



**CITY OF NOVATO**  
PARKS & RECREATION

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

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Minutes**

**Thursday, January 11, 2024 – 6:00 PM**

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lacey at 6:02 PM.

**Commissioners Present:** Chair Erin Lacey, Vice Chair Nancy Weber, Suzanne Crow, Mavi Pilloton, Betsy Ricketts, Beverley Winsor

Commissioner Emily Larsen arrived at 6:16 PM

**Commissioners Absent:** Dennis Bentley, Zachary Schmechel

**Staff Present:** Director of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Katie Gauntlett; Community Services Division Manager Drew Bendickson; Recreation Division Manager Alexandra Kambur

**B. APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA**

**Commission Action:** Upon motion by Commissioner Crow and seconded by Commissioner Pilloton, the Commission voted 6-0-0-3 to approve the final agenda.

**Ayes:** Crow, Lacey, Pilloton, Ricketts, Weber, Winsor

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Bentley, Larsen, Schmechel

**Motion Carried**

**C. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Trish McCurdy

## D. CONSENT ITEMS

### D.1. APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES

**Commission Action:** Upon motion by Chair Lacey and seconded by Commissioner Crow, the Commission voted 6-0-0-3 to approve the meeting minutes as amended to correct description for item F.2. and voting record for item G.2 of the Special Meeting Minutes for November 8, 2023.

**Ayes:** Crow, Lacey, Ricketts, Pilloton, Weber, Winsor

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Bentley, Larsen, Schmechel

**Motion Carried**

## E. UNFINISHED AND OTHER BUSINESS

None

## F. GENERAL BUSINESS

### F.1. Elections of Chair and Vice Chair

Vice Chair Weber was nominated as Chair and Commissioner Larsen was nominated as Vice Chair.

**Public Comment:**

**None**

**Commission Action:** Upon motion by Chair Lacey and seconded by Commissioner Ricketts, the Commission voted 7-0-0-2 to select Vice Chair Weber as Chair and Commissioner Larsen as Vice Chair.

**Ayes:** Crow, Lacey, Larsen, Pilloton, Ricketts, Weber, Winsor

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Bentley, Schmechel

**Motion Carried**

- F.2. Receive a presentation from Ryan Judd, a Senior at NOVA Independent Study, and consider approving a culminating Eagle Scout Service Project to fundraise for and install a park kiosk at the entrance to the Downtown Recreation Center, a City of Novato Parks, Recreation & Community Services facility, located at 950 7<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown, Novato.**

Ryan Judd presented a proposal for his Eagle Scout Service Project, a park kiosk installation and landscaping enhancement at the entrance to the Downtown Recreation Center located at 950 7<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown Novato. Project to include revitalizing an existing landscape plot with new plants, and installing a Kirby Built kiosk for staff to display department information, materials, and wayfinding signage. To ensure consistency across recreation sites, Mr. Judd recommended installing a Kirby Built kiosk, the brand of kiosk currently in place at the Hill Recreation Area.

Mr. Judd explained that the project would include fundraising approximately \$1,600, purchasing a new Kirby Built kiosk as well as drought resistant plants and other needed materials, assembling and installing the park kiosk, and landscaping the area.

Recreation Division Manager Kambur clarified that the landscape plot is located in the Novato Gymnastics and Downtown Recreation Center parking lot. Chair Lacey provided further clarification that the plot is located outside the gate to the entrance of the Downtown Recreation Center. Commissioner Crow thanked Mr. Judd for his interest in a project that would provide a permanent improvement to the City.

**Public Comment:**

**None**

**Commission Action:** Upon motion by Commissioner Ricketts and seconded by Chair Lacey, the Commission voted 7-0-0-2 to approve Ryan Judd's culminating Eagle Scout Service Project to fundraise for and install a park kiosk at the entrance to the Downtown Recreation Center.

**Ayes:** Crow, Lacey, Larsen, Pilloton, Ricketts, Weber, Winsor

**Noes:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Bentley, Schmechel

## Motion Carried

### G. COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

#### G.1. Staff Updates

Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Director Gauntlett provided a recap of winter events which included Letters to Santa, the two-day Holiday Crafts Fair, Photos with Santa, Gingerbread Build, the Winter Gymnastics Showcase, and Stroll the Pond. The Stroll the Pond event at Scottsdale Pond included an opportunity for the community to meet local artist Emma Oyle, who designed new environmental signage installed in partnership with the City of Novato and Rotary Club of Novato.

Highlights of winter programming included the Senior Center Luncheon held on December 18 and Babysitting and First Aid CPR classes run by Novato's Aquatics staff with a full class in December and another scheduled for January.

December marked the conclusion of the Boys Youth Basketball League and the start of the Girls Youth Basketball League. Registration for winter adult leagues includes 22 Adult Basketball teams including 4 women's teams, and 23 teams participating in the Adult Volleyball League.

