



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting on Thursday, May 20, 2021**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The duly noticed regular meeting of the Burlingame Parks & Recreation Commission was called to order by Vice-Chair Holzman at 7:00 pm via Zoom meeting.

2. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Milne, Holzman, Chang, Matthews (left at 8:20 pm), Lee

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Ardito & Pappajohn

STAFF PRESENT: Parks & Recreation Director Glomstad, Recreation Manager Acquisti, Recreation Coordinators Sanchez, Recording Secretary Helley

OTHERS PRESENT: Rachel Visscher, Karen Verpeet, Erica Strohmeier, Will Johnson and various members of the public to comment on Item 7a.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Matthews made a motion to approve the April minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Milne and was approved. 5-0-2 (Ardito & Pappajohn absent).

4. CORRESPONDENCE

None

5. PRESENTATION – 410 AIRPORT BLVD. PROJECT

Presenting the project at 410 Airport Blvd is Rachel Visscher and Karen Verpeet with HT Harvey & Associates, Erica Strohmeier with Sera Architects, and Will Johnson with The Sphere Institute. Ms. Visscher presented background on the project. In 2017, The Sphere Institute, next door to the property, is a health policy research non-profit organization, and they submitted a park project application to the State Lands Commission. In 2019, Sphere was awarded a short-term lease on the property, which extends to 2023. During which time, Sphere will maintain the site in its current condition and ensure public safety, design a park project, complete the CEQA planning process, acquire funding, and apply for a long-term lease of approximately 49 years. The design process is expected to take two years. The goals include connecting communities to the bay and provide amenities for recreation; to restore tidal marsh and marsh uplands transition zone habitats, and demonstrating a nature-based approach to sea-level rise resiliency with a focus on educational programming. The proposed design includes walking/bike trails, picnic and fishing area, boardwalks, an overlook grove, lawn, and kitesurfing rigging area with mow curb, a universal kayak launch, a natural tidal marsh area, and a one-way parallel parking area, and an educational center with restrooms and a small over the counter shop. The full presentation can be viewed on the video for the

Commissioner Lee liked the idea of the development and asked what the cost of the project was and who was funding it. Mr. Johnson stated three grants had been received for the planning costs from the EPA, the State Wildlife Conservation Board, and the Measure AA San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority totally \$1.5 million. Total construction costs will be approximately \$20 million for which grant funding is available, and there will be fundraising as well.

Commissioner Milne thanked the group for the presentation and appreciated the parking lot concept that won't feel like a parking lot. He asked when the construction would conclude. Karen noted the project would be approximately three construction seasons. They will know more after the design phase. Milne also inquired if the education center would be open to the public or have permanent exhibits. Rachel noted the center would have various uses, rental options, open to the public, and a small over-the-counter café. Vice-Chair Holzman appreciated the well-thought-out approach to the project and thanked the presenters for the informative presentation of the project.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. Expansion of Pickleball Court Options

Recreation Coordinator Sanchez introduced himself and provided background on the item. At the April 15, 2021, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, staff presented various options to enhance the pickleball opportunities throughout Burlingame. At the presentation, there was general support for a majority of the concepts from the Commissioners. As a result, staff surveyed the pickleball community to obtain data on which options were most supported. Additionally, staff engaged in research on the potential fiscal impact of the various options and the operational shifts each would require. Sanchez noted that staff has also continued to receive correspondence from the community on a desire for more pickleball options in Burlingame.

While there were many pickleball players who do like to play as much as possible, the survey results demonstrated that most people play a few times a week, around two hours per day. While most respondents favored weekday mornings, 37% did express weekend time being their preference.

When evaluating additional outdoor blacktop location preferences, the overall ranking is as follows (1 being the highest preference):

1. Village Park
2. Pershing Park
3. Cuernavaca Park
4. Victoria Park

Considering the cost of stripping a court for pickleball, staff recommends selecting two blacktop locations that could accommodate the addition of six pickleball courts. The courts could serve as alternative locations where members of the public could bring their own pickleball equipment and play when drop-in pickleball is not offered, including weekends.

