

City of Santa Rosa  
Board of Community Services Meeting  
Minutes – March 5, 2008

JOINT STUDY SESSION – 6:30 P.M.

The Board held a joint study session with the Planning Commission to discuss the proposed Business and Strategic Action Plan. Public comments and concerns were also entertained.

REGULAR MEETING

1. Call to Order  
The meeting was called to order at 8:23 p.m. by Chairperson Lawson at the Finley Community Center in Santa Rosa, California.
2. Roll Call  
Present: Martell, Schwinn, Bañuelos, Regalia, Lawson, Costa, Richardson, Brown  
Absent: None
3. Public comments on items not on this agenda – None.
4. Approval of Minutes  
Schwinn made a motion to approve the minutes of January 23, 2008, which was seconded by Martell. Vote to approve was unanimous.
5. Approval of Agenda  
Regalia made a motion to approve the agenda, which was seconded by Schwinn. Vote to approve was unanimous.
6. Scheduled Items
  - 6.1 Draft Recreation and Parks Business and Strategic Action Plan  
Richardson solicited comments, questions and direction from the Board in regard to the Business and Strategic Action Plan (BSAP). This item will appear again on the agenda at the March 26<sup>th</sup> Board meeting and it is hoped that the Board could take action on the plan at that time. Council could adopt the BSAP later this spring which would result in the need to amend the General Plan.

Richardson noted the Board of Community Services is an advisory board to the City Council and that each member is appointed by a Council person. Board members live in various City quadrants and serve voluntarily because of their concern for parks and recreation.

Board comments and concerns regarding the BSAP included: appreciation for additional time to be better informed and to consider possible funding mechanisms; need to include county open space on city maps and the need to be consistent in the designation of the quadrants; need for citizen involvement to continue; requested that Board members receive copies of Appendix E in the General Plan Amendment after revisions are made; clarification regarding Goal 3 and Measure O programs the department is taking over or whether it refers to programs the department is already supporting; and whether Measure O money can be used to increase maintenance staff in parks to increase public safety.

Richardson noted Goal 3 refers to programs our department already has in place and that staff will be using a benchmarking process in regard to our current recreation programs. He also noted the City is

ineligible to receive a grant from Measure O funding and the need to form partnerships with non-profit organizations to provide certain services or training to augment our maintenance services.

Other comments included the need to be more overt with ADA language and map symbols. It was noted that specific ADA language will be added to the Business and Strategic Action Plan. Bañuelos expressed a concern regarding the removal of language in the General Plan Amendment in regard to a commitment to the Southwest area and the inclusion of less specific wording; Schwinn expressed support for bringing programs to various centers, especially low-income areas and to at-risk youth but is concerned there be no subtle movement away from addressing young children in favor of teens. Regalia concurred that there is a different connotation when the word “children” is used rather than “youth”. Richardson later noted that the word “children” remains in the PSFA-13 section of the General Plan Amendment.

Schwinn noted the possibility of partnering with homeowner associations to maintain new development to help address our maintenance shortfall. Richardson responded this idea has been considered and is dependent upon the developer agreeing to set up that type of program. He also noted a special tax district may also be required. Lawson noted a homeowner’s association was once used as a mechanism for maintenance of back-on landscaping. After 3 years the homeowner association was disbanded and the maintenance fell to the City. It has not been a successful template. Schwinn also questioned whether the setting aside of open space in the southwest quadrant in lieu of larger parks is being accomplished with the changes that have been made. Richardson noted open space has been included in the definition of every park classification. This is an opportunity to partner with the Open Space District, Laguna Foundation and/or the County and City Parks Departments to apply to the Open Space District to acquire the property and set it aside for open space. Schwinn also questioned whether a basketball court could be built on contaminated land. No building can take place until the land is at a non-detect level. Schwinn also noted the need for a scale to be included on the maps.

Brown questioned whether Southwest Community Park would be considered as the signature feature in the southwest quadrant and whether the area is large enough to comfortably fit all the amenities. Richardson noted the design team did an analysis on the property which showed room for all proposed features. Brown also questioned the rigidity of the ½ and ¼ mile designations, specifically the area between Calistoga Road and Oakmont. These designations are guidelines to reach the population basis. Richardson noted the bike trails that parallel Highway 12, a pocket park near the new grocery complex and Annadel State Park that link Oakmont and Santa Rosa are the connectivity pieces that are already in place.

