

Agenda
Meeting of the Oakland Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC)
Wednesday, March 10, 2021 - 4:30 PM

Zoom Webinar Information:

When: Mar 10, 2021 04:30 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Topic: Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Meeting - March 10, 2021

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If you have questions, email Diane Boyd, Executive Assistant to the Director of Oakland Parks, Recreation and Youth Development dboyd@oaklandca.gov. Thank you.



PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION - PRAC
Wednesday, March 10, 2021, 4:30 P.M.
Meeting Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER:
2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Allen, Duhe, Ha, Kos-Read, Moore, Reilly, Torres and Walton
Excused: Smith

3. DISPOSITION OF MINUTES:
February 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion: Commissioner Reilly entertained a motion to recommend approval of the February 10, 2021 meeting minutes. **Moved by:** Commissioner Duhe. **Second by:** Commissioner Walton. **Vote:** 8 Yes: Allen, Duhe, Ha, Kos-Read, Moore, Reilly, Torres, Walton. Motion: Pass.

4. MODIFICATION OF THE AGENDA:
5. OPEN FORUM:
6. CONSENT NEW BUSINESS:
7. NEW BUSINESS:
 - A. Item not used.

B. REQUEST FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION TO APPROVE THE FRIENDS OF JOAQUIN MILLER PARK (FOJMP) IN COORDINATION WITH EAGLE SCOUTS TO INSTALL INFORMATIONAL KIOSK AT ENTRANCE OF WOODMINSTER CASCADE WITHIN JOAQUIN MILLER PARK

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission reviewed the staff report for Item 7B introduced by Alethia Walker of Oakland Parks, Recreation and Youth Development on behalf of Oakland Public Works (OPW).

OPW requested that the Friends of Joaquin Miller Park (FOJMP), in partnership with the Eagle Scouts, be allowed to build a kiosk in Joaquin Miller Park which will hold information material for local and regional visitors.

Following the basis kiosk design, this structure will be made of redwood and topped with a shingle roof. The structure will stand approximately 8 feet high and 4 feet wide with a two-door aluminum locking unit. Simpson brackets will be used to raise the support posts off the ground to avoid damaging tree roots. Staff will locate the structure at the entrance of the Woodminster Cascade, right off the sidewalk, and away from the stairwell which is a popular venue for wedding photos.

The kiosk will hold a variety of material including maps, handouts, Jr. Wildlife Ranger pamphlets and other information. FOJMP and OPW will share maintenance of the information and handouts. OPW staff will also oversee the construction of the kiosk and the day of buildout.

Motion: Commissioner Reilly entertained a motion to recommend approval the staff recommendation to allow the Friends of Joaquin Miller Park and Eagle Scouts' installation of a Kiosk at the Woodminster Cascades entrance in Joaquin Miller Park.

Moved by: Commissioner Walton. **Second by:** Commissioner Allen. **Vote:** 8 Yes: Allen, Duhe, Ha, Kos-Read, Moore, Reilly, Torres, Walton. **Motion:** Pass.

C. REQUEST FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION TO GRANT PERMISSION TO RENAME DIGITAL ARTS AND CULINARY ACADEMY (A.K.A. THE RAINBOW TEEN CENTER/DACA)

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission reviewed the staff report for Item 7C introduced by Claytoven Richardson from of Oakland Parks, Recreation and Youth Development.

During the Phase II planning stages of the Digital Arts and Culinary Academy's (DACA) Capital Improvement Project (CIP) remodel, the team considered the possibility of changing the program's name to alleviate reoccurring confusion with other community services. The name change would coincide with the reopening of the site.

Former and current DACA students including 13 teens, and 5 young adults, as well as 3 none voting staff participated in the discussion regarding the name change. In three separate votes, the East Oakland Arts Center and Seminary Arts Center selections tied.

The collective reasoning for changing the name included DACA's shared acronym with the immigration resource Deferred Action for Child Arrivals, the interchangeable reference to the program also known as Rainbow Teen Center, and graffiti tags messaging anti-immigration opinions. Staff offered that DACA's programs do not exclusively service teens but are also designed to include seniors and middle school youth.

Commission Comments:

The Commission suggested staff conduct a Google search to discover what may come up to help determine most effective marketing. Staff informed the Commission that several acronym searches were conducted to avoid issues.

The Commission inquired what participants liked about the names selected.

Staff provided information that youth were encouraged to come up with names reflective of the work and programs at DACA including general arts because the programs are broad and various. They were also given the option to consider naming the Center after a community member. The discussions often returned to arts related option. Staff reported having no favorite selection and stated their continued non-participation in the voting process or swaying the opinion of youth during the process.

