



MEETING MINUTES  
**Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC)**  
**Wednesday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 4:30 P.M.**  
**Lakeside Park Garden Center**

**Meeting Recording Link:**

<https://oakland.granicus.com/player/clip/5564?&redirect=true>

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL: 4:47 P.M.

**BARACH, DUHE, HA, KOS-READ, D. SMITH, K. SMITH, TORRES, TRAN, WATKINS**

**Present (6):** Chair Tran, Vice Chair Barach, Commissioners Duhe, Kos-Read, K. Smith, Watkins  
**Excused (1):** Commissioner Ha  
**Absent (1):** Commissioner D. Smith

1. MODIFICATION OF THE AGENDA:

- Agenda Items 6B and 6C will be heard after Agenda Item 4 – Consent Calendar Items.

**Motion:** Chair Tran entertained a motion to approve the modification to the Agenda. **Moved by:** Commissioner Duhe. **Second by:** Commissioner K. Smith. **Vote:** Yes (6) Barach, Duhe, Kos-Read, K. Smith Tran, Watkins. **Abstain:** (0). **Motion:** Passed.

2. DISPOSITION OF MINUTES:

- June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Draft Meeting Minutes

**Motion:** Chair Tran entertained a motion to approve the June Meeting Minutes. **Moved by:** Commissioner Kos-Read. **Second by:** Commissioner Duhe. **Vote:** Yes (6) Barach, Duhe, Kos-Read, K. Smith Tran, Watkins. **Abstain:** (0). **Motion:** Passed.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT: There were 3 speakers and 4 public comments received via email.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS:

4A. **REQUEST FROM AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION (AFSP) TO COLLECT ONSITE CHARITABLE**

**DONATIONS AT THE OUT OF THE DARKNESS WALK AT SNOW PARK  
ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2023, FROM 6:00AM – 9:30AM.**

- 4B. **REQUEST FROM EAST BAY FRONT RUNNERS AND WALKERS  
APPROVAL TO COLLECT ON-SITE REGISTRATION FEES FOR THE  
5K/10K PRIDE RUN/WALK AT LAKESIDE PARK ON SATURDAY,  
OCTOBER 14, 2023, FROM 8:00AM-12:00PM.**
- 4C. **REQUEST FROM OAKLAND EAST BAY GARDEN CENTER, INC. AND  
FRIENDS OF THE GARDENS AT LAKE MERRITT (FGLM) TO  
COLLECT FUNDS ON SITE AT THE ANNUAL AUTUMN LIGHTS  
FESTIVAL/FUNDRAISER AT LAKESIDE PARK GARDEN CENTER  
AND THE GARDENS AT LAKE MERRITT ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER  
12, 2023– SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2023, FROM 6:00PM-11:00PM.**

Commissioner Kos Read commented that the three items heard represent utilization of Lake Merritt as an event space, which is fully endorsed by PRAC and spoke to the impact this area has to the community.

**Motion:** Chair Tran entertained a motion to approve the requests. **Moved by:** Commissioner Kos-Read. **Second by:** Commissioner Duhe. **Vote:** Yes (6) Barach, Duhe, Kos-Read, K. Smith Tran, Watkins. **Abstain:** (0). **Motion:** Passed.

Zermaine Thomas, Special Events Coordinator - OPRYD, read invitation from Autumn Lights Festival organizers to Commissioners.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

6B. **UPDATES ON LAKE MERRITT.**

Joe Devries, Deputy City Administrator, who oversees the Lake Merritt Working Group, a multi-departmental operation, provided the verbal update. The City Council adopted a new budget including a \$1MIL allocation to Lake Merritt from projected parking meter revenue. Council President Bas proposed: \$234K to the Lake Merritt Vending Program to help with event management; \$150K to Park Maintenance; \$150K to Park Stewards Program for increased hours and staffing; \$182K to unfreeze Municipal Code Enforcement Inspectors to assist with ensuring events/activities are properly permitted; \$100K for Lake Merritt traffic safety improvements; and \$183K to dedicated OPD staffing to help manage Lake Merritt traffic, parking, and code enforcement.