Lawson commented on the need to have consistency in the quadrant designations, that the distance definition is a little too rigid and that purpose was connectivity, and not something specific. He would also like to see funding addressed in the BSAP and the need to educate the public as to where the current park funding goes as allowed by the Quimby Act. He noted that as long as 1/3 of park funding goes to existing facilities it cannot be considered a sustainable funding source, especially given the current market conditions. There is a need to find a more sustainable source so that parks can be constructed in southwest Santa Rosa. He also requested data concerning the current park standard of 3.5 acres per thousand and inquired as to the impact on acreage if the quadrants are redefined to align with Community Development.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Jessica Diaz, 859 St Helena Avenue: Noted that the City's goals are close to what residents desire and a need to tweak some of the language in the plan to address their concerns. The phrase, "Pocket Parks" should be called out in Chapter 3, Section 1, to show that this designation and concept for small areas is still part of the City's planning process. In regard to county islands, the City needs to go overboard in being very implicit in the BSAP to show that the City is planning for projected build out, future annexation and underserved areas. She would like to see the words "underserved", "density" and "projected build out" on the first page of chapter three. She thanked everyone for all of their efforts on this process.

Theresa Champagne: Thanked the Board for their responsiveness and noted the need to tweak some of the language in the plan. She inquired as to whether funding is being allocated for acquisition of park land in southwest Santa Rosa. She liked the idea of connectivity but is concerned that some of the connection areas will be counted as overall acreage instead of as a connection link. She also inquired if Airfield Park could be used as open space which would require very little maintenance.

Richardson noted that park developer fees must be used for programmable space, not creek setbacks or pathways. He also referred her to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan which is being developed and will help articulate where those connective points will be.

Makeba Rosas: Noted the importance of parks and the opportunity parks give her to relax and socialize. She would like to have more parks located in southwest Santa Rosa.

David Rosas, 1411 West Avenue: Read a letter from the Southwest Community Health Center which noted the need for parks in the southwest area and the benefits to the quality of life for residents in that area as well as the City of Santa Rosa. He also questioned whether the BSAP would supersede other plans. He would also like to see the number of acres in the plan for parks in the southwest quadrant and a break down in each quadrant regarding park maintenance.

Richardson note adoption of the BSAP by Council would require an amendment to the General Plan and that the General Plan takes precedence over the other plans.

Steven Greenberg, 3475 Holland Drive: Noted that the community would like small stopping places along the Rodota Trail. He encouraged the Board to put the dots back on the map and call them plazas. The community does not want one park with the same acreage.

Victoria Rodriguez, 2236 Jasper Lane: Shared her appreciation for all the comments, noted a problem with the language and that the citizens would be much better in receiving the plan if the language is changed. She would like to make sure that the density is addressed in the plan as well as including the break down of funding with what is available and where additional funding can be found. Recognized the need for maintenance but would like to ensure that parks go to the underserved, especially the children. She questioned whether there is a process in place for proposed plazas or pocket parks.

Dan Hubley, 135 Alma Avenue, Rohnert Park: Noted the interest of the national Boys and Girls Club in the southwest area of Santa Rosa. They foresee various services available to residents in that area and the need to share amenities so that resources go farther. He commended everyone for their efforts.

Magdalena Ridley, 3242 Newman Drive: Feels everything is moving forward and is appreciative of the Bayer Farm collaboration. She noted the 11 neighborhood and 2 community parks earmarked for the southwest area and inquired how the proposed plaza areas will be funded.

Richardson noted the public gathering places and plazas could be funded by park development fees and those fees will be credited against that amenity. Costa noted the importance of the community input at public meetings to request some funding be set aside for plazas.

Eddie Alvarez, 4007 Lancaster Avenue: Questioned whether the vacant Albertson Center on Sebastopol Road has been looked at as a viable alternative.

Bañuelos inquired as to how soon Board comments need to be submitted to staff. Richardson requested remarks and concerns should be sent to staff as soon as possible.

Board members thanked everyone for staying, the need to go forward, and that some tweaking of the plan is needed. Staff frustration at not being able to get things done as quickly as possible was acknowledged as was the fact that this plan is a process and not an event. It was also noted that the plan will continue to be evaluated and there will be future opportunities for change.

7. Written Communications

It was noted that the Senior Newsletter and letters from the Neighborhood Alliance of Santa Rosa and the Accountable Development Coalition had been distributed to Board members.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:48 pm.

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 26, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. at the Finley Community Center in Santa Rosa, California.

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Craig Lawson, Board Chair

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Yvonne Earle, Recording Secretary