

**APPROVED MINUTES OF SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE PLANNING  
COMMISSION, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION, AND THE  
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 9, 2000**

**Location:** North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Avenue  
The meeting began at 6:35pm.

**Planning Commissioners Present:** Boverhuis (7:05), Bronstein, Capitelli, Howerton (6:55), McCamant (6:45), Morris, Poschman, Wengraf, Wrenn (6:40)

**Staff Present:** Haney-Owens, Caronna, Thomas, Douglas

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**ORDER OF AGENDA**

(M/S/C) to consider item #8 after item #9 (Poschman/Bronstein). The motion carried. Ayes: Bronstein, Capitelli, Howerton, McCamant, Morris, Poschman, Wengraf and Wrenn. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Boverhuis.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

None.

**COUNCIL ACTIONS**

None.

**FUTURE AGENDAS**

Staff Haney-Owens stated that Becky O'Malley from the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) had requested that the Planning Commission hold a joint meeting with the LPC on March 29 regarding the demolition issue.

Commissioner Capitelli asked staff to determine whether the special meeting request resulted from formal action taken by the LPC.

Commissioner Wengraf stated that the request for a joint meeting should be in the form of a letter from the LPC Chair.

Staff Haney-Owens stated that in February the Planning Commission must elect a new Chair.

Commissioner Capitelli stated that the election can take place after the General Plan Housing Workshop at the February 23 meeting.

Staff Haney-Owens presented the proposed Planning Commission schedule.

(M/S/C) to approve the proposed Planning Commission schedule for the period February through July 2000 (Bronstein/Poschman). The motion carried. Ayes: Bronstein, Capitelli, Howerton, McCamant, Morris, Poschman, Wengraf and Wrenn. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Boverhuis.

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Commissioner Poschman requested that Commissioners be provided with a roster which includes fax numbers and e-mail addresses.

Staff Haney-Owens mentioned the availability of a report on the proposed Living Wage Ordinance. Chair Capitelli requested that staff provide copies to the Commissioners.

**APPROVAL OF JANUARY 12, 2000 MINUTES**

(M/S/C) to approve the 1/12/00 minutes with corrections (Wrenn/Morris). The motion carried.

Ayes: Bronstein, Capitelli, Howerton, McCamant, Morris, Poschman, Wengraf and Wrenn.

Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Boverhuis.

**APPROVAL OF JANUARY 26, 2000 MINUTES**

(M/S/C) to approve the 1/26/00 minutes with corrections (Wrenn/Poschman). The motion carried.

Ayes: Capitelli, Howerton, McCamant, Morris, Poschman, Wengraf and Wrenn. Noes:

None. Abstain: Bronstein. Absent: Boverhuis.

**GENERAL PLAN OPEN SPACE AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP**

Chair Capitelli introduced the subject and invited public comments regarding 20-year open space priorities.

Gregory Frankel of the Berkeley Food Policy Council submitted written information regarding community gardens and stated that he would like to see them mentioned in the General Plan.

Clifford Fred stated that Berkeley should have more woods and forest. He stated that open space can be non-recreational.

Gayle Kelman of the Parks and Recreation Commission stated that the UC campus is part of the open space in Berkeley. She stated that the Pedestrian Overcrossing will increase access to Aquatic Park, and that efforts should be made to maintain and increase access to open space throughout the City.

Wendy Weikel stated that open space in Berkeley is dwindling and must be maintained.

Richard Register of Ecocity Builders stated that higher density centers would allow for more open space if the transfer of development rights were used.

Mark Liolios stated that linear parks can link the city and increase safety in open spaces. He stated that the Santa Fe Right of Way has this potential.

Stephen Swanson stated his support for the use of the Santa Fe right of way as open space. He also noted the importance of pathways in Berkeley, and the need for more open space in Southwest Berkeley.

Eva Bansner requested a map showing all creeks that are planned to be daylighted.

Howard Linnard asked what the building is in People's Park.

Staff Caronna stated that it is a bathroom and an office.

Dale Smith of the Community Environmental Advisory Committee (CEAC) stated her concern regarding auto emissions contaminating community gardens. She stated that toxins should be

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addressed in the General Plan. She also stated her support for preserving native plants in Berkeley.

John Selawsky of CEAC stated that the City of Berkeley should protect open space, including the Santa Fe Right of Way, prioritize open space development in South and Central Berkeley, and increase the number of community gardens.

Commissioner Morris raised the issue of open space access, especially for children and seniors, and the need to identify ways in which to use local regional parks as open space resources.

Michael Diehl stated his support for maintaining People's Park as open space and stated that Derby Creek should be brought above ground. He also stated his support for promoting urban agriculture in southwest Berkeley.