Deputy City Administrator Devries advised sideshows are a challenge still in need of a solution. OPD's policy prohibits the pursuit of motorbike riders as a safety precaution. The numbers of individuals involved in sideshows outnumber OPD staff and vehicle

tracking is difficult as many have no license plates. Sideshows are an ongoing problem that the police department is well aware of. Optimistically, for the first time, there is dedicated funding to Lake Merritt from the parking revenue that will be generated. Supply chain issues created delays in the installation of kiosks. However, parking enforcement is now in effect. As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, tickets will be issued for parking meter violations.

Commissioner Duhe asked where this information is documented. Deputy City Administrator Devries advised it is in the Council President's budget proposal and can be found in the June 26<sup>th</sup> City Council Meeting attachments. Commissioner Duhe also asked about the communication process and Deputy City Administrator Devries advised that there is explicit direction to return to the PRAC and City Council to report on data collected after 6 months and then again at 1 year. The information will be published on the website and made available to the public.

Vice Chair Barach asked if the \$1MIL expected inclusive of parking/traffic tickets. Deputy City Administrator Devries advised it is inclusive of both tickets and parking meter payments. A formula was used as derived by OAKDOT to determine projected revenue generation. Initial estimates were higher as meters have flex pricing where rates can change based on demand, but desire is to keep rates low.

Commissioner Kos-Read asked about El Embarcadero closures or changes to become a one-way street. Deputy City Administrator Devries advised there is a long-term OAKDOT study around the creation of a complete bike track, similar to what's found on Lakeside and Harrison, around the entire lake utilizing El Embarcadero and part of that consideration would be to close the street. Commissioner Kos-Read requested the lead staff person on the project and Deputy City Administrator Devries advised he would get back with that information. Commissioner Kos-Read commented the ATV/dirtbike issue is a city-wide problem and encouraged an effective operation to limit it everywhere in the city [not just Lake Merritt] to assist with deterrence. Commissioner Kos-Read also encouraged that vending management be made beneficial to the small businesses hustling to survive as well as compatible with other uses of the lake; and asked for insight around the conflict of unsanctioned commercial activity and the use of public space. Deputy City Administrator Devries advised he has had ongoing conversations with the Special Activities Permit Coordinator. El Embarcadero was used to avoid using portions of the park and to avoid the PRAC park process because these gatherings were prohibited during the pandemic. Flex streets such as El Embarcadero were used in a similar way as the parklets outside of restaurants. Based on recent observations, over the next year, it may be desirable to move the vending market into the park along Grand Avenue where illegal vending happens currently. Vendors have complained that El Embarcadero is too far from where people are strolling and do not get the foot-traffic. It is arguable now with the dedicated resources to move vending to the 500-block of Grand where there is a commercial corridor on the other side of the street, foot-traffic, and it may be more easily controlled. This is simply a concept that is going to require research and community engagement. The current model still has areas of improvement, and it is believed that we should continue to experiment until we find what works best. Commissioner Kos-Read

added the importance of consulting with the brick and mortar business to discover if the new vending location concept might also be beneficial and desirable to them. Deputy City Administrator Devries advised one part of the proposal is to move the food trucks to El Embarcadero because patrons are more willing to walk further for food than a hat, and allow the merchandise vendors on the park property where damage with food handling and garbage is less likely to occur. Commissioner Kos-Read commented on the growth of encampments as another challenge that can reinforce illegal vending and other activities, discouraging the desire to utilize the park and invest additional resources.

Chair Tran asked about how the allocations to OPD came about and the differences from the budget City Council approved a year before. Deputy City Administrator Devries advised due to the new budget cycle, the lack of specific allocations, and further review with Council and of the department costs involved, it was determined that these amendments were necessary. OPD must be funded to do this work because when they are not there many of the parking technicians are threatened/unable to do their work, municipal code enforcement officers cannot get vendors to comply, and traffic/crowd control become much more difficult. Not many police are required, but there is a need for a team to support lake activities and without dedicated funding, it just will not happen. Last Sunday, officers did not take any overtime shifts. We are stretched thin city-wide. It is bad enough that there are not enough officers for shifts, but worse to not have the funding to pay for the shifts. The allocation to OPD is to avoid such situations. The other budget allocations line up with PRAC's proposal: traffic safety, park maintenance, park stewards, and the vendor program. The PRAC's role was significant in vetting the concept of parking meters and how the money should be spent and the City heard the desire to reinvest the monies into the park and its issues. It is believed that the funding has been allocated more beneficially than in the initial recommendation.

