



**CITY OF NOVATO**  
**PARKS & RECREATION**

**Recreation, Cultural and Community Services Advisory Commission**

**MEETING**

**Minutes**

**Thursday, January 12, 2023 – 6:00 PM**

**A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Lacey at 6:01 PM.

**Commissioners Present:** Dennis Bentley, Emily Larsen, Suzanne Crow, Chair Betsy Ricketts, Vice Chair Erin Lacey, Nancy Weber, Ericka Erickson

**Commissioners Absent:** Mavi Pilloton, Beverly Winsor

**Staff Present:** Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Service Katie Gauntlett; Senior Management Analyst Drew Bendickson; Sustainability Coordinator Gretchen Schubeck

**B. APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA**

**Commission Action:** Upon motion by Commissioner Crow and seconded by Commissioner Weber, the Commission voted 6-0-1-2 to approve the final agenda.

**Ayes:** Bentley, Larsen, Crow, Lacey, Weber, Erickson

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** Ricketts

**Absent:** Pilloton, Winsor

**Motion Carried**

**C. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## **D. CONSENT ITEMS**

### **D.1. Approve the Meeting Minutes from September 8, 2022**

**Commission Action:** Upon motion by Commissioner Lacey and seconded by Commissioner Crow, the Commission voted 6-0-1-2 to approve the minutes.

**Ayes:** Bentley, Larsen, Crow, Ricketts, Lacey, Weber

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** Erickson

**Absent:** Pilloton, Winsor

**Motion Carried**

## **E. UNFINISHED AND OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

## **F. GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **F.1. Receive a presentation from Rotary Club of Novato on potential Pianos on Grant program and provide recommendation**

Christina Stroeh gave a presentation on behalf of the Rotary Club of Novato outlining ideas for a pilot program called Pianos on Grant.

Christina Stroeh shared that the Rotary Club of Novato surveyed the businesses on Grant with positive support. The program would start with one piano located outside Marin Music Center to be jointly supervised by Marin Music Center and Watt's Music. The installation, storage, and maintenance would be provided by the Rotary Club of Novato. Students from San Marin High School would contribute a mural to the piano frame.

The Rotary Club would like the program to launch in time for the Art and Wine Festival and continue through August.

Commissioners discussed concerns surrounding maintenance and tuning, traffic safety, and coordinating with Marin Pottery summer camps.

**Public Comment:**

None.

**Commission Action:**

Upon motion by Commissioner Crow and seconded by Commissioner Bentley, the Commission voted 7-0-0-2 in favor of supporting the program.

**Ayes:** Bentley, Larsen, Crow, Ricketts, Lacey, Weber, Erickson

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Pilloton, Winsor

**F.2. Receive a presentation on Balloon Policies from Sustainability Coordinator Gretchen Schubeck**

Sustainability Coordinator Gretchen Schubeck gave a presentation on the use of balloons. Non-biodegradable materials in latex and mylar balloons become microplastics and pollute soil and waterways. The conductive properties of metals in mylar balloons are known to cause damage to high-voltage power lines, and the debris is often mistaken by marine animals as a food source. Sustainability Coordinator Gretchen Schubeck offered alternatives to balloons including flowers, streamers, kites, natural confetti, and bubble machines.

Sustainability Coordinator Gretchen Schubeck shared that the City of Novato Staff are not recommending a local ordinance. Proactive discouragement including social media campaigns, rental policy language, and the cessation of balloons at city-funded programs was recommended instead.

Director Gauntlett clarified the proposed balloon policy for city-funded events and compared the new policy to the existing plastic water bottle policy which bans purchase and use of single use water bottles at city events and functions. Director Gauntlett outlined plans for kiosk postings in English and Spanish in the parks and an evergreen, reusable marketing package for park renters.

Commissioners discussed social media outlets to share the policy and expressed interest in furthering the policy in the future by including stronger language and an official ban.

**Commission Action:**

Upon motion by Commissioner Erickson and seconded by Commissioner Weber, the Commission voted 7-0-0-2 in favor of educational flyers and kiosk postings.

**Ayes:** Bentley, Larsen, Crow, Ricketts, Lacey, Weber, Erickson

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Pilloton, Winsor

Upon motion by Commissioner Erickson and seconded by Commissioner Crow, the Commission voted 7-0-0-2 in favor of receiving a staff report on administrative guidelines toward an official ban of balloons at city-sponsored events for both indoor and outdoor facilities at a future meeting.

**Ayes:** Bentley, Larsen, Crow, Ricketts, Lacey, Weber, Erickson

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Pilloton, Winsor

**F.3. Receive an update and provide direction on the proposed commemorative bench sponsorship program from Senior Management Analyst Drew Bendickson**

Senior Management Analyst Drew Bendickson updated the Commission on the launch of the commemorative bench sponsorship program. The benches are back in stock and will be available for sponsorship through applications now located under Forms on the City website. Benches are six feet long and made from Ipe wood for a durability of at least ten years. The benches will be provided at cost, preferably replacing benches that are in the most disrepair. Senior Management Analyst Drew Bendickson shared the estimated timeline for shipping and installation will be eight to twelve weeks.

Commissioners discussed park locations and installation.

**F.4. Elections of Chair and Vice Chair**

**Commission Action**

Upon motion by Commissioner Crow and seconded by Commissioner Larsen, the Commission voted 7-0-0-2 in favor of electing Commissioner Erin Lacey as Chair.

**Ayes:** Bentley, Larsen, Crow, Ricketts, Weber, Lacey, Erickson

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Pilloton, Winsor

Upon motion by Commissioner Ricketts and seconded by Commissioner Lacey, the Commission voted 7-0-0-2 in favor of electing Commissioner Nancy Weber as Vice Chair.

**Ayes:** Bentley, Larsen, Crow, Ricketts, Weber, Lacey, Erickson

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Pilloton, Winsor

**F.5. Review the 2023 Recreation, Cultural and Community Services Advisory Commission Meeting Calendar**

Director Gauntlett reviewed the 2023 RCCS Meeting Calendar and updated the Commission that staff will no longer be conducting quorum checks prior to a regularly scheduled meeting.

**G. COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS**

**G.1. STAFF UPDATES**

Director Gauntlett reported that the Winter and Spring Activity Guide launched successfully and will remain in digital format following a positive response from staff. New activities include toddler soccer, chess camp, and Lego camps.

Director Gauntlett shared the success of the holiday events including Letters to Santa, Holiday Craft Faire, Gingerbread Build, and the Novato Gymnastics Center's Winter Showcase.

Director Gauntlett announced the new Aquatics program and upcoming lifeguard certification classes to be held at Novato High School. Aquatics activities will open in May.

Director Gauntlett reported the hiring of Recreation Coordinator Rachelle Fugitt-Schneider, Special Events Coordinator Stephany Simmons, and Senior Office Assistant Jamay Dauenhauer.

Director Gauntlett updated the Commission regarding the Request for Proposals for the Parks Master Plan to be submitted to the Commission in March.

Director Gauntlett advised the Commission of the downed tree in Pioneer Park. Public Works is assessing damage and exploring replacement parts for play structures. Construction is expected to resume in March.

**G.2. COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

Commissioner Crow reported that the girls' softball area in Marion Park may warrant improvement.

Commissioner Weber expressed positive community support for city staff's response following recent floods.

#### **H. ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion by Commissioner Ricketts and seconded by Commissioner Crow, the meeting was adjourned at 7:59.

**I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly adopted at the RCCS Commission meeting of January 12, 2023.**

/ Drew Bendickson /

Drew Bendickson, Senior Management Analyst