Commissioner Buell called the meeting of the Recreation and Park Commission to order on April 15, 2010 at 4:06 p.m.

Present
Mark Buell
Tom Harrison
Gloria Bonilla
David Lee
Meagan Levitan
Larry Martin
Michael Sullivan

Commissioner Buell announced the following changes to the agenda: The order of the agenda will be Item 2, Item 4, Item 5, Item 11 the Beach Chalet Soccer Fields, then Item 6 through 10, Item 11A is being taken off the calendar and being put on at a later date and then we’ll hear Items 12 and Item 3 the General Manager’s report will conclude the meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT
Commissioner Buell: The President’s Report. I’m going to first ask that we have a Vice President’s Report and ask Commissioner Harrison to say something.

Commissioner Harrison: Thank you Mr. President. I had the distinct pleasure to attend a small reception for the Clipper Around the World Yacht Race over at the Golden Gate Yacht Club a few days ago. I thought it was outstanding. These young people are great and I just wanted to say thank you to the Yacht Club for hosting such an event. It was a very nice reception to welcome these amazing people and their boats to San Francisco. I want to make a special thanks to Larry White our Harbor Master for finding the places for these boats to tie up and arranging for the Golden Gate Yacht Club to have a welcoming reception into our city. It’s very nice and I like to see this sort of thing. I wish I was young enough to be a participant but I’m not, I can just enjoy looking at that from afar. It’s a wonderful thing and a special thanks to the Yacht Club for holding this small reception for these young and exciting young people, thank you.

Commissioner Buell: Thanks Commissioner. I have two comments to make. One is that on April 3rd Commissioner Lee and myself and the Secretary of the Commission Margaret McArthur were judges at the Spring Extravaganza at Stern Grove and we had to judge 10 different rib preparations, 10 different side dish preparations and 10 different dessert preparations. The three of us each weighed about 10 pounds more than when we started but it was a great event with the Police Department, the Fire Department and the Recreation and Park Department. So I want to congratulate all concerned, it was really a great day and everybody looked like they were having a great time. As a second matter I want to thank Commissioner Harrison for joining me to meet with Jimmy’s Car Picnic and we met out at the site to try to resolve the differences of opinion there and I think Commissioner Harrison did a noble job of explaining the concerns and expressing the point of view. At any rate we hope to have a recommendation back from Jimmy about how he’d like to proceed based on that meeting so thanks Commissioner for your help. With that we have a couple of proclamations.
We have with us today Marcus Young the Commodore of the Yacht Club, Bob Repke Vice Commodore, Ray Thomas Rear Commodore, and Norbert Bajurin Staff Commodore. Now, I just want to say a few words here. These folks did a remarkable job in hosting the America’s Cup winning entry in the Oracle BMW team. My wife thought I was nuts when I got up in the middle of the night to watch these races but I’ll tell you it was a thing to behold and I’d like before I present them with a proclamation from the Recreation and Park Commission I’d just like to say that I think that with the help of every able-bodied sailor we want to bring the America’s Cup to San Francisco and stand ready to help you in any way you can. You’re going to have your work cut out but it should be an enormous event. It would mean more than the Superbowl in terms of economics to the city and it would be a beautiful thing. You wouldn’t have to build a stadium, you’ve got a beautiful bay right there and the stadium is already built. So congratulations to all of you. Let me read a little bit about this proclamation. Founded in 1939, the Golden Gate Yacht Club was first constructed when members built a clubhouse on a barge in the city’s Marina. In 1989 the Loma Prieta Earthquake severely damaged the club. Through the commitment and hard work of its members it has become a premier site which sits on a public jetty with view of the Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz Island. It is with this same tenacity that the club’s racing term BMW Racing brought the prestigious America’s Cup which had been away from the US shores for 15 years to the Golden Gate Yacht Club in San Francisco. This win has thrilled the sailing community throughout the Bay Area and the world and inspired a new generation of sailors. Under Mayor Newsom’s leadership and with strong support from the Board of Supervisors, the city is focused and dedicated to securing a San Francisco venue suitable for hosting the 34th America’s Cup on the San Francisco Bay. The San Francisco Recreation and Park extends its most heartfelt congratulations to the Golden Gate Yacht Club and BMW Oracle Racing on winning the America’s Cup and the honor it has bestowed on San Francisco, congratulations to all.

We have a quarterly employee recognition program, as you know, which we have our fabulous Human Resources Manager Kin Gee here to give us a brief reminder of how our nominees and today’s winners have been chosen.

Phil Ginsburg: Commissioners, it’s now my great honor to continue the recognition portion of the meeting. We have a quarterly employee recognition program, as you know, which we have our fabulous Human Resources Director Kin Gee here to give us a brief reminder of how our nominees and today’s winners have been chosen.

Kin Gee: Good afternoon Commissioners, General Manager Ginsburg. My name is Kin Gee and I am the Human Resources manager for the Recreation and Park Department. I am proud to be here today to introduce and award the recipients of our quarterly employee recognition program. Before introducing the recipients I would like to briefly review the criteria used by the Committee to evaluate the nominees and to select the recipients of the award. It includes an accomplishment and improves procedures, saves time, money, improves customer service, is heroic, it builds community, displays innovation, provides a model for consistent work excellence, shows leadership, is timely or improves moral. Joe Padilla is the recipient of the individual award. Joe started working at the Recreation and Park Paint Shop on May 4, 1998. Joe has successfully shown innovation in juggling his staff and his materials and supplies to ensure that our parks and facilities remain graffiti-free. In calendar year 2009 Joe and his crew responded to 3346 work orders dealing with graffiti alone. Eighty percent of those graffiti hits are responded to within 48 hours which meets the target set by the Mayor’s anti-graffiti task force. Of particular note is that Joe and his crew have been able to rapidly respond to offensive graffiti that had occurred at Glen Park and the Legion of Honor. Upon being notified of the award Joel said the award is reflective of the hard work of the staff and that he’s...
honored to lead a very dedicated crew of eight painters. It is for those reasons that the Recreation and Park Employee Recognition Committee selection Joe Padilla as the individual winner of this quarter.

And for the group award the recipients are Milo Linaman and Mark Tilley. Milo started with the Department on April 19th, 2008, while Mark began on July 3rd, 2006. Both have exclusively worked in Neighborhood Services Area Two, North Beach Complex. These two employees are deserving of the workgroup award due to their successful renovation of the first phase of Pioneer Park located at Coit Tower. Prior to this the community and Recreation and Park staff had been struggling to address the tree problem which obscured the view of the city from Coit Tower for many years without consensus. However, with the help of the Pioneer Park groups sponsored design these gardeners were able to create a native plant oriented area that allows for tourists to enjoy the spectacular view of the city. In order to achieve that goal Milo and Mark work with several groups of volunteers on almost a weekly basis in the view restoration project. The volunteers and non-profit groups includes folks from the Pioneer Park project, Hands on Bay Area, One Brick, and corporate groups such as PG&E and Levi Strauss. The work definitely show innovation, community building, and is a model for work excellence. It is for these reasons that the Recreation and Park Department employee recognition Committee chose Milo and Mark as the workgroup winner this quarter.

Julie Christensen:  Looks like a busy day, I’ll be brief. Mr. President, Commissioners, my name is Julie Christensen, I’m a resident of North Beach and a 15-year volunteer of the Pioneer Park Project and I just thought it was appropriate to add the thanks and congratulations of the community to those of the Commission for Milo and Mark, all of our hard effort would be meaningless without the effort of field staff. The army marches on its stomach, our parks function on the strength of the field staff. I’ll add Joe who often swoops in to save us from the perils of graffiti and Maggie Cleveland, Mark and Milo’s supervisor, who not only nominated them but promotes them on a daily basis. So we’re very grateful. If the world was a just place there would be twice as many people lined up to thank them as they're waiting out there to talk about soccer fields. But thank you for acknowledging them and know that we appreciate them very much. Thank you.

Ernestine Weiss:  Good afternoon. I was not able to hear the President’s Report so I don’t know what the content was so I find it hard to make comment on it.

Commissioner Buell:  It was a good report Ernestine.

Ernestine Weiss:  I’m sure it was so I’ll have to wait for comment for other things.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Suzanne Dumont:  Good afternoon. Suzanne Dumont from the Save the Stow Lake Boathouse Coalition. I’ll try to keep this brief. I’m representing over 1500 person who have signed our petition in support of the current tenant and preservation of the existing character at the Stow Lake concession. So here’s the official copy that I’ll be turning into Margaret of our signatures to date, but they keep pouring in. We also got a letter this week of support from the Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council and I’ll give you a copy of that as well. Viewers in the television world can add their signatures by Googling Save Stow Lake. We know many of you treasure the boathouse and we ask you to take a very careful look at what Mr. Ginsburg and his staff are doing right now behind closed doors with the RFQ. At the 12-17-09 Commission meeting on video record Mr. Ginsburg assured all of us including yourselves that there would be ample opportunity for public input, that he would “weave in the community dialog” along the way. That there would be “lots of community input on the selection panel”. That has not occurred and it needs to be corrected immediately. Jeffrey Bowling:  Hi, my name is Jeffrey Bowling. I am a resident of Crocker-Amazon and a member of the San Francisco Disc Golf Club. I just wanted to give the Commission an update. We’re moving with the disc golf course in McLaren Park which some of you are aware of. I just want to let you guys know that we’ve done a few activities. We’ve done an open house in Golden Gate Park to give some of the residents of McLaren Park and the neighborhood an idea of what the disk golf course is like. This past weekend we did a walkthrough of the proposed layout of McLaren Park in McLaren Park and this coming Tuesday we’re doing a community meeting. These are all organized with Recreation and Park Department who’s been extremely helpful. So I just wanted to give you guys an update or what’s going on. I’d love to say that all of the feedback has been positive, I can’t say that, but there’s been a lot of positive feedback as well as a few negative feedback. But I just kind of wanted to give you guys an update and I know what it’s like to be part of a group that wants to speak so I’ll let them speak. Becky Terrill:  Hi, my name is Becky Terrill, I’m the Secretary of the San Francisco Disk
Golf Club. I’m here to represent the over 200 members that are not present today to say that we’re really happy and pleased to be working with the Parks Department on the project at McLaren Park. We’ve had a lot of support from members outside of our community, meaning the disk golf community, a lot of public support from San Francisco residents and McLaren Park neighbors. So thank you for hearing us and thank you for your support. **Meredith Thomas:** Good afternoon Commissioners, Meredith Thomas with Neighborhood Parks Council. I’m holding in my hands the 2010 Playground Report Card, all of you are going to be getting copies very soon, which we released jointly with the Department last week at McLaren Park at our Annual Playday Event and I just wanted to share the good news that we’ve made a lot of progress since we did an assessment of all our city’s playgrounds two years ago and that the average grade for playgrounds in San Francisco in now a B. We have more work to do, we have about 16 sites that still qualify as failing, D or F, and certainly the Cs need to be buffed and polished and painted and kept safe for our kids but I think finally we’re seeing the results of the 2000 bond investment and shortly the 2008 bond investment. And to the extent that we can keep working with the Department to make it easier and easier for community groups to step to the table to make improvements through volunteer workdays and sweat equity and donations of private funding where city funding is not available, we’ll get that list even shorter than 16. So I’m really pleased with the progress we’ve made and I want to thank the Department for their partnership on the project. **Manual Flores:** Thank you, President Buell, General Manager Phil Ginsburg, fellow Commissioners. My name is Manual Flores, I represent the Carpenter’s Local 22, I come before you today to thank you. Last month there was a hearing, a joint session with the Planning Commission and your board on the controversy of 555 Washington Street—we’re not out of the woods yet, obviously there’s an appeals, we don’t even know if it’s going to get built, but the point of the matter is you stood up for us and stood for Labor and it was great. I just come before you to say thank you, thank you very much and bless you. **Ernestine Weiss:** Good afternoon everybody. I want to call your attention at this time to the Sue Bierman Park question and the minutes of the meeting of June 21st, 2007, it stated the Recreation and Park Commission passed Resolution Number 0609-010 that supported the Board of Supervisors’ Ordinance introduced by Supervisor Ammiano to rename the area now known as Ferry Park to Sue Bierman Park. Therefore if they supported the ordinance that had failed at the Board of Supervisors then you should repeal your resolutions, two of them, immediately, because they’re in direct conflict with this whole thing. So that’s another thing. Excise the big lie and repeal the resolutions. It has done a lot of collateral damage to Peter Pan Event, the transfer of Ferry Park renaming a little slice of land when Ferry Park was originally transferred. It’s wrongly named. I only get one minute? **Secretary McArthur:** One minute today.

**Commissioner Buell:** I get the gist, thank you. I understand what you’re saying.

**Louis Dillon:** Good afternoon Commissioners. I would like two minutes rather than one. But to begin with, whereas Golden Gate Park is the cultural, recreational, and environmental heart of San Francisco and whereas Golden Gate Park is a world renowned resource for the city and county of San Francisco’s residents and visitors to the park, whereas Golden Gate Park stables play an integral role in the history of the park and the stables were built in 1870 by William Hammond Hall, the original designer of Golden Gate Park and the first superintendent of Golden Gate Park, and whereas Golden Gate Park stables are today used by youth, adults, and seniors from San Francisco and throughout the Bay Area as a riding academy and a boarding facility and as a recreational facility. What’s going on here? It doesn’t seem like there’s much movement. As a city attorney and General Manager I’d like to see some more progress, thank you.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Meredith Thomas:** Commissioners, Meredith Thomas. We’re so excited that you’re going to accept the gift at Dolores Park Playground and we’re going to have a world-class Playground in Dolores Park, yay!

On motion by **Commissioner Levitan** and duly seconded, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

**RES. NO. 1004-007**

RESOLVED, That this Commission does approve an award of contract to Otis Elevator Company for the Coit Tower Elevator Modernization project in the amount of $169,000.00.

**RES. NO. 1004-008**

RESOLVED, That this Commission does: 1) recommend to the Board of Supervisors that they accept and expend a gift of cash and in-kind services with a value not less than $1,500,000 from the Friends of Dolores Park Playground and the Mercer Fund, 2) approve the naming of the playground at Mission Dolores Park after San Francisco
philanthropist Helen Diller, and 3) approve a donor recognition program for the Mission Dolores Park renovation project.

RES. NO. 1004-009

RESOLVED, That this Commission does approve resolutions to apply for, accept and expend Urban Greening for Sustainable Communities Program Grants for the Boeddeker Park Renovation Project and Cayuga Clubhouse and Playground Renovation Project.

GOLDEN GATE PARK BEACH CHALET SOCCER FIELDS

Phil Ginsburg: Commissioners. You are often asked to grapple with problems, problems such as those created by our chronic shortage of playfields and the serious challenges we have in providing sports facilities for youth and adult athletic leagues, school teams and physical education classes, and informal neighborhood play. Indeed, in 2004 an independent study found San Francisco short by 35 soccer fields and 30 baseball fields. Problems such as those created by our lack of funding to maintain and repair our aging and sometimes decrepit facilities. Indeed, as you know this Department has $1.7 billion in unmet capital needs and we are nearly 200 gardeners short of what our vast acreage deserves.

So today I’m so pleased to bring you not another problem but a solution. Today we’re asking you to approve the conceptual improvement plan for athletic fields at the Beach Chalet facility at Golden Gate Park. These grass fields are heavily used but in extremely poor condition and are closed for rest and re-growth every Monday and for four months each year. While the site is just seven acres of Golden Gate Park’s 1017 acres, these fields provide a critical playspace for our city’s children. By renovating these fields with synthetic turf and lights more than 9,000 hours of new playtime will be created and use of the fields will triple. At the same time the renovation will save nearly six million gallons of water each year eliminating the need for herbicides and preventing injuries on the fields abundant gopher holes.

We will be renovating these fields not with General Fund dollars but with a $5 million gift from the City Fields Foundation and with $7.5 million in voter approved bond funding by San Franciscans who well understand the importance of our objectives. The renovation will rehabilitate the restrooms and make the site much more family friendly. Doors will be put on the bathroom stalls, bike parking and drinking fountains will be installed and a modest play structure is being built for kids.

