

**Community & Library Services
Commission
Wednesday, March 12, 2025
6:00 PM – Regular Meeting
MINUTES**



**City of Huntington Beach
2000 Main Street
Huntington Beach, CA 92648
City Council Chambers**

STAFF:

ASHLEY WYSOCKI, Director

Community & Library Services

CHRIS COLE, Manager, Facilities & Dev.

Community & Library Services

CHARLENE GOMEZ, Sr. Admin. Assistant

Community & Library Services

AUSTIN EDELL, Chair

LOLLY MCHARDY, Vice-Chair

CEASON BAKER, Commissioner

STEVE BARNES, Commissioner

TEISHA NIM-HUSAINI, Commissioner

JEANNE PARIS, Commissioner

TRICIA THIENES, Commissioner

CALL TO ORDER – Vice Chair McHardy called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM, stating that Chair Edsell was running late.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Led by Commissioner Barnes

ROLL CALL

Baker, Barnes, Edsell (arrived at 6:10 pm), McHardy, Nim-Husaini, Paris, Thienes

Staff: Wysocki, Cole, Gomez, Martinez, Sandoval, Katayama, Flores

PRESENTATION

25-177 Eagle Scout Project – In recognition of Scout Bradley Boucher's bench donation at Dog Park in Central Park West, Cole presented a Certificate of Appreciation. Commissioner Barnes asked the Scout questions on how he chose his project. Scout Boucher responded that he had visited the park and noticed a need for durable seating due to the environmental elements.

25-178 Community & Library Services Part-Time Employee of the Month Presentation – Aaron Katayama, Supervisor of Murdy Community Center, provided a Certificate of Appreciation to Part Time Program Coordinator, Leyla Flores for her outstanding service.

SUPPLEMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS – Gomez announced supplemental communications were supplied to Commissioners via email and a copy had been included with the agenda packets at the dais.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Nancy Buchoz spoke in opposition to the proposed Edison Park redevelopment design, listing some reasons of opposition as the removal of healthy trees and the addition of pickleball courts. Ms. Buchoz felt there was an unbalance to the plan, an impact on Stillwell Avenue residents, and asked that an environmental impact report be performed.

Ann McCarthy, spoke in support of lighted soccer fields, and provided background on AYSO Region 56, expressing her appreciation for full fields being implemented in the plan.

Michelle Africano spoke in opposition to the proposed plan at Edison Park due to loss of trees and asked that Commissioners consider a previous plan.

Mark Currie spoke in opposition to the Edison Park plan due to cost and the addition of 16 pickleball courts. Mr. Currie voiced his concern of “cramming” too much into a small footprint and urged the Commission to consider the Edison Park Community Group’s alternative plan.

Jerry Schreiber thanked the design team for removing the pump track from the design. Mr. Schreiber also spoke of his family’s use of the park, AYSO Region 56, and asked that the trees be saved.

Sabrina Schrieber spoke in support of keeping the trees slated for removal and the Edison Park Community Group’s alternative plan.

Leslie Chetwynd felt the design firm was dishonest about the pump track and trees during the input process, which caused them to lose credibility in her view.

Ding-Jo Currie thanked the Edison Park Community Group for two years of dedication on the project, and thanked City Council Member, Casey McKeon for his support in pausing the project. Ms. Currie provided background information and a handout of the Community Group’s alternative plan layouts.

Ernie Courter spoke of the enjoyment he and his family experienced using the Edison Park. He would like to see the handball courts stay, stating that the courts were used by all ages with varying exercise needs. Mr. Courter voiced his concern with both the pickleball courts and hitting wall and would like to see three handball courts saved. He would also like to see the construction costs.

Tony Riccobono felt the feedback from citizens was not heard and the cost was too high. He also voiced his opinion that the Edison Park Community Group’s design was better at a lower cost.

Mark Rafter spoke in support of adding bocce ball courts and on the balance within the park. Mr. Rafter proposed adding bocce courts behind the fire station block wall due to the growing interest in the sport and spoke of Quimby funds.

John Reopelli said he was instrumental in bringing bocce ball to Murdy Park. Mr. Reopelli cited information from newspaper articles supporting bocce ball and announced that he was now an instructor with classes available through the HB SANDS recreation guide. Mr. Reopelli recommended the installation of four synthetic courts near the parking area and block wall of Fire Station #4.

Betty Flynn voiced her concern for the removal of trees. Although she agreed the park needs to be redesigned, she felt healthy trees should not be removed. Ms. Flynn asked that the Commission consider the Edison Park Community Group’s alternative plan. Additionally, she suggested dimming lights or putting them on timers.

Julie McEachin said she was bothered by the new design plan, saying she felt it did not include any of the collaborative elements discussed with the Edison Park Community Group.

