



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting on Thursday, October 16, 2025**

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Milne, Brunello, Curtis, Wettan (arrived at 7:02pm) & Chang

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Giere & Yu

STAFF PRESENT: Director Glomstad, Recreation Manager Acquisti, Recreation Supervisor Gresh, Parks Superintendent Holtz, Recreation Coordinator Sheldon & Recording Secretary Helley

OTHERS PRESENT: Shelley Nielson, Lynne Ahn, Bryan Michael & Youth Advisory Committee members

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Brunello made a motion to approve the May 15, July 17, and September 18, 2025, minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Curtis. The motion was approved 4-0-3 (Giere, Yu & Wettan absent).

4. CORRESPONDENCE

None

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

6. PRESENTATIONS

Coordinator Sheldon introduced the Youth Advisory Committee presentation and handed it over to the committee members, who outlined their plans for the upcoming year.

Committee members Hope DiLaura, Charlotte Guglielmi, Dylan Lachance, Owen Larkin, Kristyn Lee, Kylie Min, Hannah Osinski, Ethan Philip, Caroline Readey, Luciano Vitale, Audrey Wei, Tate Willis, and Adrian Yiensu presented this year's initiative of Mental Health & Wellness, which had been divided into two sections: self and others. For self, the approach is to hold a day-long Wellness Fair in Washington Park with booths focused on self-care, including yoga, meditation, NAMI, a gratitude wall, a petting zoo, and more. For others, the approach will be Social Media PSA's and a Gratitude Project wherein YAC hosts a community-wide project writing gratitude notes for public servants and City departments around Valentine's Day.

The committee will also help with several events, such as the Family Camp Out, Kids Nights Out, and the NAMI Mental Health Walk, and has fundraising plans for the upcoming Winter Market and the Wellness Fair. Other events include Fall Fest, Royal Ball, Bayside Cleanup, holiday events, and the Parks Foundation Ride.

The members expressed gratitude to the committee for their growth, connections, leadership development, public service, and for connecting with community members and other youth in the area.

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. Review of the Off-Leash Summer Pilot Program at Washington Field - Supervisor Gresh introduced the background on the item. Ten years ago, the City had three designated off-leash dog areas: Bayside Dog Exercise Park, Washington Park (near the rose garden), and the upper grass area at Cuernavaca Park. Over time, based on community feedback and extensive public outreach, the City Council approved additional off-leash locations, including Washington Ballfield, Skyline Park, Adrian Dog Park, and Ray Dog Park.

Despite these additional off-leash opportunities, dog owners continue to express interest in additional locations and hours of access.

In May 2024, staff received correspondence from a small group of residents requesting expanded off-leash hours at Washington Park Ballfield. Over the following months, staff met with these residents to discuss their proposal, which included adding summer off-leash hours from 6:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m., Monday through Friday. No changes to existing school-year off-leash hours were requested.

In January 2025, the Dog Advisory Group and City staff met to review the proposal. The discussion included an evaluation of current off-leash summer hours, the proposed expanded hours, and the potential operational impacts on city programs and park maintenance activities. For example, during the summer months, camps begin at 9:00 a.m., with program setup starting as early as 8:30 a.m. In addition, Parks Division staff typically perform field maintenance on Monday mornings; however, maintenance schedules may vary depending on field conditions, workload priorities, and staffing levels.

To ensure uninterrupted field maintenance and operational efficiency, the volunteer group that submitted the proposal committed to managing on-site activity during the expanded morning off-leash hours. This included ensuring that all dogs and dog owners are clear of the maintenance areas during staff operations. The group also proposed establishing a daily volunteer schedule. Staff requested that this schedule be shared with City personnel to allow for direct coordination with the designated volunteer in the event of operational conflicts.

In March 2025, the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council approved a pilot program authorizing expanded summer off-leash hours at Washington Park Field. Staff also recommended returning to the Commission at the conclusion of the summer season to provide an evaluation of the pilot program and determine whether the expanded hours should be continued, modified, or discontinued for another summer.

Commissioner Milne inquired if, outside of the off-leash hours, this volunteer program has had field monitors patrol and check other areas. Gresh confirmed this to be the case.

Commissioner Brunello asked whether, due to the increased use of the field, there has been a noticeable deterioration of the surface. Superintendent Holtz noted that with increased use, more holes have been dug. The volunteers have helped fill in the holes with the provided dirt, but it is not the same as compacted earth for sports use.