For the past year we’ve worked with the community listening to neighbors and athletes, parents and kids, to come up with a design that balances the needs for more and safer playtime on the fields with their location in our beloved Golden Gate Park. As you will hear in a minute the thoughtful and careful design of this project is fully consistent with the letter and spirit of Golden Gate Park’s master plan and honors its history, its beauty and recreational importance. The fields will have no loudspeakers or flashing scoreboards, the field lights are actually 10 to 20 feet shorter than standard so they’re screened from surrounding neighborhoods. A four foot fence will replace the existing and generally locked 8 foot fence currently surrounding the fields.

The Beach Chalet athletic fields have been used for sports for more than 75 years and are one of the primary sports fields for San Francisco’s kids. We should do all we can to get more kids playing in our parks and this is another step in the right direction. Before turning our presentation over to Dan Mauer, the Department’s project manager and Patrick Hannon from the City Fields Foundation, on behalf of the Mayor I want to extend my profound thanks to all of the city staff that has worked on this project. I also want to thank the entire City Fields team led by Susan Hirsch for their competence, determination, and partnership. And of course our profound gratitude is owed to Bill, Bob, and John Fisher and the 60 other philanthropic contributors to this project for their vision and generosity. I’d now like to turn it over to Dan and Patrick who are going to make a brief presentation.

Patrick Hannon: Thank you Commissioners and thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. We’re going to go through a little background about the program and then we’ll move into the actual project details. San Francisco faces a chronic shortage of athletic fields. As Phil mentioned, you’re more than two dozen fields short for soccer and about 30 fields short for baseball and softball. The greatest shortfall falls after school. More than 4,000 kids take to the fields to play ball for a variety of activities.

Our partnership with Recreation and Park was established in 2006 with the goal of addressing this chronic shortage of athletic fields and to help the city equitably provide playfields through your permits and reservations office. We
worked with you for about a year and a half to reorganize your permits and reservations office and during that time and since we've done a number of field renovations. Our program as Phil mentioned installs synthetic turf and lights and so far we've done five field and or light renovations.

We get asked why synthetic turf? The main benefit of synthetic turf is that you're able to increase play capacity and the amount of play on a field by a dramatic amount, by about up to double to triple per field. There’s no rain closures. The fields never need to be rested for regrowth and the fields can be used year around every day for extended periods of time. As Phil mentioned, they’re also safer, more consistent level playing fields. You save about a million and a half per full sized athletic field. It reduces maintenance, it eliminates the needs for herbicides and here in San Francisco we’re gone through a thorough vetting process both with the synthetic playfields task force as well as city Departments have reviewed synthetic turf and the task force actually ultimately resulted in stringent purchasing standards that were developed with the Department of the environment and Recreation and Park for all synthetic turf installations on city and county property.

With that I’d like to invite up Dr. Chris Geiger from the Department of the Environment who participated in not only the initial review of synthetic turf for the Department of the Environment but the development of the standards as well a review to make sure the standards were being met for the most recent project that was bid at Kimball Playground.

**Chris Geiger:** Good afternoon Commissioners. So we first got involved in the whole topic of artificial turf in 2004 before all of this started out of just plain interest in what the impacts are on the environment and on human health. We commissioned our own studies on it. We were mostly interested in flame retardants actually which is a very big concern of ours, it’s a hazardous product, it accumulates in the food chain. Luckily, we found none. We found a few other concerns, one of them is lead, that we didn’t expect to find. And luckily we also found that is a problem that’s easily solved. We can solve it by not buying anything with lead in it and the manufacturers have since then solved it by stopping production of products with lead in them.

So there are impacts that depend on how the artificial turf is used, climate change impacts, depend an awful lot on things like for example how often people are driving over the bridge to play games in Marin County instead of staying in the city or how much water is being saved. So there are multiple factors to consider when you’re talking about environmental impact. But the long and the short of it is we could not find any reason why there should be a moratorium on the use of this in the city during our participation in the synthetic playfields task force which I think was a pretty careful process. It became pretty clear that the public health benefits to be gained from these were something that really had to be considered right alongside any potential risks and I think the overall—to summarize the conclusion of that task force we should not have a moratorium on it. We should think carefully and siding it. We should not have it in places that are going to be flooded or we should make sure that there is good drainage installed, a few things like that—right?

So we’ve been working with Recreation and Park very closely since then as Patrick mentioned in developing some very stringent purchasing standards to make sure that none of the heavy metals are in the products we buy and we plan to continue supporting them in the purchasing process.

**Patrick Hannon:** We’ll just run you through a couple of the projects that have already been completed. The first two projects we did were in 2006 at Garfield Square and Silver Terrace—profound changes at both those sites. In 2007 we added lights to one of the city’s existing turf fields at Franklin Square. In 2008 we renovated South Sunset and Crocker-Amazon, both of those sites have been tremendously popular and tremendously successful.

Currently, Kimball Playground in the Western Addition is under construction and it will be finished later on this summer and we hope that you’ll come to the big ribbon cutting neighborhood block party that will happen.

So why Beach Chalet? Beach Chalet is one of three primary ground sports athletic facilities in San Francisco. The other two being the Polo Fields and Crocker-Amazon. During fall more than 1500 kids and 600 adults play there every single week.
The fields were built more than 75 years ago and have always since that time served as athletic fields for the purpose of sports. One of the fields is always closed as Phil mentioned and the entire facility is actually locked every Monday and for four months out of the year including the second half of the fall youth soccer season.

The Beach Chalet fields are also considered unsafe due to the constant use and abundant gopher population and then the year-around wet conditions at that site and more so even though kids play at this site every single day the facility lacks basic family friendly facilities such as doors on the bathrooms, changing stations. There is not a single place to sit at Beach Chalet, there’s not a bench and not a table even though you have families coming there to watch games every weekend and parents there to pick up kids after practice every single day.

But the primary reason for renovating Beach Chalet is its ability to help us address the ongoing deficit of playfields, its ability to triple the amount of playtime at that site. Currently the site holds about 4,700 hours of play each year. With this renovation we’ll triple that to north of 14,000 hours of playtime annually and this will help us close that deficit in essence of those after school hours of not having enough time. So this facility is kind—it’s the second of the really large athletic facilities in San Francisco and it will go a long way to addressing that challenge.

With that I want to turn it over to Dan who’s going to speak to the project details.

**Dan Mauer:** Good afternoon Commissioners, Dan Mauer with the Capital Division with Recreation and Park and as Patrick has gone through the where we’ve been and how we got to where we’re at today what I was playing to do is go through a couple slides here that articulated what we’re proposing to do at that facility in more detail. The images that are in your packages and the ones that are shown on the screen I appreciate the fact that they’re difficult to read, but bear with me. The soccer fields that we’re renovating out at Beach Chalet there’s currently four soccer fields out there right now and they’re surrounded by an eight foot chain link fence and then outside the chain link fence we have mature vegetation which basically closed in that meadow space. Other elements that are at that particular facility are the restroom building, a parking lot which holds about 50 cars, and some social trails that meander in and out through the site. There’s no real formal pathways to get in for pedestrian access.

This is an aerial view. Essentially, our proposed project the goal of it is to basically renovate within that envelope of trees and vegetation out there. So we’re not necessarily expanding the site, we’re shifting it a bit but we’re not changing the overall footprint of that whole facility. As you can see from the renovation here we’re proposing to replace the natural turf with synthetic turf, install field lights and pathway lights for safe exist and egress into the facility during evening hours. What we’re also proposing to do is take away an old asphalt apron that wraps around the bathrooms and replace it with a formal entry to the space, basically a front door to the play fields. It will allow for ADA access to the restrooms, some seating which is lacking at the moment and basically it’s the front door to this athletic facility. What we’re also proposing to do is provide a small children’s play area. When we went out to the public one of the issues—when we went out to some of the user groups one of the issues is they bring their whole family out there, one child is out there playing and the other child is running in the bushes which is a problem. There’s no extra amenity out there for recreational purposes so they really pushed to have a children’s play area out there and so we’re proposing to do a really modest, naturalistic looking play structure out there for that amenity.

As Patrick mentioned we’re proposing to renovate the restrooms. The restrooms are small, underserviced facility and we’re proposing to renovate it within the same footprint and structure of the existing building out there. We’re also proposing to improve the parking lot. We’re going to expand it by about 25 percent. Right now it’s in very poor condition, the striping is very poor and it’s an irregular shape. What we’re proposing to do is formalize that space a bit and add some additional parking stalls so we can accommodate about 20 additional parking stalls, four ADA parking stalls, a formal drop-off, pickup area. Right now what happens is people drive in off of JFK and cars end up cueing in that space because they don’t know how to circulate in the space so what we’re basically going to do is have a drop off zone so that circulation is appropriate and minimize impact out on JFK Drive. We’re also going to be providing a pedestrian walk way in from JFK Drive. Right now we have pedestrians and vehicles in conflict as they enter that facility, so we’re going to provide a dedicated walkway for pedestrians coming in.

Adjacent to the play area we’re proposing to put some picnic tables and barbecue pits. What we found obviously as Patrick alluded to is that there are no amenities out there for recreation. On weekends we find families coming out, they’re bringing their own barbecue tables, their own canopies and lugging all that stuff into the facility which
makes it difficult for them and really difficult for operation maintenance staff to maintain and clean up after that on Monday when they’re done doing that. So we want to provide an amenity out there that will help encourage that activity and support that activity and allow our maintenance staff a better opportunity to manage it long term.

As part of the project also we’re going to provide some [unintelligible] landscaping where appropriate around the perimeter of the site. We’re also proposing to plant new trees. You’ll hear some comment today about tree removal on this project. Our project is proposing to remove 14 trees, more than half of which are basically dead or dying and on their way out. We’ve had an arborist, hort scientist come out and do a tress assessment and that was their end result. So we’re proposing to remove about 14 trees on the project but with that we’re proposing to install upwards to about 114 trees if we can find space out there. Our goal is to basically strengthen the park’s end, the windbreak, the visual character of the space and so we plan to engage and promote the reforestation of that space out there.

This is our architect generated several renderings which help us better visualize what this is going to look like at the end of construction. What you’re looking at here is an image standing on the field looking east at the restrooms building. What it articulates here is basically the restroom building isn’t changing at all and the plaza area that we’re proposing is actually going to be buffered with landscape around the perimeter of it, softening that look. Off to the left of that image is the pedestrian walkway which cuts through the center of the fields and what that basically does is allows for better access for spectators and players to get out on the field and watch the games, it provided access for folks with disabilities and it provides a cueing space for larger events out there. It’s very subtle, it’s about 18 inches off the ground, it’s part of our program here is we went to our designer and said look you’re doing this project in Golden Gate Park, this isn’t a major sports complex like you’d see at a university. We need to be subtle and go light-handed on this site and you’ll see in some of the design drawings here and in your packages that a lot of the elements we’re proposing here are very subtle in nature, style, color, and form.

As I articulated a little bit more, this is the plaza area coming off the parking lot. Again, a small plaza area which working with the community over the last few months and actually with the Planning Department too we’ve actually reduced and improved our project. The plaza area originally had a trellis structure over it which we removed, the plaza area was reduced by about 12 percent in size. We took the play area and actually pushed it a bit south providing additional landscape zones and buffers so that it was a softer look, provided more landscape areas, took a formal ADA pathway which is required by all of our new capital projects from a formal ramp with handrails and such to a more sinuous pathway that doesn’t require handrails. We’re also doing as I mentioned there’s an eight foot chain link fence around the perimeter and originally we’re going to replace that in kind but after talking with user groups and other folks interested in the project we determined that for the betterment of the park, the visitors, the users and the spectators we’re going to lower the fence from 8 feet down to about 42 inches around most of the perimeter of the park with the exception of providing fencing up behind the goals so that we prevents errant balls from going out into the landscape which was a concern from users out there. Basically what they do now is when they kick balls they go over the fence they don’t go and retrieve them because they’re worried about safety and having children going into the landscape.

The restrooms, we don’t need to go into much more than that. The footprint is staying the same, we’re basically approximately doubling the number of fixtures inside to accommodate the level of play and use. We’re going to make it a more environmentally friendly structure by putting skylights that we’re not using electricity during daytime. They’ll have changing stations, storage for operations staff, it will also have a small concession space for use of the facility so they have a place for sign-ins and a small operation room such as that.

About the parking lot, I alluded to this briefly, again this is just an illustration generated by our architect. It’s a loop design, it’s going to provide better circulation, better lighting, at the facility we’ll accommodate bike parking which it currently doesn’t. We’re proposing to accommodate 60 bike spots throughout the facility. There will be a marked dropoff, pickup area. Again, trying to accommodate 60 additional spots or 20 additional spots. The reason for that too is as part of our program we went out and consulted with a traffic engineer, we wanted to know what our proposed project was going to do to traffic in the area if we renovated and added the capacity that we’re talking about, that Patrick alluded to. And as part of that study we took the evaluation, what they determined at any one time we would see at worst-case scenario about a 33 car increase at any one period which from a practical standpoint if you’re out there driving at an intersection the way they alluded to this is that right now there’s a car that comes every 23 seconds to an intersection. When this facility is upgraded there would be a car coming once every 20 seconds. They basically said it was a negligible impact to the overall project. They also said 33 cars,
we’re trying to accommodate 20 of them in the parking lot, in the reconfigured parking lot and then the others could be utilized out on JFK which is impacted as part of the project—of the Beach Chalet parking lot. Excuse me, the beach parking lot.

Lighting. Lighting was another item. When we started the project we asked our designers to come out and give us the best lighting possible for a facility of this nature and he came back with two top companies with their lighting programs, one of which had very poles similar between a magnitude of 90 and 100 feet. We basically said that’s a non-starter. We thought they poles were going to be too intrusive, too tall above the trees and so we looked at the second company, this is a company Musko. We’ve actually installed their product at several of our other facilities. It’s a nation-wide, recognized, highly recognized company and what we determined is that we were going to go with a lower pole and the second design process was we’re going to have lights around the perimeter of the field and the poles at that point were going to be about 70 or 80 feet tall. And we looked at that, we did some modeling with computer software and we said that’s a non-starter also, we need to come up with a better approach. And a lot of this was in consultation with the public, with some of our stakeholders and partners, we met with GGNRA, we talked to some of their dark skies experts out of Colorado and then working with our design team what we did is we refined this process and we actually put 60 foot tall poles rather than the 100, we actually got them down to 60 feet, we put them on the interior of the field and we went from what were doing is again—not to get too technical—we went from a 50 foot candles which is the level of light that’s down on the field for optimal play for a facility of this nature. We looked at that and said well maybe we can lower that and so what we determined is during routine play throughout the area we were going to basically implement a 30 foot candles, so we’re dropping it down two steps in lighting standard talk, in lingo. So we’re reducing the amount of light coming down on the field and so we think we made great strides from what we originally started with to where we’re at now trying to come to a reasonable compromise, respecting neighbors and uninterested folks but at the same time providing lighting for the facility so its functioning as appropriate and safe for users out there. We’ll also proposing really low-profile lighting fixtures for some of the pathways around the site so that people can exit at the end of the evening and some minimal light fixtures in the parking lot in the plaza area basically for security. I want to emphasize the lighting because it’s an important issue for us and for the users and the public. The system were proposing is like many of the others that we’ve installed recently, it’s on an automatic control system unlike some of our older systems, where we actually have detailed control of when lights are turned on and turned off, which really helps us control and manage that system more effectively. And that’s going to be true for the sports field lighting, the parking lot lights, and pathway lights. So we looked at this thing holistically and the goal at the end of the day is basically to turn all the lights off when the field is done, that would include parking lots and pathway lights. So those wouldn’t be maintained throughout the evening.

Again, this is just another illustration showing the context of the poles within the site and surrounding vegetation. It’s a computer rendering from actual photographs on-site and I think the important thing that this image shows is basically the scale of the poles with respect to some of the tree canopies that exist on the backside of the field and on the far right side with the improvements that we made at the plaza area. The plaza area is no longer visible with the new landscaping, it’s really subdued out there and we’re trying to blend this whole program within the footprint of the west end of Golden Gate Park.