Sanchez reported that staff gathered information regarding the interest in playing indoor pickleball at The Burlingamer, an indoor sports facility that the Burlingame Soccer Club (BSC) operates. 65% of respondents expressed they were interested in playing at The Burlingame once or twice a week, while another 25% mentioned they would be interested in playing three or four days per week. Considering these responses, staff suggest pickleball could occur at The Burlingamer on Monday and, Wednesday mornings, from 9 am – 12 pm. A majority of respondents mentioned that they would like to have flexibility in the payment options, preferring the flexibility for daily drop-in fees and weekly/monthly memberships. Following the survey results, staff spoke with BSC leadership and the cost of operating at the facility was quoted at \$50 per hour by the BSC Board.

Based off operational costs and projected participants, The Burlingamer would offer pickleball for a daily drop-in fee of \$7 and "punch card" system where players could pay for multiple dates in advance and use at their convenience during the scheduled times. BSC leadership expressed a clear desire to help build on the interest of pickleball in town and mentioned they understand it does take time for new programs to gain popularity. Should The Burlingamer prove to be a popular location, BSC staff would be free to expand to Fridays and weekends if desired.

In an effort to confirm that the location works well for pickleball, staff plans to host drop-in pickleball at The Burlingamer on Wednesday, May 26. Staff will invite the pickleball community to tour the venue and provide an opportunity to have a trial of pickleball at the indoor location. Based off the response to that experience, staff will work with BSC leadership to acquire the necessary equipment, add pickleball lines to The Burlingamer floor and market the program. Once the program begins, BSC leadership will manage indoor pickleball. Opportunities exist for continued partnerships, including offering pickleball lessons, tournaments and leagues.

Sanchez noted that staff initially recommended adding two pickleball courts on one tennis court. However, when hearing about the safety concerns from the players and a desire to make the courts available for pickleball without the public transporting nets, staff recommends that two Washington park tennis courts be lined to have one pickleball court each.

A net has been purchased and tested a ConVert aNet tennis net adjuster that lowers the tennis court net to the appropriate pickleball height. With these available to pickleball players, tennis courts could be adjusted for pickleball. As a fee-based program, staff could set up and break down all five locations during the reserved time; the Washington Park Sports Court (3) and Washington Tennis Courts 3 and 4. This would take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 am – 1 pm. Staff recommends reinstituting the \$5 drop-in fee for these days. If approved, staff will formulate operational plan to collect revenue.

The tennis courts could also be used for pickleball at other times; however, pickleball players would need to supply their own conversion system. Pickleball players would have the same access to the courts that tennis players have. Courts could be used in a first come-first-serve capacity, or members of the public could pay to reserve a court for a fee. If the addition of pickleball on the tennis courts results in significant queues, staff will install racquet racks that indicate who is next in line for a court. Staff can also install a timer system that will allow for a ninety-minute count to begin as soon as someone starts to wait for a court occupied by other drop-in users.

As with past practices, there are times when the courts would not be available for drop-in use. This includes tennis camps, tennis lessons and USTA Team Matches. These events typically take place on weekday mornings.

Sanchez recommends the Parks and Recreation Commission provide direction on the following recommendations: Adding pickleball courts at: Village Park (3); Pershing Park (3); Washington Park Tennis Courts #3 and #4 (2).

He also recommended to shift the pickleball operations from the Washington Park sport court on Mondays and Wednesdays to The Burlingame; and to reinstate a fee based drop-in pickleball at Washington Park on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Vice-Chair opened public comments and ask that any correspondence on the item be read into the minutes.

Correspondence via email was received by the following:

Mark Kelley: "I travel around the country and there are indoor and outdoor places to play pickle ball almost everywhere I go. I am surprised that in Burlingame there are hardly any options. Pickle ball is only going to grow in popularity. With SFO and hotels so close, a lot of travelers like me love playing while away from home. We don't leave home without our paddle. Pickle ball is so much more social than and not as intimidating as tennis. Pickle ball is the future for many towns and cities. People will get out of their hotel rooms and play pickleball, then go shopping in down town Burlingame. Sounds like good revenue for Burlingame."