Nancy Holland stated that area plans should be prioritized, and that the General Plan should encourage more tree plantings, particularly in the medians.

Becky O'Malley stated her concern that UC and School District open space may be lost in the future.

Karl Linn stated his support for community gardens and the need to balance housing and open space needs.

Beebo Turman stated that she is having local soils tested at the edible garden site.

Martha Nicoloff stated that the Open Space Element should focus on specific sites that should be developed as open space.

Chair Capitelli asked for comments regarding the 1977 Master Plan Open Space and Recreation Element.

Pat, of the Berkeley Path Wanderers, stated that many crucial rights of way were lost because paths were a low priority in the 1977 Plan.

Commissioner Wengraf stated that pathways are important as a means of safe passage and should be addressed in the Public Safety Element.

Wendy Weikel asked what happened to the Measure "Y" money that was slated for park acquisition.

Staff Caronna listed several parks funded by measure "Y" funds.

Eva Bansner reiterated that the General Plan should map which creeks are most appropriate for day-lighting.

Karl Linn stated his support for providing guidelines for the development and maintenance of community gardens in the Open Space Element.

Peggy Smuchler raised the issue of who would have access to community gardens and expressed concern regarding the potential use of pesticides in these gardens.

Richard Register stated that access to community gardens can be increased by removing old buildings.

Commissioner Wengraf asked whether community gardens are locked, whether there is a fee, and how people get a plot.

Beebo Truman replied that the gardens are locked, there is a \$25/year fee, and that plots are available on a first come, first served basis. She also stated that all materials used in the gardens are non-toxic.

Commissioner McCamant suggested that people can be more creative about gardening in their own yards.

Martha Nicoloff stated that open space should be required in all new housing projects.

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Clifford Fred stated his support for the acquisition of more open space. He stated that the 1977 Plan calls for the City and UC to maintain open space in the hill area. He stated his opposition to reducing open space standards for new development and the need to protect public views. He also stated that building height increases would put views at risk.

Commissioner Capitelli raised the issue of whether the City wants to add to its overburdened open space maintenance needs.

Chair Capitelli invited comments regarding specific existing or potential open space locations in Berkeley.

Becky O'Malley stated her concern that increased density and more development will result in less open space. She stated her support for preserving the Oxford Tract.

Commissioner Wengraf raised the issue of whether Berkeley's population should be encouraged to reach 120,000.

Becky O'Malley stated that the population limit should be purposeful, not arbitrary.

Gail Keleman stated that open space should not be sacrificed for housing.

Commissioner Morris stated that open areas such as median strips and streets can be enjoyable open spaces if designed and treated properly as was done with Halcyon Court.

Richard Register stated that Berkeley should grow in a balanced way with affordable housing.

Norine Smith stated that South Berkeley needs more parks, and that Willard Park should be maintained.

Commissioner McCamant stated that there are few parcels available for parks in South Berkeley. She cited the cities of Albany and El Cerrito as having made good use of greenways, noting that there is a greenway in North Berkeley but not in South Berkeley.

Eva Bansner asked why the city abandoned the Corporation Yard as a potential open space site.

Staff Thomas stated that the City Council recently considered and rejected the idea due to relocation costs.

Eva Bansner stated that the Ohlone greenway could go through the North Berkeley BART station.

Steven Swanson stated that the Santa Fe right of way provides opportunities for community gardens and other uses.

Commissioner Wrenn stated that there are several options for the reuse of the Santa Fe Right of Way, including designating it as open space, designating it for use as a mix of open space and other uses, or simply making no recommendation. He asked the group which option they would prefer. There was general support for maintaining the Santa Fe Right of Way as open space.

Commissioner Wengraf stated that the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) has three reservoirs in Berkeley that serve also as open space resources.

Gregory Frankel stated that the Adult School could serve as a location for a community garden and that Sacramento Street could be planted with fruit trees. He stated that the Santa Fe right of way should be soil tested before being used as a garden.

Dale Smith stated that the Harrison Street Playing Fields is an unhealthy place for children.

Peggy Smuckler stated that the UC Corporation Yard on Milvia Street should be open space.

Clifford Fred stated that the Berkeley Waterfront must be protected.

Wendy Weikel requested a list of potential open spaces in Berkeley and potential funding sources for developing open spaces.

Chair Capitelli invited comments regarding day lighting creeks in Berkeley.

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Gene Bernardi stated her support for daylighting Strawberry Creek but stated her concern that Lawerance Berkeley Laboratories (LBL) and construction of the Haas Pavilion have polluted the creek.

Richard Register stated that several cities have successfully daylighted creeks.