There is one area that in your packages you have several other photos but this is the one I wanted to point out. This is a particular shot that we took from the Great Highway looking back into the facility. This is the only area where you can actually see the light poles and that’s because the vegetation on that west side of that soccer facility is lower than the other three sides and so what we’re illustrating here is that you will see the light poles above the tree canopy from the beach side. The light poles and the globes that you see are actually the lights on the Great Highway, you have to look behind those to see the field lights that are articulated in this computer rendering.

Lastly, in the interest of time, I wanted to comment on the park stewardship. Although the City Fields Foundation has been terrific in helping us renovate these fields they also helped us with our permits and reservations systems and they’ve also engaged with the Parks Trust to do some park stewardship. So, sorry, Neighborhood Parks Council—on a parks stewardship program so that when the facility is renovated we can bring the public in, give them some ownership of these facilities and help maintain. I don’t know how often because I’m not involved in the operations end but I know they have routine cleanup days and community gatherings around our athletic fields that we’ve completed in the past and it’s been a tremendous success.
Lastly, I wanted to talk about an anticipated timeline and schedule. After our presentation here and the outcome we are proposing to go forward with some blueprint developments on the project, send it out through a standard construction bid process, and so the blueprint process will take a few months in the middle of summer here. We’d go out for bid August through October and hopefully be in construction at the end of this year, November, December, with a completion date in September of next year. So that concludes my presentation. I’m happy to answer any questions. I also wanted to let you know that we do have several members in the group that participated to help answer questions. We have Mark Leginsky, our landscape architect; we have Sarah Jones and Tina Tam from the Planning Department; Dana Ketchum with our permits and reservations Department. I’m sure I’m forgetting some other folks. But we have folks here to answer specific questions if you have questions that you may have on this project. And with that what I’d like to do is invite Tina Tam from the Planning Department, she is actually the coordinator with the Historic Commission and she’d like to make some comments based on the request.

**Tina Tam:** Good evening Mr. President and members of the Commission. My name is Tina Tam, I am the Preservation Coordinator for the Planning Department and as the Preservation Coordinator I am also [unintelligible] of the Historic Preservation Commission. I am here today to confirm what I believe you already know which is that the Historic Preservation Commission held a public hearing last week on April the seventh and had on their calendar an informational presentation on the proposed renovation project of the athletic fields in Golden Gate Park. At this hearing Recreation and Park staff presented their project and went over the changes that were made largely in response to the Planning Department’s request to ensure that the project would be compatible with existing cultural and historic landscape of Golden Gate Park.

At this hearing the Historic Preservation Commission had for their review and consideration the historic resource evaluation response. This 10-page document dated April 5th highlights some of the following information. One, that the subject site is located within the National Register of Historic Districts. Two, why the Historic District is so significant. Three, why both the soccer fields and the restroom facilities are contributor features to the Historic District. And four, which is most importantly, how the proposed project is in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior’s standards for treatment of historic properties and the guidelines for rehabilitation cultural landscapes as established by the National Park Services. This document goes through in detail the evaluation of the project and how it does not affect the park’s general character defining features including spatial relationships, topography, circulation, vegetation, natural features, and buildings and structures in any negative or significant way. And I believe you have this Historic Resource Evaluation response as part of your certificate of exemption from environmental review. At the hearing last week before the Historic Preservation Commission the Commission heard over two hours of public testimony both in favor and opposition to the project. Because the Item on the calendar was informational only no action was taken last week. However, the Commission did express at this hearing their concerns for this project, specially the conversion of the soccer fields to artificial turf and the insulation of the 60 foot tall light standards.

They went ahead and scheduled for next week, which is April the 21st, an action item on their calendar so that they can go ahead and issue a formal written comments to both the Planning Department and to you of their concerns of how the proposed project may have an impact on Historic Resources.

I don’t have any further comments but I am available to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

**Commissioner Harrison:** Yeah, I’m very happy to hear that you’re doing a lot more reforesting with the trees that are going to be taken out. When you work with the Department of the Environment you came up with some very strict criteria on purchasing the field, this synthetic turf. On the other hand, and I think you read it in here, was that you also had the manufacturers agreed to take it back at the End of Life for this product?

**Dan Mauer:** Right, and I apologize, when I sat down I forget to recognize Paul LaDesma who’s with the Department of the Environment and he’s the Director for Recycling. I forget his formal title. He was also working with Chris Geiger and the project team to develop this recycling component to our specifications and he’d be happy to come up and speak if necessary. But essentially what we did was we put a specification together that addressed the recycling component of this, it was a big topic that came up when we went through the task force process and what we did is we went through probably an eight-month process interviewing probably about a dozen companies, top leading companies in the synthetic turf industry, and basically drew our line in the sand with regard to heavy metal content in the turf and the recycling components and what we were requiring of the companies is that they not
only produce their product with some post-consumer content material but that when they bring the product to the site that they have the ability and have demonstrated the ability to recycle the turf after it’s gone through its useful life. And there were two companies—I like to say that the two companies that we’ve used in the past in our other fields actually rose to the top on that process. Although it’s a very new industry and the turf companies are new at the recycling component these two turf companies stepped forward and had demonstrated that they had recycled their synthetic fields in the past and were committed to doing it at our facilities. I want to preface the fact that we’re not contractually bound in contract for them to do that but what we want to do is guarantee that they have the ability to do it and that they come back and do it. So we went through a very exhaustive process in that and Paul LaDesma can addressed specific questions about the recycling component and his viewpoint on this.

**Commissioner Buell:** Did they say how they recycled that material?

**Dan Mauer:** Again, a lot of companies are trying a bunch of different material. For the most part—the difficulty is all of the components of the turf can be recycled. The difficulty is separating some of the fibers from the backing and so what we’ve heard today is they’ve turned it into plastic lumber for experience, the Trex material you’re so familiar with, turning it into coasters. One company is making backpacks, tee-shirt. What they like to do is take it and actually reuse. It takes a lot of energy to take material and turn it into something else. What they’ve been doing, one company has been taking it and giving it to someone else to you use in different capacities like for dog runs and other uses. So there’s a whole array of opportunity for reused and or recycling on the product and it’s evolving on a daily basis.

**Commissioner Buell:** What’s the general lifetime of these fields?

**Dan Mauer:** The fields are warranted for eight years in general. One company warrants theirs for 10 years. And the oldest field that we could document through our process was one up in Seattle which went through a life of 14 years. I think they just replaced it last year. Again, it’s a relatively new industry. We’re hoping at the Beach Chalet facility that we’re going to get somewhere in that range, between 10 and 12 years, 14 years, just because of the level of use of soccer. Some of our higher profile facilities they get baseball, football, like Kimball Playground may see a little quicker wear. But with routine care that we’re doing on a routine basis we hope to get the maximum life expectancy out of these fields.

**Commissioner Buell:** That would lead into my last question about this and that is if you have 1500 kids and 600 adults per day did I understand that use the field? Per week. What’s the increased number with the new fields and the lighting?

**Patrick Hannon:** It’s about 9500 hours a year. Yeah, 9500 a year.

**Commissioner Buell:** More?

**Patrick Hannon:** Yeah, that’s tripling north of 14,000 hours at this site. Right now it’s about 4700.

**Commissioner Buell:** So you’d go from 4700 to 14,000?

**Patrick Hannon:** Yes sir.

**Commissioner Buell:** Got it. Thank you.

**Commissioner Sullivan:** Yeah Dan, I wanted to ask about the lighting of the project because some of the concerns from the community are about lighting. There’s not a lot of housing that’s within easy viewing of these lights but there’s some and also I think there’s some concern about migratory birds and that kind of thing. So I wanted to ask, and if you covered this before I arrived I apologize, but the lights are at 60 feet?

**Dan Mauer:** The lights are at 60 feet.

**Commissioner Sullivan:** And is that—did you think about going lower? Is there a reason why 60 is necessary and 50 or a lower level is not appropriate?
Dan Mauer: Yeah, again, Mark Leginsky the architect might be able to address this but for a quick description on why—for optimal lighting design you want the light poles as tall as possible so that the light fixtures are shining directly back down on the field, to minimize the light spill that you have. So are you lower the poles the light fixtures actually have to be tilted up to get the light levels on the field. So the lower the poles go the more they tilt and the more throw or light spill you get out on the perimeter of the field. And so at 60 feet we feel we’ve struck a great compromise there for having safe, accessible play down on the field and minimize the light spill into the environment. To answer that question a little more technical and I know it’s in your packages I’ve provided some lighting calculation numbers and I turn back to the foot candle without getting too off-base but you can see that the calculations really cut off the light spill that you see as part of this project as it’s designed right now, both in a horizontal direction and above the light fixtures themselves.

Commissioner Sullivan: Okay. I think you answered my next question which was are you confident that you designed these lights to produce the minimum spill outside of the play area?

Dan Mauer: Yes

Commissioner Sullivan: Now, the materials also referred to planting trees to try to mitigate the lighting impact. I know a little bit about trees and this is a tough part of the city to have trees grow. So do you have specific ideas about what you could plant there that would grow quickly and grow tall enough to get past 60 feet and survive?

Dan Mauer: No. We haven’t developed a formal landscape plan for the project. From my viewing of the site we’re proposing to do most of the revegetation along the south edge which doesn’t have any trees right now. It has one tree that we’re proposing to remove because of its poor condition. But right now it’s basically [unintelligible]. So we proposing to increase the wind break and the screening along the west—or the south, southeast edge of the facility and on the east side of the parking lot, areas where I think could benefit the most from reforestation. Our urban foresters have already initiated a reforestation plot on the northwest edge of the field and we plan to work with them to potentially continue that along that edge. Trees are difficult to grow, I do appreciate that. Again, we’ve budgeted as I mentioned for about 114 trees of large scale and I know that planting small versus large there’s some different viewpoints on that. I think we’d probably be looking at doing a combination of both, both for an immediate aesthetic issue and for long-term but it will be an ongoing process and we like to work with our stakeholders, our urban forest group and Gloria Cotchkins and her staff to make sure we’re doing it appropriately and in keeping with that end of the park.

Commissioner Sullivan: Right. I would just really encourage you to get scientific about this. It would be a shame to plant trees that didn’t do the job.


Commissioner Buell: I have a question for the City Attorney. What is the legal status of the Historic Preservation Commission vis-à-vis this project? Do they have standing with the approval process?

Virginia Dario Elizondo: They will be making a recommendation. It is my understanding, I spoke to one of the land use attorneys, that it does not impact your decision making process, that you’re free to move forward.

Commissioner Buell: Thank you.

Commissioner Bonilla: Yes, I’d like to hear a little bit more about the parking, what the parking plan would consist of; is there going to be patrol, are there going to be limitations on how long somebody can park there? I’m concerned about cars coming from everywhere and just parking there. So what is your—could you speak a little bit more about the parking plan?

Dan Mauer: Absolutely. Currently the parking lot as I mentioned hosts about 50 stalls depending on how cars park in there because they kind of jam themselves in and make it cumbersome. There’s actually a swing gate at the entrance to the parking lot and that’s controlled by our operations staff, gardening staff, and Park Patrol. And so the goal of this project wouldn’t be to change that protocol. The fortunate thing is that the Park Patrol staff are actually
in Golden Gate Park and will have a closer eye on this facility rather than some of the other facilities like Crocker-Amazon. So we’re fortunate in that nature. But the goal obviously is when the facility is closed that a swing gate or something of similar nature would be utilized to keep cars out of that parking lot during evening hours. In fact, close the parking lot down when the facility is closed.

Commissioner Sullivan: Okay, great. I have one other question. It’s my understanding that you’re going to—the last decision that you’re going to make in terms of this renovation is the material that the—the synthetic material that you’re going to be using, and that you’re going to keep the door open to getting as much input and as much technology in here in terms of getting the best type of material. So is that going to be the case, in fact?

Dan Mauer: Absolutely, as I mentioned we went through a very exhaustive process to get the specification and the turf manufacturer for the Kimball project which is going through the process. We intend to go through that same process with Beach Chalet. We have a comfort level with the materials that we selected at Kimball and we feel comfortable that we can install those same materials at Beach Chalet without any impact. But like you mentioned the industry is changing on the minute and we are trying to stay abreast of all new technologies, new infill materials, new fiber backing products, better recycling opportunities and we’re trying to chase that stuff down on a daily, weekly basis not only with our designer who specializes in synthetic turf projects around the state but we have turf companies calling us weekly, at least myself weekly, about the latest, greatest project and willing to fly me over to go kick a soccer ball or hit a baseball on their latest field. So yes, we are doing our due diligence and also including the Department of the Environment in that review process because it’s important that they buy off on that product at the end of the day.

Commissioner Sullivan: I hope you do that. Thank you.

Mark Welther: Mr. President, Commissioners, my name is Mark Welther and I’m the Executive Director of Golden Gate Audubon. We represent 10,000 members and supporters in the Bay Area and people who are concerned about wildlife and habitat as well as other uses for our parks. And we’re very much in support of soccer and we’re glad to see the kids here and very excited about that but we also think there are other uses of the park that are important to consider and most importantly we believe that this project will have significant impact on the environmental and historical character of the western end of Golden Gate Park and that it violates the San Francisco General Plan and the Golden Gate Park Master Plan by altering the natural character of the west end of the park. We also believe that the categorical exemption is inaccurate and incomplete and under represents the environmental impact of this kind of a project. It constitutes a significant expansion of use by expanding the hours three times—

Commissioner Buell: Please continue. I think given the fact that you represent the Audubon Society and the 10,000 members you get a few more minutes, go ahead.

Mark Welther: Thank you. Tripling the use of the park and also traffic in the area. The increased level of trash and food waste in the area and all of the animals that that attracts, some of whom are predators for the native birds and wildlife, alteration of the grass fields, in other words removing natural grass and replacing it with plastic grass, and the impact of that. The fact that the artificial grass only lasts for 8 to 10 years and then has to be recycled and that the plans for recycling that are unclear at this point and one of the things that we’re most concerned about is the 60 foot light towers and the introduction of light at night in that part of the park. As a natural area the west end of Golden Gate Park is a very significant flyway for birds going up and down the west coast and the introduction of light at that area has a significant environmental impact. And so the main thing that we’re asking for is that—and also there is no real information in the categorical exemption about the impacts of the addition of light in that area of the park. So we believe that it’s important to go through the process of having a full and fair public environmental review of this project. We are not against soccer, we’re not against kids, we just want to make sure that the environmental impact is taking fully into consideration and that the public have a chance to comment on the environmental impacts in a very direct way.

Commissioner Buell: I have one question for you. Has the Audubon Society—is this a site specific objection or have you taken a position on other synthetic fields, other soccer fields in other jurisdictions?

Mark Welther: We haven’t taken a position against artificial turf as a general issue. We have—it is for the purpose of this hearing site specific.
Commissioner Buell: Thank you.

Mark Welther: In other words we want to make sure that environmental review is taken into consideration anytime you tear out a natural environment, replace natural grass with plastic grass, remove mature trees and generally alter the environment significantly.

Commissioner Buell: Thank you.

