired a number of consultants in a variety of disciplines, and they are retained. He said rather than going out for individual project request for proposals and individually hire consultants, these consultants are given a scope of work and they prepare a proposal with a cost structure, and the Department awards that right away. He said also to refine the process they were getting their Capital Projects group in Facilities Division more involved in delivering projects. He said other than Parks, Public Works was a cost recovery department, and there needed to be a fund account for charges. He said in some cases that had been a hindrance as with tight budgets there had not been allocations for Public Works review that was adequate. He said moving forward they wanted to make sure in these budgets that there was design and construction and project management funding allocations. Supervisor Pine said he thought they had identified and funded the most important projects that were critical to opening closed parks and whatever processes were needed to get that work done. He said then they should come back with the next set of capital projects that hopefully the Board can authorize. He said a general bias was for investing in a capital project that can generate revenue. He suggested for the 26 goals to put the revenue generating items together. He said the topic of income generation was important. He said the Presidio had set a goal that they would break even on their revenue and expenses. He suggested considering in the Plan a goal of recouping some specified percentage of expenses and how, such as through fees or alternative arrangements. He said regarding the fee structure that they really needed to call out the Devil's Slide rollout. He said he liked Page 18 that listed everything to do for year one. He suggested that they come back to the Board with proposed operating budget that would allow those goals to be achieved. He asked if there was a general sense of what would be needed. Director Porter said to get staffing and equipment they would need during year one it would be roughly \$2.5 million in addition to the \$8.5 million. He said that would be about \$2 million in operating cost and approximately \$700,000 in equipment and onetime costs. He said in year two there were roughly additional \$1.5 million operating cost. He said for ongoing operations to implement everything discussed in five years it was roughly an additional \$4 million on top of the \$8.5 million or about \$12.5 million.

Supervisor Pine said the playground inspections were in the mid-term and suggested those perhaps should be moved up. He suggested making memorandums of understanding with Friends' groups and establishing good working relations a priority. He said they had to accomplish opening the facilities listed in Appendix F

Director Porter noted for the record that Deanna Haskell, from the County Manager's Office, had provided the leadership and hard work to get the Plan developed with staff and public engagement.

Public Comment: Ms. Marcia Cohen, Friends of Fitzgerald Marine Reserve Board, said they were pleased to see the Plan and strategies related to supporting all Friends' groups, but wanted to emphasize the uniqueness of the Reserve's rocky, intertidal habitat. She said the newly formed San Mateo Marine Protection Council was working to define priorities and an action plan to insure goals and objectives of the state's Marine Protection Act are fulfilled. She said goals and strategies in the proposed Plan overlap or duplicate work being done by that Council. She said they recommended that the County use the goals and strategies defined by the Council to avoid duplication.

Ms. Lennie Roberts, Committee for Green Foothills, noted they had sent written comments. She said Parks needed to be a standalone department as the missions and cultures of parks and public works were different. She said what has been lacking was a high level position responsible for natural resource management with expertise in biology and ecology to preserve and protect all of the parks systems resources and restore sensitive habitat. She said the County should provide adequate funding to staff field operations. She referred to Appendix B and the Level of Services over the past 12 years. She said they were grateful to the voters who passed Measure A. She said the County should give strong support, encouragement and appreciation to parks partners, Foundation, Friends and environmental volunteers. She emphasized the need to seek additional partnerships. She said some of the goals were potentially in conflict and there had been no prioritizing or harmonizing of those. She suggested the County wait to adopt the proposed Plan until Parks was re-established as a standalone department and Friends and Parks partners can be engaged in a broader, more collaborative process related to some of the listed goals and strategies.

Ms. Lisa Ketcham, Moss Beach, said she wanted more attention paid to restoration and natural resources in the Parks. She noted the removal of pampas grass at Pillar Point Bluff which has not been maintained by the County. She urged the County to adopt the recommendations made by Committee for Green Foothills in their written comment letter, specifically to return to a standalone department, raise staffing levels, hire a high level natural resources position, and develop partnerships using GGRNA as a successful example.

Mr. Ken McIntire, Executive Director of San Bruno Mountain Watch, and a member of the Natural Resources Coalition. He said the Plan should be informed by a high level biologist or ecologist in a high decision making level. He said he would like the Plan revisited and revised after someone like that was hired and after the Parks Department was reestablished. He said also staffing needed to be increased. He said a natural resources manager would help improve the relationship between County Parks and natural resource volunteer groups.

Mr. Perry Peterson, San Bruno, said after a public meeting about establishing a disk golf course at Junipero Serra Park, he circulated a petition against that citing noise and damage. He noted the record should include a copy of that petition. He said the Plan did not have a goal of being a good neighbor to residents and agencies adjacent to parks, and cited a desire for peace and quiet. He said Mr. Bill Giusti, his neighbor, had

written comments he was providing for him now. He said they supported increased park staffing and a standalone department.

