

City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department
Open Space Parks Division

Chollas Lake Park Community Recreation Group Regular Meeting

Minutes

December 17, 2024

Meeting Held at:

Teen Challenge Facility
5450 Lea Ave
San Diego, CA 92115
Also via Zoom

Mailing Address is:

9485 Aero Drive
MS 5D
San Diego, CA 92123

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present

Harley Davis (Chair)
Lynn Edwards (Treasurer)
Andy Huelskamp (Vice Chair)
Bettina Rausa (Corresponding Secretary)
Jim Simon
Arlette Bianconi
Larry Isom
Daniele Laman

Members Absent

City Staff Present

Bruce Williams, Council District 4
Najja Lyon, Senior Park Ranger
Lauren Baker, Recreation Center Director II

Guests

Simon Breen
Mr. Breen's coworker
Richard Diaz

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Harley Davis called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Corrections to the Agenda:

- Date of the meeting
- Date of the next regular meeting
- The month of the minutes to be approved
- Action Item #3 and #5 need to be struck
- Swap Action Items #2 and #1
- Add the RCF Budget approval to the Action Items list

MOTION: It was moved/seconded (Andy Huelskamp | Daniele Laman) to approve the agenda as amended.

The motion passed unanimously 7 | 0 | 0

It was moved/seconded (Andy Huelskamp | Daniele Laman) to add the RCF Budget Approval to the Action Items.

The motion passed unanimously 7 | 0 | 0

COMMUNICATIONS

Richard Diaz had wanted to inquire about ownership of a particular parcel in the neighborhood, but had already spoken with Center Director Lauren Baker, who requested that the specific location be marked on a map for clarity.

REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE

COMMUNITY REPORTS

- Chollas Lake Park Corporation
 1. Nothing to report. No meeting.

- Chollas Lake Little League
 1. Daniele Laman reported that Little League finished Fall Ball just before Thanksgiving.
 2. Thanks to a Grounds Maintenance Worker at Colina Del Sol Recreation Center, they now understand their irrigation system much better.
 3. The taller fence they requested seems to be complete; it appears to be eight feet tall.
 4. The west side fence with the green netting needs to be fixed, as the netting is on the wrong side of the fence for the wind that blows there.
 5. They pumped the septic tank, which had not been done for several years.
 6. They tented the snack bar for pest control, which had not been done for decades.
 7. They are moving towards more online registrations.
 8. There are now a lot of off-season scholarships available.
 9. They will be providing documentation for a permit at North Chollas soon.
 10. Addressing Bruce Williams, she asked for assistance requesting that the Police Department communicate with Little League before using their fields for dog training. They would prefer to be able to prepare properly and then inspect afterward.

- R.C. Flyers
 1. The R.C. Flyers reported that members of the Police Department have been coming into their area to train police dogs without notifying them beforehand.
 2. The City brought back the rollers to compact the surface of their new runway, which is still under construction.
 3. They are getting quotes for materials and services to finish the runway project.
 4. They have lost members due to the runway problems.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- Community Parks I and Community Parks II did not meet.

CITY STAFF REPORT

1. Mayor's Office Report – no report
2. San Diego Police – no report
3. Park Ranger
 - a. Chollas Lake Park had quite a few things happen over the last several months or so. The entire team at Chollas have been doing some excellent work.
 - b. Rec Staff Updates:
 - a. Lauren and her staff have been doing some fun and exciting things these last several months.
 - b. Lauren has again successfully run the Summer Camp, Movie Night, and the recently held Halloween party.
 - c. The fishing clinic is doing great, we are fully stocked and have recently replaced the worm farm container.
 - d. The archery program is fully prepared with both left and right-eye-dominant numbered bows in every draw strength. We would like to start “range hours” to allow those with their own archery equipment to use the range with only a Rec Leader as range master; Lauren will do research into the possibility of this idea.
 - e. On 10/28 all the Rec leaders worked as a team to clean out the storage room in the Comfort Station.
 - f. Recreation Leaders are being given opportunities to work directly with Park Rangers to gain expanded experience, which will assist them with their career development plans.
 - g. ACD Erin Holbech has been a great asset to the park and the department; she was on a temporary assignment in the Community Parks I division, and has since accepted a position in that division.
 - c. Ranger Staff Updates
 - a. Park Ranger Gilbert Herrera has been very busy as of late. He has initiated several park improvement projects:
 - i. He had the old and hazardous breezeway inspected and finally removed.
 - ii. He was instrumental in communicating with Andy Field to convey that our park had a problem, to which Andy responded by taking actions to expedite the removal of the old structure and start looking at designs for a replacement.
 - b. Ranger Herrera has been doing a lot of behind the scenes work as well, completing work requests as needed.
 - c. He has also been reaching out to the community and has completed several Scout projects such as the new Gloria's Mesa welcome sign and the recently completed bench project which has given the park four new seating options in various areas in the North Chollas area of the park.