Staff suggested that if the Seminary Arts Center were selected, that the youth participants would be recommended to create a sign to reflect that of a traditional street sign.

The Commission learned that the majority of the participants live in the immediate neighborhood of East Oakland's Districts 6 and 7. Some come from District 4, and more regionally from Alameda, Hayward, including annual visitors from Bakersfield.

The Commission expressed concern regarding the danger presented to the Center and the importance to make the name change. A real-time Google search showed that the Seminary Arts Center appeared in Vermont.

The Commission further commented on Oakland's continued goal to find inclusion and embrace diversity but pointed out that East Oakland Arts Center was more inclusive, while the Seminary Arts Center selection represented just an area in East Oakland and seemed too limiting.

The Commission also suggested that the name chosen should be based on whatever would be familiar to the community, such as including Rainbow in the name selected.

The body was assured that the name change would reflect the community's wishes. The Commission was also informed that the proposed names with Rainbow featured in the titles did not receive votes. Staff cited the following reason for not including Rainbow in the final name change; continuing confusion regarding service delivery to the Rainbow Center and DACA, the community's misunderstanding of DACA's affiliation with immigrations services and walk-in clients mistaking the Rainbow Center for DACA. Staff concluded that reliance on DACA's strong marking skills would make the name change effective.

The Commission agreed to make a motion to change the name to the East Oakland Arts Center.

Motion: Commissioner Reilly entertained a motion to recommend approval of the DACA Name Change Committee's request to rename Digital Arts and Culinary Academy, a.k.a. DACA, a.k.a. Rainbow Teen Center DACA to East Oakland Arts Center. **Moved by:** Commissioner Walton. **Second by:** Commissioner Duhe. **Vote:** 8 Yes: Allen, Duhe, Ha, Kos-Read, Moore, Reilly, Torres, Walton. Motion: Pass.

8. PLANNING AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS:

9. MEASURE Q:

David Ferguson, Director Oakland Public Works

Provided an overview of Oakland Public Works (OPW) operations. Members of PRAC met with OPW staff Measure Q liaison to help guide the content of the presentation.

Areas covered included the agency's mission to maintain, improve and preserve Oakland's infrastructure. The presentation included OPW organizational, Core Services and bureau of administration structures, as well as the Bureau of Environment which

encompasses environmental services, parks ground and median maintenance, and tree management and maintenance. Also reviewed were the City's vast infrastructure assets, included but not limited to; miles of storm drains, 80 miles of open creeks and sewer pipes; 309 public building, 140 City parks, all open space and park trees, an estimated 2.5 million square feet of City-owned buildings. Implementing environmental priorities for the City including a new Storm Drainage Master Plan and Measure Q – Oakland Parks and Recreation Preservation, Litter Reduction, and Homelessness Support Act passed in March 2020.

Staff acknowledged that due to the impact of COVID-19 in March 2020, OPW's services were halted or were pared down to 50% capacity, thereby delaying the work required under Measure Q. Staff referenced City Council's November 2020 decision to provide citizen oversight of the Measure Q spending and performance, and named PRAC to the hold the position. Fiscal oversight will also be conducted by the City Auditor and the OPW's Annual Financial Audit.

Staff also reported that Sean Maher, OPW's Liaison to Measure Q met with Commissioners to discuss the upcoming monthly report. Discussions will continue to work with the Measure Q Oversight Committee to develop timelines and other details.

Funding directed under the Measure includes:

64% - for parks, landscape maintenance and recreational services

30% - for services to address homelessness

5% - for services and projects to address water quality and litter reduction

1% - to cover costs of auditing and evaluation programs

Staff reported slow progress with the hiring process when COVID-19 protocols came into play March of 2020. The workforce was reduced due to the County health order put in place. As a result, OPW was unable to conduct necessary performance examinations. Currently back on track to interview for needed Gardener II and Gardener Crew leader positions. This would be a good opportunity for PRAC and Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation members to join OPW as evaluators of the performance examinations.

Before March 2020, OPW had 57 custodial position, currently 19 positions are vacant.

Actively recruiting to fill the positions, but the department is having a rough time bring on staff.

OPW recommended that the department return quarterly with full updates including hiring and other progress. The Subcommittee plans to meet monthly for smaller updates.

Public Comments:

- Require the Finance Committee to provide a 101 presentation on specific usage of Measure Q funds.
- Schedule a detailed presentation from OPW regarding staffing and all assets in PRAC's jurisdiction including, landscaping, personal for recreation centers, restrooms and playgrounds, ballfields, granite pads around Lake Merritt. Who is in charge of repairs?
- Receive information from OPW regarding who oversees the City's response on clean water and drainage.

