



ALAMEDA RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSION MINUTES FOR SPECIAL MEETING

DATE: Thursday, May 25, 2023
TIME: 7:00 p.m. Called to Order
PLACE: City Hall Council Chambers

A video recording of the meeting may be viewed at <https://alameda.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>
The following are action minutes in keeping with the Sunshine Ordinance 2-91.17.

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Navarro, Vice Chair Alexander, Commissioner Robbins, and Commissioner Jones.
Staff: Alameda Recreation and Park Department (ARPD) Acting Director David Leimsieder and Matt Nowlen, Acting Recreation Services Manager

2. NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

- Speaker Joe Strack, Owner/Operator of Stacked Adventures: Spoke in support of the Urban Campground as it would be a great and unique opportunity for the Bay Area, a valuable asset to the City of Alameda and encouraged the Commission to put the item on the agenda for a future meeting.

3. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Acting Director David Leimsieder gave the Director report.

4. COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION

- Commissioner Robbins: Played tennis at Krusi Park and Washington Park tennis courts. Confused why we still don't have an online tennis reservation system on the website. Spent time at Linear Park as has a passion about doing something in the park in the coming years. Enjoyed watching the soccer games at Ritler Park.
- Commissioner Jones: Attended Alameda Sail Center BBQ event at the Encinal Boat Ramp which was well attended and informative. They offer sailing lessons for all ages and put on a nice event. The instructors talked about the services they offer.
- Vice Chair Alexander: Nice to see the parks being utilized. Drives by Tillman Park and there is always a soccer or lacrosse game going on; Krusi Park is always full, the girls are playing softball there and Ritler Park has 3-4 soccer games at one time plus the baseball games going on. Attended Krusi meeting regarding Pickleball with the neighbors to listen to their concerns. Went to Lincoln Park to observe and listen to the Pickleball noise level and revisited other possible sites. Went to Chochenyo Park and it was nice to see the kids and parents using the playground that we worked so hard to put there. Attended the Friends of the Park event Monday. Encouraged everyone to look up the Friends of the Park online to see the good work they do.
- Chair Navarro: Will be her last meeting after 4 years on the Commission. Joined the Commission when she was new to Alameda and wanted to see about getting a play space at Chochenyo Park. Has loved being able to participate in helping define the way the parks department has gone. Happy to see us running at 110%. Enjoyed ARPD Programs and events and is enrolling

her kids in the various camps. Proud that we have such an amazing park department and a strong commission. Encouraged to keep pushing for more funding for future projects.

5. MINUTES

Commissioner Robbins moved to accept the minutes of April 13, 2023 Regular Meeting as presented. M/S Commissioner Robbins / Vice Chair Alexander. All present in favor with 4 ayes via roll call vote.

6. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

6-A Request for Recreation and Park Commission Recommendation that McKinley Park Playground repairs and replacement be prioritized and for staff to move forward with implementing this replacement project.

Acting Director David Leimsieder gave the presentation which included background, 4 diagrams of playground structure options, overall response from families, fiscal impact, alternative considerations and staff recommendation. Option A was the overall preferred playground by parents and children.

Public Comments – none

Commissioner Comments

- Commissioner Robbins: Was there any cost recovery from the insurance available because of the fallen tree? Answer by Acting Recreation Services Manager Matt Nowlen: Unfortunately no; Lincoln Park also did not qualify for any insurance funding as it did not meet the criteria. Likes Option A the best and would like to get the playground completed as soon as possible.
- Commissioner Jones: No comment
- Vice Chair Alexander: Would like to see the McKinley Park Playground move forward as quickly and efficiently as possible to get the playground replaced. How long did it take to complete the Lincoln Park playground? Answer by Acting Recreation Services Manager Matt Nowlen: 6 to 8 months.
- Chair Navarro: Happy with whatever the public chooses and agrees we should move forward as soon as possible. Is the Tiny Tot play area and program still in service? Answer by Acting Recreation Services Manager Matt Nowlen: The 2 year old to 5 year old playground is still standing and will remain in service.

6-A Motion

Commissioner Robbins motioned to approve moving forward with the design using option A.

M/S Commissioner Robbins / Vice Chair Alexander
All present in favor with 4 ayes via roll call vote.