Gilbert worked with the Eagle Scout who designed, built and installed the benches to achieve this project at no cost to the city.

- d. Intern Whitney Haluza has brought many great ideas and projects to the park. She has been involved in more than one trail restoration event where she has been able to reach out to the community and create a volunteer base to assist with these projects and has been successful in completing them.
- e. The nature trail at the lake and the Gloria's Mesa exit trail have both benefitted from these projects.
- f. Staff is currently in between part 1 of a 2 – part restoration by the North Chollas entrance. Ms. Haluza is planning on installing 50 native plants to replace some non-native/invasive plants.
- g. Regarding the Boy Scout bridge to Chollas Lake, it was a Citywide effort. Ranger staff proposed a few locations to choose from that led to some site inspections and ultimately approval of and installation at its current location.
- d. GMW staff was instrumental in completing the hazard tree removals around the lake and later at Hubner Street. GMW Rodney Major has designed an improvement idea for the ADA ramp leading to the walkway. GMWs also provided a new trash can that was chained up at Zena Park for public convenience and theft prevention.
- e. Upcoming events and current projects are:
 - a. I Love A Clean San Diego is hosting clean-up event at the lake on December 5th.
 - b. The Lake staff was even able to help with the cleanup efforts around Mission Bay and The San Diego River Park.
 - c. By donating the old un-seaworthy canoes stored at the lake to Moises Vasquez in the Maintenance Assessment District section, their team was able to make a larger pontoon-style boat for hauling garbage from one of their sites.
 - d. There is now a volunteer opportunity to make further improvements to the pull-up bar feature on the dam.
 - e. Staff will be looking to find some native plant features to accent the new benches at North Chollas.
 - f. Getting a design and approval for the replacement of the old breezeway structure.
 - g. Continuing patrols and graffiti removal at North and South Chollas.
 - h. Keeping up with the electricity project at Chollas Lake.
 - i. A pier replacement quote has been obtained from Blue Water; this purchase will require four additional quotes.

4. Council District 4 Report

- a. The new name for the Jacobs Center is San Ysidro Health Clinic; they hosted a Winter Wonderland event on December 14. Five thousand people attended, the largest they have ever had.
- b. There will be another Dumpster Day in February.

- c. Tiffany Harrison has been promoted and there is a highly qualified new representative in her place.
 - d. Street light service requests in Oak Park will hopefully happen in December.
 - e. The Water Department and the Public Utilities Department are encouraging people to get a discounted rain barrel for the upcoming rainy season. Pre-ordered barrels will be discounted in price.
 - f. The Chollas Operations Yard parking lot repair process is ongoing; project construction is scheduled to start in late January. Construction duration is expected to be eight months. The total cost for the repair is \$10.5M. There is ongoing monitoring of methane levels in the area.
5. District 79 Report
 6. County Supervisor Report
 7. Chollas Lake Center Director Report
 - a. Budget cuts are affecting Chollas Lake, as the Assistant Center Director has transferred to another division, and no permission to fill the vacancy will be given in the foreseeable future. There is not even an option to have anyone fill in temporarily.
 - b. This means that the summer camp for 2025 will be greatly affected. Staff is looking at finding an outside vendor to run a summer camp this year.
 - c. Regular programming is going well. Senior programming needs to be developed at Chollas Lake, such as mindfulness walks.

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Status of new Library/Recreation Center Plans at North Chollas – Andy Huelskamp
 - a. Funding that existed before is still in place, with a deficit of \$9M to complete the project.
 - b. The exact location of the new building is still unclear.
 - c. The plan for the observatory is as of now unfunded.
2. Update on the funding for Chollas Lake projects recently approved by the Parks and Recreation Board as the RPIF Oversight Committee- Daniele Laman
 - a. There have been mandated 20% cuts across the board.
 - b. The storm drain improvement project has been placed on the back burner at this time.
 - c. The funds are being diverted to Southcrest Recreation Center to lower the level of their playing field for flood mitigation along Chollas Creek.
 - d. The pier project should be brought to the Parks Foundation; however, at that cost they may not be able to assist.
3. Carver Elementary Fundraising Activity – presenter not in attendance

