

PARKS AND WATERFRONT COMMISSION
Regular Meeting

Wednesday, September 13, 2023, 7:00 P.M., Live Oak Community Ctr, Fireside Room

Minutes – Draft

The Commissions may discuss any items listed on the agenda, but may take action only on items identified as Action.

1. **Call to Order** (Chair). 7pm.
2. **Roll Call** (Secretary). Present: Abshez; Cox; Diehm; Hurtado; Kawczynska; Lee; Ranuzzi; Absent: Avellar; Wozniak.
3. **Land Acknowledgement:**
4. **Action: Approval of Agenda** (Chair). (M/S/C: Ranuzzi/Lee/U): Ayes: Abshez; Cox; Diehm; Hurtado; Kawczynska; Lee; Ranuzzi; Noes: None; Absent: Avellar; Wozniak.
5. **Action: Approval of Minutes** for September 13, 2023 (Chair).* (M/S/C: Diehm/Hurtado/U) with correction: Ayes: Abshez; Cox; Diehm; Hurtado; Kawczynska; Lee; Ranuzzi; Noes: None; Absent: Avellar; Wozniak.
6. **Public Comment.** a) Kathryn Langstaff, Living Shoreline; b) Jim McGrath, Waterfront Specific Plan; c) Kelly Hammargren; d) Gordon Stout, Specific Plan.
7. **Chair's Report.** Swimmers at South Cove (Kawczynska); Notify the secretary re: annual request to receive notification of PRW Commission agenda (Kawczynska); Golden Gate Fields closing Dec 18 (Kawczynska); SF Chronicle article re parks within 10 min walk (Kawczynska); Microforests (Diehm).
8. **Director's Report** (Ferris). Update was provided.
9. **Discussion/Action: PRW Commission Memo & Recommendations to City Council Regarding the Berkeley Waterfront Specific Plan** Abshez/ Diehm/ Kawczynska).* Discussion was held. Public Comment: a) Jim McGrath; b) Kelley Hammargren.
10. **Discussion/Action: Update about the process of Public Art project in Aquatic Park** (Kawczynska/Cox).* Update was provided. Public Comment: a) Kelly Hammargren.
11. **Discussion/Action: Councilmember Taplin Request for State Funds for Pools and funding referrals for Dreamland and Shorebird Play Structures** (Kawczynska).* Discussion was held. M/S/C (Diehm/Ranuzzi/U) to ask council to forward the commission's support letter to the State Budget Committee; Ayes: Abshez; Cox; Diehm; Hurtado; Kawczynska; Lee; Ranuzzi; Noes: None; Absent: Avellar; Wozniak.
12. **Discussion/Action: PRW Commission Workplan 2023 (DRAFT) and approval of new liaisons** (Kawczynska/Diehm).* Held over.
13. **Information: Recent Council Reports.***
14. **Future Agenda Items:** Priorities for parks capital projects FY2023-24; PRW Commission Workplan 2023; Parks Development Fee; Citywide Accessibility Plan; Dogs in Parks; Berth Fee Waivers for community service organizations.
15. **Communications.** Corporate Landscaping, NY Times (Kawczynska); Letters re: Cesar Chavez Park OLA (multiple ltrs).
16. **Adjournment:** 9:20pm.

* document is attached to agenda packet and on the commission website.
** document will be provided at the meeting.

- Commissioners in attendance: 7 of 9 appointed.
- Public in attendance: 5
- Public speakers: 5

Item 11. Discussion/Action: Councilmember Taplin Request for State Funds for Pools, etc.

September 13, 2023

Senate Budget Committee & Assembly Budget Committee
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission would like to endorse City Council's request for state budget allocations for capital improvements at San Pablo Park that includes the Frances Albrier Community Center and a new San Pablo Park Pool.

These are projects that initially came to our commission during deliberations for Measure T1, a bond that voters approved in 2016. And while this project received our recommendation, funding was only available for its planning and design phase. As Councilmember Terry Taplin noted, we had concurred that since it was not possible to renovate or build the Willard Pool (that is owned by the BUSD and not the city of Berkeley) that "we feared that many children in our city will not have the opportunity to learn to swim." Since San Pablo Park generally serves areas of Berkeley that historically have included Black and Latinos and lower income residents, providing such a recreational opportunity is one of environmental and social justice.

According to USA Swimming as of 2018 70% of African-Americans and 60% of Hispanic/Latino children don't know how to swim and their study showed that one of the main reasons for this is their neighborhoods have a lack of access to facilities. Not learning to swim also translates into a segment of our community who might be hesitant to pursue other water sports offered at the Berkeley Waterfront, like windsurfing, kayaking, open water swimming or even dragon boating. A CDC report in 2021 CDC said "that long-standing [racial disparities](#) in drowning deaths have not improved since 1999. According to the report, Black Americans are 1.5 times more likely to drown than white Americans."

A study from Northwestern University found that:

- Only 46% of Black and 47% of Latino children had swimming lessons, compared to 72% of white children.
- Less than 4% of white parents reported never learning to swim, compared to 26% of Black parents and over 32% of Latino parents.
- CDC reports Black children ages 10-14 years old drown in pools at rates over seven times higher than white children.

Construction costs have increased 26% over the last two years, so if we defer this project further, the costs will surely increase will increase even more than its \$14.8M projection. Please consider helping us construct a competitive and recreational pool complex at San Pablo Park. This park's symbolic and material importance in our struggle for racial justice cannot be overstated.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Claudia Kawczynska
Chair, Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission