



***Special Meeting Minutes of the Oakland
Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC)**

**Wednesday, November 18, 2020, 4:30 P.M.
Zoom Teleconference**

1. CALL TO ORDER:
2. ROLL CALL: 4:31 P.M.

**AIKENS, COLE, DUHE, HA, HOWZE, KOS-READ, MOORE, REILLY, SMITH,
TORRES**

Present - 8: Commissioners Aikens, Ha, Howze, Kos-Read, Moore, Reilly, Smith, Torres.
Excused -1: Commissioner Cole. **In Transit -1:** Commissioner Duhe.

3. DISPOSITION OF MINUTES:

October 14, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes:

Note: Insufficient members were present to approve the October 14, 2020 minutes.
Commissioner Aikens received the following vote: **Yes - 5:** Commissioners Aikens, Howze, Kos-Read, Moore and Smith. **Abstained - 3:** Ha, Reilly, Torres.

The item will be moved to the December agenda for consideration.

4. OPEN FORUM
5. MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA:
6. CONSENT NEW BUSINESS:
7. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Tree Permit Appeal for 1125 Hollywood Avenue

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission reviewed report 7A presented by Tod Lawson, Arboricultural Inspector, Oakland Public Works Tree Division.

On April 3, 2020, Tree Services Division approved tree removal permit ND20- 032 for 1125 Hollywood Avenue. After the property inspection, Tree Services staff approved the

applicant's request for the removal of a 42" diameter Canary Island pine tree from the property.

Staff cited structural defects regarding the Canary Island pine including its poor structure due to topping in May 2011. Topping has impacted the natural growth of the tree and has compromised the shape and formation of its limbs and the overall appearance from that of a Christmas tree with larger limbs at the bottom, to a more rounded shape with larger limbs at the top. The compromised limbs grow longer with heavier tips. Because the tree has been cut many times over many years the irregular growth supports the high likelihood of limb failure.

The canopy of the tree covers portions of three properties including 3 backyards, 3 homes, a deck and a patio.

Appellant

Appellants at 1111 Hollywood Avenue asserted that the tree had not been topped prior to the applicant's ownership of the property, and that the applicant did so 5 years prior to their action to appeal the tree removal permit.

Their opposition to removing the tree include the reduction of nesting, foraging and overall habitat for local bird species, and the provisions in the Big Tree Registry initiated by the Quan Administration to prevent unnecessary tree loss.

The appellants asserted there was no evidence of structural failure of the Canary Pine and referenced an arborist's report not provided to Trees Services staff for the presentations of this appeal.

The property owners at 1111 Hollywood Avenue offered to financially support the care of the Canary Island pine located at 1125 Hollywood Avenue.

Applicant

The applicant asserted that she had not topped the tree. That the topping occurred prior to her ownership of the property and that the tree appears the same as it did 11 years ago. The property owner also stated that the tree poses a significant danger to human life, pets and property. She reported that limbs and pine cones drop into the yard, and for 11 years she has been afraid to use a section of the property which has been cordoned off. She also reported that her gardener wears a hard hat for protection from falling pine cones, which when closed, drop like projectiles from the tree. Evidently, there are too many limbs to be moved manually, and roots are growing in the crawl spaces of the home.

The Appellant's offer to participate with the financial care of the tree was declined. The applicant offered that she was formerly employed by the National Parks Service and cares for the health of trees, and would not opt to remove the tree without cause.

The applicant reminded the appellants and the Commission that she holds the liability associated with harm to persons or property.

Staff apprised the Commission that Protected Tree Ordinance does not make provisions for consideration of nesting birds or the Big Tree Registry when determining the removal of a tree. Further, staff informed the Commission that homeowners should consult with the State Fish and Wildlife Office when scheduling a tree removal. Tree Division Staff affirmed that the City's main criteria when approving a tree removal request is to ensure public health and safety relative to the health of the tree. They consider the likelihood of limbs snapping off or the tree failing and what is situated below its canopy.

PRAC Tree Committee members informed the body that as is required, they toured the property with staff and met with the applicant/homeowner.

Commission

PRAC Tree Committee members informed the body that as is required, they toured the property with staff and met with the applicant/homeowner.

Staff confirmed for the Commission that, the Big Tree Registry is a platform where the community can enter a tree of interest and that the venue is not relied on when determining removal of a tree, a tree cannot be removed until all nesting has ended and proper notice was made to those associated with the permit appeal including adjacent property owners.

The Commission confirmed with staff that the tree is not structurally sound and is growing backward.

Before rendering a vote on the item, PRAC requested staff report back in December with the findings from the appellant's arborist.

Motion: Commissioner Aikens entertained a motion to recommend that PRAC hold the vote on item 7A until the December meeting, and at the time receive and review the arborist report prepared on behalf of the appellant. **Moved by:** Commissioner Ha. **Second by:** Commissioner Moore. **Vote: Yes - (7):** Aikens, Ha, Kos-Read, Moore, Reilly, Smith, Torres. **Abstained (2):** – Commissioners Duhe and Howze. **Motion:** Passed.

Note: Commissioner Duhe arrived before the vote on Item 7A.

B. Request For Parks And Recreation Advisory Commission To Approve Leasing Of Lowell Park For SquashDrive

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission reviewed report 7B presented by Myka Hammock, Recreation Supervisor, Oakland Parks, Recreation and Youth Development.

In partnership with Oakland Parks, Recreation and Youth Development (OPRYD), SquashDrive representatives requested approval to conduct a feasibility study to build 2-4 portable outdoor squash courts at Lowell Park in West Oakland.

Squash is a two-person sport played with a racket and rubber balls in a four-wall setting. The proposed court will be used for the SquashDrive program currently serving 80 black and brown Oakland youth including 4th-12th graders and college students. Sixteen of these players are ranked nationally. Squash is considered a healthy, fun, low cost sport with little equipment needed. SquashDrive will work with OPRYD and Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) to introduce the health and fitness program to the community.

SquashDrive's mission is to foster an environment where program participants have the opportunity to thrive through their academic pursuits and character development. The organization supports students high school, post-secondary education and further. Berkeley Maynard Academy is SquashDrive's primary partner.

Full funding for the program will be raised by the SquashDrive board, consisting of mostly squash players, and its community donors. SquashDrive will maintain the courts. Squash Drive does not anticipate OPRYD incurring costs for the program.

Director

Great amenity to the Lowell Park community. The addition will complement the recently installed Outdoor Fitness amenity.

The department will work with SquashDrive to develop program specifics including, program schedule, OPRYD and community access. Staff and program representatives will report back.

Commission

The Commission responded favorably to the concept of SquashDrive and its possible addition to the Oakland community. Commission members expressed appreciation for the health benefits, diversity of the program participants, as well as the social and educational aspects it offers youth.

Motion: Commissioner Aikens entertained a motion to recommend that PRAC approve the staff request to allow SquashDrive to install a temporary squash court structure at Lowell Park and conduct a feasibility study and community engagement event to explore building a permanent structure. **Moved by:** Commissioner Kos-Read. **Second by:** Commissioner Torres. **Vote:** Yes – (9): Aikens, Duhe, Ha, Howze, Kos-Read, Moore, Reilly, Smith, Torres. **Motion:** Passed.

8. PLANNING AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS

9. MEASURE Q: OVERSIGHT/UPDATES/REPORTS

Brooke Levin, Co-Chair Measure Q

- Oakland Public Works (OPW) is working to schedule a required presentation to the PRAC.

10. COMMITTEE AND/OR ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATES:

- Tree Committee – Commissioner Wolfson’s position on the PRAC expired in November leaving a seat on the Tree Committee vacant.
- After a discussion between Commissioner’s Kos-Read and Aikens, Commissioner Aikens agreed to join the Committee with Commissioners Moore and Ha.
- Topics/Comments for future discussion:
 - Equitable climate change – shade is an amenity.
 - To OPW - What is the current assessment of Oakland’s tree canopy?
 - To OPW - How can PRAC comment? What is PRAC’s role?

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

- Commissioner Kos-Read
 - The Lake Merritt community met to discuss improving conditions and conducting community engagement.
 - Volunteers are needed for District 2
- Commissioner Aikens
 - Lake Merritt vendors are interested in what will happen with the program during the winter months?

12. CONTINUATION OF OPEN FORUM:

13. ADJOURNMENT: 5:59 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ J. Nicholas Williams
J. Nicholas Williams
Secretary

/s/ Diane L. Boyd
Diane L. Boyd
Recording Secretary

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

TeleConference