

Parks and Recreation Commission
Skateboard Park Ad-hoc Committee Meeting
February 24, 2014 6:00pm at Marine Avenue Park

Meeting Notes:

Introductions & Background

- Parks and Recreation Commissioner and Ad-Hoc Committee member Nancy Hersman welcomed meeting attendees and introduced committee, invited participants, and city staff.
- Nancy provided a brief statement outlining the goal of the commission, noting that the City of Manhattan Beach has always supported its residents and the City's skateboarders have not been provided for in the same way as other athletes.
- Parks and Recreation director Mark Leyman gave a brief description of the meeting process and topics of discussion.
- Recreation Services Manager Idris Al-Oboudi gave background and summary information of past discussions, research and recommendations (See "Skateboard Park Info Brief" document)
- Idris opened it up for questions from Meeting attendees

Questions and Comments from Attendees:

Location:

- What is the recommended site currently used for?
 - Idris explained fitness station and provided usage statistics from past user studies
- Has a site on the west side of the city been considered?
- North-east end of Veterans' Parkway and the Manhattan Village Field parking lot suggested as other possibilities
- What will the impact be on all surrounding facilities that are already heavily used?
- Could the proximity of the proposed location to Northrop Grumman cause problems?

Survey:

- Can a survey gauging interest and support be distributed to the middle school and high school students?
- Mira Costa students commented on ways they can assist in distributing surveys at their school
- Is there real value in conducting a survey? What purpose does it serve?
 - Most recent survey information is from 2001 and city Council will ask for numerical data to show interest and support for a skateboard park
- We should add questions about design preferences, skill level, distance people are willing to travel, etc.

Funding:

- Money will likely be the biggest issue to work through in the process
- Funding options:
 - Privately funded and operated skateboard parks have been researched, but there has not been interest
 - Grants are most often reserved for lower-income areas and past research has shown there are very few available to us, and those that are will be very small
 - Funding from the City's Capital Improvement Project
 - Public funding campaigns and community fundraising (e.g. Kickstarter)

- Private sponsorships
- A combination of sources
- Many comments in support of a community effort and having City's youth heavily involved in the fundraising process
- The City does not ask any other group (Older Adults, Youth Sports, tennis players, etc.) to pay up-front for the facilities they want and need. It could set a precedent for future projects.
- Grassroots fundraising could build support and be compounded by private donations
- Rewards of some type could be offered to encourage people to get involved in fundraising
- We should have a clear vision before seeking money
- A pay-to-use system could help recoup funds and cover maintenance costs
- There was a request for someone to step up and take the lead on a fundraising effort
- Supporters need to go out into the community and ask

Operations:

- Should we have a staffed or unstaffed park?
 - Staffing a skateboard park could actually put the City at higher risk of liability
 - State law protects unstaffed parks
- Are there ways other than staffing to monitor use and reduce unauthorized use?
- Will the park be attract and be open to non-residents?
- We cannot exclude non-residents and all of our facilities and programs are open to non-residents
- Programming is an important component of having a successful skateboard park
- How can we determine how many people will want to use the park and how can we control capacity?
 - Like new facility, use will spike at first, then level off

Other Comments:

- Liability issues should be major concern
 - Because it is defined as a hazardous activity, risk of liability is lower than expected
- Design is the best way to control use and limit liability

Parks and Recreation Commission
Skateboard Park Ad-hoc Committee Meeting
March 10, 2014 6:00pm at Marine Avenue Park

Meeting Notes:

Ad-Hoc Committee member and Parks and Recreation Commissioner Nancy Hersman welcomed attendees to the meeting, introduced committee members, City staff, and invited participants and welcomed new attendee Laura Santos. Ms. Santos took the opportunity to express concerns about the following:

- safety requirements,
- liability
- issues of skateboarders using the streets
- possible use of a skateboard park by non-residents
- impacts of attendance at new facilities on the community
- whether a skateboard park would be a good investment

Nancy Hersman thanked Ms. Santos for her input.

Parks and Recreation Director Mark Leyman reviewed agenda items and explained ad-hoc committee goals, the discussion process and the City Council's direction for the benefit of first time attendees.