Kristine Jacobson: "The tennis courts in Burlingame are already pretty severely impacted and I would not be interested in the option that lines the tennis courts and further reduces availability."

Janet Chan Fricke via Juanita Lucero: "It occurs to me that there is a rush by the Burl Rec to make this a fee-based activity. While I completely understand the business side and I might be missing something here, there isn't any president to charge players for open play in a public park. Tennis and Basketball don't pay extra fees for open play, so why pickleball should be singled out? While asphalt surface might be acceptable to beginners (and some locals) as an overflow stopgap, the more accomplished players (bulk of the community) will gravitate to the better developed and frequented venues that do not impose fees beyond the property taxes we all pay. If Burlingame starts off with the wrong assumptions, the master strategy might find disappointment. Players will go where they want to play and find the best experience. I am also opposed paying a fee for pickleball in a public park. If it was a truly dedicated pickleball court(s) that would be different. Local Bay Area public parks (Stern Grove, Presidio Wall, Louis Sutter and Foster City) do not require a fee to play. Here's a recent photo taken on 5/10/21 of "Hill Recreation Area" in Novato with 6 new dedicated pickleball courts open to non-residents without any fees. One thing that has not been addressed is the fact that while pickleball players are on overcrowded courts every Monday and Wednesday, the tennis courts are empty. This video, <https://photos.app.goo.gl/mm45ZNh71EqAUx8S9>, was taken on May 5, at 11:00, but the situation is like this every time I look in the courts during pickleball playing time on Mondays and Wednesdays."

Joanne Stenberg: "As a longtime resident of Burlingame I discourage the use of Pershing Park for a Pickle Ball court. Pershing Park is a little jewel of beauty and tranquility in our neighborhood which attracts families with young children who come from all over Burlingame to enjoy the playground, the beautiful grounds and the safe, quiet, calm of the area. It was closed during Covid and now the stream of strollers has begun and the playground is full of happy children and adults every day and all day. Over the years the two blocks of Howard Avenue west of El Camino Real has become a main artery for traffic from Hillsborough and Burlingame Hills going to El Camino and the freeways and to downtown Burlingame. Many people park on Howard for dining and shopping. There is no parking on the north side of street except for Sundays. Parking is limited to 2 hours parking on the south side. Sunday parking on these 2 blocks is jammed. Opening this park to Pickle Ball games will attract more people and cars than this area can accommodate. The peaceful, safe atmosphere of the Park that attracts young families will be gone. Please do not let this happen to this unique lovely space which we all treasure."

Brian Roche: "My name is Brian Roche and I live at 1557 Newlands Ave. I just want to let you know we strongly are against adding any pickle ball courts to Pershing Park. I've looked out at Pershing Park for the last 16 years. We are quite happy not changing that. Pershing Park is a park for families with young kids Sicklebills does not fall into that category. Pickle ball is noisy plus will attract more mature people and teens and probably scare away the young families that currently frequent the park. We currently have issues with teens hanging out in the park well after dark we really don't want to add to that. Also pickle ball is so noisy plus cheering from players for that reason alone it really should not be considered for this location due to the close proximity to people's residences. Plus, all the additional traffic and parking issues. For parking the City needs to add 2-hour parking on Crescent Ave in front of the park over to Howard Ave. What's happening is people are parking their cars in the morning and getting picked up by someone else and returning in the evening. These cars are taking up available parking spaces for Park users. What is then happening they are parking on Newlands Avenue on both sides of the street? I have also seen people just drop construction trucks in the evening driver gets picked up by somebody else and they leave the truck overnight. This happens quite regularly. As a resident of this area and I also speak for a few of my neighbors we are happy not to change the existing character of Pershing Park. By adding pickle ball courts, it would totally change Pershing Park from been such a nice quite family friendly kids park and would become an overcrowded very noisy very busy park. It's really not the right location for Pickle ball courts so please be considerate to the residents who will be mostly impacted by this decision."