Cathleen Stern: My name is Cathleen Stern, I’m a 42-year resident of San Francisco, a property owner, living in the outer Richmond. I play tennis, bicycle, and walk all over Golden Gate Park. My husband and I got married at the Dutch Windmill. The result of the proposed Beach Chalet soccer fields renovation project will be inconsistent with the rest of the western edge of the park, including the other organized playfields. That is, the golf course, the archery range, the equestrian field, and the 46th Avenue Playground. As a San Francisco resident and a member of San Francisco Parks Trust I request a complete EIR be done. If the city does not want an EIR I suggest that it restore not renovate the Beach Chalet soccer fields. If the city wants a lit, artificial turf sports complex I suggest that it be built outside of Golden Gate Park. Let’s keep Golden Gate Park as one of the most fantastic urban parks in the world, thank you. Kathleen Friedlander: Hi, my name is Kathleen Friedlander. I’m a 20-year resident of the Outer Richmond overlooking the soccer fields and the windmills. My concerns are the lack of an adequate environmental review here. You’re essentially replacing a natural area with about 6 acres with artificial turf, putting a concrete surface over it. I’m concerned about the flyway, about the lights and how it will impact the residents and whether these trees will grow. John Zwolinski: Park Commissioners, my name is John Zwolinski. My family and I live a block from the southwest corner of Golden Gate Park. Opponents of the proposed fields renovations would have you believe that the fields sylvan meadows and a habitat to wildlife. Nothing in fact could be further from the truth. The fields were carved out of the original sand dunes as was the rest of the park and have been sporting fields for at least 75. They comprise meaningful habitat for gophers alone and gophers of course are why our children are breaking their ankles out there. If the opponents of the project wish to protect wildlife they could more reasonably turn their attentions to the woodlands surrounding the fields which have for decades been despoiled by the activities of people cruising the area for anonymous al fresco sex. Decades of cruising and various attendant illegal activities have eroded the paths, degraded the greenery and littered the entire area in spite of the best efforts of park gardeners. Many of us in the community embrace the Golden Gate Master Plan for taking back that corner of the park for the legitimate recreational purposes it was designed for, including both sports and the enjoyment of nature. We believe that the improvements are proposed, including the lighting and turf, will encourage an increased desirable use and discourage the dirty and dangerous nonsense the wildlife and the rest of us alike have been obliged to avoid for years. Thank you. David Goggin: Hi, I’m Dave Goggin a San Francisco resident opposed to this project. A project of this scope with potentially significant adverse impact on the environment of Golden Gate Park and Ocean Beach should have a full Environmental Impact Report. Like many other residents I’m concerned that sky glow over the nearby parklands would likely be increased significantly by this project thus degrading a valuable dark sky resource enjoyed by people of all ages. The nearby parks and beach currently provide a quality of night sky views quite rare elsewhere in the inner Bay Area. Because the fields are so large and would be lit so brightly, light reflecting up off the field’s surfaces themselves would likely be a major source of uplift in the area. A full study of the effects of both direct and reflected uplight caused by the proposed lighting is needed. The exemption certificate completely fails to provide that, thank you. Andie Danforth: My name is Andie Danforth and I’m here to basically reflect what my predecessor here at this podium stated. I live in Sutro Heights overlooking Golden Gate Park and Ocean Beach and I moved there about two years ago specifically because I like the wildness, the quiet, the beauty of the ocean and Golden Gate Park and the nighttime darkness, being able to see the moon and stars on a regular basis. Someone told me that one of you owns a home in Bolinas and so knowing what a beautiful place that is I would guess that you identify with those of us who are residents of Sutro Heights and other neighborhoods near the park. Would you like a project like this near your home? So, I don’t know, I’d guess not. This is our home, our ocean, our beach, park, dark sky. Please don’t destroy it. John Frykman: Hi, my name is John Frykman. I was here a few weeks ago on the Sutro Dunes proposition, naming it. I live on 47th Avenue just about two and a half blocks from where this is and have lived there since 1978 and I’m really concerned as a former architect, Lutheran minister and psychotherapist about lots of quality issues and I feel kind of like David in the valley with Goliath after hearing the presentation that Dan and Patrick and other made. It seemed like it was overwhelming, like why does it need to be so overwhelming if there aren’t real issues and that’s the kind of thing that happens all the time. The replacing of them in 10 years, what I found going on the internet and looking, about $5 million. The costs that’s
here is not just here, it’s got to be replicated every 10 years as you go through. I’m concerned about the way it will affect our lives. We can see the light from the South Sunset Park brightly in the sky from where we are in the Richmond District side between Balboa and Cabrillo on 47th Avenue. We go out on our front porch and there it is, a big glow in the sky. I hope you’ll really make for an Environmental Impact Report because I think the kind of things you learn will change your perspective on what this project is. Thank you. **Allie Meneghetti:** My name is Allie Meneghetti and I’m 13 years old and in the 7th grade. My middle school team was here with me, unfortunately they had to leave because the pickup line was here and people talked a little bit too long. Some of my team is here though as you can see. Yesterday we voted to come to this meeting today instead of going to practice even though we have a game tomorrow. We think this field renovation is very important. Most of us have played soccer here in San Francisco since we were five years old. We’ve played on a lot of nice soccer fields here in the city. We have played on some really nice synthetic turf fields like Garfield and Crocker-Amazon and we have played on some really bad fields filled with gopher holes, uneven grass and dirt, fields that get closed all the time due to poor field conditions. My middle school team practices on Beach Chalet right now for our spring soccer season and the field has been closed more than it has been opened. On the days of our practices it’s not even raining but the fields are closes due to poor drainage. This means that we can’t practice so we never sharper our skills. If the field was covered with synthetic turf we could practice and play our games instead of just having to go home. My teammates and I wanted you to support the Beach Chalet renovation. Think of us, the children of San Francisco, when you consider this project, show us that we do have a voice. Thank you. **Cassie May:** My name is Cassie May and I’m in the eighth grade. I’ve been playing soccer since kindergarten, that makes this my eighteenth season, most of which I’ve played at Beach Chalet. Soccer is very important to me and I’m playing five days a week on two teams. In the time I’ve been playing at Beach Chalet I’ve rolled my ankles and a lot and it would be really nice to focus more on the ball and less on where I’m stepping. El Nino has really cut out a lot of our practice time and it’s definitely affected our playing. We would be more than happy to play in the rain but the fields are closed all the time. This is where turf would be really useful. I really enjoyed playing on turf fields but there are none on the north side of the city where my teammates and I live and go to school, therefore there is no way we can make it all the way across town to practice. I have an eight year-old brother who’s just begun playing soccer and I’m really excited for him and I know he’d benefit from these fields just as much as people my age. This would be a very effective improvement and I know it would be used all the time. So think of my teammates, myself, and the many other children who would benefit greatly from this when you make your decision. **Braden Edwards:** My name is Braden Edwards. I’ve been a resident of San Francisco for 15 years. I’ve come here as an proponent of this and I come here as a parent, as a high school lacrosse coach and as a member of the board that started that Bay Area Youth Sports Foundation in San Francisco which gave $50,000 to youth sports in the Bay Area last year. As a parent I go to countless games and see all the same gopher holes and things of that nature and watch kids fall and hurt themselves and getting dissuaded from playing on turf and as a parent who lives in the city and pays taxes and I’m reminded all the time from the other parents why don’t we just move to Danville? There’s plenty of turf out there to play on out there where we could go and there’s a lot of people that make that consideration to leave the city for that very reason. As a high school Lacrosse coach I’ve had to take 25 kids down to Hunter’s Point at 5:00 o’clock to practice because the fields are closed in the city because of poor weather. As unfair as it is to those birds that are flying by with the light that the opponents talk about, it’s equally unfair to take a 16 year-old young man and stick him down at Hunter’s Point at 5:00 o’clock at night where everybody knows what can take place down there after dark. And lastly as a nonprofit leader we’ve made a real contribution to sports in the area. Lacrosse is absolutely growing leaps and bounds in the city and this would obviously help the game grow as well. **Mary Ann Miller:** This project will destroy forever the grassy meadow at the western end of Golden Gate Park and replace it with a pavement of gravel, plastic grass, and tire crumb soil despite Dan Mauer’s efforts with all the providers it’s still the same. Of course environmental groups such as San Francisco Tomorrow which I’m representing today oppose and object because of the degradation of habitat for our people, our wildlife, and for these living outdoor rooms filled with oxygenating plants and grass. I live in that part of the park, I live on 42nd Avenue a half a block away, so I live in that part of the park. My husband, my dog and I are truly alive there. It is not a single purpose experience open only to dog walkers or to flower fanciers or to the volleyball players. But this proposal is for more than seven acres of single-purpose use, just for soccer and by no means just for children and it will degrade the area environmentally for years to come. The project is irreversible. If you dig down five feet you’re not going to replace the topsoil, over seven acres times five feet, Commissioners, and I believe it’s unsustainable environmentally. There are alternatives possible, we want the soccer fields to remain, we want them truly renovated and we think there are products there and there are means there especially daylight savings time—that’s the biggest means of lighting those fields, they’re lighted right now until 7:30. **Zoey Meneghetti:** My name is Zoey Meneghetti and I’m 10 years old and in the fifth grade. I live in San Francisco and I love soccer. These are some of my teammates, this is
Caroline, Madeline, Serena, Kira, Nina, and this is Merca. We want to play soccer on safe fields and fields we can play on all the time. We don’t want fields closed all the time because the grass is wet and there is mud. So many of our practices have been cancelled this season at Beach Chalet due to the field being too wet to play on. We love birds and we want our environment safe and we want to see the stars at night but we also want to play soccer and become good girl athletes. The Beach Chalet renovation will allow us to play more soccer and allow us to enjoy nature. We love soccer and we want to play. We are just kids but we have big dreams. Please make Beach Chalet better. Vote in favor of Beach Chalet renovation. Please support us, we are the city’s future. Thank you for listening to us. Shelli Meneghetti: President Buell and members of the Recreation and Park Commission. My name is Shelli Meneghetti and I’m a San Francisco resident and a parent and a coach here in San Francisco. I’ve been very active with the San Francisco Youth Soccer program for the past 10 years. Vikings is a parent run volunteer youth soccer program that has 6000 kids between the ages of 4 and 18 here in San Francisco. We cover every zip code. I am in support of the Beach Chalet renovation project. Organized sports is one way that children and their families get outside and play and interact with their environment and their community. The proposed renovations at Beach Chalet will triple the amount of play time on the existing fields greatly expanding the play opportunities for the community. The organizations behind the renovation have more than mindfully researched the best and safe practices for the project. The turf at the end of its lifespan is recyclable and in line with San Francisco’s strict recycling standards. Any trees removed are replaced with new trees at greater replacement numbers than removal. The lights point down. These examples demonstrate strong commitments to respecting and improving the existing environment. The project significantly benefits the San Francisco community and betters our collective living environment. Thank you for your consideration. Colin Schmidt: My name is Colin Schmidt, I’m a parent. I’m Executive Director of America Scores, we run after school recreation programs in partnership with public school communities, mostly in the Bayview, Hunter’s Point, Mission, Excelsior. The other side of the city. I’m here to speak in favor of the fields. I’m here to say thank you to City Fields for the gift they’ve already provided, it’s made a huge impact on the families, the 400 families that my organization represents. But it’s not enough. We’re for more hours. We’ve got kids practicing Monday through Friday on blacktop, it’s not safe, it’s not fun. And worse, we’re turning kids away. We’re in a no-grow situation when the demand is high, the demand for programs for younger kids, kids who are not playing on sports teams and will not unless its facilitated in a safe place through their school communities. We may never make it to Beach Chalet, we focus on Crocker-Amazon and these other parts of the city but again we’re turning kids away. It’s not safe. We urge you to support this. Andrea Nagelson: Hi President Buell and members of the Commission. My name is Andrea Nagelson and I’m a 20-year resident of San Francisco and an 18-year resident in the Richmond District. I’m President of San Francisco City Lacrosse club and I’m here to express my strong support for the Beach Chalet project. We’re a club of 150 kids, boys and girls ages 8 to 18, coming from over 25 public and private schools across the city. By all accounts lacrosse is the faster growing sport among youth on the west coast and to give you a sense of the magnitude, over the last 10 years according to US Lacrosse the sport has grown in Northern California from 30 teams to 300, from 700 kids to 7000, from 200 games to 2000 and the girls lacrosse programs are growing much, much faster than the boys and these numbers do not even consider the high school numbers that include high schools with school teams and club programs such as ours. This season our club experienced over subscription on several teams and we face the difficult decision of turning kids away as a larger lacrosse community, we can simply not meet the demand and absorb the growth of the current field deficit. Michelle Levenson: Hi, my name is Michelle Levenson. I’m a 20-year resident and I have three girls, they’ve all played soccer and baseball and I’m in strong support of the Beach Chalet athletic field renovation. We’ve played on grass, we’ve played on turf and the turf fields will allow year-around play. Thank you so much. Joanna Doyle: Good afternoon, my name is Joanne Doyle, I’m the Program Manager of the San Francisco Police Activities League. For over 50 years SFPAL has been serving the youth of San Francisco in giving the opportunity to play with the collaboration of fantastic volunteers and police officers. For decades SFPAL has worked in partnership with Recreation and Park to deliver high quality youth sports programs on the fields of San Francisco. It’s not new that San Francisco has run out of field space for the participants. SFPAL turns away kids due to limited space. Imagine a program whose goal is to provide healthy play for all communities only to have to go back on their word and not allow kids to play. It’s also not news that synthetic turf can provide doubling if not tripling amount of play, they are free from hazards such as gopher holes, sprinkler heads and rocks that kids encounter all the time on grass fields. SFPAL is not just a sports organization, one sports organization, we have eight different programs and leagues. We serve over 5,000 kids. The renovation of Beach Chalet will not only benefit the soccer players of San Francisco it will cause a positive domino effect that will provide more access to everyone who plays baseball, softball, lacrosse, football, and other field sports. Thank you for considering our perspective and for your past support of SFPAL. Lorraine Woodruff: I’m Lorraine Woodruff-Long. I’m the Executive Director of PAL, the Police Activities League and I’m also a parent in San
Francisco of two children and also a parent of children who use San Francisco fields for soccer. I did want to reiterate that every year we turn away children for soccer. We have significant [unintelligible] need and in this time of childhood obesity and also with programs being cut in schools we're really limiting physical activity, it is critical that we expand our opportunities to grow healthy children especially in a city with a Mayor focusing and our city focusing so much on healthy children. Finally, I’d also like to say that my own child is not here because he’s practicing soccer right now on Crocker-Amazon and I want to thank City Fields and the Fisher family for the significant contribution to our city in this. And it's made a huge difference to our children and to my own family. In closing, with so many cuts and things happening to children right now in our city, in our state and our country we really need to remember that children are a priority in our community and this is something that is going to make a difference for children and families in San Francisco. Thank you. **Dierdre Appel:** Good evening Commissioners. My name is Dierdre Appel. I am a resident of San Francisco. I’m an employee at the San Francisco PUC and I’m a mother of two soccer players here in the city. I would like to ask you to support this renovation of the Beach Chalet soccer field. It’s basically a health and safety issue. We’ve had many of our children’s friends that have sprained and broken their ankles out on these fields and as already reported the bathroom stalls out at the fields are pretty awful. The turf fields are not—have been as the reports said—not that dangerous for children and they actually, at least from the PUC and the Water Department, they do save water. It’s schedule to is save over 6 million gallons of water per year, plus there’s less maintenance for our city staff. I urge you to support this. Thank you. I also was given this binder of letters and testimony of supporters for your review. **Steve Arnold:** Hello Commissioners, my name is Steve Arnold. I’m a San Francisco native and current resident. I have three girls ages 18, 16, 13, two of them play soccer, one of them plays lacrosse. I’m speaking in support of the proposed improvements. I’ve been coaching soccer for 13 years since my oldest girl was 5. I now coach my youngest. During that time I’ve seen the pressure build on a limited number of playing fields available as more and more kids fall in love with the game and as other sports also become popular. I’ve seen 12, 13, 14 year-old girls go down with serious season-ending if not career-ending injuries, condemned at best to spend the following few months on crutches due simply to the road surface on overused and under-maintained grass fields. I’ve accepted the cancellation of practices and games due to soggy fields even though he weather was clear by game time as the price one pays for living in a dense urban environment, knowing that Recreation and Park must protect soggy fields or see them turn to mud because they do not have the resources to maintain the grass surfaces in their constant use. I’ve voted for ever Recreation and Park bond measure since moving back to San Francisco over two decades ago. I’ve done so and will continue to do so specifically to support the recreational amenities established with the city for the good people of San Francisco. Many have been established long before anyone in this room took up residence here. Golden Gate Park was originally conceived as an urban park, much like Central Park in New York which is its model. It was conceived as a recreational amenity to be used by the people of this city and its surrounds. It was never intended to be a nature reserve or a wilderness area. While I have no personal animosity towards Canada geese, earthworms, coyotes, gophers or any other wildlife that might be passing through or wants to make a go of it in the park I did not vote for those bonds in order to establish a wildlife refuge for them. Nor was Golden Gate Park ever intended to fulfill such a role. This cause is for a different geography. This project is an intelligently conceived, much needed and well-designed project. It is consistent with the intended use of Golden Gate Park. It is an appropriate and cost effective improvement to an existing recreational amenity that will go far to relieve the pressure on playing fields throughout the city. **Johannes Posthumus:** Hello, my name is Johannes Posthumus. I’ve been living in San Francisco since 1963, currently in the Outer Richmond just a few blocks away from the proposed field. I was born and raised in Buenos Aires and I grew up playing soccer. My favorite team was Jaco Junior’s famous team down there. Soccer is a great game but the proposed Beach Chalet soccer fields renovation project is in my opinion not a great idea. The artificial turf and its 6-story high stadium lights do not belong in Golden Gate Park, especially in the western part of the park with its pastoral and sylvan landscape. I request an EIR be completed. A better idea would be to restore the fields. I don’t understand also the need for the lights to be on until 10:00 o'clock. It seems like children are not going to play and that part, as far as the lighting is concerned, I think the project is misrepresented as being for children, as being mainly for adults at that time. Thank you. **George Wooding:** Good afternoon, George Wooding. San Francisco. I have sponsored many kids and adult soccer teams and I’m a parent of a soccer play. I am not for the artificial turf being installed at Golden Gate Park. This product needs an EIR. Being against artificial turf does not mean that you are against children or soccer. The RPD needs to remember that we need to preserve Golden Gate Park for children in a natural state. Golden Gate Park should not be paved over and the RPD should stop increasing the field fees so that local kids can afford to play and practice in San Francisco. I want to wish the RPD good lucky in closing this current $12.4 million budget deficit. Thank you. **Alan Ogilvie:** Good afternoon ladies and gentleman, my name is Alan Ogilvie, long-term San Francisco resident, moved here in the late 80s. I live in the outer Richmond District. I’m a soccer player, or was a soccer player, in my country we call...
it football. It’s a beautiful game, I love it, I’m a fanatic and indeed we all are. But I do think that the artificial turf is out of place in Golden Gate Park for a number of reasons which have already been covered by some others, so I’ll keep this brief. My main concern is the spread of community acquired MSRA which has been known to infect players of all games played on artificial turf and I believe that an EIR should be called for to study that and all other aspects of having an artificial field in the middle of the most beautiful park in the world. Thank you very much for your time. **Jill Landsberry:** Hi, my name is Jill Landsberry. I am a coach and a player for 20 years. I don’t know what idyllic beautiful meadow they’re talking about. After three weeks of overuse it is a dirt clod and on the outskirts you have probably some of the most insidious people you ever want to meet. If you have to go out there to collect a ball you’re talking about used condoms, syringe needles, it’s pretty awful. If anyone has been to Crocker-Amazon you’ll see how beautiful a job they’ve done there and how it has improved the whole area. They have less crime, they have less problems. The lights allow for adults and yes adults are important too. Right now I’m taking my adult team across the bridge because the only place that we can play because everyone works is over at Berkeley. So we go and we travel one hour to Berkeley and we travel an hour back. Now, I have several players who are college students, they’d rather be studying, but they love soccer so much that they’ll sit in the car and they’ll read on the way to practice as we sit in traffic and it’s pretty horrible. Believe me, if you fix this field up—it’s already in place, it’s already there, all we’re asking is for it to be made better. Thank you. **Humberto Galleno:** President Buell and members of the Recreation and Park Commissioners, my name is Humberto Galleno and after being born in San Francisco I live now in District 1. I came today because I support this initiative. I feel strongly about the renovation of these fields. I have played soccer for over 31 years. I volunteer my time as a coach of youth soccer in the Viking League. I play here in the city, my sons play soccer and I play regularly as a member of a group of 40 plus men many of whom barely have a leg to stand on and most of them need all the help they can get. My request is simple, we need suitable and appropriate fields to play on. We used to play on grass fields but had to stop due to injuries. We have played at Beach Chalet. After 31 years of soccer experience the dangers these unkempt and underfunded fields present are too great. My teams have migrated from Mt. Tam, the synthetic fields at Franklin Square, Sunset and now Crocker-Amazon. We will go where there are good fields but you don’t know how dangerous and bad these grass fields are until you play on a good, flat, kept fields and are forced to go back and play on these unkempt fields. Very dangerous. Thank you for your support.  