Session 3 Winter Gymnastics classes began in January with 834 participants registered in weekly classes and 30 athletes participating in the Competitive Team program. Director Gauntlett shared that there are two new gymnastics program offerings this winter including Tumbling Tots, a drop-in program for children ages 12 months - 5 years, and Teen Tumbling & Gymnastics for tweens and teens.

This was the second year that Novato Parks & Recreation has promoted the "Give the Gift of Gymnastics" campaign to support the Gymnastics Youth Scholarship Program. The holiday campaign has reached \$5,910 in donations to date, of which, the Novato Gymnastics Boosters Club donated \$5,000.

Shinning Soccer Stars, our special/adaptive needs class, started in the fall and continues this winter. This soccer program has now expanded, and the contract instructor is now offering classes for neurotypical children in addition to neurodiverse participants. Additionally, we continue to have youth and adult Taekwondo held at the Hamilton Community Center.

Over the holiday school break, Novato Parks & Recreation offered several camps including Gymnastics, All Sports, and Play-Well LEGO Engineering. These camp offerings will be offered again during Mid-Winter and Spring Break.

Director Gauntlett provided an update related to parks. This included the completion of the Citywide Play Structure Upgrades project, which included new rubberized surfacing at Bahia Oaks Park, new rubberized surfacing under the swing banks at South Hamilton and Miwok Parks, and new play equipment, rubberized surfacing, and a water fountain at Olive Tot Lot. The second park update was specific to Pioneer Park. Director Gauntlett shared that the Pioneer Park Playground re-opened on December 21, making it the first adaptive playground in Marin County. The City of Novato is scheduling a reopening celebration and ribbon cutting event in April. Additionally Pioneer Park Playground has received updated signage including Playground Rules and Picture Exchange Communication boards. Director Gauntlett shared that there are a handful of outstanding items for the playground area including the installation of centralized benches, a large canopy style shade structure, and a new main gate. These items are on order and will be installed upon delivery.

Looking ahead, Novato Parks & Recreation will be hosting Sing, Dance & Discover Together, a free black history event on February 3 at the Margaret Todd Senior Center, the Cupid Shuffle, a sensory friendly silent disco for the special/adaptive needs community on February 17 at the Margaret Todd Senior Center, and the 2024 Novato Classic, a gymnastics meet on March 2 and 3 at the Novato Gymnastics Center.

On February 29, there will be a Special Meeting of the Recreation, Cultural and Community Services Advisory Commission to review a draft of the Parks Master Plan. Meanwhile, a review of Park Policies is scheduled to return to the Commission at a future meeting.

## **G.2. Commissioner Reports**

Chair Lacey congratulated staff on renovations completed at Pioneer Park. She remarked that the park has been well attended since the reopening and is serving children of all ages.

Commissioner Crow expressed gratitude for the new, vibrant environmental signage at Scottsdale Pond and for updates to Olive Tot Lot. She shared that graffiti was successfully removed from the new park signage at Scottsdale Pond. Commissioner Crow additionally commented on the popular Holiday Crafts Fair held at the Margaret Todd Senior Center, suggesting that staff consider changes to the layout to provide additional space near the stage.

Commissioner Larsen spoke about her experience at the Stroll the Pond event and commented on the vibrancy of the new environmental signs. She commended staff on the inclusion of Picture Exchange Communication boards at Pioneer Park Playground. Commissioner Larsen inquired about media coverage at Pioneer Park.

Director Gauntlett explained that she would be working in collaboration with the City's communication team to invite the media to attend a ribbon cutting event in the spring.

Commissioner Pilloton echoed comments related to Scottsdale Pond and Pioneer Park and shared that their family has enjoyed updates to the Olive Tot Lot and attending events in downtown Novato.

Commissioner Winsor shared that she has been enjoying participating in The Youthful Hearts line dancing class at the Maragaret Todd Senior Center and expressed appreciation for renovations to the Pioneer Park Playground.

Commissioner Weber inquired about the age ranges served at the Cupid Shuffle Event. Division Manager Kambur responded, explaining that there are two silent disco sessions planned, one for youth ages 8-17 years and another for adults. Commissioner Weber inquired about amplified sound being restricted in the Pioneer Park Playground. Director Gauntlett provided clarification that amplified sound would continue to be permitted for the BBQ/Picnic Area when reserved, however, in the interest of maintaining a safe and inclusive environment in the playground area, amplified sound is not allowed inside the enclosed play space. Commissioner Weber inquired about the opportunity to have communication boards at other parks in Novato. Director Gauntlett expressed interest in that recommendation and stated that we would consider including the cost and time to develop communication boards into future park renovation projects.

## **H. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 PM.

The next RCCS meeting is a Special Meeting on February 29, 2024.

**I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly adopted at the RCCS Commission meeting of March 14, 2024.**

/ Alexandra Kambur /

Alexandra Kambur, Recreation Division Manager