6-B Staff Request for Recreation and Park Commission Review and consideration of the Krusi Park Tennis Court Resurfacing Project to be completed without adding Pickleball striping, and request for Recreation and Park Commission Recommendation on other potential Pickleball Venues in Alameda.

Acting Director David Leimsieder: Appreciated the commentary and direction from the Commission last meeting. Gave the presentation which included background, update on community meetings, Pickleball in the Bay Area, (i.e. City of Oakland, City and County of San Francisco, City of Berkeley and U.C. Berkeley Golden Bear Multi-sport Courts), the future Estuary Park Pickleball Courts, potential alternate locations, fiscal impact and staff recommendation.

Public Comments

- Speaker Eddie Metairie, Alameda Pickleball: In favor of adding lines to Krusi Park Tennis courts to make more Pickleball courts. Alameda is in dire need of more Pickleball courts and Krusi courts are perfect temporary solution. Encourages to do a short trial period and find a compromise.
- Speaker Edward Folkman: 10-year-old Pickleball player who is in favor of Pickleball dual use courts for Tennis and Pickleball. "Let's play!"
- Speaker Bradee Evans, Alameda Resident: Advocating to distribute equality for quiet for all. If a few residents with a preference for quiet can bring the threat of a lawsuit that has the power to affect the 15,000 recreation visitors that use the parks then that is terrifying. Please continue to choose fairly. Thanked the Commissioners for all they do.
- Speaker Ann O'Rourke, 79 year old, City of Alameda 42 years: In favor of more Pickleball courts as it provides fun, exercise and socializing to all. Helped her recover from her surgery.
- Speaker Rod Harris: Yes to the Krusi Park Pickleball courts. Lives near a park and has noise sensitivity, however, does not feel the parks should revolve around him because the parks are available for all. ARPD needs parks that belong to everyone. The residents shouldn't be able to veto the Pickleball courts.
- Speaker Andrea Remeta, Alameda Resident 30 years: Plays Pickleball and it helped with pre-diabetes and brought new friends. It is necessary for her health.
- Speaker Ed Downing, Alameda Resident 20 years: Thanked the Commissioners and staff for their service and efforts. Plays Pickleball; it is a tremendous addition to health. Thinks Washington Park is a good alternative. Good to make a move as soon as possible.
- Speaker Barbara Greenstein: Yes to the Krusi Park Pickleball Courts. Plays Pickleball and is a psychologist who treats depression and anxiety. Scientific studies show that Pickleball benefits and improves people's mental health as it is inclusive by nature and brings people together of all ages, diverse backgrounds and skill set through exercise.
- Speaker Marie Pon, Alameda Resident in Krusi Park neighborhood for 50 years: Some neighbors are now bedridden or disabled. Pleased to see people being active but heard the Pickleball players yesterday while home and it was really noisy. Accumulation of sound is no fun. No to Pickleball courts in Krusi Park.
- Speaker Teri Rose, Alameda Tennis Coalition and is a Pickleball player: Pickleball has brought her joy and exercise during a time of loss. There are several articles how playing Pickleball helps with grief and depression. Suggests a task force made up of ARPD, Krusi Neighbors, Tennis and Pickleball Players to test the actual noise levels.
- Zoom Speaker A Valerie: Thanked the Commission and staff for the time and effort put into the issue. Not a resident of Alameda but lives in a city where they just put in full time Pickleball courts and it is very noisy. The noise is constant and disruptive in every room in her house.
- Zoom Speaker Camilla Whyte, Alameda Resident 23 years: Supports the game of Pickleball but not at Krusi Park. She lives 100 feet from the courts and the noise, safety and parking are

issues which impacts the neighbors. Commends ARPD for looking at the noise issue. Tennis is also still a growing sport and once you make the tennis courts multi-use you cannot use the courts for tennis competition. The constant pop from the Pickleball courts makes it impossible to enjoy the backyard.