ACTION ITEMS

1. Simon Breen “Arts in the Park” grant support request
 - a. The Earth Discovery Institute is a community-based nonprofit serving East County and South Bay

- b. The mission of the Earth Discovery Institute is to inspire stewardship of San Diego’s native environment. They conduct nature-related recreation activities for schools and families.
- c. Parks California is offering a grant called Arts in California Parks. They are looking for organizations like theirs to partner with government agencies. They have already installed a successful project in El Cajon.
- d. At an ecological reserve, they have installed small podiums, each showing a page of a children’s story with environmental themes. They are placed along a loop walking trail, so to finish the story, participants must complete the hike.
- e. Stories are displayed in different languages based on the needs of the community.
- f. They want to install four storybook hikes at Chollas Lake Park, with one story per season. It could possibly go on the Nature Trail, or probably in an area more accessible to more participants of varying abilities. Gloria’s Mesa was suggested as a desirable location.
- g. A nighttime movie in the park may be a good addition at the end of the project.
- h. The deadline for the grant proposal will be in June.

MOTION: It was moved/seconded (Daniele Laman | Larry Isom) to write a letter of support for an installation of four storybook hikes at Chollas Lake Park, with the stipulation that Mr. Breen return in February with more specific details.

The motion passed unanimously 7 | 0 | 0

2. Election for 2025 Board Members

- a. Motion to elect:
 - i. Lynn Edwards for Chair
 - ii. Harley Davis for Vice Chair.
 - iii. Bettina Rausa for Treasurer
 - iv. Andy Huelskamp for Corresponding Secretary

MOTION: It was moved/seconded (Larry Isom | Daniele Laman) to approve the slate as presented.

The motion passed unanimously 7 | 0 | 0

3. Approval of the new Chollas Lake Logo

MOTION: It was moved/seconded (Bettina Rausa | Andy Huelskamp) to adopt the new logo.

The motion did not pass 3 | 4 | 0

4. Approval of the Fiscal Year 2026 Recreation Center Fund Budget

- a. Funds for Summer Camp remain as planned, \$4,000 for five weeks of camp. However, because the Assistant Center Director position is currently vacant, that is no longer a possibility. Staff is looking into having an outside vendor or a group of interns and volunteers to assist.
- b. The five weeks of camp would be during the same fiscal year, but spread between two summers. The first four weeks were anticipated to be after July 1, 2025, and the fifth week would take place the next summer, before June 30 of 2026.

- c. Most programs are the same with the addition of a yet undetermined senior program and a walking meditation and/or fitness class.
- d. If the electricity project moves forward during this fiscal year, the ceramics program will be able to move forward, and after the first year it will be bringing money into the RCF.
- e. Special events are identical to last year's costs except:
 - i. The budget for the fishing derby will be increased to \$2000 from \$1500
 - ii. The Halloween event will go up to \$750
 - iii. Two one-day events that have fees for customers attached, to generate funds for the RCF. One will be Bird Day, as a working title, where crafts and activities would take about 6 hours and center around native birds. The other will be a Fishing Workshop, which would last the same amount of time, and will include intermediate and advanced lessons that exceed the basic information provided at the normal Fishing Clinic. These would be pilot programs to see if they could be a feasible income-generating program template.

MOTION: It was moved/seconded (Daniele Laman | Lynn Edwards) to approve the FY2026 RCF Budget as presented.

The motion passed 7 | 0 | 0

APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 2024 MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: It was moved/seconded (Bettina Rausa | Andy Huelskamp) to approve the minutes with the following corrections:

1. Page 1 under Communications, it should read Zena Canyon.
2. On the same page, it should read "staff will empty the trash can weekly."
3. On page 2 under Park Ranger Report, D, insert a semicolon to correct the run-on sentence.
4. Then under E, it should read "Open Space Pesticide Applicators"
5. On Page 3, remove extra period.
6. On page 4, #2b should read "advised" not "counseled"

MOTION: It was moved/seconded (Lynn Edwards | Andy Huelskamp) to approve the minutes as amended.

The motion passed 7 | 0 | 0

ADJOURNMENT

Next meeting is scheduled for February 25, 2025, at 6:00 pm at Teen Challenge, 5450 Lea Ave, San Diego, CA 92115. The Chollas Lake Park Corporation meeting will take place immediately after the CRG meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Baker, Recreation Center Director II