Max Moriyama introduced himself as the architect working with the Edison Park Community Group on an alternate design plan. Mr. Moriyama listed items he had issue with in the proposed conceptual plan. He spoke about a “preferred” plan and “alternative” design plan, that he had created. Mr. Moriyama said it would reduce the amount of pickleball courts and parking spaces, save trees, create a path network and improve the green space, while also creating balance within the park.

Robert Granger spoke of a simplified approach and his concern for pedestrian safety due to e-bike riders in the park. Mr. Granger asked to implement safety attention into the plan. Additionally, Mr. Granger was in support of saving the trees and spoke about school district property. He stated he did not want a school maintenance yard in the community and asked the City to communicate with the School District.

Scott Smith complimented the Edison Park Community Group on the alternative plan. Mr. Smith recommended a compromise on the phasing and provided a list of items that could be changed, including the pathways, e-bike use and safety, the “Edison Lake” area drainage design, and the issues with the softball perimeter fencing.

James Torres spoke in support of soccer fields at Edison Park and the use by AYSO Region 56. Mr. Torres discussed safety on the fields and the design care that should be taken, especially for kids with special needs. Additionally, Mr. Torres was in support of bocce ball.

Brian Thienes spoke in favor of redesigning the park, however not in favor of the current proposed plan. Mr. Thienes felt the design was too simple for the cost. Additionally, he spoke in support of saving the trees and voiced his concern of cramming too much activity in a small space. He felt it was not appropriate to convert Edison Park to a sports park.

Linda Rowilson spoke in support of a pump track, stating that kids, particularly teens such as those at the high school across the street, needed somewhere to ride. If a track couldn't be created at Edison Park, then Ms. Rowilson asked that it be created elsewhere. Additionally, Ms. Rowilson spoke in support of RJM Design, sharing her previous experience with the firm.

Gimo Trazo voiced her strong objection to the proposed design plan. Ms. Trazo said she lived on Stillwell and was concerned of the proximity of the 16 pickleball courts to the homes. She requested a different location be reviewed for the courts and asked that a sound mitigation plan be implemented and reduction the nighttime stadium lighting.

Robert Trazo provided a packet to Commissioners containing past communications regarding his request for a CEQA study. Mr. Trazo played a sound clip of pickleball play, stating it would cause loss of sleep. He voiced his support of the Edison Park Community Group's efforts and asked that Commission take the alternative plan and his documents into consideration.

Erin Greer said she lived in the community and had dealt with parking issues during the week from the school and from baseball and churches patrons at the park on weekends, limiting parking in front of residents' homes. Additionally, she spoke on the park paths, e-bike riders, loss of shade trees, pickleball, and other park amenities and issues that cause irritation to the residents

Lu Perez spoke in support of the library petitions and asked Commissioners to vote in support of the petitions in June.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

25-179 Request approval of the February 11, 2024 meeting minutes.

MOTION: Commissioner Barnes moved to accept the minutes as written with Commissioner Paris seconding the motion. (passed 6-0-1)

AYES: Barnes, Edsell, McHardy, Nim-Hussaini, Paris, Thienes

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Baker

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

25-180 Edison Park Conceptual Plan – Wysocki introduced staff from RJM Design Group and Geosyntec, stating both firms had worked diligently over the last few years with staff and the public to design the Edison Park redevelopment conceptual plan. Zachary Meuting of RJM Design provided background, including a timeline of the community outreach process, the types of outreach conducted, the originally approved Conceptual Plan C, and the rescinding of the approved plan, by City Council directing staff to obtain more input from the public. Mr. Meuting said additional data was collected via surveys and meetings with the public, along with the performance of geotechnical and noise studies.

Mr. Meuting introduced his associate, Andrew Steen, who is also a certified arborist. Mr. Steen presented an overhead view of the park, making note of the landfill on the westside of the park and the location of two abandoned oil wells, which must be avoided. Mr. Steen turned the floor over to Yonus Zemuy of Geosyntec, who specializes in environmental matters, such as the landfill and abandoned oil wells. Mr. Zemuy spoke on why the landfill and oilwells should not be disturbed. Mr. Zemuy stated that survey tests were conducted to determine the limits of the landfill. This allowed the design firm to conceptualize a design that would avoid the landfill area, which is regulated by regulatory agencies. If disturbed, the oilwells would require re-abandoning at an astronomical cost. Images were shown that depicted the condition and deformities created by the landfill waste settlement, along with images of surveyors conducting the oil well detection.

Mr. Steen summarized the arborist report information including the number of trees that were declared unhealthy or in decline. He provided an image with a color-coded overlay

of past arborist reports and a current report depicting unhealthy or declining trees, the trees that would remain and those to be removed, along with the recommended planting of almost 200 trees at various levels of maturity and species. Another assessment performed was the noise impact study for pickleball noise. RK Engineering set up two noise monitoring sites. The results obtained did not exceed the City's 55 and 75 (peak) decibel levels.

The proposed design sets out to include various amenities without impacting the landfill and oilwell areas. Parking was reconfigured to allow for maximum greenspace, aesthetics, and safety aspects, to include aligning one entrance/exit with the signalized light at Edison High School and aligning the second entrance/exit with Poston Lane to avoid headlights going directly into residences. Basketball courts would be reconfigured from 4 full courts and 4 half courts to 6 full courts. Pickleball would include eight dedicated courts, which would take over the two remaining original tennis courts, and eight overlay courts within in one of two relocated tennis courts. An all-wheeled plaza would replace the current skate park to allow for other wheeled use, such as wheelchairs, roller skates, and bikes.

Mr. Steen provided detailed information on the potential for a phased construction approach. Phasing costs were distributed to be similar in Phase A & B with a smaller cost anticipated for Phase C.

Wysocki read the recommended action, adding that if approved, the plan would be provided to the Community Development Department where an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) study would be conducted before being presented to City Council for approval. She provided more detail and addressed other opportunities for community involvement, including plant palettes and design elements. Various lighting options would be considered, such as pedestrian lighting and sports lights. Wysocki provided information on the public's input and their desire for pickleball. Additionally, she reported the Police Department's desire for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in the design, which would enhance safety and security by allowing officers to see into the park without obstruction. Currently, the racquet ball courts limit the line of sight into the park. Wysocki also reported that phasing would take approximately 6 – 9 months per phase, versus implementing the full plan across the entire park was estimated at 9 – 12 months to complete construction. Wysocki reported there was just under \$4,000,000 available through the Park Development Impact Fund, Quimby funds and AES sources, which were earmarked specifically for Edison Park, and staff would ask for another \$1 million in Quimby funds this fiscal year. Also, staff would look for grants and other funding opportunities, with a goal not to use any general fund, if possible. Wysocki also informed Commission that currently the project was almost funded up to the anticipated costs of the first phase.

Commissioner Nim-Husaini asked about the type of trees that would replace those slated for removal. Wysocki shared the community's opposition to palm trees, stating that no palm trees would be installed, and deferred to Mr. Steen, who provided information on the various types of trees that were safe and sturdy for the environment, but also

waterwise. Wysocki reiterated that community input would not stop with an approval of the conceptual design, utilizing community feedback to help fine-tune the landscape design, should be project continue to move forward.

Chair Edsell asked about the size of trees to be planted. Mr. Steen provided details on trees, saying trees were sold in “box” sizes. A 24” box would represent a standard sized new tree, but trees become larger and more mature as the box size increases. He provided examples of the size and maturity of a 36”, 48” and 60” box tree. Mr. Steen also informed Commissioners that growth speed would vary by species. The concept was designed to take into consideration various tree sizes and species. Discussion continued on the type and size of trees and how they grow.

Commissioner Baker asked if trees that filter the air could be considered over only aesthetically pleasing trees due to the park’s proximity to the Ascon plant. Mr. Steen said trees naturally bio-filtrate, but some species could mitigate better than others, which may be implemented in the plan. Commissioner Baker also asked about eucalyptus trees. Mr. Steen provided information, saying eucalyptus trees were a fast-growing tree native to Australia, not California. The species, not as strong as other native trees, were subject to failure. Originally used as a windbreak for farming communities, professionals typically do not include eucalyptus trees in park designs any longer.

Commissioner Barnes asked how the plan addressed the drainage issues with “Lake Edison”. Mr. Meuting said the area had shown a significant depression where the landfill was sinking and said it would be addressed through a drainage system, reiterating it would be important not to disturb the waste settlement. Mr. Zemuy provided further information on grading and maintenance of the area. Commissioner Barnes asked if RJM had a chance to review the design by Max Moriyama from the Edison Park Community Group. Mr. Meuting said he had only received the design handout during public comments, and at first glance, it appeared to be similar. He said RJM would look at the plan and the items addressed by the group in more depth upon return to their office.

Discussion moved to the location of the pickleball courts, the parking lot in relationship to the play area, and the parking impact on the neighborhood if parking spaces were reduced.

Commissioner Paris asked about the size of the soccer fields, which prompted additional questions and discussion on the U14 soccer fields and current sports lighting. Commissioner Paris asked if bocce ball could be included. Wysocki said the design could be reviewed to determine if a suitable location could be identified for the implementation of bocce ball. The conversation continued with questions on parking and addressing the landfill. Wysocki noted that to address the landfill so that amenities could be placed on top would require most of the funding to be utilized underground, and, therefore, the public would not see the benefits of above ground amenities.