Public Reminders from October 2020

- Recommended OPW make detailed presentations regarding parks, trees, facilities and clean water including all operational information for each function so the PRAC and the community are familiar with what resources are available to accomplish tasks.
- Finance Manager offered to make a presentation to familiarize PRAC with the budgeting process.
- Monthly hiring matrix given to the Civil Service Board should be placed in PRAC's monthly packets
- Requested a 6-month report for the first 36 months of Measure Q detailing financial information. Now past 1 year mark.

Commission Comments:

- Are the 57 custodial vacant and slated to be funded by Measure Q?
Staff informed the Commission that of the 57 custodial positions, 2 are dedicated to Measure Q and 19 are vacant. Custodian positions and parttime park attendants are feeder positions to other City employment opportunities such as maintenance workers, maintenance leaders, sewer maintenance worker. Keeping up with the custodial vacancies has also been challenging due to personnel

leaving the City for employment elsewhere. Staff informed the Commission that OPW would return with the request reports.

- For context, the Commission suggested it would be helpful to review a report on the scope of work, staffing and budgets of comparable cities. An offline review of this information would be agreeable. A baseline matrix on the status of how services are being met was also requested.

The Commission referenced OPW's website showing July 2018 organizational chart depicting 15 fulltime staff working at Lake Merritt. The Commission requested budget information for the area. Staff agreed to provide information from the monthly asset management report and comparable data from other municipalities.

- Did the City's hiring freezes impact Measure Q?
The Commission was informed that Measure Q was not impacted.

Commissioners affirmed the desire to be good stewards of Measure Q and expressed appreciation to OPW staff for their collaborative assistance.

The Chair specifically addressed the public and provided background information on the development of the Measure Q Ad Hoc Committee established at the February 2021 PRAC meeting. The meetings of the three-member committee, including Allen, Duhe and Reilly, do not meet the standards for a quorum and are not public. The public was informed that the first meeting was a working session where the members discussed their values and how they would like to see Measure Q reflected in the broader PRAC meetings. Also discussed was the importance of knowing what tools Commission needs to be a good and effective oversight body. The ad hoc committee intends to work to prepare information to bring to the public and PRAC, including setting the agenda and setting expectations. Information shared with the ad hoc members will be share with the Commission. Moving forward, the Committee will meet again in April. Community members may be invited to future meetings to assist with presentations.

- Would like to have Measure Q Budget presentation by the Finance Director to understand how Measure Q funds are being spent and tracked. Hopeful to be scheduled for April.
- Add hiring matrix in next packet and each month moving forward.
- Looking forward to 6 month detailed operational report.

10. UPDATE FROM DIRECTOR, COMMITTEES, RECREATION ADVISORY COUNCILS (RAC) & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Williams informed the Commission that Joe DeVries from the City Administrator's Office was present to provide an update on the activities at Lake Merritt.

Joe DeVries – Lake Merritt Update:

Providing an oral report today. A full written report will be made to the Life Enrichment Committee (LEC) on March 22, 2021 at 1:30p.m. Will share PRAC recommendations from September 2020, how the City responded, current conditions and survey results.

The City has experienced a great increase in visits to Lake Merritt over the past several years. In particular, all City parks visits have increased due to the pandemic where people have been turning to outdoor spaces to recreate. Because people are unable to congregate in clubs and bars, they have moved to parks and places not intended for these nighttime activities which contribute to the greater concerns at Lake Merritt.

Last year saw a large growing group of vendors along Lake Shore Avenue in a residential area. The PRAC recommended the City establish a legal and managed regulated way for people to vend, but not to be located in the original area. As a result, the City launched a Pilot Vending Program. The program was successful in terms of moving vending off Lake Shore Avenue on to El Embarcadero. For the duration of the eight-week program, the City's Enforcement Team were able to target persons illegally selling alcohol and cannabis. Vendors selling commercial goods

and other products were able to operate safely. The City provided PPE and hand sanitizer. Vendors observed COVID safe distancing protocols and time of operation.

Also, continued traffic control measures implemented in July of 2020 and carried through Thanksgiving. The traffic controls measures included closing El Embarcadero completed to traffic which created a larger recreational space for the public and more space for vendors.

The City also closed the southbound lane on Lake Shore, effectively creating a one-way street and restricted parking all around Lake Merritt and coned off the center parking lane. Staff found that the traffic controls helped minimize illegal parking and traffic safety problems. While shutting down the daily vending operations, staff discovered parking and traffic concerns would resume.