**Andrew Hart:** Hi, my name is Andrew Hart. I represented the North Park Neighborhood Association, just north of Golden Gate Park by the museums, and also a member of Burt’s Soccer Crew and I would like to speak on behalf of adults. I think that it’s a shame that we don’t have good facilities for adults in the city to play on, we’re all busy, we work, we take care of our children. My kids have all played soccer in the leagues, I’ve coached in the Viking League. I believe it’s really important to have after school facilities, more of them available. With fields closed the kids don’t have places to play, teams are limited. But I think you should also think about the adults like me and others who are trying to stay healthy and we need places to play after we come home and eat dinner. So the parks say that we stay open until 10:00 o’clock obviously most of the year the light ends at 5:00 or 6:00. By having lights that are well-maintained, that are respectful of the neighborhoods, you can give adults a chance to play as well. I encourage you to vote for these fields, thank you.  

**Patrick Maguire:** Good evening Commissioners, my name is Patrick Maguire. I’m a native San Franciscan. I live in the outer Sunset on the Great Highway. I’m a soccer coach or two teams of little boys, five year-old and seven year-old boys. I’ve been a coach of women’s soccer and I’ve played soccer on Beach Chalet since I was four years old. I remain living in the outer Sunset. I have 30 nieces and nephews all under the age of 15 years old who are all soccer players or potential soccer players and we all lived below the boulevard in the Sunset. We all fully support this project. We’re excited about it, we look forward to it, we love it and we thank everybody who’s taken part in this and I left—I have two my teams practicing right now, I left them to come here to just say hey we’re in full support and I could have brought them all with me but I didn’t want to do that to you guys. But I just want to let you know that I speak on behalf of a lot of kids in the neighborhood, a lot of people, and we’re in full support. So thank you Commissioners.  

**Lisa Monti:** Good afternoon Commissioners. My name is Lisa Monti. I was born in the Richmond District and grew up playing in Golden Gate Park, it was my playground. I also was the first girl to play soccer and I’m really excited to see all these girls here playing because there were no girls teams when I started. I’ve played on a boys team and I played for Lowell Varsity High School and now my son is playing at Beach Chalet. It was an ankle breaker back then and it still is but I really want to bring up the issue of when I was a kid everything was free in the park. The Zoo was free. Now there’s not much for kids to do that’s free. Soccer is still relatively free. It’s something that a lot of kids can do and we need places for kids to play. But one other point I wanted to make—I mean, I’ve heard both sides of the issues and I’m a school teacher and the environment is important to me too but every time my son goes to play the pesticides there give him such a bad allergic reaction that I’m almost going to say you know no more practicing at Beach Chalet because the pesticides are so bad. So to me that is also an environmental concern for the kids. So I’ll cut it short and say thank you for
Good afternoon Commissioners. My name is Paul Soder. I’m a West Portal resident, lived in the city for 35 years and my daughter has played soccer since she was 4 and is in high school now and also plays Lacrosse. I coach fencing. I was a coach of the US Olympic Fencing Team in 2004. I coach children, youth, and adults. And all I have to say is thank you to the soccer community because the kids who come into my program who are in good shape, who can move, got it in soccer. They don’t get it in the schools anymore, that’s where it came from, soccer. This is really important to our whole children’s and our whole youth development in this country. Soccer has become the urban sport. This is a well-designed, well thought-out program and it’s a good place for soccer. I was a city kid and I grew up thinking about when I wanted to go somewhere and do something I’d take the bus and do you realize that you can get to Beach Chalet with one transfer from anywhere in the city? That’s important to kids and it’s important to adults. It’s an efficient utilization of resources, it’s a great place to put this, and the city really, really needs it. Thank you. Don Collins: Thank you Commissioners. I’m Don Collins, I’m the Commissioner of Athletics for the San Francisco Unified School District. We have a lot of schools that play soccer, 22 middle schools, 12 high schools, that’s a lot of kids. We don’t have a lot of school district fields so on April 15th I think it’s appropriate to say we place a heavy tax on the fields and we really need to get the kind of fields where we can use them and really be able to be efficient and productive in our use. It has some educational benefits for us. We do take children out of school sometimes and they go to fields that are not ready and are not closed. So we gain some additional benefits besides the ones that we’ve just mentioned for play. We gain enormous benefits also geographically. We don’t have these schools yet on these fields yet on the west side of town. So we’re gaining some benefits and I hope you can support this and I thank you for all that you’ve done. Thank you. Ron Dudham: Good afternoon Commissioners, my name is Ron Dudham—and staff. If the Audubon Society can claim to represent 10,000 people I might be able to say that I represent over 10,000 people that voted for me in the last election that live in the neighborhood. Yes, I did, and I still got over 10,000 votes. So that being the case I wanted to address a couple of issues. One is historic preservation. Anybody who refers to the original preservation plan of 1897 is out of their mind. That plan—200,000 people who currently live in that side of the city did not live there in 1897. It was considered uninhabitable area, the outside lands, and to believe that that’s how we were supposed to keep it means that half of the population of San Francisco would have to leave and so any appeal to historic preservation has got to be dismissed right out of hand, number one. Number two, two constituents that I just saw today, one who works in the Astronomical Society and is putting up as we speak a telescope says there’s zero problem with regards to being able to appreciate the stars when the fog isn’t there. So anybody who sees the stars every night in the Sunset is not standing outside. And then lastly Rich Murphy, who is a member—a neighbor, first thing I talked to him about, I said Rich what do you think about this project and he says the first question he said—and that’s why I love San Francisco—the first question he said what about the kids? It’s that simple. If you want families to stay in San Francisco you need to expedite this project, get rid of the EIR and move forward as quickly as possible because we’re losing families too fast. Thank you for your time. David Lee: Mr. President, Commissioners. My name is David Lee. I am a fifth and sixth grade math teacher at Town School for Boys as well as the director of the lacrosse program at school which represents over a hundred boys playing lacrosse this current season, this is up from about 75 boys just three years ago. As Andrea Nagelson mentioned before lacrosse is the fastest growing sport in California right now. Eight years ago there were about 1200 boys playing lacrosse, this year there’s close to 8,000 boys and girls playing lacrosse in the Northern California area. Our team plays on grass fields and as you know it’s been a rainy winter, we can’t get out there. We were relegated to basketball courts and to play on top of our roof because of a lack of access to fields. It is a pleasure to go outside of San Francisco where there are turf and all-purpose fields and where there are families free to run around. We talk about a time where we’re in a major deficit and funding is short—here we have a fully funded, excellent project by the Fisher Foundation and City Fields, this serves tons of needs. I don’t see why—this seems like a no-brainer type of project to go through. If you want to keep families in San Francisco, in the school district, as tax payers, I think it behooves the board to be in favor of the Beach Chalet renovation. Carlos Montiglio: President Buell and members of the Recreation and Park Commission. My name is Carlos Montiglio, I live in the Richmond District. I don’t represent 10,000 people but standing in line I kind of feel like I’m 10,001 out there. Which I think is great because I love soccer and I think a lot of people here do as well. I played soccer at Beach Chalet for many years, now with a group of over 40 year-old individuals and we are all now playing either in South San Francisco or Marin so we’re playing all over the place. I have a few kids, they all play soccer, it’s healthy, we spend a lot of time together and that’s really the guiding force for why I’m here because I think it improves my family and my friends and all of my kids friends play soccer. So if we renovated Beach Chalet we’d have more flexibility, we’d be a lot closer to where we spend most of our time and all athletes of all ages playing soccer in San Francisco. I thank you for your support and hope we move forward. Toby Rappolt: Commissioners, my name is Toby Rappolt. I’m not a native but I moved here when I was in the third grade and I have a very close and person and long-term relationship with both Beach Chalet and
Crocker-Amazon. I figured it out the other day, I first started going out to Beach Chalet in 1965, because that—a few years before that—I came out of Visitation Valley to Crocker-Amazon. I’ve played and coached on every soccer field in the city of San Francisco in that time. We all know they’re dangerous, we all know they inhibit learning, they’re an embarrassment. And then 15 years ago when I turned 40 I was going to leave my hometown because I’d go out to these places, I’d go out into the suburbs, I’d go to Vegas sometimes and go to L.A. and see these beautiful fields and say why can’t we have these fields? And then the Fields Foundation came and they were like—came from God! They were like our gift to me. And I remember standing outside of Crocker-Amazon the week after it opened, the first time I saw it and I started to cry because I thought of all those years in elementary school at Visitation Valley Elementary going up there and playing. Luther Burbank Junior High School, Lowell High School, and they came along and they gave it to us. And God bless them. Now I’ve moved to the west side of the city and I’m on the other side and we need something out there. Thank you very much. **Eric Phillips:** Hello Commissioners, my name is Eric Phillips and I’m a resident of the outer Richmond District. In fact I live at the condominium complex right across the street from the fields so I probably live about as close to the fields as you can get. I moved out there because of the recreational opportunities afforded by the fields, the ocean, the golf course out there. However, I’ve been pretty disappointed with the fields obviously because danger, safety issues, overcrowding, you name it, you’ve heard it all. But in addition out in that neighborhood there really are no athletic fields that are available for drop-in play. Those fields are either the gates are always closed or they’re subject to reservations. I’m really excited about the fact that with the renovation plan those fields promise to be open more to local residents who can just drop over, kick the ball around with my two sons and play in a recreational league. It looks like I’m about to join an over-40 group some others had mentioned earlier. So in closing I just hope you’ll support the project. **Kelly Watts:** My name is Kelly Watts. For over 10 years I’ve done eco-audits for organizations and corporations such as Esprit De Corp. If the RPD and City Fields truly believe that these fields were safe why have we seen them at Viking Soccer and other leagues, why have they been lobbying for months at multiple city Commissions to ensure the continued suppression of any public safety environmental impact reviews? We have found that clearly [unintelligible] RPD and City Fields has in fact not created any additional playing surface but is only and basically for the use of one single sport, eliminated over 30 acres of multi-use grass and soil playfields replacing them with acres of plastic and over 190 million pounds of unconfined materials, materials that are of such concern for environmental and public health risks that at the emphatic urging of the USGAL and USEPA this year they’re reopened their investigations. We are especially dismayed to note that today City Fields and it’s many vocal supporters are well aware that this Golden Gate Park conversion is being slipped in coincidentally just months before the State of California is set to release three separate risk assessments on synthetic fields regarding asthma, [unintelligible], infections, cancer, and other environmental health issues. **Rob Weissnburger:** Good evening, my name is Rob Weissnburger. I’m a parent of soccer players and I’m a board member of the Mission Youth Soccer League. We represent a lot of at-risk children and teenagers. We’ve been forced due to the shortage of fields the economic hardship, we’ve had to rent fields outside of San Francisco. We use DCYF funds, we get grants from them to help us be able to keep our kids playing soccer. We see a drop in soccer players in the teenage years, 14 to 17, 18 years old, that’s when the teams start reducing in number. If we don’t have the fields these kids are not where you want them to be. We like to keep these kids playing soccer, it’s the best thing for them. The bus transfer was brought up earlier, kids from the Mission we rely on public transporter—we primarily practice at Crocker-Amazon. Beach Chalet is perfect example. Kids can get on the bus in the Mission and they can be at their field. They don’t have parents to give them rides. Their parents are working on Saturdays and Sundays. You know, they take busses to school. I have sympathy for the people that are worried about the lights. I live one block from Palaga and I keep my shades closed until 10:00 o’clock at night and I do it because I know kids in my neighborhood are busy playing basketball, tennis, and they’re being taken care of. That’s not a whole lot to give up. It’s an embarrassment, out competitive teams we travel out of the area and we play in beautiful fields, the teams come to play us—we’re ashamed of what we offer them to play on. You know, the kids that we represent are kids, they’re not a one-sport kid. They grow up, they get given a soccer ball when they’re 5 years old and that’s the sport they know. We can’t take soccer away. We need to provide them with fields. It’s very important for our at-risk teenage youth. Thank you. **Rich Fern:** Good afternoon Recreation and Park Commission. My name is Rich Fern and I just want to know by a show of hands—and I know you guys have been here a long time—have any of you been out to Beach Chalet in the last six months? Just one person, and two. Okay, thank you, now at least everybody is awake, they’re hear me. Okay, so my name is Rich Fern and I’m the president of the San Francisco soccer referee association and I also represent CYSA and CNRA. I am the referee administrator for District 1. There are over 13,000 referees in California North and I also include on behalf of all the referees of San Francisco from the San Francisco soccer referee association and CYSA and CNRA, I am in strong support and show their support for getting new turf fields. Some of the reasons are—I have been a referee for over 18 years, I have been the president of the referee association.
for the past seven years and I used to play at Beach Chalet like a lot of people did when I was a child out here and over these years many times we’ve gone to the fields and the field was closed due to the fact that it has rained the day before. This just happened last Sunday. We had teams that were supposed to come here and they couldn’t play because the fields were closed. And I know I’m out of time but the only thing I wanted to say was I’m in full support and in today’s economic times I can’t understand the rationale, we have people willing to spend money on a facility like this and the kids really need a place and a safe place to play. Thank you for your time today. **Gene Thompson:** My name is Gene Thompson. I’m a long time resident of the area just four blocks away from the proposed site. The most important question before you is not whether or not this project serves the soccer community. It’s not a question of whether or not we support these beautiful children who spoke before you. The question is does it warrant an Environmental Impact Report? The changes that are proposed are not small changes, they are drastic. Responsible, knowledgeable organizations, most notably the Audubon Society, have consistently expressed to you their concerns about the impact of this project on our environment. EIRs were mandated precisely for this kind of project to make sure that the impact would be investigated responsibly. To push forward without conducting the EIR would be to shirk your responsibility. Along with over 1500 citizens who have signed petitions asking for a delay for further investigation. I’d like to make sure I have the attention of the entire body, please. I ask you not to go forward without an Environmental Impact Report. **Meredith Thomas:** Commissioners, Meredith Thomas with the Neighborhood Parks Council. A lot of what we spend our time on managing a park system as a city is trying to accommodate high demand and limited space and trying to meet the needs of all different kinds of park users including people who want to participate in the different kinds of recreation we offer as a city and what we know about our facilities is that we have too few of them, that demand exceeds the facilities we have and the facilities that we need to have need to be as high-performing as possible and they need to be safe and they need to be accessible to every neighborhood. So we support renovating these fields for that reason. We know that there are an excess of folks who are not having access to fields and they need to be able to use them and exercise is important. And in terms of the stewardship that has followed these fields, we’ve had an opportunity to increase use, invigorate communities around these fields, and get people more invested in the park system as a whole. They’re volunteering, they’re having workdays, they’re holding ice cream socials and backpack giveaways and it’s an opportunity to get people in the neighborhood focused on their park and the park system. Thank you. **Curt Sanburn:** Hello Commissioners, my and name is Curt Sanburn, I live on Geary Boulevard at 41st Avenue at the Outer Richmond and I’m a regular user of both Lincoln Park and Golden Gate Park. My concerns have to do with the process of this whole project and the whole public airing of this project and the whole idea. I learned about it when I read a letter to the editor in the Richmond Review newspaper. So I went to a Recreation and Park’s informational meeting about the plan that was held specifically for the Richmond community. It turned out that the meeting was overrun was soccer families from all over the Bay Area. At that meeting Dan Maur of the Department flatly told us that he totally supported the soccer stadium idea. I was surprised by his honesty. I had thought that city employees were supposed to seek out the ideas and concerns and community and listen to them before deciding anything or at least pretend to. I would also not that there has been very little news coverage about this issue. I bet there are hundreds and thousands of San Francisco residents who’d be completely surprised if they knew what was going on. Thank you. **Will Roos:** My name is Will Roos. I’m a third grader at the San Francisco Friends School. I’m in favor of turf fields because one; I play soccer and baseball year-around. Two, we need more fields in the city that don’t get shut down in bad weather. Three, turf fields are safer as they have no gopher holes, no chemicals, no random bumps. Please give us places to play in the city, thank you. **Eric Sachleben:** Hello, my name is Eric Sachleben and I go to the San Francisco Friends School. And I want you to please vote for the turfing at the Beach Chalet fields because I love soccer and we don’t have enough fields in the city and the fields we have aren’t cared for and they’re closed too often so we don’t get to play as much as we’d like to. If you want to keep families in the city you should vote for turfing the Beach Chalet fields. Thank you. **Richard Fong:** Good evening Commissioners, my name is Richard Fong. I just want to make a few quick comments touching close up on what I’ve been talking about throughout quite a few weeks. I looked at it from the perspective of the fields and then I in short one of the things tried to get the grass kind of fields that would be at Candlestick Park or any or the grass reinforced fields and when I have to try to make a comment and I heard Thomas about the health issue, emphatically Dan Maur would have said there isn’t any problems. So I kind of looked at it and I would say wait a minute they’re going to think about spraying all of Golden Gate Park, they have a brown apple moth type of problem that is going to be particulate, it’s got a [unintelligible] solvent, it’s got to get all over everything. It also has the pheromones so it’s going to attach up all over the place. They had all the problem at Santa Cruz County when they had to do the spraying. So that hasn’t happened yet. So before it does happen I’m going to try to implore of you Commissioners to insist that there be a scientific analysis and monitoring of the fields just to keep everybody happy. Thank you. **Patrick Monette-Shaw:** Good afternoon Commissioners. I’m Patrick Monette-Shaw. I’ve submitted to Ms. McArthur that I want included
Good afternoon Commissioner. My name is Juan Gonzalez. I’m co-founder of the Mission Soccer League that was founded in 1993. We founded this league to save children’s lives. The last meeting I attended was at McLaren Lodge in regards to the portable field soccer field in Delores Park and which we filled the room up with 500 people and with press and teachers and so forth. What I’m here for is I’ve coached for 20 years kids of all ages and the reason we found the league, what I want you to understand, is to save children’s lives. If they’re not playing a sport they are in a gang. This is what is so important. If you want to save the children of San Francisco get them involved in a sport and soccer and other sports is a great opportunity for that. Just one thing I want to mention. One time I was coaching a team in practice and one of the kids ran up to me and says coach, you know what happened last night. I go what happened? Someone shot through our front door and barely hit my mom in the kitchen and I asked him well where were you? I was here in practice with you coach. This is why I want to let you guys know the issue is children’s lives. Thank you. 