- Speaker Suzanne Marquis-Lavoie, Alameda Resident for 25 years: In favor of expanding Pickleball courts and adding lines to existing courts as it is a sport for the whole family and improves health. Encouraged to do a trial period to see if there is too much noise and work together to figure it out.
- Speaker Stephanie Lipow: Enjoys playing Pickleball and supports a trial period for Pickleball at Krusi Park. The need is continuing to grow as more people are playing Pickleball. The Parks are for everyone and should not be up to the residents living by the park.
- Speaker TJ Adachi: In favor of Pickleball courts and a trial period at Krusi Park. Played Pickleball at Krusi Park and the Pickleball noise was significantly less than the traffic on Otis, screaming children on the playground, the school alarm, the airplanes above and probably would have been less than softball games if they were playing. The Pickleball Community is willing to offer scheduling and programming solutions to mitigate the noise concerns. Please don't let the lawsuit threat from a few kill play opportunities from hundreds of Alameda Pickleball players.
- Speaker Joseph Marin, Alameda Resident for 43 years: Uses the ARPD services and programs and is impressed with ARPD's ongoing interest for the community needs. Recently started playing Pickleball and really enjoys it and has used the Pickleball courts more than anything else. In favor of more Pickleball courts in Alameda.
- Speaker Barbara Krummel, Alameda Resident 30 years: Plays Pickleball and also lives by the park with many sounds and it would never occur to her to put her personal preference above the needs of the larger community. Yes to Pickleball at Krusi Park.
- Speaker Cheryl Saxton, lifelong Alameda resident: Pickleball has many benefits including exercise and friendship. Often has to play at the courts in Oakland when the Alameda courts are full. It is logical to put lines on the Krusi Park courts.
- Speaker Jasmine Buczeu, Business Owner of All in One Fitness and a Pickleball Coach: Pickleball is good for mental health, community and for people of all ages. She has to go to Montclair to use their courts to teach due to the lack of space in Alameda. Yes, to Krusi Park for a solution as the noise is drowned out by the traffic and is far enough away from the houses.
- Speaker Michelle Pero Igo, homeowner in Alameda: Pickleball is a growing sport and Krusi Park is a good idea; please consider. Hundreds of people are playing Pickleball in Alameda. Please don't let a few people discourage you from putting Pickleball in an already noisy park. Parks make life better.
- Speaker Alain McLaughlin: Thanked staff for their research and service. Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the U.S. as the sport welcomes all ages. Alameda needs more courts and a trial period at Krusi is a good idea. Encouraged to take action sooner than later.
- Speaker Eunice Edwards: Plays Pickleball and it has helped with the stress of being a caretaker. Yes to more Pickleball courts in Alameda spread out through the city.

- Speaker Maria Latorre, Alameda Resident 15 years: Plays Pickleball and has met so many new friends through the Pickleball Community. Presently working on a document regarding Pickleball phenomenon. Encouraged more Pickleball courts in Alameda and to do a test.
- Speaker Barry Ko: Yes to the Krusi Park Pickleball Courts. Pickleball saved his life by lowering his blood pressure and helped with weight loss. Became a Pickleball instructor and now teaches. The fairest solution is a trial period to collect more data for more courts in Krusi Park.
- Speaker Andy Brooks: Lives near Krusi Park and does not want the Pickleball courts at Krusi Park due to the noise. The popping noise creates anxiety. Encourages to seek out other locations.
- Speaker Brian Tremper, Alameda Resident: Pickleball is a great sport that improves mental and physical health. Encourages a trial period.
- Speaker Adriane Tillman, Alameda Resident: Lives on High street and encourages new Pickleball courts to be placed at Washington Park or Franklin Park not Krusi Park. The Pickleball noise is a sharper popping noise than the noise of children playing.
- Speaker Drew Higginson: Lives by Krusi Park and is against Pickleball Courts at Krusi Park due to the noise. There is no reason to do a test. Urged the Commission to consider Washington Park instead. His wife has a chronic disease and needs rest and quiet and the Pickleball noise is a devastating noise to neighbors. It is unethical to destroy our entire neighborhood just so Pickleball players don't occasionally have to wait.
- Speaker Rita Song, Alameda Resident and student: Lives next to Krusi Park. Against Pickleball courts at Krusi Park due to the loud popping noise as it is difficult to concentrate, study and work from home.
- Speaker Marianne McNair, lifetime Alameda Resident: Pickleball helped her mental health and is grateful for the Pickleball Community as her son was murdered and playing Pickleball has helped. We need more Pickleball courts due to the demand. A trial period at Krusi Park is a good solution.
- Speaker Gary Tillman: Thanked the Commission for their work. No to Pickleball courts at Krusi Park or a trial period. Pickleball would add a significant amount of additional noise which is an issue for the neighbors. Nine cities have already banned or moved Pickleball Courts because of the noise.
- Speaker Teri Rose, Alameda Resident 38 years: Pickleball Player in favor of a trial period at Krusi Park. Pickleball Community is always there for each other. Saying no is saying no to what the parks stand for. Give us a chance.