Mr. Gene Mullin, Board of Directors of the San Mateo County Historical Association, said other Board of Directors' members were in attendance: Barbara Pierce, David Campa, and Mitch Postel, President. He said they were pleased that the contributions of the Historical Museum were recognized. He said they supported the recommendations as they applied to the facilities for which they have responsibility. He said they appreciate the subvention the County has provided each year, which was about 13% of their annual budget. He noted work needed on the Woodside Store and that the Sanchez Adobe has not received much maintenance over the last 60 years. He cited strategies 16.1, 16.2, 16.3 to provide better upkeep of the historical exhibits and increase the operating hours for both historical sites. He said they would like the 10% decrease in subvention from 2013 added back in so that they could accomplish the goals in the strategies he cited. He said they fundraise for most of the money needed to operate the Museum, Sanchez Adobe and the Woodside Store and provide programs at the Folger Stable. He said they were in the process of replacing the HVAC system at the Museum. He said they were a major resource for San Mateo County schools, noting about 75% of the public schools use their facilities and 65% when private schools were included.

Mr. Bill Korbholz, Friends of Edgewood, said they were celebrating their 20th year as a nonprofit volunteer group and the 20th anniversary of the designation of Edgewood Park as a Natural Preserve. He noted he had emailed comments and supported the recommendations made by the Committee for Green Foothills. He said the County has such a diversity of ecosystems in its parks system but noted the difficulty of managing those resources on a piecemeal basis. He said there were a number of committed and well versed natural resource volunteer organizations but oversight of those efforts was missing. He said a high level natural resources manager was needed.

Ms. Nadia Bledsoe, AFSCME Council 57, said Parks needed to become a standalone department again and parks maintenance staff must remain part of the Parks Department. She said a Parks Director was necessary to provide guidance during what they hoped would be a return of the County Parks system to its former glory. She said a director provided a direct contact for the public, other agencies, and volunteer organizations. She said it was true staff were maintaining the Parks capably but she would argue that they were at the breaking point. She said staff levels needed to be increased to at least the 2002 levels. She said at that time there were 63 positions not counting park aides and in contrast there are 48 positions currently. She said Parks Maintenance staff provide added value in that they can also function as rangers noting they know CPR and first aid which was not typical of County maintenance workers. She said the Parks system must enjoy dedicated funding for ongoing success. She urged the Commission to recommend option 1 in the Plan to the Board for a full service Parks Department complete with skilled maintenance staff.

Mr. Mike Ferreira, Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter, said they supported the

recommendations made by the Committee for Green Foothills. He said many saw Measure A as a way to restore funding and fund a Parks Department and they pitched in to promote approval of that measure. He asked the County to support the recommendations made by the Committee for Green Foothills.

Ms. Connie Sevier said she was a member of the CuriOdyssey Museum Board and Chair of the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Foundation Board, and that both were important partners and supporters of Parks. She said the feedback they were receiving on the proposed Plan was relevant and would improve the strategies. She said she agreed with comments on the importance a standalone Parks Department with a dedicated Maintenance section, and a return to at least 2001 funding levels including the hiring of additional rangers and a leadership management level natural resources person. She said the mission of Parks was to engage with partners such as Friends' groups, Parks Foundation and CuriOdyssey. She said she would like to see more in the Plan as to specifics on how to maintain and develop those relationships.

Mr. Allan Berkowitz, Executive Director, Environmental Volunteers, said each year they deliver 550 educational field trips for school children to the outdoors in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. He said the prior year they were informed that for their educational forest and ecology field trips to Huddart Park would be charged \$3 per person. He said after this year they would not use Huddart Park for these trips. He said he understood the economic realities but it did not seem the fee was negotiable. He said it saddened him that although they would continue to encourage natural stewardship in San Mateo County it would not take place in County Parks.

Chair Cooney suggested he continue a dialogue with County Parks staff particularly with one of the Park Superintendents.

Ms. Julia Bott, Executive Director, San Mateo County Parks Foundation, said although they were always looking at raising money in the community, increasing volunteer support, and leveraging partnerships those alone would not meet the needs of the Parks system. She said that could only be done through adequate and secure funding from the County. She said they were pleased the voters approved Measure A and that they had put their weight behind that measure specifically because they were looking to support more funding for Parks. She said they thought more funding than what was added the prior year to the Parks budget and the funding for Devil's Slide was needed for the people who work in Parks and to maintain relationships with volunteers. She said Option 1 for a standalone department was what she heard the community supporting. She said funding at the 2001 level was a minimum requirement but suggested need to fund to the next level or 1990 level at today's dollars. She said both field and office staff needed bolstering noting administrative needs for accounts payable, accounts receivable, and reservations supported the needs of field staff. She said they recommended a dedicated high level natural resources manager and keeping maintenance staffing in Parks. She suggested adoption of the Plan be deferred until the Department was standalone and volunteer, Friends and partnership relationships were developed so that the final development of a Strategic Plan was collaborative.

Supervisor Horsley noted that he unfortunately had another meeting. He said they had been developing this Plan for two years and the public feedback was important. He said Measure A tax was in place for 10 years and they had to consider sustainability of added positions. He thanked Director Porter for taking leadership of County Parks noting the realities of successive budget cuts. He said he knew that the call for a standalone department was not criticism of Director Porter and his team and was only because the Parks system was an incredibly valuable resource for all of the citizens and they wanted to make sure that it gets the support it really deserves. He thanked Ms. Ketcham for her single-handed efforts at the Pillar Point Bluff to restore and preserve native habitat.