Chair Chang opened Public Comment.

Jerry Peil – Volunteered with the program and thought it went well. There are troublesome dogs; however, it is a good avenue for dogs to socialize. The camaraderie among both people and dogs benefits the community. He thinks the extended hours help both the dogs and people get together. The WhatsApp group started with 180 members and is now about 215 after this pilot program. On average, there are about 30-40 regulars, and everybody gets to know each other and the rules about the 8:30 am ending time.

Brian Micheal, A resident for 25 years, appreciates the response and the experience. He volunteered over 10 times this summer. He is a former Eagle Scout and feels the group left the field cleaner than they found it, as dogs and people come late at night and leave things behind that the morning group cleans up. He would really encourage a dog registration drive. A small

percentage of dog owners in Burlingame have registered their dogs. He thinks owners who have registered their dogs are more responsible and feel more connected, so they are more likely to follow the rules. Many people arrive after 8:30 am, and he feels the pilot program educated some of them, as they did not know about the limit on off-leash hours on the field. It's another way to educate people. The group is very self-policing, so it was all very positive for the community, the people, and the dogs. He appreciates the commission's consideration of continuing the hours.

Chang noted that seven emails were received regarding the items the commissioners reviewed prior to the meeting.

Emails received:

Lynne Ahn – “This is for inclusion in the upcoming meeting on October 16, 2025 regarding the pilot program for off leash access at Washington Park. Thank you for having the expanded dog off leash hours pilot program this past summer. My dog loved seeing his friends, eating as many treats as he could get from their owners and he was set for having his morning exercise in and being happy so I could go to work and not worry about him.

I enjoyed being able to do my part in volunteering the 10 or so times to help clean up the field ,remind folks of the rules, as well as do some extras like spot leaky sprinklers that were creating puddles/holes, filling in some bare spots, and picking up trash so the area was nice and clean for the kids enjoying summer camp during the day. The vest was helpful on the field as well. I always worked hard while there to leave the field in better shape than when I entered it as I know it's a wonderful amenity for all of us to enjoy.

I hope the program continues. Some improvements I would suggest are longer term to simplify the hours year round so it's more easy to remember. Plus make the signage super clear "No Dogs" "Dogs Ok" and limit the entrance points by locking some of the gates. The current signage while robust, I would say individuals don't always take the time to read all the detailed rules and internalize this information. Parks and Recreation also has essentially free labor from this volunteer pool they can take advantage of. I am happy to put grass seed in bare spots or do extras during my volunteer days as well that would benefit the park overall.

Thank you for your continued consideration.”

Lisa Brady – “I'm sending email in support of keeping this program on a continuous basis at Washington Park as it helps with new dog owners learning to socialize their pups, old (or more experienced:) dog owners a place to let the pups have an off leash experience of a 'snif-fari + most of these dogs know one another & I know my Newfoundland Rupert is happy to meet new and old friends, both of the 4 and 2 legger companions. Also, when there is a tussel with the dogs, while never fun, can be a way for all to learn how to handle these situations in a calm manner.”

Judith Downing -

“I am a Burlingame resident and a senior citizen. This is just a general response to any area that is not fenced in Washington Park for dogs off leash. I take Yoga several days a week at the Rec Center. The reason is for balance. I have had dogs off leash rush at me twice At Washington Park. I was able to keep my balance but barely. I don’t think people realize that just because you are walking well without a support cane that one might still have a disability that is not apparent. I would feel more confident if all dogs were on a leash. I am not afraid of dogs and love dogs. I would be more that upset if a dog off leash were responsible for me falling and breaking a bone. These dog owners should carry good home owners insurance if they are going to be off leash.”

David Gonzales – “I want to express my support for the off leash summer dog program. I honestly have never met such a strong and supportive group of people that are responsible and highlight with one another when an issue comes up in the park and needs to be addressed, e.g., your dog is pooping over there...It’s been a great program and I hope it continues.”

Brian Higgins – “I’m a Burlingame resident with 2 dogs and regularly use the BHS field during permitted off-leash hours. Unfortunately, I am travelling for work and I am not able to attend the meeting on October 16th but wanted to express both my appreciation to the Parks Department and support for continuing the expanded summer off-lease hours.

