

**CITY OF SAN MATEO
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 27, 2015**

APPROVED

The meeting convened at 7:30 p.m. in the City of San Mateo Council Chambers and was called to order by Chair Bonilla, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Those present were: Commissioner Whitaker, Commissioner Massey, Commissioner Hugg, Vice-Chair Drechsler, and Chair Bonilla.

A motion was made by Vice-Chair Drechsler, second by Commissioner Massey to approve the minutes of the Regular meeting of January 6, 2015.

Vote – Pass unanimous 5-0

A motion was made by Commissioner Massey, second by Vice Chair Drechsler, to approve the minutes as amended of the Regular meeting of January 13, 2015.

Vote – Pass unanimous 5-0

***** PUBLIC COMMENT**

No one wishing to speak, closed the public comment period.

ITEM 1

PUBLIC HEARING

PA 14-105 LOS PRADOS PARK TURF CONVERSION. Conversion of 4.2 acres of turf grass in the main field with synthetic turf. 1837 Bahia Street (APN 040-163-260)

The Planning Commission will review the following items and make a recommendation to the City Council for final action.

Require

- A. Mitigated Negative Declaration to Assess Environmental Impacts.
- B. Site Development Planning Application for grading consisting of the removal of 10 inches of organic material or approximately 6,700 cubic yards of material.

The City of San Mateo Park totals 12.6 acres and is located at 1837 Bahia Street, south of East Hillsdale Blvd/S. Norfolk Street and east of US Highway 101. The project is zoned Open Space and the General Plan land use designation is Parks/Open Space.

Guido Periscone, Associate Planner made the staff presentation. Paul Council, Recreation Division Manager assisted with the presentation.

Chris Chisam, Senior Project Manager for Beals Alliance, the project landscape architect, and Patrick Angell, Principal for PMC, the environmental review consultant, also addressed Commissioner questions.

Public Comment:

The following persons spoke on this item: John Shield with the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), Cliff Robbins with the Parks Commission and Community Advisory Committee (CAC), Tom Whipple, Brenda Stengle, and Nima Khaki with San Mateo Soccer Club:

- Pointed out that those public entities, especially local schools, keep children's health & safety as high priorities and they have installed synthetic turf, would agree that this is a safe project.
- Community access is huge for a project like this; the project is needed and should go forward.
- Concerned about aesthetics of neighborhood when not being used for athletics, will it be a pleasant place for kids, families, dogs. Prefer natural turf, natural vegetation in the neighborhood because it affects property values, and is also a great way to cool off in the summer.
- Materials proposed for use in this project are not well-studied, no peer-reviews cited, journal articles, need time to determine health effects. Synthetic turf changes mood of the field, will change neighborhood dramatically, and will also increase traffic as it becomes a year-round sports field.
- Likes the project because there is no other turf around the area for rainy day/winter sports, is great to add another field for sports activities in the city.

Staff Comment – The Parks and Recreation Commission has jurisdiction on the selection of Los Prados Park and the use of specific turf materials; the Parks and Recreation Commission used a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to examine alternatives. Staff recommends Planning Commission address required approvals regarding how construction, drainage, and other impacts have been dealt with the grading permit. Should the Commission wish to address the type of turf to be used, it is recommended that it be done in a separate motion.

The Planning Commission had the following questions for the applicant and staff:

- Is there a Peer-review study of the proposed turf? *Staff* - Staff reviewed research and papers on health and environmental considerations for synthetic turf, and relied only upon peer reviewed and/or governmentally sponsored research and articles.
- Will aesthetics and property values be affected by the project? *Staff* - none identified by the project.