Ms. Linda Liebes said she was bringing a historic perspective as a long time Parks supporter. She said the County gets the biggest bang for its buck from their County Parks. She said Parks is what the County has done for the residents. She said the history she wanted to bring had to do with the funding. She said in 1982 Parks expenditures were 2% of the County budget and in 1992 they were less than 1%. She said they formed a funding committee for Parks at that time and met weekly for two years. She said it was a big crisis. She said now in 2013 Parks was at less than half a percent of the County budget. She said she urged the County now that Measure A has passed and they knew a lot of parks people beat the bushes to get it passed that they look at the percentages of the County budget and even see what 1% of that would be.

Ms. Liebes said Ms. Zoe Kersteen-Tucker asked her to make a few points from the letter Ms. Tucker had written. To create a standalone Parks Department, return staffing levels to 2001, urge recognition of working with Parks' partners, that a Director for parks have strong skills in that area, and the construction and long term maintenance of Devil's Slide Trail be given a higher priority in future iterations of the Parks Strategic Plan.

Mr. Paul Heipel said he was the lead Friday weeder at Edgewood County Park and had weeded in parks for 25 years. He said he and other weeders were members of the California Native Plant Society, noted Edgewood was lucky in having two organizations interested in its natural resources. He said he very much supported having someone who was a high level resource manager. He said his group has developed techniques and strategies for non-native plants but there had been no expert to talk with about other techniques to advance native plants. He said it took several months to train volunteers to recognize native and non-native plants.

Mr. Jesse Pemberton, Half Moon Bay Disc Golf Club, provided information on the sport noting it did not required land clearing or modification. He said they did not want to violate people's need for quiet and that a course too close to a residential area might not be a good fit. He said that County Parks has lots of land, and they would like to propose construction of professional (Tier 1) courses, noting that these courses generated revenue. He said this use would not create obstructions for other users noting that existing trails were often used for courses. He said if a course was being

built then a bike trail and walking path could be included in the planning. He said collaboration was a big part of what they do as stewards of the courses. He said they do their part to pick up trash, excite other members and new people, noting this was a growing sport, with corporate sponsorships and professional players. He provided written information for the Commissioners to review later.

Chair Cooney closed the public hearing at 4:30 p.m.

Commission Comment: Commissioner Merrilees said he has shared the proposed Plan with constituents and not one person has asked that things stay as they are for Parks and that they want the Parks to be a standalone department. He said he appreciated the people who took the time to attend the meeting. He said he would be really interested in what the process would look like for the desired changes to happen. He said some of the volunteer groups seem to be hanging on by their fingernails in terms of relationships with the County and finding their place in that system. He noted that he has been working with the Friends of Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, and one of the proposals in the Plan was to implement MOUs, which needed to happen, but with the stated goal of adding 10% to our volunteers that if the MOU was not crafted exactly right and not seen by the volunteer groups as something that supported them they could easily end up with 20% less volunteers. He suggested crafting the MOUs with the Friends groups and developing an enhanced relationship rather than separate the relationship. He said at the first Commission meeting he attended as a Commissioner they had to close Flood Park. He thanked staff for all of their hard work in keeping other parks open.

Director Porter said staff would take the comments and prepare a staff report to take to the Board of Supervisors for consideration

Commissioner Enriquez noted Goal 16 to preserve and enhance historical, cultural, special features within County Parks. He said A Day in the Park that he sponsors was important to the diverse community and it did not only have to do with additional profits and revenues for Parks but preserving cultural traditions and events. He asked that A Day in the Park be included in the staff report to the Board.

Youth Commissioner Ruehl said people had comments about returning funding to 2001 levels, natural resource preservation and stewardship. He said Appendix B showed that habitat restoration levels in 2001 were low and have been ever since. He said the standards indicated annually or not at all, which was not very reassuring. He said the Strategic Plan indicated that the Parks Commission regards habitat management and preservation as a goal but in the implementation goals there was not very much to support that. He said he would like more specifics to be added as to how they planned to be stewards of the environment.

Commissioner Pincus said that time was of the essence and wanted the process to move along. He said he agreed with most of the comments made except for one. He said he thought setting up a new structure could very well take time but should not delay

the implementation of this Plan for that to occur. He said having projects ready to go made them ready for funding opportunities. He said that there was not much marketing for Parks and some were underutilized. He said the more the public took advantage of the Parks the more they could advance the cause for support.

Supervisor Pine said this was the beginning of a new era of Parks which was an exciting opportunity. He said he supported Parks being a standalone department with its own maintenance staff as that structure gave it prominence and the type of camaraderie it required and to have the ability to work with all the other public land managers. He said the volunteers and supporters' efforts were deeply appreciated. He said a biologist position was critical.

Responding to an inquiry from Chair Cooney, Director Porter said that they would take all the comments and include them in some way so the Board received the full breadth of the public comment.

Commission Action: M/S Cooney/Merrilees to recommend to the Board of Supervisors approval of the Strategic Plan.

Motion carried 5-0.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.