Charles Spiegal: We’ve live for 20 years two blocks from Delores Park which I say for two reasons, one to thank you for what you did two hours ago and two to say different people in different neighborhoods contribute different things and I don’t have to tell you how much Delores Park is used and our neighborhood is used that way. I’m speaking in support of this proposal and I want to say three things about my daughter’s soccer team. If they were here it would be a team of 16 kids in there from the San Francisco Friends School as well. There would be two Hispanic children, two African American, five Asian American, there would be four kids who are either adopted or from foster care, there would be two sets of lesbian and gay parents. So these are soccer teams that reflect a diversity in the city. The second thing I want to say is that they practice on Wednesdays at Franklin Square which has been renovated with turf which they love and they practice on Fridays at Glen Canyon and when we were downstairs I asked my daughter which part of the field at Glen Canyon—which part of the baseball field do they practice on at Glen Canyon for their soccer permit and she said the part of the outfield that slopes down so you can’t kick the ball. So that’s their description. And I want to end by saying something very personal as a parent of a girl growing up in the city which is the parenting advice I got is that the success for girls at this age is greatly increased if they will do a sport but that girls this age won’t start a sport while they’re adolescents but they have to start beforehand and I’ve always kept that in mind. I don’t know if you want to say anything? Okay, thank you. 

Eric Hanson: Good evening President Buell and member of the Recreation and Park Commission. My name is Eric Hanson, I’m a resident of the Outer Sunset. I have two young boys and four and a half year-old and a 12 year-old and I’m a strong supporter of this Beach Chalet renovation project. I grew up playing all kinds of sports, particularly soccer, and I’ve had the opportunity to get back into the game through my children. Our family has really been able to experience the positive effects of the work of Fisher City Fields Foundation and Recreation and Park, that partnership. My sons get to play on safe fields with more playing hours and reduced field closures. As an adult it’s really been kind of a rebirth in the game for me, you know, I’ve been able to play on safe fields in the evenings with the lights with other adults that are out there being healthy and enjoying the game. If you go to these fields around sunset to me it’s just a beautiful thing, the kids are wrapping up, the adults are getting off work, getting ready to get out there and play. And I think it’s really had a transformative effect on some of these neighborhoods like Crocker and I’d like to see that happen to Beach Chalet. Thank you. 

Mary Nelson: Good evening, my names is Mary Nelson and I’m a resident a homeowner in the Richmond district. I grew up in the neighborhood and I used the soccer fields meadow as a child. My sons grew up in the neighborhood and played soccer and my granddaughter plays soccer, so I’m not unsympathetic to the soccer players. I heard in the presentation that they said the planners reached out to the neighborhood. I only heard of this project last week and I have two major concerns that have been mentioned over and over about the lighting affecting the wildlife and the natural area and my second concern is the rainwater filtering through the Astro Turf and into the aquifers. We don’t know if toxins will leach into the groundwater and I’m just really, strongly encouraging you to vote for the Environmental Impact Report. Please let me just say it’s also because I’ve heard that in our district, in the western side of the city, we’re going to be expected
to have the groundwater from the aquifers mixed with our Hetch Hetchy water for drinking water. Now, I know that plan is down the road but it is in the works and so please consider an Environmental Impact Report. Thank you.

**Terry McDevitt:** Hi Commissioners, I’m Terry McDevitt. I’ve been a groundskeeper taking care of your meadows and natural grass fields for almost 35 to 38 years and all I can say is what it boils down for me, plastic might have its place but it’s not in Golden Gate Park. Golden Gate Park is the inner sanctum, the refuge from urbanization, etc. and to bring a six acre hardscape into the park is to me really a sin. I’ve maintained West Sunset Field, I know they’re not a pool table but I’ve maintained them gopher free with a minimum of materials and machines. I’ve asked the Fields Foundations reps long ago I said do you have any money to actually help with the grass fields? And they say no, it’s only for plastic and the big projects. If you really want to improve things for all the athletes I’d say let’s shed some money towards the rest of the fields. Like I said, what do you lose when you lose the true ethic of why the park is there. It’s a natural place and to bring this hardscape in there to me would be shameful, I’m sorry.

**Bernice Garcia:** My name is Bernice Garcia, I’m a longtime resident of the Richmond district and I have grandchildren who play soccer. However, I am opposed to this renovation as it’s been called, although it’s much more than a renovation. I have read the certificate of determination exemption and strongly disagree with its conclusions, that is that the impact on the park, the beach and the neighborhood will be minimal. Reviews by government Departments may be subject to pressures incompatible with the public good. Obviously the population at large has not been aware of it and it has not been well publicized. In any case, I live near the proposed project are and you testify that the traffic is going to be a very large problem in the area. I think this needs an EIR. I think it’s outrageous that this project is pushed forward without a full study as well as without input from the public. The park belongs to the whole city, to everyone in San Francisco not just a special interest. Thank you.

**Beth Lewis:** My name is Beth Lewis. I live on 25th Avenue. I’ve from the 25th Avenue neighborhood association. I would like to respectfully remind you as guardians of our precious Golden Gate Park of your responsibility to ensure that the introduction of an artificial soccer complex is environmentally desirable. At least wait until the State of California fully completes its current environmental risk assessment of toxins in artificial turf. This is currently under examination. A decision in favor of an EIR will at least allow you as Commissioners to know that you have fully researched all the issues before making an important decision that impacts everyone’s future and the park’s. Thank you.

**Joanne Bartles:** Hi, my name is Joanne Bartles and my husband and I live on 47th Avenue two blocks from the proposed soccer fields. We want through there every day. It’s beautiful, the west end. I don’t know what people are saying. I mean, I know there’s things that go on there at night maybe but we walk through there sundown every day with our dog. We got married there last year, we want to have a family out there one day in the outer Sunset and I’m against the proposed soccer fields. I believe appreciating the beauty of a natural landscape like the west end of Golden Gate Park is just as valuable as playing organized sports. Once the park is destroyed it will be gone forever so please don’t let that be part of your legacy. Thanks.

**Luke Bartles:** My name is Luke Bartles, I also live in the outer Sunset and I have three concerns. I am a resident, I’m also a soccer player, I play regularly on both the west and the south Sunset fields, one being turf and lit at night, one being unlit and natural grass. I am concerned at the choice of the location for a complex of this size. We play at the west Sunset field, the field directly above it in the same complex for I’m assuming softball, baseball fields, is lit, there’s lights there. This field seems a comparable size. I don’t know why it hasn’t been considered which leads to outreach issues. I think it’s very unclear for a lot of people how the decisions were made to choose the park which is clearly a very contentious location for a project of this scale. I’m very concerned about the future of the fields as a soccer player, as hopefully a father in the future, 10 years down the line it’s hard to imagine without money set aside all along the way that there would be funds to replace this and I wonder about the precedent it sets for Golden Gate Park. Thank you very much.

**Corrine Moya:** Good evening President Buell and member of the Recreation and Park Commission. I’m Corrine Moya and I strongly support the renovation of the Beach Chalet soccer fields. I represent the Golden Gate Women’s Soccer League with over 1000 women soccer players. I’m a referee and also a player in the over-35 division of the league and since no one else really likes playing on those fields we get to play there and it’s a safety issue. Safety is my main concern for supporting the project, the unsafe fields puts everyone at risk for serious injury. I live near Crocker-Amazon and have seen the positive revitalization of the surrounding neighborhood and I believe this project will help bring economic stimulation to San Francisco. Thank you.