Nancy Hersman then began discussion of Funding options:

- Nancy stated that skateboard park grants are available, but are generally reserved for lower income areas and not a realistic source of funds for Manhattan Beach
- Nancy said a public-private partnership could be a possibility, citing the City's partnership with AYSO in construction of a synthetic turf soccer field at Marine Ave. Park
- Nancy asked the group for suggestions on who to approach and how to do it
 - The group should come up with a list of potential donors and supporters
 - Local churches and the Downtown MB Business Association were suggested
 - Richard Crow noted that that local companies DVS Shoes and S1 Helmets had expressed
- Richard Crow stated that a clear message must be communicated and suggested putting together a presentation that could be given to potential funding sources.
 - "Skateparks Solve Problems" should be the core message
 - The questions "what problem does it solve?" and "what does it do for me?" need to be answered
- Richard also suggested coming up with a "pledge and reward" system to offer incentives to potential donors. Rewards do not need to be material items, but rather things like "virtual shout-outs"
- Blake Bordokas mentioned reaching out to Mira Costa High School Students
- Jaeden Kesell said that the Boy Scouts might also be interested in supporting
- Nancy brought up the possibility of a Kickstarter campaign and asked if any members of the group were familiar with setting one up
- Jaeden Kesell asked how fundraising can begin
 - Tom Allard answered that he believed a non-profit needed to be set up prior to raising or collecting any money
- Nancy and Tom expressed the importance of getting as much input as possible before the Parks and Recreation Commission presents to the City Council.

Parks and Recreation Commission
Skateboard Park Ad-hoc Committee Meeting
March 17, 2014 6:00pm at Marine Avenue Park

Meeting Notes:

Introduction and Overview

- Parks and Recreation Commissioner and Ad-Hoc Committee member Nancy Hersman welcomed meeting attendees and introduced committee and City staff and reminded attendees of the importance of providing as much feedback as possible during the research and discussion
- Nancy introduced Parks and Recreation Director Mark Leyman
- Mark introduced Aaron Spohn of Spohn Ranch, who would be giving a presentation on how to choose a location for a skateboard park.

Skateboard Park Siting Presentation by Aaron Spohn of Spohn Ranch

- Aaron's presentation covered the following points:
 - Visibility
 - Accessibility
 - Design
 - Barriers to "shovel-ready"
 - Amenities and infrastructure
 - Impact on surrounding environment
 - Potential sites in Manhattan Beach
 - Projected costs
- Comments and questions during presentation:
 - The pros and cons of all potential sites should be considered and compared even if a site is not thought to be a realistic choice
 - Concerns were expressed over accessibility at the Begg and Sand Dune locations
 - Begg location might conflict with future plans to expand the Begg Pool facility
 - Traffic impacts should be considered at MBUSD Maintenance Yard location
 - MBUSD has not demonstrated total opposition to
 - Projected costs are for construction only and do not include demolition of or modifications to current facilities
 - Aaron added that the presentation is available to anyone who would like it

Questions, comments, and discussion points:

- Has anyone reached out to Northrop Grumman regarding availability of their property in the future?
 - Not recently, but their property is not expected to be available
- Is the National Guard Armory near Sand Dune Park a possibility?
- Could liability be limited if a location like Marine Ave. Park was identified as sports-specific facility and reserved only for sports use?
 - Skateboard parks generally reduce liability on their own by putting skateboarders in a safer environment
- Expected user demographics and accessibility should be considered when choosing a location
- Is a beach location possible?
 - Would need to go Los Angeles County and the Coastal Commission

- Manhattan Village Field Parking lot is another possible location that was not included in the presentation
- A list of signatures of people opposed to building a skateboard park in Polliwog Park was presented
 - It was pointed out that the location should still be considered even if people are opposed
- Recreation Services Manager Idris Al-Oboudi recommended that everyone review previous staff reports summarizing the pros and cons of possible locations
- Idris recommended that someone speak with MBUSD directly before any school district property is considered or ruled out as a possible location
- The Ad-Hoc Committee would like to determine a preferred location prior to reporting to the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council

Wrap-up

- Nancy thanked attendees and presenters and reminded everyone of the Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting on Monday, March 24, 2014

Parks and Recreation Commission
Skateboard Park Ad-hoc Committee Meeting
April 14, 2014 6:00pm at Marine Avenue Park

Meeting Notes:

Introduction and Overview

- Parks and Recreation Commissioner and Ad-Hoc Committee member Nancy Hersman welcomed meeting attendees and introduced committee members and City staff
- Nancy introduced Parks and Recreation Director Mark Leyman
 - Mark Gave an overview of City Council direction and asked Recreation Services Manager Idris Al-Oboudi to give an overview of usage controls and operations
- Idris noted the following points:
 - Staffed versus unstaffed parks
 - Hermosa Beach is staffed; other parks visited are unstaffed
 - Skateboarding is defined as a high risk activity by the State of California
 - Generally signage and unstaffed parks mitigate liability
 - Regulations must be posted
 - It is up to users to follow rules and regulations
 - Design and maintenance are important factors in minimizing risk
 - The Risk manager has been consulted and they supplied some information from the City's insurance pool
- Idris stated that he is not a risk management expert and always refers liability and risk issues to City Risk Manager as he has done for 28+ years of working with the City of Manhattan Beach
- Idris asked the attendees if they had any questions