Commissioner Kos-Read asked about loud DJ gatherings near the Lake Merritt Clubhouse on Tuesdays and whether Park Stewards are involved with addressing such concerns. Myka Hammock, Park Stewards General Supervisor – OPRYD, advised that Park Stewards currently work weekends only. With the new funding, attempts to hire are underway; however, the city is currently having hiring challenges. Once additional staff are hired, additional days and shifts can be added to the schedule to address such concerns. Currently, all feedback and communications regarding noise concerns around the lake and by Grand are being taken into consideration. Park stewards are advised to approach park goers cordially and to contact the non-emergency line for support when needed.

Commissioner asked how many Park Steward Staff are there currently, and how many more are to be hired. Myka Hammock advised that there are currently 10 staff and would like to hire 5 or 6 more. In addition, the department is trying to add a Program Director to assist with oversight and staffing.

**6C. REQUEST FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION TO APPROVE THE INSTALLATION OF A KIOSK AND**

**BELL STATION IN JOAQUIN MILLER PARK BY THE EAGLE SCOUT ORGANIZATION IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FRIENDS OF JOAQUIN MILLER.**

Evan Dickason, Eagle Scout Candidate for Troupe 11 in Piedmont, CA presented the request. He advised that his decision to do this project was based on his use of Joaquin Miller growing up, passion for building things, joy of biking, and desire to build something to help the park. When Dale Risdien expressed interest in building a kiosk to encourage biking, Evan thought it was a great idea. Both he and Dale spoke with some bikers in the area who also believed the kiosk to be a good idea because there are no bike trail maps specific to the park available. Evan emphasized outlining the bike trails for the park will make it safer for everyone as bikers and walkers alike will know where bikers can ride. Evan will fund and build the project, and Friends of Joaquin Miller Park will maintain it and provide maps and bells.

**Motion:** Chair Tran entertained a motion to approve the request. **Moved by:** Commissioner K. Smith. **Second by:** Commissioner Duhe. **Vote:** Yes (6) Barach, Duhe, Kos-Read, K. Smith Tran, Watkins. **Abstain:** (0). **Motion:** Passed.

5. MEASURE Q OVERSIGHT/AD HOC COMMITTEE UPDATE:

\*Visit Measure Q [website](#) for more information, documents, and reports.

- Per Chair Tran, there are no updates at this time.
- Ad Hoc committee is deciding what to cover next. Current performance metrics are being reviewed to determine the best way to show Measure Q at work in the community. A financial audit has been requested and pending City Auditor response.

6. NEW BUSINESS (continued):

6D. **REQUEST FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION TO APPROVE THE PLANS FOR MURALS ON THE DOORS OF THE FIVE RESTROOMS IN DIMOND PARK.**

Opie Bella, Co-Founder and Chair of Friends of Dimond Park, and Laurie Umeh, Secretary/Treasurer of Friends of Dimond Park, presented the request. Opie advised future maintenance would be supported by the original, local muralist who paints the work. In addition, the murals will have anti-graffiti coating. The muralist is requesting \$50/hour for maintenance after first year of installation. Funding for the project is expected to come from fundraising. Opie emphasized the importance of community outreach and how parkgoers expressed general excitement for the project. The Friends of Dimond Park also have funds to supplement the project as well as pending grant applications but are confident community support will be substantial.

Commissioner Kos-Read expressed concern over the absence of the staff persons who submit the report as he is unable to get a perspective on the project from the

City's point of view.

Laurie and Opie clarified that the \$50/hour after the first year for maintenance would come from Friends of Dimond Park, and that there were no requests for funds from the City.

**Motion:** Chair Tran entertained a motion to approve the request. **Moved by:** Commissioner Duhe. **Second by:** Vice Chair Barach. **Vote:** Yes (6) Barach, Duhe, Kos-Read, K. Smith Tran, Watkins. **Abstain:** (0). **Motion:** Passed.