**Usha Mulvaney:** Hi, my name is Usha Mulvaney. I’m a biology major from the University of San Francisco and I’m again renovation because I think it needs and Environmental Impact Report not only because of the species variety in that park, it’s also famous world-wide, people all over the world come to see it. I think it’s really important to keep it natural. But also because if I were a parent I’d be really concerned with the toxic chemicals that Astro Turf has and I think there should be an Environmental Impact Report is important just because of that. Thank you.
Speaker: Hello, thank you Commissioners for hearing the appeal from the public about this vital resource this afternoon. I was born in San Francisco, I’ve lived here for 43 years. I’ve lived within four blocks of Golden Gate Park for the last 20. I played soccer at grammar school and high school and I’m currently a substitute teacher for the school district so I know how important it is to provide recreation for our youth and I’d like—I’m really impressed actually at this hearing by the organization of my fellow citizens around the soccer and I’d like to reach out to them across the aisle so to speak and encourage them to organize for a really nice, decent playing field at Beach Chalet using natural turf as an alternative without the 60 foot lights which would severely impact wildlife in the area and find some other venue for adult, nighttime recreation in the city. So I urge you to go with the Environmental Impact Report and I reach out to my fellow citizens, let’s organize for some decent soccer fields out at Beach Chalet that are natural turn and can support some wildlife as well as some fun for everybody. Thank you. Robert Van Ravenswaay: Good evening Commissioners. My name is Robert Van Ravenswaay. I just want to speak. I live in the Richmond, I walk and bicycle in Golden Gate Park, I’ve got kids and grandkids who play on the sports fields but I’m really looking at the process by which this project has come forward and there’s a lot of concern over the playing surface that’s being proposed and I’ve looked at this exemption that was issued last week and I think it’s based on poor reasoning and misrepresented studies and I just want to point out two areas—and more areas are going to come out as this is discussed further. The exemption doesn’t even look at the Master Plan for Golden Gate Park. This Master Plan was created pursuant to the General Plan that calls for it in two locations in the General Plan and calls for the western end of the park to be basically kind of rural in character and replacing landscape with hardscape is not consistent with that plan. The so-called traffic study that’s in this exemption really is a couple guys who came out for two hours on a Saturday, counted up parking spaces, counted the traffic movements and said well plenty of cars can move through this intersection or that intersection but two of the three intersections they talk about are supposed to be closed according to the Master Plan for Golden Gate Park. So you can’t really put a lot of credence in that kind of study. I think a deeper environmental study should be done, now whether you do a full EIR and every little item in it or a do an initial study that looks at things and you cut it down to 6 or 8 issues, you know, I’m okay on that. But I think this process is a little shaky so far. Thank you. Joan Wood: Good evening Commissioners. My name is Joan Wood, I live in North Beach. I’m a third generation San Franciscan. My mother’s family lived near Golden Gate Park on Noriega Street and the park has been there since the beginning since the beginning of the 19th century and it should remain as pristine as possible. I’ve noticed that the Planning Commission generally favors development, I don’t know why that is, so you’re our only hope here. Regardless of who appointed you I really hope that you will think about what is best for most of San Francisco. I belong to San Francisco Tomorrow, Telegraph Hill Dwellers, both of those organizations want you to take an Environmental Review and that’s what I’m here about. Some beautiful children appeared here today. I don’t know, maybe soccer makes them beautiful, I don’t know what it is but I’m surely not opposed to soccer and it’s very hard to want to do something different than what those gorgeous children wanted. It will be very expensive for you to allow artificial turf, you’d just have to keep paying out millions to restore it. Please, please, ask for an EIR, thank you. Dan Richman: Good evening. My name is Dan Richman. I’m a San Francisco homeowner and a parent and I love soccer and I love children but I’m opposed to the location of your proposed plan. My objections have been already stated better than I ever could but I would like to just say this, that just because that place is dark at night and just because it is not used very much and just because it has fresh water on one side of it, salt water on the other side of it, tress and meadows, that to me does not make it a target for development. In fact, it should be considered a unique place in the city. Last, I would like to address this to I believe it was a supervisor who showed a certain amount of contempt for the Master Plan and for the original intend of that park. If he’s contemptuous about that then are you contemptuous about the Supreme Court of the United States? Thank you. Casey Charluggy: Good evening, my name is Casey Charluggy. I’m a 33-year resident of San Francisco and I live in the Sunset. I was a state humane officer years between 1985 and 1987 and in 1987 I led a number of rescues down in the city. I want to know what species exactly are the Audubon Society mostly concerned with. Because I love animals and I’m also a soccer player. I’m kind of torn between—I also love my children and if the fields are toxic why the City Planning the St. Ignatis [unintelligible] I would imagine there has been studies done when they built that. I’m also forced out of the city to play in a league of my age. I play in Marin County in [unintelligible]. That field has been around I think about seven years. A representative of Recreation and Park made it clear that with building these fields in San Francisco you’re going to alter the frequency of their usage would be three-fold. I would like to add please do not deny this opportunity which the Fisher family is providing us for the future generation of our San Francisco athletes. Thank you. Leslie Dodie: Good evening. My name is Leslie Dodie. I’ve been a resident and registered voter in San Francisco for more than 40 years. I’m a homeowner and I appreciate the interest of the Recreation and Park Commission members to “maintain beautiful parks and preserve the environment for the well-being of our diverse community for the recreation of all San Franciscans”. Why would you good people who are to protect our park
want to authorize the removal of soil, grass, trees, and other plants that provide much needed habitat for the wildlife [unintelligible] and supports and exclude the recreational use of the area for all people except those interested in one sport. It seems to me this plan is inappropriate and promotes the unnecessary loss of multi-use park land for the construction of a totally artificial environment that could be be build anywhere with adequate space, maybe even over an old parking lot. Thank you for your consideration to reject the present design for the renovation of the soccer fields. Thank you. **Martin Reid:** Good evening, my name is Martin Reid and I have a small business, Willie Louis Brown Jr. Community Consultant Agency. And so I represent the African American community here in San Francisco and I’ve got a phone call that said can you be at the Board of Supervisors tonight? I said, yeah, I really didn’t know the issue, you know what I’m saying, but I know our community is in such dire straits that I’m compelled. My brother works for Recreation and Park so it’s really great the renovation you guys have been doing all over the city because you know this kids, man, I took my little girl to Hamilton. It’s beautiful, you know what I’m saying, but I think we need to shed more light on education and I think you should support all these people you know what I mean and come up with an alternate plan or something that we can all live with so we can all smile and be happy and I know you’re brilliant people and have alternate ideas, especially him—look at him, he’s smiling, you know what I’m saying. It’s a pleasure—I helped Willie Brown get elected. I helped Jerry Brown get elected. I worked for Frank Jordan but I’m just saying this so you can have an understanding of where I come from. I’m going to end it right here. You know, I’m an African American, I’ve been in and out of prison all my life but I’ve also been active politically, you know, so I’m back. You guys have a good evening, come up with an alternate plan. **Roberto Graves:** Good evening. My name is Roberto Graves and I’m with the San Jose Earthquakes who is in firmly support of the renovation to the Beach Chalet soccer fields. The San Jose Earthquakes actually is very proud of finding talent in the Bay Area. We have Ramino Corrales from Salinas, Joe Cannon from Palo Alto, just recently we signed Steven Bettashore from San Jose. We need somebody from San Francisco and this is something, the soccer fields, give the resources for youth to develop that talent and really give us a chance to pick and put them on a national stage. On a personal level I also coach a team in the San Francisco Soccer Football League, one of the oldest leagues in the country, founded in 1902. I’m very proud of that league. But we’re running out of fields. More and more, youth need them. I want to give priority to youth but as an adult I want to play too and I want my growing youth who become adult San Francisco residents to stay here and be able to play and we need those fields. I look forward to having this renovation, hoping that it will expand to other projects. Again, thank you and let’s move forward on this as soon as possible. **Steve Symanovich:** Good evening Commissioners. My name is Steve Symanovich. I’m a 30-year resident of San Francisco, journalist and a soccer dad and my girls are currently playing their practice games on Beach Chalet and they’re playing their regular games at Crocker-Amazon so I’m getting to see the worst and the best of what San Francisco has to offer in soccer. One thing I’ll say that surprises me. I think someone spoke emotionally about Crocker-Amazon. It’s one of the most beautiful places in the city right now. When I go there it’s not just for soccer kids, it’s not just for soccer adults and their fans, there are all kinds of people who go there now. It’s senior citizens who are exercising around the perimeters, it’s people who bring their entire families or bring their small families from the neighborhood with the picnic lunch. There are people who just stop by and enjoy the feel of the place and the scene. So I hope you’re going to see that this is a good thing for the city and something we can all be proud of. Thank you. **Anmarie Mabbutt:** Good evening Commissioners. My name is Anmarie Mabbutt. I am a resident of San Francisco and I’m here today to speak in opposition to tonight’s planned approval of the Beach Chalet soccer fields. Ordinance 060255 approved the initial City Fields gifts in place for Garfield Square and Silver Terrace. The City Fields partnership MOU and the delegation of authority over all future gifts to the RPD General Manager. This portion of the ordinance appears to be an improper delegation of the Board of Supervisors responsibility under Section 10.100-305B of the administrative code to approve all gifts in excess of $10,000. Furthermore the Citizen’s Right to Know Act of 1998 imposes very specific sign posting and/or resident mailing requirements prior to the approval of major public works projects and the expenditure of public funds thereon. If today’s approval of the conceptual improvement plans of the Beach Chalet fields is an approval subject to the requirements of the Citizen’s Right to Know Act of 1998 I respectfully request the Commission reject any approval of the conceptual improvement plans until the public has been properly informed of this project and any scheduled approval thereof. Thank you for your time. **Jan Van Hassett:** Good evening. My name is Jan and that’s Illiana and Cathy. We just came from a soccer game at our school. I’m with turning the Beach Chalet into a turf field because I feel like that many of us have broken our ankles and have been injured on those type of grass fields and we are actually turning our school into a turf field so we want to be able to play with our surroundings. Thank you. **Brian Richard:** Good evening Commissioners. My name is Brian Richard. I’m a father of three daughters here in the city. I’m also a coach and we’ve been playing here for 10 years now. We’ve been all over Northern California and most of all—the best pitches we play at are all turf pitches. Most of the grass fields here in the city are full of holes. When we go to play at a field most of my kids on all three of my teams from 14 through 9
year-old, when they get to go and play on a turf pitch they’re completely excited to go. When we have to play at a grass field I get a lot of complaints and we’ve had some very bad experiences with a lot of these pitches. I strongly support and really hope the Beach Chalet renovation gets approved. It’s something we’ve been looking forward to for a long time with fall and a great tradition of Crocker Amazon pitch, South Sunset, Silver Terrace which we even go to when we don’t even practice I’ll take my daughter to these places over Beach Chalet over Delores Park over Eureka Valley, wherever there are grass fields we go to Franklin, we go to where the turf pitches are because they are quality pitches. Also, it’s not just soccer, it’s lacrosse, I see American football, I see old-timers out there 70 plus playing as well as young kids. So it is not just one group or one sport it is a huge community and it’s really what brings us together and it’s a positive experience. Thank you so much. Hiroshi Fukuda: Good evening Commissioners, my name is Hiroshi Fukuda and I’m the President of the Richmond Community Association. I’d like to read this letter. The Richmond Community Associate RCA is extremely disappointed that a categorical exemption has been issued for this project. The proposed project will have a major negative impact on the west end of Golden Gate Park the surrounding residential areas. The 60 foot light towers will be a major disruption every evening until 10:00 p.m. Please note the Giants only light up ATT Park less than a 100 days a year. The Lights tower clearly indicate the project is to increase revenues and much of it from adult players from outside San Francisco. The primary purpose of Golden Gate Park should be for the enjoyment of San Francisco resident. San Francisco has one of the highest population densities in the United States and that’s why natural Open Space is limited. Golden Gate Park needs to be protected for future generations. In closing, as past speakers have said it’s critically important that a complete Environmental Impact Report be completed and also that the report from the State regarding the safety of the turfs needs to be considered. And we have nothing against kids—kids need playing fields. There are other sites that can be considered. Schoolyards that are not being used, they could be considered, the Candlestick Park area. Ernestine Weiss: Hi, my name is Ernestine Weiss and I had two brothers that played ball forever and my mother was a young widow and that kept them out of trouble, let me tell you. And so I’m all for ball player and there’s a crying need for soccer in this city. It has become a world-wide phenomenon, it’s caught fire so rapidly, it’s really unbelievable. So I encourage you to produce as many soccer fields and ball fields as you can in this city but keeping aware of the environment too which I worry about. Another thing is in my park, Ferry Park, there’s a crying need for the kids and adults to play after work so I’m recommending very strongly that you devote the Music Concourse which is the south lawn which is never used to give the people a chance to play ball there and that would help out community a whole lot. Thank you. Pam Hemphill: Hi, I’m Pam Hemphill, I’m a Commissioner on the Animal Control and Welfare Commission and we met back on January 14th and discussed the plan. So thank you very much. Judy Burkowitz: Good evening Commissioners, Mr. President. Judy Burkowitz, Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods. As a couple of you may be aware I do live right next to Garfield Park, artificial turf fields, and I have firsthand experience in dealing with them. I can tell you right now that this is not—that the arguments that we hear today about kids and sports are mostly specious, a diversion, and a red-herring, because what this is is a revenue stream. That’s why these fields are going in. Most of the people who play at Garfield Park after 6:00 in the evening are semi-pro teams, league play from out of town, from San Mateo and not children. Once the striping is down for these fields it’s only one sport that can be played there, other sports cannot be played there until a grass turf field which you can put softball and soccer striping down, one after the other. A full EIR is the least you can do on a proposed project which is contrary to both the Golden Gate Master Plan and the San Francisco General Plan. So thank you very much. Greg Miller: Good afternoon Commissioners, my name is Greg Miller. I’ve live in San Francisco for 35 years. Please do not approve this project. We should definitely renovate the Beach Chalet using modern techniques to produce safe and playable grass fields for our kids. It would then retain a multi-use space that is well integrated with the surrounding parklands. The proposed project is not a renovation, it is a massive transformation of a beautiful meadow into a specialized machine designed to extract the maximum hours of soccer play. Almost a quarter million watts of field lighting would forever banish the gentle shades of evening. Seven acres of grass and flowers will be replaced with a surface that closely resembles a billiard table. This project will inflict permanent damage on the character of the park and the nearby beach. Please do not sacrifice our wonderful parklands in the pursuit of budgetary targets. Thank you for your time. Nancy Weurfel: I am Nancy...
Weurfel. I request that you vote against this conceptual design for renovating the Beach Chalet fields for these reasons: The Department has not acknowledged the enormous public outcry about the proposed sports stadium idea for the field renovations. We have just handed to you letters from 80 neighborhood environmental and preservation groups, petitions signed by over 1400 people, personal letters from over 160 people expressing their concerns about this project and their love of Golden Gate Park. The Department has chosen not to request a full EIR of the potential impacts on the park thereby denying you the knowledge of possible alternative designs and mitigations to protect this historic resource. The Department has chosen to abandon a part of its mission statement, namely to preserve the environment. We are very disappointed in the lack of RPD stewardship to maintain the park’s natural woodlands and meadows for future generations. How selfish to choose to destroy the heritage that has survived for so long.

Catherine Howard: Catherine Howard, San Francisco Ocean Edge. This hearing today is not about soccer. It is about the future of Golden Gate Park. Will Golden Gate Park be continuously fragmented into smaller and smaller pieces until it is no longer recognizable as the park envisioned by its creators? And what is that vision? In 1873 William Hammond Hall said a park should be an agglomeration of hill and dale, meadow, lawn, wood, [unintelligible] presenting a series of sylvan and pastoral view calculated to banish all thought of urban objects. If you go out to the Beach Chalet recreation field today that is what you will see. This is the essence of Golden Gate Park. You are called on today to uphold a vision of the park as it was conceived and as it has been beloved by San Franciscans for over 140 years. Fix the natural grass playing fields, find other playing fields for soccer, but please do not destroy Golden Gate Park. Thank you. Bob Frieze: My name is Bob Frieze, I live on 48th Avenue above the west end of Golden Gate Park and I’ve lived in the city since 1972, usually near the park, and I use it a lot. My kids played soccer at the Polo Field when they were young. I don’t mind soccer at all, I think it’s great. My concern mainly is the lighting and the effect of the lighting on the surrounding area including people who live nearby and animals and other living beings. I think the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club’s assessments are pretty accurate as to what’s likely to happen if this project goes forward. It seems to be too big and I agree it’s out of character with the west end of the park. So I hope you’ll at least delay it for an EIR if don’t decline for approval all together. Thank you.

In addition to the public comment heard today, the emails attached at the end of the minutes are part of the public comment on this item.

Commissioner Levitan: I sort of have an array of thoughts so bear with me. You know, when I’m out in the community the number one thing I hear as a Commissioner and as a parent is that we need ballfields and so when people find out in my capacity as a parent that I’m a Commissioner I really hear about it. And I’m trying to take my opinion out of this in my capacity as a parent of a child who is now a soccer player and who will start practice at the Beach Chalet in just a couple of weeks. I’m born and raised in the city, I live in the house I grew up in in the Richmond District. Very few people played soccer when I was growing up, just the boys, and very few of the schools at that. But even then all those tragically many years ago nobody wanted to go out to the Beach Chalet and in fact that end of the park and as I say I grew up in the Richmond, I was in the park all the time. We didn’t go to that end of the park. And so you fast forward now however many years later, 30 plus, and I think about how this Department did not keep up with the demands of our society, of our recreational society through no fault of this Department, it’s just—I watched it or somehow didn’t see it happen. One minute most of our outdoor activity was on hardscape and suddenly now soccer and lacrosse and baseball have taken on levels of interest that it’s so wonderful to see but suddenly we find ourselves woefully unprepared and that’s why frankly having something like the Fields Foundation there to help us is so wonderful.