The City published a Lake Merritt survey in February and received 2,100 responses to date. The survey was distributed to addresses within 1 block of the Lake. Council Office and the Library assisted with distribution. Staff marked concern regarding the high-income demographic of respondents and recognized the need for a greater racially diverse response. The current results are slanted to the Caucasian community. Staff have plans to organize at the Lake to gather a more diverse response.

Survey Highlights:

Conditions at Lake Merritt

44% - significantly declined

22% - slightly declined in past two years

Top 3 Major Concerns (in order)

Crime and Violence

Homeless

Illegal Dumping and Litter

Followed by:

Environmental Concerns

Noise

Equitable Access to Lake Merritt

Lake Merritt Pilot Program

35% - Moderately Successful

22% - Very Successful

Continuation Licensed/Managed Street Vending Program at Lake Merritt

58% support

Continued Street Closures on Lake Shore Year-Round/Weekends

46%

Continue Street Closures on Lake Shore Spring/Summer/Weekends

34%

Close El Embarcadero to Allow for Street Vending

70%

Parking Benefit District Around Lake Merritt/Meter Revenue Back to Lake

55%

Permanent Barrier Lake Shore Center Lane - El Embarcadero/East 18th

60%

Park Rangers – State Model Non-Sworn Education and Enforcement

68%

Park Rangers – Traditional Sworn Police Officers

38%

Staff found a majority support for a variety of other expanded services including, more litter containers, more bathrooms, protecting and preserving the Lake's wildlife protections, more park restoration efforts.

Note: Due to the recent publication of the Lake Merritt Survey, the results shared with the Commission were preliminary as collection of responses continues.

As weather changes, the same activities have returned. Managed vending participants at El Embarcadero have arranged for portable restrooms on their own and observe reasonable set-up and break-down hours. Unfortunately, along Lake Shore and Grand, unauthorized vending has returned, included, alcohol and cannabis sell, amplified sound. Staff reported a homicide at Grand and Perkins – second in area in one month.

Due to the budget, funds are not available to continue a vending program or overtime to OPD crew for traffic control. However, at the past Finance Committee on March 8th, Council President Bas and Vice Mayor Kaplan put forward a proposal regarding revenue the City will be receiving from the Warrior's settlement where they have identified \$300,000.00 to go towards Lake Merritt operations. The proposal will go to City Council on Tuesday. This may be an unexpected funding source that could allow for the reimplementation of some of the successful efforts made last year. A sustainable source of funds will be needed to maintain the services.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT CONTINUE:

Director Williams reported that OPRYD submitted the budget with the requested reductions. Conversations are being held regarding what minimum services would be implemented if instructed to begin the reopening process. In the next one to two months, OPRYD will bring forward a more detailed report regarding how the department will continue to service the community. The Department is looking for finances to assist with reopening programs and facilities as Oakland moves from purple to red. This will require reengaging parttime staff laid off due to budget reductions.

OPRYD received a \$100,000 scholarship grant from Comcast as part of their National Wi-Fi high speed internet Lift Zone service. Twenty recreation centers were selected to serve as hot spots. Additionally, 1000 laptop will be made available to kids in the Lift Zones with another \$100,000 provided for Town Camp scholarships and supplies.

Public Comments:

- Structure of the Lake Merritt Survey primes the answers. Encourages the City to look at long term best solutions. Consider tools such as CEQA. Must consider traffic closures should be paired with impact to local streets.
- Pass Park Rules. No large speakers in the park.
- Consider a Benefits District for Lake Merritt
- Lake Merritt Program should be added as a regular item on the agenda
- Conditions around Lake Merritt are unlivable for residents. Last year's efforts were minimal.

- Dread weekends as people are pushing the limit on public behavior. Suggested the City aspire to higher and more significant action for all concerned.
- Due to parking issues, residents walk blocks away from home to receive deliveries of critical medications.
- The Lake Merritt survey is skewed to upper income and white residents, concerned results will adversely impact communities of color.
- Same issue surfacing now as last year. Looking for real change.
- Fund Lake Merritt Pilot program
- Root causes of issues at Lake Merritt including food vending. Activity draws crowds and cause parking problems. Eliminating vending at the Lake would minimize violence and noise. Move vending to Jack London a different venue.
- Problems at the Lake are not insolvable. Firm enforcement of parking rules, regulations, and towing is needed.
- Residential driveways are blocked. Starting on Fridays, activities begin at 10a.m. – 10p.m.
- Remote working for adults and remote learning for children is impacted.
- Relocating vending to el Embarcadero was positive.
- Our Lady of Lourdes' services have been held outdoors due to COVID-19. Activities at the Lake make it impossible to hold services and function.
- Bullets from a recent shooting on Lake Merritt entered a 9th floor apartment. Activities are attracting car racing.
- Signs missing.
- Enforce laws – the City owes citizens due to taxes paid.

