

**TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MARCH 3, 2014**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Brasler, Co-chair House, Commissioners Cronk, Krebs, Pipkin, Swaim

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Sisich

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Brasler called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

OPEN TIME FOR PUBLIC EXPRESSION

No one spoke.

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Interim Planning Director Diane Henderson noted that Sisich was not in attendance because he owns property within 500 feet of the skate park project site. Senior Planner Phil Boyle is currently on vacation. The next meeting of the Planning Commission is tentatively scheduled for April 7.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of Planning Commission Meeting February 3, 2014.

M/s, Krebs/House, to approve the minutes of the meeting of February 3, 2014.

AYES: Brasler, Cronk, House, Krebs, Pipkin, Swaim

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Sisich

REGULAR AGENDA

DR-1401, Town of San Anselmo, 1000 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard (Memorial Park), APN 006-032-19, The applicant is requesting design review for a Skate Plaza in Memorial Park, (between the Isabel Cook Center and the baseball fields), 1000 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. The project site is located in the Public Facilities (PF) Zoning District (Staff person: Boyle).

Henderson presented the staff report and introduced Community Services Director Dave Donery.

Donery advised that in 2000, there was an effort to create a formal skate park consisting of poured concrete surfaces, permanent fencing, and an entrance from the parking lot that would be similar to the facility at McGinnis Park in San Rafael. Community workshops ensued and designs were developed and priced. The cost was estimated at \$1 million. Fundraising fell short and the project never came to fruition.

In 2010, Coach Tim Musselman, a Recreation Department instructor and former skater, asked if he could construct a half pipe in order to offer an introductory skateboarding camp. Donery noted that the class has been expanded from one week to three weeks over the past few years and that each session has filled up.

Donery reported that it has been about 30 years since half pipes have begun appearing in public areas and they've gained wide acceptance. It has been determined that the best course of action has been to make the structures self-placing, to display strict rules concerning use of the facilities, and to follow State guidelines for the required use of safety gear.

The Recreation Department has been allowing the half pipes to remain in place at the end of the class sessions. Donery has been observing their use and condition closely and noted that the structures are attracting a group of middle and high school students previously not served by the existing Recreation Department programs.

A conversation was begun with skaters, parents, and Recreation Department staff, resulting in a proposal that was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission in October. The proposal is for securing a temporary skate plaza of five or six components on to an asphalt surface adjacent to the tennis courts.

The proposed space is an existing basketball court that is not currently usable as it is. The space would be paved and one-half of the area would be designated for the skate plaza and the other half for a half-size basketball court that would also serve as a full-size court for mini sports camp participants. Donery is considering proposal of a low, vinyl-covered chain link fence to separate the two spaces. He described the individual components of the skate park structures and noted that the wood frame deck is a composite material that is weatherproof and can be dismantled and used elsewhere.

Donery added that the project would be funded by private contributions and the cost is expected to be approximately \$50,000. He introduced Lisa Graham, a parent leader who has completed considerable research on the project and can address questions and concerns as well.

Commissioner Cronk asked for clarification as to what would happen if the skate plaza needed to be removed for the construction of a detention basin.

Donery responded that the proposed detention basin is in the very earliest stages of consideration and not likely to be built soon. The skate plaza components could certainly be moved; however, if the detention basin is approved and constructed, the entire park would need to be lowered and it would be a matter of deciding which features are placed in Memorial Park. He added that if the detention basin is not constructed, there would most likely be an on-going fund raising effort for the skate plaza to purchase items such as trash receptacles and to replace the surfacing as needed.

Swaim confirmed with Donery that the proposed hours of the skate plaza are from 9:00 a.m. to dusk. He further asked if Donery has any concerns about noise generated by the skate plaza.

Donery observed that the park opens at 9:00 a.m., as do the tennis courts. There is not an expectation that many skaters will be present at 9:00 a.m. due to school commitments. In the summer months, the camps begin at 9:00 a.m.