Kathy & Irvine Holmes: "As a resident across the street from the Park, I oppose the installation of Pickle ball courts for the many reasons enumerated by my neighbors in their letter. The park is already very heavily used and parking is a joke making it difficult for residents already. This will only add to the inconvenience and traffic to a very heavily used area. I am emailing regarding our strong opposition to the possibility Pickleball Court(s) at Pershing Park. We are very opposed to putting Pickleball court(s) at Pershing Park due to the decreased safety, negative impact on children, and overcrowding to the entire Burlingame Park neighborhood. We have owned our home on Crescent Avenue Burlingame, directly across from Pershing Park for 27 years. It has always been a wonderful neighborhood park, ideally suited for young families. Here are the reasons, we believe Pickleball courts at Pershing Park would be a very bad idea, and have a negative impact on:

1). **Safety to the neighborhood** - Pickleball, a high demand sport with few available courts, would attract people from all over Burlingame and beyond. Our quiet hamlet and local Pershing Park would become a more highly trafficked area by adults from all over. Pershing Park is one block off El Camino, where there is a public bus stop. In the past, neighbors have lobbied not to have a bathroom put in the park due to the potential of the bathroom used by homeless in the area. Because of the proximity to Burlingame Avenue, and the exposure to crowds outside Burlingame, it has been a neighborhood goal to keep this park low profile and safer.

2). **Play space for children** - We see every day (because our front porch looks out on the park), the Pershing Park blacktop used with great frequency by children for bike riding, kickball games, basketball, and games of imagination. It is a very friendly and safe park for young children, and there are not as many play areas in the neighborhood for children. Young Burlingame children need this dedicated space in Pershing Park!

3). **Park age demographics would shift from children to adults:** The vast majority of Pickleball players are adults. We enjoy playing Pickleball and go to Foster City (which is convenient due to the large # of courts). Our experience playing is that 95% of the Pickleball players are adults, with very few families or children playing. Pickleball courts at Pershing Park would cause more adults to hang out there, which would have a negative impact on the young children focus and safety.

4). **Lack of Parking:** There is not nearly enough current parking for people who come to Pershing Park, particularly in the summer. The parking space in front of our house on Crescent is always used by park attendees, because the Burlingame Police Dept. has been asked, but will not put a two-hour parking signs on Crescent. This drives much traffic to Crescent Avenue. Currently, many people from Safeway and other retail outlets come to park all day on Crescent Avenue, because it is the only non "Two Hour Parking" street in the surrounding area. Pickleball would bring several more cars daily in front of our overcrowded street, Crescent Avenue.

5). **Pershing Park is too small for a Pickleball Court(s):** Pershing Park is much smaller than Village or Washington Park, which could accommodate Pickleball Courts with relatively little impact. The available space is much, much smaller than Village or Washington Park: Washington Park can handle several Pickleball courts, as can Village Park and Cuernavaca. One or two of the Burlingame tennis courts near the High School could also be turned into Pickleball courts.

6). **Basketball courts are enjoyed and needed in our neighborhood:** Our family and another Pershing Park neighbor were responsible for asking for the basketball courts at Pershing over two decades ago. These basketball courts are used all the time by children, young people and families. The next most local basketball courts are at Washington Park. A Pershing Park Pickleball court would take away one or more basketball courts, not to mention the tennis backboard, which are all used.

Thank you for hearing our real concerns about Pickleball court(s) in our neighborhood at Pershing Park."

Evan Krasts: "I live at 1548 Newlands Ave, adjacent to Pershing Park. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposal to add pickleball courts to Pershing Park. I

am submitting the attached letter co-signed by 16 nearby residents in **firm opposition** to adding any pickleball courts to the park. We believe adding courts will unfairly impact nearby residents, change the character of the park for the worse, and be out of step with the goals laid out in the 2020 Parks Master Plan. We urge you to find another, more appropriate location."