Questions, comments, and discussion points from attendees:

- Are there laws in California limiting liability for unstaffed parks?
 - Yes
- Staffing a skateboard park can increase the risk of liability?
 - Idris - Generally, yes
- If staffing a park means more risk, what are other options for monitoring use?
- Will hours of operation be set? How will they be enforced?
- Do surveillance cameras impact risk or liability?
 - Idris – some parks have cameras and the City has considered using cameras as well, but we do not know about associated risks. Our City's Risk Manager will help form our opinion
- How many parks have been visited by City staff and how many of those parks were staffed?
 - Staff visited five parks and one was staffed
- Does visibility impact vandalism and improper use?
- Have we researched vandalism issues at other skateboard parks?
 - Idris – Yes, but most problems are related to trash and people putting stickers on signs and skateboard park elements, not graffiti
- Is the beach or a beach parking area a potential site? The beach should be considered because it represents the City.
- What kind of square footage is necessary?

- The commissioners cited Aaron Spohn's previous presentation and suggested a space of about 10,000 square feet would be most appropriate
- Several attendees expressed their concern over on-going problems in Polliwog Park
 - After-hours use, trespassing, and vandalism are constant problems
 - Attendees stated that they contact the police department regularly
 - Traffic and parking from MBMS are already bad and have never been addressed
 - The City cannot enforce the policies already in place at Polliwog, so how will they enforce rules at a new facility
- Residents living near Polliwog fear that the decision has already been made to build a skateboard park in Polliwog
- What part of Polliwog is being considered? Is the SE part of the park an option?
 - Yes, it was included in Mr. Spohn's presentation
- Is an indoor park an option?
 - Not for the City. An indoor park would be privately owned and operated
- Other comments on location:
 - Marine Ave Park outfield location is best because the impact on residences is minimal
 - Are there any locations where relocating or replacing an existing facility (e.g. a tennis or basketball court) is an option?
 - The City does not want to get rid of anything, but relocating a facility is an option
 - Marine Ave. Park location is not visible enough to easily control use
- A skateboard park may actually alleviate some of the concerns that exist
- The city should look at The Cove Skateboard Park in Santa Monica for an example of an alternative to free, unstaffed parks.

Questions/Comments from Committee:

- Committee Member Nancy Hersman asked that discussion focus on operation and usage. Further comments on location could be brought to the next Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.
- If building a skateboard park was a foregone conclusion, where should it go?
- Should several smaller skateboard park elements scattered around the City be considered? If so, where should the elements go?
 - Several attendees agreed that this approach made sense and should be considered
- Committee Member Madison Miketa asked what the attendees expected from the young people they assume would be using the park

Wrap-up

- Committee Member Nancy Hersman ended the discussion and reminded attendees of the meeting on April 21, 2014 and noted that the topic of discussion would be design.

Parks and Recreation Commission
Skateboard Park Ad-hoc Committee Meeting
April 21, 2014 6:00pm at Marine Avenue Park

Meeting Notes:

Introduction and Overview

- Ad-Hoc committee member Nancy Hersman and Parks and Recreation Director Mark Leyman introduced the committee, City Staff and Vince Onel from Spohn Ranch Skateparks.
- Nancy explained the purpose of the meetings, provided background information and described the meeting process
- Recreation Services Manager Idris Al-Oboudi introduced two members of the Police Department. Idris explained that following comments at the meeting on April 14, 2014 concerning illegal activity at Polliwog Park he requested statistics on calls to police in the area. He said the officers were available to answer any questions and provided the group with Officer Rob Cochran's email address (rcochran@citymb.info).
- A question concerning the Ad-Hoc Committee meetings and adherence to Brown Act regulations was asked by an attendee.
 - Nancy explained the Brown Act and the structure of the Ad-Hoc Committee and meetings and their compliance with the Brown Act
- Nancy again introduced Vince Onel from Spohn Ranch Skateparks and asked that he give a presentation on skatepark design.

Skateboard Park Design Presentation by Vince Onel of Spohn Ranch Skateparks:

- Vince explained three points that need to be considered when deciding on a design for a skateboard park:
 1. Site
 2. Budget
 3. Local input
- Vince showed examples of skateboard parks in the region and planned parks outside the region. The parks varied in size and design. Vince asked attendees to comment on the pros and cons of each example.
 1. Hermosa Beach:
 - Pros
 - Not in residential area
 - Cons
 - Too small
 - Does not flow well from feature to feature
 - Outdated
 - Not built by skatepark designers
 2. Westchester:
 - Pros
 - Well built
 - Good street-scape design
 - Easily accessible
 - Appears open and inviting