He added that skating components have been on site for the past several summers and that letters have been sent to the residents of homes adjacent to the site for each of the past three meetings held on the

topic of the proposed skating facility. Additionally, homeowners have been contacted directly in some instances. So far, there does not seem to be much concern on the part of residents.

Swaim observed that Donery had mentioned the skate plaza would be self-policing. He is concerned about the interaction of young children and teens in the plaza.

Donery invited Lisa Graham to speak on the topic. He further observed that there tend to be different age groups on site at different times of day and that his colleagues with similar facilities have observed there is not typically any issue with different age groups using the facilities at the same time. The recreation offices are close by, staff keeps an eye on the skating facilities, and if an issue arises, it will be addressed.

Brasler noted that the skate plaza is a Town-owned facility funded by private donations and asked if any additional insurance would be needed.

Donery replied that there would be no additional insurance cost.

As there were no further questions from the Planning Commission, Brasler invited members of the public to speak.

Steve Lamb, Laurel Avenue, noticed that the Rules and Regulations specify that no scooters are allowed in the skate plaza. One of the arguments for the skate plaza is to take kids off the streets and the sidewalks. Scooters are also on the sidewalks and in the park. Donery mentioned scooters in the context of another skate plaza. Lamb is wondering if scooters should be included in the skate plaza or not.

Lisa Graham has been spearheading the skate plaza project since the beginning. Both of her boys are skaters who play basketball and baseball as well.

Graham acknowledged that the scooter situation does have to be addressed. She noted that at McGinnis Park, specific times are designated for the scooters. Most of the children on scooters are younger and it may be advisable to designate early Saturday mornings and other early hours for use of the facility by scooters to be fair to everyone. The big no-no in most skate parks is BMX bikes because they can destroy the park. The bikers are aware of this. Currently, Fairfax Cyclery and other bike entities are looking at potential pump tracks in Fairfax and San Anselmo.

Graham and her constituents are committed to safety. They have plans in place and have been doing outreach with Drake High with regard to a skate guard program. Drake students could earn community service hours volunteering as skate guards. There is also interest in developing a skate club at Drake.

Jeremy Boucher is a senior at San Francisco State currently interning at Proof Lab in Mill Valley. Proof Lab has an in-door skating facility. Boucher conducts outreach with the goal of bringing the skate board community together. He'll be visiting Drake High to see what kinds of skate clubs can be developed there.

With regard to concerns about younger kids mingling with middle and high school students in the skate park, Boucher explained that there is a definite code of contact at a skate park. Participants, skaters as well as scooter riders, take turns. Signage is posted with the rules of the park. Boucher further observed that most of the older kids visit skate parks later in the day.

As there were no further comments from the public, Brasler returned the discussion to the Planning Commission, noting that he is confident that scooter riders and skaters will learn to use the facilities together and that the Parks and Recreation Department will clarify the rules and regulations regarding shared use.

Co-chair House believes this is a great project. She's glad it is coming forward and observed that it looks like a good development for the Town.

Swaim was skeptical about the project earlier, but has been persuaded that it is a sound proposal.

Commissioner Pipkin thinks it is a fantastic idea. There are a lot of young people in her neighborhood who have nowhere to go with their skateboards. She is an advocate of anything that brings people together and is appreciative of the fact that the skate park is at the recreation facility where activity can be monitored.

Commissioner Krebs echoes the sentiments of Brasler, House, Swaim, and Pipkin. He believes it's a good idea to provide Recreation Department services to more groups. Krebs wished the group success in raising funds for the skate plaza.

Cronk is very supportive and appreciates the community coming together and making the time to create the project.

M/s, House/Swaim, to support the staff report.

AYES: Brasler, Cronk, House, Krebs, Pipkin, Swaim

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Sisich

Brasler reminded all present that there is a 10-day appeal period.

ITEMS FROM PLANNING COMMISSION

Krebs is interested in scheduling time for the Planning Commission to tour completed projects approved in the past. He would like to see how they have turned out.

Brasler suggested that time be scheduled in the summer during a regularly scheduled Planning Commission when there are not items on the regular agenda.

ADJOURN TO THE MEETING OF APRIL 7, 2014

Brasler adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Harris