6E. **REQUEST FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL FOR ON SITE SALES AT THE FRIENDS OF SAUSAL CREEK 18TH ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT SALE AND OPEN HOUSE.**

Zermaine Thomas, Special Events Coordinator – OPRYD, on behalf of Cynthia Armstrong, Recreation Supervisor of Cultural Arts & Nature – OPRYD, presented the request. The nursery is located on the backside of Woodminster, inside San Joaquin Miller Park.

**Motion:** Chair Tran entertained a motion to approve the request. **Moved by:** Commissioner K. Smith. **Second by:** Commissioner Kos-Read. **Vote:** Yes (6) Barach, Duhe, Kos-Read, K. Smith Tran, Watkins. **Abstain:** (0). **Motion:** Passed.

6A. **DEPARTMENT MERGER AND BUDGET BRIEFING.**

Brooklyn Williams, Chief of Education and Community Safety for the Office of the Mayor, presented the verbal update. Brooklyn advised that information shared will be about engagement and planning processes, not specific numbers around the budget or measures. The recommendation for starting a Department of Children, Youth and Families came out of the Reimagining Public Safety Taskforce that took place after the killing of George Floyd. Brooklyn sat on that taskforce that involved over 150 residents through a series of advisory councils as well as taskforce members. Council allocated funds to complete a study around the implementation of a Department of Children, Youth and Families.

The initial goals included, outside of the engagement process, the creation of a citywide plan for youth to leverage resources (currently, there are several different departments/agencies, plans, and budgets), the creation of a one-stop-shop for families to make services the City provides more accessible (especially for those accessing multiple services, e.g. a universal application.) Brooklyn observed that the City is under-enrolled in some of its programming. The last goal was the creation of career pipelines. Brooklyn informed there are a number of City vacancies along with a city filled with young people needing jobs that pay livable wages. The idea is to have homegrown staff in City departments.

Now that the Council has a budget, the City Administrator takes the project over. The new City Administrator, Jestin Johnson, and his team are leading this project. The first effort is hiring a consulting firm to assist with launching an engagement process. Brooklyn emphasized the PRAC will be included in the process and that no decisions will be made until the engagement process is complete. In addition, staff, the community, and other stakeholders will also be a part of the engagement process to identify best practices around how [the Department of Children, Youth and Families] should be structured and what it should look like.

Commissioner K. Smith asked for more information about the effect this will have on staffing and programming for children. Brooklyn advised the engagement process would be particularly helpful in this area with this body as it will be about leveraging every penny the City offers across all programming, existing and new, toward the same goal. During the merger planning process [Department of Parks, Recreation & Youth Development and the Department of Human Services into the Department of Children, Youth and Families], we all will be informed of the various programs the City offers. Brooklyn asserted her background is in Youth Development, specifically transitioning youth. In engagement with various departments, it was found that all have different strengths and visions with little knowledge of one another's goals.

Vice Chair Barach asked how the name, Department of Children, Youth and Families, was chosen before the engagement process discussions have begun. Brooklyn advised that she joined a body of cities as part of this process to learn from and hear what the various cities were arguing. There are several departments within the state with the same name, including the one in the City of San Francisco. In these meetings, either cities were trying to start funds for children and youth or trying to start a department/division. Nonetheless, the name is a standard one. Vice Chair Barach emphasized the question of how the creation/name of this entity was selected adding how confusing it can be for the public looking for parks information. Vice Chair Barach observed the entity does not talk about seniors or parks, nor addresses what would become of the PRAC. Brooklyn advised that the merger would not necessarily change how the department functions but encouraged such feedback once the engagement process starts so that concerns are included in the planning process. With regard to branding, there is opportunity around the use of technology, specifically the website, social media, and outreach.

Chair Tran, informed that she works for the City of San Francisco and shared an experience in their engagement process on another one-stop-shop consolidation process. It was found to be slow and messy but ultimately worked because of the quality of the initial engagement process. Chair Tran asked about how the Department of Parks, Recreation and Youth Development has been engaged in the process as its staff will be responsible for overseeing/implementing any changes, and expressed deep concern that things are moving very fast. Chair Tran went on to express that she was advised by a colleague, contrary to statements made, there has not been such an effort to consolidate to a one-stop-shop in San Francisco. Parks and recreation has always been a separate department. Though there is a component of youth development, parks are for everyone.