Commissioner Thienes inquired about noise mitigation implementation options. Wysocki said the hitting wall and trees would help, along with improved technology for pickleball

play equipment, including advancements in sound screens, paddles and balls. Wysocki recapped that the City was trying to be thoughtful in the location of pickleball courts but could also implement standards for the type of equipment and rules applied to the game in the park, if necessary. Commissioner Thienes asked what happens if funds are not available to go beyond the first phase. Wysocki provided scenarios that included identification of grants and other funding opportunities, or the project could wait until full funding were available. She reminded Commissioners that with any construction project, the longer the wait, the higher the costs as materials and labor continue to rise.

Commissioner Barnes asked Wysocki to clarify that Edison Park, as the City's second largest park, was a community park and not a neighborhood park. Wysocki confirmed the information and provided a description of the four levels of parks within the City, including regional, community, neighborhood, and pocket parks. She stated that parks and the amenities are designed to fit the park type.

Discussion moved to funding with Chair Edsell clarifying that conceptual plans were a concept that staff could go to when funding allowed, and not a commitment of funds at the time of approval by Commission. Wysocki said City Council had already approved \$4,000,000, and the earmarked Quimby funds had to be used within approximately 2.5 miles of a project area. She provided further information on how the process would work including asking City Council for funding, if necessary.

Baker asked about the difference between an all-wheel plaza versus a skate spot. Wysocki said it would be available to scooters, wheelchairs, skates, etc., which allows for inclusivity. There is an all-inclusive playground on the beach, but environmental elements were causing deterioration and replacement at a quicker rate than normal and access from the parking areas can be difficult for those with special needs.

Questions moved to hours of baseball/softball play, sports lighting and timers. Wysocki said that should noise and lighting become an issue, the City could determine an adjustment in the schedule. The lights are Musco lights, and staff could control the on/off timers.

Chair Edsell asked if 16 pickleball games were being played during the noise study. Wysocki said the study was conducted with the decibels as if 16 games were played. Discussion moved to the pickleball courts and the overlay of the current tennis courts, and where the temporary courts are currently located. To date, only one MyHB complaint had been received since the installation of the temporary courts. Wysocki discussed a visit she made to the park to evaluate the noise in person. Discussion continued on sound mitigation and City programmed pickleball play, in addition to drop-in play by the public.

Conversation shifted to the pathways within the park and the potential for design and working with the community on future aesthetic designs. Wysocki said staff would continue to work with the community through meetings, workshops, signage, marketing, etc. Discussion continued on the design, needs, improvements, and moving forward.

Commissioner Barnes asked what other parks have a group such as the Edison group. Wysocki said there are volunteers across the City but the engagement with Edison Park Community Group was one of higher level. She gave an example of the HB Tree Society and their large projects in Central Park, such as the Urban Forest and Secret Garden, but working with a group like the Edison Park Community Group on park design was unique. Commissioners and staff continued to discuss items requested by the Community Group and how elements were implemented in the plan. Chair Edsell thanked staff, the Edison Park Community Group, and the community as a whole for their commitment to the projects.

MOTION: Chair Edsell moved to approve for recommendation the Edison Park Redevelopment Conceptual Plan as presented with the contingency to install 10% mature trees when the time comes, and that staff should continue to work with the Edison Park Community Group moving forward. Commissioner Baker seconded the motion. (All in favor 7-0)

AYES: Baker, Barnes, Edsell, McHardy, Nim-Hussaini, Paris, Thienes

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

25-181 Encyclopedia Lots Acquisitions – Wysocki provided information on the history of the encyclopedia lots, saying the encyclopedia company sold plots of land in 1910 for \$1 when a set of encyclopedias was purchased for \$126. Recently, two lots were purchased for approximately \$52,000. Discussion ensued on the properties, who owned the remaining outstanding lots, noting that the majority were owned by the City and located within the Urban Forest area of Huntington Central Park.

25-182 Calendar of Events – Wysocki announced the events calendar was provided in the agenda packets for Commissions review.

STAFF ITEMS

25-184 HB Sands Recreation Class Scholarship Discussion – Wysocki announced this item was brought forth by Commission Baker. Commissioner Baker said she was a resource for foster parents and children, and that it had been brought to her attention foster children do not always have the financial opportunity to participate in various programs. Wysocki said that scholarships could be looked at through private funding or as an ask for City Council to provide funding. Discussion ensued on recreational classes, the cost, and ideas on how to make recreation programs available through a scholarship program.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – None

COMMENTS – Not Agendized

Commissioner Barnes reported that he attended the reopening of Langenback playground

and the ribbon cutting for the new HB Training Center for joint operations.

Wysocki announced that the next few meetings would be relocated to meeting rooms B8 and/or B7 due to renovations in Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT – With no further business, Chair Edsell called for adjournment at 8:40 pm with Commissioner Paris seconding the motion.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Huntington Beach Community & Library Services Commission is Wednesday, April 9, 2025, at 6:00 PM in Meeting Room B-8, lower level of City Hall located at 2000 Main Street, Huntington Beach, CA 92648.