Commissioner Comments

- Commissioner Robbins: There were numerous lawsuits around the country with baseball when aluminum bats were introduced and the same with bounce houses generators, boom boxes, playgrounds and softball noises and 30 years later they are still happening. The Pickleball Community worked with Lincoln Park residents. Reconsider moving forward with a trial period working with the neighbors at Krusi and Washington Parks as the need for more Pickleball courts is now. Recommended that we move forward with a trial period at Krusi Park to resurface the courts for multi-use for a trial period while working with the residents and put Washington Park back on the table.
- Commissioner Jones: Championed for Girls' Softball at Krusi Park 20 years ago and neighbors, supporters, ARPD Directors and Commissioners all worked together to make it happen. We can

all come to a solution together. Supports a trial period with complete transparency with neighbors, Commissioners and ARPD Pickleball and tennis players. Need parameters of trial period length and times.

- Vice Chair Alexander: Thanked staff for setting up the meetings with the Pickleball Community and neighbors. Other options she thought of are the old soccer field at Alameda Point, the area by Seaplane Lagoon or work with AUSD and Encinal HS to see if the tennis court could be available for Pickleball on the weekends and when school is not in session. Asked if the City of Alameda came to an agreement with the College of Alameda (COA) regarding the tennis courts at the college, would COA be partners in the upkeep? Answer by Acting Director David Leimsieder: Yes too far ahead as the first question would need to be is COA open to the idea. Vice Chair Alexander inquired: When did Pickleball start at Lincoln Park? Answer by Acting Recreation Services Manager Matt Nowlen: 2017. Vice Chair Alexander inquired: When did Pickleball and Tennis come to the Commission with the idea of Pickleball courts striping? Answer by Acting Recreation Services Manager Matt Nowlen: 12 to 15 months ago, the Commission voted no due to the noise. Vice Chair Alexander inquired: If we revisited Pickleball courts at Washington Park how soon could the Pickleball courts happen? Answer by David Leimsieder, Acting Director: It could bump other projects and prioritize the project. Would like to have a short trial period and have 1 -2 Commissioners attend any meetings with Pickleball Community and ARPD and also look at what the times Pickleball is allowed to be played.
- Chair Navarro: When was the last time the Leydecker and Longfellow tennis courts were resurfaced? Answer by Acting Recreation Services Manager Matt Nowlen: Longfellow was done 3 years ago due to vandalism and Leydecker was not recommended to be resurfaced due to it being in good shape with a floating surface but is not necessarily preferred to tennis players due to it being squishy. People who come to the meetings are passionate about their cause, it has been an ongoing situation with the need for more Pickleball and Tennis courts. More Pickleball courts through compromise; a trial period at Krusi, Washington and Leydecker Parks with measurable results would be a good idea to make permanent decisions.

6-B Motion

Chair Navarro motioned that the Commission approves the staff request moving forward with the Krusi Park tennis court resurfacing project currently without Pickleball striping and also request that staff look at other potential Pickleball venues.

M/S Chair Navarro / Vice Chair Alexander
All present in favor with 4 ayes via roll call vote.

Vice Chair Alexander motioned that while the Recreation and Park Department is working to get that project completed, we have a trial period for Pickleball at Krusi Park no longer than 3 months provided that the community neighbors have a chance to meet with the Pickleball community and include one of us in that meeting so we can understand and set some perimeters and that those conversations are in continuum.

M/S Vice Chair Alexander / Commissioner Robbins
All present in favor with 4 ayes via roll call vote.

7. NEXT MEETING

7-A Chair Navarro motioned to cancel the June 8, 2023.

M/S Chair Navarro / Commissioner Robbins

All present in favor with 4 ayes via roll call vote.

- Next meeting is July 13, 2023

7-B Possible Agenda Items for the Next Meeting:

- Report on other Pickleball venues
- Tilden Dog Park Design
- Estuary Park Phase 2
- Presentation Public Arts Master Plan
- Nominate Chair and Vice-Chair

8. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Alexander thanked and commended Chair Navarro for her years of service and said it was a joy to work with her and she will be missed. Commissioner Robbins and Jones seconded the sentiment.

Chair Navarro adjourned the meeting at 10:01 PM.