*Commissioner Torres joined at 5:57pm.*

Commissioner Watkins agreed with Chair Tran's comments adding that he has worked for San Francisco parks and recreation for 37 years and that it has always been a separate entity and line item on the budget. Brooklyn encouraged such comments and suggestions be brought forth during the engagement process and hopes the City Administrator will provide a more detailed plan in September.

Commissioner Kos-Read clarified that this is a step in the process and that engagement will happen in the coming year before anything is finalized. Brooklyn asserted that the financial decisions regarding the budget have been made, but the means is what the engagement process will be about.

Commissioner Torres requested communication between the Mayor's Office and PRAC staff and support staff, observing that the department director typically is a driving force in determining programming fund allocation and philanthropy. She inquired who will step into that role with the removal of the parks and recreation director position, asked that the Mayor's Office consider the age range of the youth the city serves, and maintain staffing. Brooklyn advised that staff and key stakeholders have already been engaged, including herself, and that this has been in discussion since 2020.

Commissioner Duhe inquired as to which staff have been engaged thus far. Brooklyn advised various staff from both the parks department and Human Services have been in meetings but does not have a list of whom.

Commissioner Torres asked for a timeline for the project. Brooklyn advised there will be one year of planning and PRAC will be engaged, but unsure of PRAC's function once details are finalized. There has been a commitment in this budget that there will be no layoffs, so none anticipated. Brooklyn offered to invite Finance Director and City Administrator in September for more details on the engagement plan.

Commissioner Kos-Read suggested taking a tour of the lake with the working group to discuss parks and structural issues. Brooklyn advised Jestin was selected based on his desire to be in community and has already taken him to visit Town Nights.

7. PLANNING AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS:

None.

8. UPDATE FROM DIRECTOR, COMMITTEES, RECREATION ADVISORY COUNCILS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**Director's Report:**

- No Updates.

**PRAC Committees:**

- No Updates.

### **Recreation Advisory Councils (RACs):**

- Chair Tran is working on structuring RACs with Commissioner Liaisons.

### **Announcements:**

- Commissioner Torres's birthday passed this weekend.
- Possible scheduling of PRAC retreat/tour of parks and rec locations.
  - Recommended to have with new director.
- Mayor's Tour has been postponed.
- Upcoming Commissioner Appreciation Event on 7/31/23.

### 6. NEW BUSINESS (continued):

- 6F. **REQUEST THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION TO REVIEW AND ACCEPT PROPOSED FROG PARK SIGNS AND TO RECOMMEND ACCEPTANCE OF IN-KIND DONATION FROM THE FROG PARK COMMITTEE FOR MATERIALS AND INSTALLATION LABOR IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED THREE HUNDRED AND FORTY-TWO DOLLARS (\$342.00).**

Zermaine Thomas, Special Events Coordinator – OPRYD, on behalf of Hank Phan, former Assistant Capital Improvement Project Coordinator – OPW, read the request. Barney Smitts, Frog Park Volunteer, presented the proposal. The signs will be provided in Spanish, English, and Chinese with a QR code that redirects individual to a website. Signs will be reviewed for grammar and punctuation.

**Motion:** Chair Tran entertained a motion to approve the request. **Moved by:** Commissioner Kos-Read. **Second by:** Commissioner Duhe. **Vote:** Yes (7) Barach, Duhe, Kos-Read, K. Smith, Torres, Tran, Watkins. **Abstain:** (0). **Motion:** Passed.

### 9. OPEN FORUM: There were 6 speakers.

### 10. ADJOURNMENT: 6:34 p.m.

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\*Visit [PRAC Website](#) for more information, documents, and reports.

**Next Meeting:**

***Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 4:30 pm***

**Lakeside Park Garden Center**  
666 Bellevue Avenue  
Oakland, CA 94610

**Via Zoom**  
(For observation purposes only.)

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jasmine S. Bellow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jasmine S. Bellow  
Executive Assistant to the Director  
Recording Secretary