Becky O'Malley stated that creeks should only be daylighted if they do not create a pollution hazard. She noted the high costs involved.

Commissioner Morris raised the question of whether Strawberry Creek should be daylighted in the Downtown.

Peggy Smuckler stated that daylighted creeks are inherently unnatural.

Commissioner Bronstein stated that the main issues involved in daylighting a creek are cost and aesthetic issues. She cited Blackberry Creek as a poor example of daylighting.

Julie stated that creeks are an important heritage and add to the beauty of open space.

Allen Gould stated that the sentence "forbid construction over creeks" should be added to the General Plan.

Beebo Truman stated that Temple Beth'El wants to build a parking lot on an existing creek and asked whether the General Plan could address this issue.

Commissioner Capitelli stated that the General Plan could address the issue on a policy level, but not specifically.

Dan Drucko stated his support for encouraging wildlife in Berkeley. He stated his concern for radioactive pollutants entering the waterways from LBL.

John Hagarty discussed a written handout regarding waterway restoration and clean water.

John Selawsky stated that Berkeley has a diverse wildlife. He stated that opening creeks can encourage a clean, healthy habitat.

Richard Register stated that contamination signs on opened creeks can create environmental awareness.

Commissioner McCamant asked how many of the City's creeks are unavailable for daylighting because they are on private land and may already be built upon.

Staff Caronna stated that the cost of daylighting creeks varies greatly. She stated that the City should look for opportunities to daylight creeks.

Chair Capitelli moved the discussion to environmental management issues. He stated that the City does not recycle plastics and has no hazardous waste drop-off point.

Harold asked how the goal of increasing the population is compatible with the goal of reducing the amount of solid waste.

Nancy Holland stated that multi-unit housing complexes could be much more efficient at recycling.

Gail Keleman stated that the City should improve its recycling program.

Richard Register stated his support for car-free housing as a means to reduce air pollution.

Mary stated that parking meter money and other car-related fees should be used to fund transit.

Richard Register stated that traffic can be controlled, as evidenced by stoplights.

John Selawsky stated that Berkeley pays into the hazardous waste facility in Oakland and does not need a similar facility locally.

Mike contrasted the "easy-to-use" hazardous material collection system in Santa Cruz with the difficult system in Berkeley. He stated that the city should make it easy for people to drop off recyclable hazardous materials.

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Commissioner Boverhuis stated that all seven grades of plastics are recyclable, but only two are profitable to recycle.

Commissioner Morris stressed the importance of enforcing recycling at multi-unit dwellings.

Norine Smith stated that it is unfair to allow occupants of older houses to burn fires in their fireplaces and not allow occupants of newer houses to do so.

Wendy Weikel stated that the General Plan should include a discussion of toxins that occur in local air pollution, especially those which are attributable to UC Berkeley's controlled burnings.

Commissioner Wengraf asked whether CEAC has formed a proposal regarding fireplaces.

John Selawski replied that CEAC is discussing several proposals.

John Hagarty stated that the expenses of pollution-related diseases often outweigh the expense of cleaning pollutants.

Harold stated that the population of Berkeley has decreased and the number of cars has increased. He stated that auto pollution must be addressed.

Commissioner Wengraf stated that vehicles are the leading cause of air pollution. She stated that stop signs increase the amount of emissions.

Commissioner Boverhuis stated that stop-and-go driving causes much more pollution than moving traffic. He stated that brake dust drains into the water system.

Commissioner Morris asked whether most emissions are caused by local traffic.

Commissioner Boverhuis replied that they are.

Commissioner Morris asked whether the City should impose a second-vehicle tax.

Doris Willingham asked about the UC trip reduction program.

Becky O'Malley stated her dissatisfaction with the discussion format. She stated that she felt limited by the categorization of the discussion which did not acknowledge the relationships between elements.

Norine Smith stated that the census date in the Draft General Plan may be out of date.

Staff Thomas replied that the Second Draft General Plan uses State Department of Finance estimates for annual city population, which are based on building permits issued since the 1990 census.

Carrie Olsen stated that the population may be as high as 120,000 because many people are not counted. She recommended that housing not be constructed on commercial corridors due to air quality concerns.

Commissioner Wrenn stated that slowing down traffic saves lives. He stated that fatal accidents in Berkeley usually occur at fast intersections.

Eva Bansner stated that in Amsterdam, travel across town is just as fast by auto, transit, or bicycle.

Clifford Fred stated that zoning for higher density increases air and noise pollution.

Nancy Holland stated that auto use is the greatest contributor to noise pollution. She stated that basic goods and services should be within walking distance and that the use of electric vehicles should be encouraged.

Item #8 was postponed.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

Adjournment at 10:10 p.m.