First, I can't tell you how important and beneficial the access to the BHS field over the summer has been to my dogs (and I think the other 20-30 dogs who typically showed up on most mornings). The ability to run, play and socialize with other dogs makes a material difference in their mood, demeanor and energy levels each day. I also believe that the community that regularly utilized BHS Field during the extended off leash hours this summer consistently left the field in better shape than we found it *every* morning. I think it's important for the Parks Department to understand that the community that utilizes the BHS field is passionate about their dogs and are committed to taking care of space both to ensure its continued usage but also to show that we respect ALL of the other communities that use and access the BHS field.

I'm also hopeful that the Parks Department is able to bifurcate the complaints that have been levied at the dogs and dog owners. There is a committed community that respects and follows the rules during the dedicated off leash hours and picks up after their dogs and then there are those that operate outside the guidelines and rules and either use the field when it's not permitted and/or don't pick up after their dogs. I think it would be damaging and grossly inaccurate to lump these two vastly different groups into a single group.

All that being said, I personally think the complaints highlighted in the Parks Dept "Staff Report" raise important issues for the Parks Dept to consider an appropriate resolution specifically around the potential costs associated with the maintenance of the dog parks. Personally, I think the Parks Department should enact some type of registration system (including a fee) for use of BHS field and other the city parks for dog owners. There are multiple benefits to such a system: first, it would very clearly identify registered users from unregistered users, second, it would allow for a more transparent system of fines and penalties for those who choose to break the rules and finally it would raise revenue to help cover the costs associated with the field usage by dog owners. It would

also allow dog owners to provide a direct benefit to the parks and more clearly justify the usage of their dogs. Happy to discuss any of the above and again really appreciate the continued commitment to the expanded off-leash program.”

Eve Nagler – “I am writing in support of maintaining Washington field access to dogs on weekday mornings before summer camp. The program this past summer went very well. Responsible dog owners monitored their dogs and policed themselves on cleanup. The dogs were happy and so were we for the opportunity to exercise our pets. We are grateful to Parks and Rec and city officials for giving us the chance to use the field during the designated hours. I join my fellow dog owners in the hope that this program will continue next year and in the future.”

Shelley Nielsen – “We dog parents all appreciate your supporting us and allowing to take our dogs to the field in the summer. We are a responsible group and promise to adhere to your requirements. Please continue this program for the sake of the community.”

Caroline Serrato – “First a big thank you to Supervisor Gresh for his leadership! And excellent staff report. I am in favor of continuing the program, there is so much good that comes from allowing and encouraging our human and canine residents to interact with each other and be outdoors! Thank you for continuing to evaluate and support these types of programs for our residents and visitors. They make Burlingame the very special place that it is!”

Chang closed public comment.

Chang opened the Commission discussion.

Wettan stated that we do not often see community groups stepping up to shoulder the burden of making things happen for the City. This is obviously a superb example of that, and he would only want to encourage it and is in favor of renewing it for next year.

Milne agreed with Wettan and was quite hopeful at the outset, when it was first brought up. He is glad it has turned out as well as it has.

Motion by Commissioner Milne to approve the extension of the pilot program for off-leash hours at Washington Field for an additional summer. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wettan. 5-0-2 (Giere & Yu absent).

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Appointment of Two Commissioners to the Dog Advisory Committee -

Staff reported that the terms of two commissioners currently on the Dog Advisory Committee are expiring, and neither is reapplying. Therefore, the committee needs two current commissioners to replace them.

Chang appointed Commissioners Giere and Yu to replace the open positions on the Dog Advisory Committee.

9. STAFF AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

a. Parks & Recreation Department Reports

Recreation Manager Acquisti reported that the Department has hired a new Recreation Coordinator, George Folau, who will introduce himself at the next meeting.

Fall Fest is on October 26, and the Halloween House Decorating Contest is the week of October 20, with the winners announced on October 24.

b. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Milne – No Report

Commissioner Curtis – No Report

Commissioner Brunello – No Report

Commissioner Wettan – Participated in the City-wide emergency preparedness drill.

Commissioner Chang – No Report

10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Presentation on Mills Canyon Fire clearance

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

The next meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission is scheduled to be held in person on Thursday, November 20, 2025, at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Joleen Helley
Recording Secretary