- In order to adopt the environmental impact report, does Planning Commission need to agree with current material? *Counsel* – The task before the Planning Commission is to decide whether the Mitigated Negative Declaration adequately analyzed the environmental impact of the proposed project. The Commission can make a separate recommendation regarding the use of a specific turf material.
- The Administrative Report refers to other synthetic turf fields on the peninsula, has staff contacted these neighboring jurisdictions? *Staff* – Yes, General experience has been positive, with benefits realized with this surface include less down time due to weather. These type of turf fields require regular sweeping, provides less overall maintenance, reduction in water usage, mowing and fertilizing.
- Are there potential negative impacts? *Staff* – Temperatures are higher on and above the surface. Concern for this would be less here than in the Central Valley – wind, fog, moderate temperatures appear to be the greatest factors in reducing heat. These characteristics in our geographic area will help. A condition of approval has been placed on the project requiring users be informed of the need to stay hydrated.
- There is a recent press release from State Senator Jerry Hill on SB47, which includes a 2 year moratorium on crumb rubber synthetic turf (recycled tire rubber); has the staff investigated this? *Staff* – Yes, City aware of this issue, we did review of scientific data, we established criteria using government sponsored tests and peer reviews. Our assessment, developed in conjunction with the City’s consultants, is that crumb rubber is safe, appropriate, economical product for this usage.
- Was there consideration of alternative synthetic turf material? *Staff* - Project was put out to bid with crumb rubber specified before Hill bill. Though the project would be exempt from the legislation, staff concluded that it would be desirable to provide additional options for City Council consideration. A bid addendum was issued that included two (2) alternative surfaces. These alternatives will be examined at by the City Council at a February 17, 2015 Study Session.
- Is adequate parking provided? *Staff & Consultant* – Two (2) lots, fifty-two (52) spaces listed in Mitigated Negative Declaration are off-street spaces in the two lots. There is also some additional on-street parking.
- Will night lights be installed? *Staff* – Only security lighting, tennis and basketball lighting; there will be no lighting of the field area.
- Will there increased impacts on the neighborhood due to the project? *Staff* - typically field is closed or partially closed December through February. Youth groups do not typically operate programs during that period because most fields are closed for repair or resting. Hard to predict what level of new/expanded usage may occur, or whether youth groups would expand their programs to include those months. Usage permits for organized sports are required.
- Are there maintenance impacts, will there be an increased presence of bacteria? *Staff and Consultant* – Studies show that synthetic turf is not a hospitable environment for bacteria. The perimeter irrigation system included will allow field to be washed down as

needed. Maintenance includes sweeping debris with machine, routine grooming to "fluff" infill and occasional deep grooming.

- Will there be increased traffic impacts? *Staff and Consultant* – Mitigated Negative Declaration addressed traffic. There is no expansion of operation, therefore, peak hour traffic volumes would not increase but there may be more days of usage, no change in level of service.

The Planning Commission had the following comments:

- Disagree with some staff information, usage of public parks can run 6 am – 6 pm in summer season and that includes noise, trash, etc. Can empathize with citizens regarding year-round use of this park. Studies supplied are too old, material choice is bad.
- The CAC started 3 years ago and had a lot of good community input. Examine adding bike racks, garbage cans; washrooms with greater supervision of the facility. Need to consider noise impacts; minimize construction impacts on community.
- Appreciate staff work; field will be an asset for San Mateo. Green space is a valuable amenity, and a project like this is needed.
- Am concerned about the crumb rubber material. Could support the project with different turf material.
- Respect the long review of CAC and Parks and Recreation Commission. While grass is aesthetically pleasing, and nicer to play on than synthetic turf, the city needs athletic fields to meet demand. Need to enhance utility of current fields for city.
- We need athletic fields; this is a good project to meet community needs, and is well designed. Staff has addressed construction noise and dust impacts.
- Pedestrian bridge at Hillsdale will create more usage of the field. Infill material is an uncertain issue, but grading portion is fine. Can approve project with a separate recommendation to City Council on materials used.
- Explore opportunities for enhanced pedestrian and bicycle accessibility.

Moved by Vice-Chair Drechsler, Second by Commissioner Massey, Passed 4-1 (Hugg opposed) that the Planning Commission recommend to City Council, acceptance of the following for final action:

- A. Mitigated Negative Declaration to Assess Environmental Impacts.
- B. Site Development Planning Application for grading consisting of the removal of 10 inches of organic material, approximately 6,700 cubic yards of material.

New/Additional Motion by Vice Chair Drechsler, Second by Chair Bonilla, Passed unanimously 5-0, that for PA14-105 Los Prados Park Turf Conversion, the Planning Commission urges the City Council and Staff to consider material other than crumb rubber for infill due to strong health concerns.

COMMUNICATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Communications from Staff

- a. Congratulations to Chair Bonilla on his appointment to City Council
- b. Upcoming Meetings
 - i. February 2, City Council Hearing on Station Park Green
 - ii. February 10, Planning Commission Study Session on latest pre-application for Hillsdale Shopping Mall renovation/improvement and Election of Officers for Planning Commission
 - iii. February 17, Los Prados Park to be on City Council agenda
 - iv. February 24, Central Park Master Plan Study Session and Century Center Parking Structure.
 - v. March 10, Climate Action Plan and General Plan amendments

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items before the Planning Commission, the meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m. on Tuesday, January 27, 2015.