- Cons
 - Offers only advanced level terrain
- 3. Venice:
 - Pros
 - Variety of street-scape and transition features
 - Very large
 - Located on the beach
 - Cons
 - No fencing (concerned that kids could walk right into park without realizing it was dangerous)
- 4. Gardena-Johnson:
 - Pros
 - Open and inviting
 - Cons
 - Too inviting (would encourage afterhours and improper use)
 - Small (6000-7000 sq. ft.)
 - Very close to homes
 - Vince noted that Spohn Ranch designed this park and was not aware of any issues related to its proximity to residences
- Other questions, comments and concerns raised during the presentation:
 - Excessive noise from skateboard parks:
 - Several attendees expressed concern over noise levels in and around skateboard parks
 - Vince stated that research shows noise levels from skateboard parks do not generally impact surrounding community. The noise generated from skateboard parks blends in to the ambient noise at a distance of 50-100 feet.
 - Are noise abatement methods be part of the design process?
 - Yes, noise can be mitigated by incorporating landscape barriers or other noise dampening features
 - Several parks in the area offer street-scape terrain, but there is a need for a park with transition type features
 - The best type of park would be one that offered varied terrain (i.e. something for everyone) because it would appeal to skateboarders of all ages and ability levels
 - Include elements that would reflect the surfing and beach culture of the City of Manhattan Beach

Wrap-up

- Ad-Hoc Committee member Nancy Hersman closed the discussion and reminded attendees of the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting on Monday, April 28, 2014 at 6:30pm.

Parks and Recreation Commission
Skateboard Park Ad-hoc Committee Meeting
May 12, 2014 6:00pm at Marine Avenue Park

Meeting Notes:

Introduction and Overview:

- Committee Member Nancy Hersman called the meeting to order and provided a brief description of the meeting process and background information.
- Nancy explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss Marine Avenue Park and Marine Sports Complex sites.
- Parks and Recreation Director Mark Leyman explained that sites at Manhattan Village Field and the MBUSD property on Peck Avenue were ruled out due to property control and traffic issues.
- Nancy asked Recreation Services Manager Idris Al-Oboudi to introduce locations, point them out on a map, and then open up discussion on the pros and cons of each. Idris recommended that all attendees review siting criteria and staff reports from previous meetings for background information on each site.

Discussion on Potential Sites at Marine Avenue Park and Marine Sports Complex

Site #1 – Marine Avenue Park Basketball Courts:

Pros

- Highly visible
- Easily accessible from the street
- Flat, level area
- Easy to provide drainage
- Proximity to other park amenities like restrooms and playgrounds

Cons:

- Replaces existing basketball courts
- Would displace youth basketball league; current location of courts is ideal for youth league use and court availability is already limited
- Would displace other adult and youth players
- Problems associated with adult basketball players (e.g. fighting, foul language, litter, vandalism, etc.) could increase if courts were relocated to a less visible location
- Noise concerns due to proximity to residences on Marine Avenue and in Manhattan Village
- If basketball court area is the only site selected, it is possible that opposition from league and individual users would be too great to get a skateboard park built and the opportunity to build a skateboard park at all may be lost.
- Parking would be impacted

Nancy called for an audience vote to gauge how many people were for and against the Marine Avenue Park Basketball Courts location. By a show of hands the audience voted 5 for and 15 against.

Site #2 – North-east corner of Marine Avenue Park outside Marine Baseball Field centerfield fence

Pros

- Space and existing amenities (workout equipment) are currently underutilized
- Distance from residences

Cons

- Shape of area is not ideal for a skateboard park
- Would require new amenities (e.g. lighting, restrooms, etc.)
- No access for emergency vehicles
- Not visible or easily accessible from street, parking lot, and other park areas
- Visibility and accessibility issues would create problems with enforcement
- Homerun balls from baseball field could be a hazard

Nancy called for an audience vote to gauge how many people were for and against the North-east Marine Avenue Park location. By a show of hands the audience voted 7 for and 11 against.

Site #3 – Marine Sports Complex (No specific location within facility)

Pros

- Visibility
- Accessibility

Cons

- Facility is used by youth baseball, softball, and soccer leagues
- Youth leagues would turn more players away if they a lost field
- Baseball and softball field dimensions are set by national governing bodies and new amenities could impact field size and shape
- May not impact baseball and softball fields, but would impact soccer fields
- Construction would impact use
- Facility is closed for several months during fall and winter for maintenance. New amenities could impact turf recovery.

Nancy called for an audience vote to gauge how many people were for and against the Marine Sports Complex location. By a show of hands the audience voted 3 for and 12 against.

Other questions and comments from the audience regarding location:

- Other locations at Marine Avenue Park should be considered, specifically the playground and dog parks.