Chair Reilly requested the Lake Merritt report and survey results be agendaized for the next meeting.

Commission Comments:

The issues at Lake Merritt are multifaceted and more complex than any one issue. The Lake Merritt subgroup should convene for an outreach session regarding the survey - encouraged all to help. Referencing trash and microplastics – parks users need to pack-out what is packed-in. Committed to updating the Park Rules and sending to City Council.

Acknowledged the community's concerns. Trash and violence have been a long-standing concern at Lake Merritt. Encouraged community members to attend City Council meetings, and urge representatives to fund staff efforts at the Lake, and issues all over the City. Enjoyed seeing many families of color in the park. They appreciate feeling welcomed and that the Lake is a space they can visit.

Requested a copy of the August 2021 Lake Merritt Report to prepare for work needed around the Lake. Will walk the Lake with other Lake Merritt Subcommittee members. The Pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes has complained for many months about the noise. The rise of garbage, illegal parking and drug use in City parks is happening throughout the entire City. Individually. Everyone must take responsibility, but all responsible parties, including Oakland PD, City Councilmembers and the Mayor, must hold up their end of the bargain.

Historically, Lake Merritt was the site where festive events drew visitors, families, children. Festival at the Lake was popular. Streets were blocked off. Noise and trash were not a problem like now. Complaints had the Lake activities shut down. While visiting a friend off Lake Merritt became very aware of the continued drumming, parking issues, and noise. Enjoyed seeing the multicultural community at the Lake. Oakland has a rich culture with Lake Merritt in the center of the City. Trash and noise are a problem. Encouraged the community to attend other Commission and City Council meetings to express concerns and preferences for change. Pay attention to the budget and current funding allocations.

Joe DeVries: Will pass survey cards and QR code to Commissioner Kos-Read for the survey. Will return with a written report in April. A meeting is scheduled for March 11th with Police Chief Armstrong and Councilmembers Bas and Fife about the Lake. The pandemic changed the way people are behaving all over the City. Lake Merritt is but one example. There is no place to go as activities are concentrated at the Lake. With more people being immunized, and bars and restaurants reopening, staff will have to see what the impact of those changes have on activities at the Lake.

Item 10 Continued

COMMITTEES' REPORTS:

Chair: The Measure Q Subcommittee met with Public Works on the earlier presentation. The Committee is currently ad hoc. Once operations are in place, there will be another discussion to determine if it should be a standing committee.

RECREATION ADVISORY COUNCILS (RAC)

Commissioner Allen, the new Liaison to Mosswood, provided the following information from the March 3, 2021 Mosswood Recreation Advisory Council (RAC) meeting

- One operating bathroom on site. Staff are working to make it accessible for all genders
- Basketball courts are still closed. The dog park and tennis courts are open.
- Service requests are sent weekly for maintenance and graffiti removal on the park benches.
- Playgrounds are still open, but patrons are cautioned to use at their own discretion.
- Providing spring programming for children ages 8 through 12 years old.
- Oakland Parks, Recreation and Youth Development (OPRYD) will be hiring for Summer Camp at Mosswood
- Staff hope to provide Mosswood Inclusion and Playgroups for children ages 0 through 5, as well as teen programs. These programs are currently being held virtually.
- Plans are underway for a Community Kindness Day, scheduled for April 24th from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. At 40th. Contact Terri Westbrook for more information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Commissioner Ha: The San Antonio Park Masterplan process is currently underway. The Commissioner met with neighbors at the end of last month as well as some of the park stewards. They shared some of their concerns given that there is a current proposal to possibly relocate a fire station on

International Blvd. to the corner of the Park and Foothill. City staff have met with the neighbors and have provided some additional information which can be found on San Antonio Parks website. There will be multilingual meetings on March 23rd, 24th, 25th.

- Congratulations to Commissioner Smith!
Commissioner Smith was notified the previous evening that he won the 2021 Black Lives Matter Award for his philanthropy and work in the community. During his conversation with the press, he acknowledged the work of the PRAC and Park and Recreation and his pride to be affiliated.

11. CONTINUATION OF OPEN FORUM:

12. ADJOURNMENT: 7:40P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

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

/s/ Diane Boyd
Diane Boyd
Acting Recording Secretary

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

Zoom Teleconference

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