Comments from those in attendance:

Kathy Schmidt thanked the commission for the opportunity to speak. She lives around the corner from Pershing Park. We have a special community and a special park. The idea of having a pickleball court given the popularity of it here within our neighborhood would bring in a lot of traffic which is a concern of our neighborhood both in terms of the impact to parking and to safety. Howard Ave is a thoroughfare for Hillsborough and the corner of Crescent and Howard is already a dangerous corner that has been improved by signage. People are drawn to this park because of the nature of the park mostly used by families and young children.

Evan Krasts read the letter that was submitted with 16 signatures from Pershing Park neighbors. "We, as residents living near Pershing Park, have significant concerns with the proposal of adding pickleball courts to Pershing Park. Pershing Park is a small neighborhood park, closely surrounded by homes. As such, it is not suitable for a feature like a pickleball court. Pickleball is a noisy sport. The hard paddle and ball produce a sharp, repetitive sound during gameplay. Cheers and shouts from players add to the overall noise level. Combined with pickleball's growing popularity, this could mean a constant stream of noise in the neighborhood throughout any given day. It is well documented that placing courts in residential areas often draws complaints and even lawsuits from residents who are impacted. A bit of online research on noise abatement indicates that courts within 350 feet of residences often require noise abatement. Courts within 150 feet require *careful* noise abatement. This not only reflects that noise is indeed a problem, but suggests that significant noise abatement would be required at Pershing Park, as there are several homes within 150 feet of the blacktop area. Any noise abatement structure would be unsightly and change the character of the park in a negative way. The Burlingame Parks Master Plan adopted in 2020, defines Pershing Park as part of a "Park Cluster" designed to serve local, residential neighborhoods. The park's description on Burlingame.org describes the park as "designed to serve families with young children...for informal play experiences for individuals and small groups". Neither of these descriptions is consistent with the installation of pickleball courts for regular use by the broader community. This is much better suited to one of the "Recreation Hubs" envisioned in the Parks Plan. Finally, in the April 15 PRC meeting minutes, Recreation Coordinator Sanchez correctly noted that there is "quite a slope" on the Pershing Park blacktop, making it a less-than-ideal option to begin with. In conclusion, we understand the desire for pickleball courts in Burlingame, but believe that Pershing Park is not a good location due to significant noise impacts on residents and the impact it will have on the character of the park itself. If the park is already considered a less than ideal physical location for a court, we wonder why it is even under consideration. We strongly oppose putting any pickleball courts at Pershing Park. Thank you, Shawna and Evan Krasts (1548 Newlands Ave.) Diane Russell and Ward Supplee (1546 Newlands Ave.) Duncan and Amy Grenier (1575 Newlands Ave.) David and Katherine Gerster (1540 Newlands Ave.) Rachel Perkel (112 Crescent Ave.) Laura and Mark Gschwind (1553 Newlands Ave.) Barbara and Terry Freethy (125 Crescent Ave.) Wenjing Zhang and Yuanming Shan (146 Crescent Ave.) Kathy Schmidt (1512 Howard Ave.) Brian and Adele Roche (1557 Newlands Ave.)"

Orla stated her opposition to adding pickleball courts to Pershing Park. She would like to maintain the nature of the park as it is.

Adrienne Leigh thanked staff and Commission for bringing this item onto the agenda. She requested that the drop-in days at Washington Park not be changed as they are popular. She also noted the USTA has been promoting the use of blended lines on courts for pickleball use. She agreed with striping all four courts at Washington Park courts. She is in favor of fees for seniors, resident, non-resident etc. She feels Saturday & Sunday play times would much appreciated by those who cannot play during the week.

Carlo lives across the street from the blacktop at Pershing Park and that due to noise and traffic the addition of pickleball courts would not be a good idea.

Elaine McPherson has lived near Pershing Park since 1969 and has been very involved in the development and changes of the park over the years. We hope it will continue to be a family park, please try to keep it that way.

Jack thanked Recreation Sanchez for all his work and Commissioners Milne and Pappajohn for coming out to see what pickleball is all about with the pros and cons. Regarding putting pickleball lines on tennis courts, he agrees with putting two courts on each side of the tennis net. The eight-foot limitation is only enforced during tournaments. Typically, four to six feet is plenty of ground behind the baseline. We could accommodate more players this way. He really wants to support the weekend option of play time.

Vice Chair Holzman closed public comment and opened Commission discussion.

Commissioner Milne asked if we put down pickleball lines with less than eight feet of space would that be a liability for the city. Glomstad noted the issue would have to be run by the risk manager in the City Attorney's office. Milne noted he is leaning toward lining all the courts at Washington and the blacktop at Village Park. He also would like to develop the Burlingamer option, in addition to facilitating the option of renting strap kits for users once we are back to normal renting of equipment. Milne stated once we line the blacktop at Village we would quickly find out if users are using the surface to play. It may turn out the surface it not optimal and would get very little use and that would determine if we line other blacktop surfaces in the city. Milne also noted this does not have to be our only pass at the resolution for this issue.

Commissioner Lee is also in favor of lining all the courts at Washington Park. And due to no comments of opposition for the Village Park option, she recommends lining the blacktop there as well and to notice the neighborhoods around Victoria and Cuernavaca Parks and see what the comments are and feels the parks are fairly noisy and would be interested to hear their input.

Commissioner Chang noted he had visited nearby cities to see what their pickleball situations were and he saw the momentum of the increasing popularity pickleball at most courts he visited. He also noted the game is louder than tennis and could see noise complaint issues in the smaller neighborhoods. Chang said he would not say that the lack of response for Village Park would mean they are okay with a court at the park as there are a lot of shared similarities between the two

parks such as lack of parking, closeness to residential, and blacktops. Village Park is similar to that of Pershing Park and they would have the same issues as stated by neighbors for Pershing Park here tonight.

Commissioner Holzman felt we can do this in phases and conduct more research. She likes the idea of the Burlingame for windy days, wintertime and the noise. Holzman would like to revisit the weekend opportunities. Glomstad noted if there is an addition of pickleball courts at Washington Park tennis courts then this will provide the weekend opportunities.

Commissioners agreed that the game of pickleball is louder than tennis and this would be impactful on tennis courts that are in small neighborhoods.

MOTION: Commissioner Milne made a motion to add pickleball lines on all four tennis courts at Washington Park. The motion was seconded by Commission Chang and was approved. 4-0-3 (Ardito, Matthews & Pappajohn absent).

MOTION: Commissioner Milne made a motion to put one court of pickleball lines on the blacktop at Village Park. The motion was seconded by Commission Lee and failed to pass. 2-2-3 (Ardito, Matthews & Pappajohn absent).

MOTION: Commissioner Milne made a motion to reinstate the pickleball drop-in fee/program of \$5 at Washington Park on Monday and Wednesdays with the option to expand if the program becomes popular. The motion was seconded by Commission Chang and was approved. 4-0-3 (Ardito, Matthews & Pappajohn absent).

8. NEW BUSINESS

None

9. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

a) Parks & Recreation Department Reports

Director Glomstad reported a new event, called Gallery on the Green will take place on June 5 from 10am to 1 pm at the front of Washington Park. It highlights the Department's contract artists, however, any artist can participate by reaching out to the Department Recreation Coordinators. The Concert in the Park series resumes on Friday evenings from 6-8 pm with the first concert on June 18 featuring the band The Sun Kings, a Beatles tribute band. Upcoming will be a Craft Market which will take the place of Art on the Avenue. The event will run from 10 am to 6pm on the Saturday and Sunday following each concert.

b) Commissioners Reports

Commissioner Milne – Reported he tried playing pickleball and found it fun. He recommends it.

Commissioner Lee – Reported she is on the Burlingame Community Center Capital Campaign which has raised approximately \$800,000 to date. Donations to the fund will have the opportunity to name rooms in the new facility or purchase a tile for the surrounding patio.

Commissioner Chang – No report.

Commissioner Holzman – Reported the 80's themed Night Under the Stars event was a fun time.

10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Fenced in off-leash area at Ray Park

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:42 pm.

The next meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission is scheduled to be held on Thursday, June 17, 2021, at 7:00 pm via zoom webinar.

Respectfully submitted,
Joleen Helley
Recording Secretary