But what I have to do now is sort of look at this as a Commissioner and I personally don’t see this as much about soccer versus not soccer, what I see this as is sort of a resistance to change and for how progressive and forward thinking is this city is when it comes to change we cannot stand it. And this reminds me of a few years ago when we introduced the disk golf course in Golden Gate Park, I heard a lot of these very same points. We need an environmental review, this is not what John McLaren had in mind, etc. And it frustrates me and it troubles me just a little bit as well that we’re not willing to be a little more open-minded about what the changing needs and demands are of the times that we live in. And while I consider Golden Gate Park to be a pristine destination place of passive relief I also think it’s important to think about what the needs and the demands are for our culture today and I am raising children in San Francisco and I think it’s fair to say that Golden Gate Park should be accommodating to them as well as to grownup who want to play soccer. It is a soccer field that’s out there but because it is in such terrible condition we can’t use it as much as we need to. We’re talking about seven acres out of 1017 acres. And I also think about what our job is as Commissioners and that is to bring people to our facilities, it is to increase access to
what we have and we cannot say with a straight face that we care about healthy San Francisco and fighting obesity and frankly keeping families in San Francisco when we are looking at an opportunity not only to improve a soccer field but also to improve a park. I feel that if we do this field renovation we’re going to bring so many more people to the west end of the park. To me that’s sort of an unintended consequence and a great one.

So I am deeply appreciative of the City Fields Foundation and the Fisher family for doing this. I also want to acknowledge Supervisor Eric Mar for his leadership in this as well. I acknowledge and appreciate the concerns of the opponents today and I struggle with some of those environmental issues you’ve raised but in my opinion what has been raised in favor of this outweighs the matter you have brought up. So I will be strongly in favor of this.

**Commissioner Sullivan:** I have to say I sympathize with positions on both sides of this issue and really respect the environmentalists and the environmental groups that have spoken tonight and that have spoken at other venues. And I get the sylvan image of William Hammond Hall and his view of what urban parks should be. And I don’t take a back seat to anybody in my commitment to the environment and really believe in that. But I think urban parks are not just hill and dale and trees and grass, they’re also a place for tennis and fly fishing and lawn bowling and roller skating and so on. They’re places that have to be activated and I wish that there was in my perfect world we would have soccer fields and lacrosse fields and ball fields that were entirely native grass and they would be in great shape and we’d have plenty of them for kids and adults—I’m not against adults—to play on. But we have to as Commissioners we have to make hard decisions and we have to work with reality and the reality is we don’t have that and I agree with Commissioner Levitan which is that as Commissioners we also have to respond to the changes in the city and changing needs and demands in our parks and recreational areas and I think it’s beyond doubt that there is an incredible increase in demand for these fields and we do have kids and adults who are unable to play or they’re playing on substandard dangerous fields or they’re going outside of the city. And it’s our job to balance the desire for what might be with the kind of realities that we face and when I do that balancing I come down in favor of this project.

I’m in part mindful of the fact that we are not—we are taking, if you believe that this is an artificial use of the park, well then what we’re doing is we’re taking one artificial use that’s there right now which is the grass field that’s there right now and the trees that are there right now are artificial space in Golden Gate Park as I think about 95 percent of Golden Gate Park is artificial. I think the oak woodlands in the corner of the park, the northeast corner are about the only part of the park that isn’t artificial. So it’s a tough decision. We have to do some balancing but I think it comes down in favor of this project.

**Commissioner Martin:** Yes. You know, I had a chance to listen to everybody talk about this project and I’ve known the park myself for all these years and watched what everybody did and there’s so many things that we have to look at and reality of what we have to do and if you stop and look at history and life there’s a lot of things have changed according to what is the needs and what the things that happened to do and that’s what happens in a lot of cases and it’s reality. So I think what’s been said and what’s we heard I think it’s time for the change to go ahead for the people to move this situation forward and I definitely would go with it.

**Commissioner Bonilla:** Yes. My family is not going to be happy with my decision here today. I come from a family of naturalists, they are very strong supporters of native plants and natural areas and they have communicated to me time and time again that when it came down to voting on this issue that they strongly let me know where they stand and they really believe that I should do everything in my power to keep Golden Gate Park the way it is. That has been there view for some time that they have expressed to me.

But on the other hand I have worked in the Mission District for a nonprofit organization for the last 30 years and every day of my life in that neighborhood in the Mission District. What I have heard time and time again and which people have not allowed me to be off the hook on is that I would not be doing my job here on the Recreation and Park Commission if I didn’t do something to make more fields, more soccer fields available for the residents of the Mission District, the Excelsior, the outer Mission. There is a lot of pressure that I feel in regards to the need for more soccer fields and where my family are really personally opposed to anything synthetic I really feel that the time has come where I have to make a decision that I think is in the best interest of the community that I serve and the community that I’ve been serving for the last 30 years has told me time and time again and I’m sure they’re never going to let me off the hook and I would be greatly chastised if I didn’t do the best that I could, if I didn’t make a decision in favor of having fields that could be used year around and that would be more accessible to the low
income communities that I serve. So I when it comes time for a decision to me made I will risk the ire of my family and vote in favor of the renovation of the fields at Golden Gate Park.

Commissioner Buell: Thank you. Seeing no other Commissioners comments let me make the following comments. If you listen broadly to the testimony we heard today and the first comment I made that this is a meeting of the Recreation and Parks Department I think you heard those who support this wearing a recreation hat and those who wanted further environmental look to be wearing the park hat. We sit in the middle and have to take into consideration both. This is a seven acre facility that is a recreation facility within a park and it’s being renovated. We can disagree on whether it’s extensive or not extensive but I don’t think that’s the point. The fact is that we have philanthropic money and bond money that’s available to renovate a recreation facility and the staff I think has done a credible job in looking at how do you mitigate to the extent possible the impacts of that recreation facility on the environment, by lowering the levels of the lights, by the fences, by planting trees, by taking into consideration the parking issues. We’ve heard testimony that this is consistent with the Master Plan, we have a Planning Department that’s provided a negative declaration on it. So in the end we have a responsibility to look at what is the most responsible way to renovate that soccer field and I believe the staff has done a very credible job in doing that. So I too come down on the side of recommending approval of this. But it isn’t easy and it’s hard to say that you’re all in favor of soccer or all in favor of the environment. The reality is that we are the Recreation and Park Department Commission and we have to make those decisions.

On motion by Commissioner Martin and duly seconded, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

RES. NO. 1004-010

RESOLVED, That this Commission does approve the conceptual design for the renovation of the Beach Chalet Athletic Fields in Golden Gate Park.

The Commission recessed at 7:16 p.m.
The Commission reconvened at 7:27 p.m.

Commissioner Buell: We’re going to reconvene the meeting of the Recreation and Park Commission. I want to clarify the record on the last item when I said the Planning Department had issued a negative declaration they issued a categorical exemption so I want to record to reflect that the President of the Commission figured out the right words. Now, it’s been expressed by some Commissioners that we try to expedite all matters before so I’m going to ask everybody to be succinct and clear, we don’t want to shortcut democracy but we want to be succinct and clear. With that where are we?

SAN FRANCISCO ZOO
Tanya Peterson: Good evening. Tanya Peterson from the San Francisco Zoological Society. I did want to update you briefly on the Tony the tiger status. I don’t know if you read that he was removed from his mote. He is doing well he though unfortunately is starting to show symptoms of dementia so we are thus making some changes to his mote, actually putting up a visual barrier so that he’s not inclined to go back down into the dry mote area. I did want to announce that this weekend the Sesame Street characters will be at the Zoo and already our members are expressing their excitement. Bert, Ernie and Grover will be coming to the Zoo for special photographs, meet and greet and also lead a treasure hunt through the Zoo. On Saturday between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. Zoo members are invited to come to be the first ones to take photos and we’ve already had members jockeying for first front line with Bert and Ernie. We will be celebrating Earth Day next week on Thursday, April 26th, this will also be the official opening of Greenie’s Conservation Corner. This is the area at the Zoo now committed to sustainable practices including an organic browse garden, solar and wind-powered features and rain capturing barrels. Speaking of solar we are going to try out two solar-powered trams for possible use for VIP tours and otherwise. We worked with the solar electrical company of Illinois and we obtained these trams for free in trade for special advertising that will fit in with the Zoo’s mission. We are presently testing the two carts for suitability and once done we will hopefully receive permanent trams one of which will be ADA complaint.

Plans are underway for our annual fundraiser called Zoofest. This year’s theme is Wild About Parrots to highlight the conservation story of South American Parrots in anticipation of the reopening of the new South American aviary. As you may recall, the WPA building has been closed for a couple years due to asbestos and other issues. Due to a [unintelligible] gift we have been able to improve those issues and we hope to open the building relatively soon. The aviary’s staff first priority will be to house the Zoo’s South American species as well as rescued parrots.
At the Zoo kickoff San Francisco gallerist Gram Arhader is hosting a benefactor party next week and Mark Bitner the author of the Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill will be passing out his book as well as available for Zoo singing. So I appreciate their generosity.

Lastly, with respect to attendance March attendance actually tracked fairly closely to where we were budgeting at over 55,000 visitors for the month. Much like recent weather patterns, however, April attendance has been more variable. This month’s free day, a warm Wednesday, hosted over 10,000 free visitors and other days of spring break saw as much as 3000 visitors per day. Unfortunately though last Sunday with the Great Highway’s closure due to the City Street program as well as rainy skies we had as little as 138 visitors on a Sunday. That’s a big miss for us on a weekend day and can be as much as $30,000 in lost revenue. The good news is that membership sales are up and March sales actually beat our projections by $60,000, thus the Society remains on track to end the fiscal year with a balanced budget. And with that I give you my expedited and brief report.

Commissioner Buell: Thank you very much and thanks for sticking around for four hours.

This item was for discussion only.

JOSEPH L ALIOTO PERFORMING ARTS PIAZZA
Denny Kern, Director of Operations, presented this item to the Commission. The Item before you is discussion and possible action to approve a temporary encroachment request permit from the San Francisco Arts Commission to install temporary art installation entitled ‘Three Heads, Six Arms’, a sculpture from the San Francisco sister city of Shanghai, Peoples Republic of China at the Joseph L. Alioto Performing Arts Piazza from April 26th of this year until May 15th of next year. This installation is related to the long-standing history being honored between Shanghai and San Francisco during this year’s sister city celebration. The sculpture is depicted both in your package and then a picture here on the overhead is a copper sculpture, very large, dimensions measuring approximately 26’ by 59’ by 32’ and it weighs approximately 15 tons. The Department and the Arts Commission have reviewed the weight distribution limits of the plaza and this sculpture can be safely installed on the east-west centerline of the plaza’s center strip which is the decomposed granite strip in the middle on hardscape, on the Larkin Street side, without damaging the underlying garage structure.

If approved the Arts Commission further requests that pending evaluation of the project and its installation during the one-year exhibit that this temporary encroachment permit be considered for extension until November 15th of 2011 if the Arts Commission decides they wish to pursue this potential extension they would bring such an extension request back to the Commission at a later date.

The fees are the customary $500 temporary encroachment fee and the staff recommendation is approval.

Commissioner Buell: I just have a question. Is that—is it something that would be fenced off or can people climb on it?

Denny Kern: Well, the Arts Commission intention right now is not to fence it off. It is as you can see it’s easily climbable.

Commissioner Buell: Right. That’s why I asked the question.

Denny Kern: We’ve posed this concern to the Arts Commission. They believe that if this does become a problem they would have to put up fencing of some sort. They will have signage out there indication not to—you know, it’s not for climbing. Although interestingly it is positioned between the two children’s Playgrounds on the—

Commissioner Buell: Whose budget does the liability insurance premium come out of? I’m just curious, if something were to happen there which Department would be liable?

Denny Kern: It would go to the Arts Commission but it would probably be covered under the city’s umbrella—we’re self-insured as a city.
Commissioner Buell: We wouldn’t be putting—defending a lawsuit in our budget, that’s what I want to make sure.

Denny Kern: Let me defer to our City Attorney.

Virginia Dario Elizondo: Good evening Commission. Just by coincidence I happened to do the gift agreement for this piece of art. Actually the city has purchased fine arts insurance and extra insurance. The Arts Commission, my understanding when our office raised some of the security concerns is they plan to have regular security patrolling the statue. So we hope for the best.

On motion by Commissioner Harrison and duly seconded, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

**RES. NO. 1004-011**

RESOLVED, That this Commission does approve a temporary encroachment permit request from the San Francisco Arts Commission to install a temporary art installation -- "Three Heads Six Arms", a sculpture from San Francisco Sister City Shanghai, Peoples Republic of China -- at Joseph L. Alioto Performing Arts Piazza from April 26, 2010 to May 15, 2011.

**JOSEPH L. ALIOTO PERFORMING ARTS PIAZZA**

Nicole Avril, Director of Partnerships and Resource Development, presented this item to the Commission. I’m here from the Partnership and Resource Development Department. I’m going to present three Items today for your approval or hopefully your approval. The first is the skating rink RFP. Just a quick overview. We’re looking to activate Civic Center and we’ve looked to other successful plazas like Justin Herman and Union Square. They both host a seasonal ice skating rink so we’d like to issue a RFP for respondents to propose a seasonal ice skating rink and or—a temporary ice skating rink—and or a temporary short-term roller skating rink. We’ve reached out to the Mayor’s office, they’re in strong favor of the initiative and we’ll work closely with the burgeoning Civic Center Community Benefit Development Working Group, excuse me, District Working Group, to make sure that we’re adding their needs.

We don’t know what the financial benefits are at this time. That will be part of the proposals we receive back. In Union Square they received upwards of $42,000 and in Justin Herman Plaza they received approximately $25,000. The key lease terms we’re asking, in response to your comments at the last Commission meeting, we’re asking respondents to propose a lease term that’s adequate to amortize any capital investment and then we’d also of course like to receive the greater of base rent or percentage rent.

That’s actually it for that one.

Commissioner Sullivan: Just a few observations. First of all I think this is a big improvement over what we saw last time so thanks for working on that. And I think I would just say the more kind of modular you can make this in the sense of it’s still a little bit of a we’re not sure what it’s going to be other than the ice rink. We can see it seems like there’s a natural add-on of the roller rink but it’s still a little bit unclear exactly when the start of this would start and when it would end. So I think the more modular you can make it so that we could potentially pick and choose maybe what comes back looks great but I think that would be great.

Nicole Avril: Absolutely.

Commissioner Sullivan: Another thought is this is the center of Civic Center which is a great beaux arts complex, so tasteful would be good. Lots of advertising around the periphery especially if it wasn’t done in the right way, that would not be good from my perspective. And I think I had one more thought but I can’t remember what it was, so that concludes my comments.

Ernestine Weiss: I heartily endorse that, I used to be a speed skater when I was a young girl and I love ice skating, so I’m for that all the way. And to use more community benefit district’s money is very important, that’s what you should be concentrating on, not just this project but a lot of other ones because we need all the help we can get. So go for it. Alioto Plaza is a beautiful space for that.
Commissioner Buell: This is the second Item in a row you’ve supported. Are you trying to sweeten us up for something? [laughter] Just checking.

Commissioner Sullivan: I just remembered my third comment which is I urge you to kind of carefully look at the uses that Civic Center has throughout the year, you know, major events. I know Pride is in June and that area is completely covered during the Pride Day. So as you pick the start and the end of this use—which I love the idea of energizing an under-utilized space—just keep those in mind please.

Nicole Avril: Absolutely.

On motion by Commissioner Levitan and duly seconded, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

RESOLVED, That this Commission does approve a Request For Proposal for a seasonal ice skating rink and possible roller skating rink at Joseph L. Alioto Performing Arts Piazza.

CANDLESTICK PARK
Nicole Avril, Director of Partnerships and Resource Development, presented this item to the Commission. I’m asking the Commission to approve a permit for KFOG’s Kaboom in Candlestick Park. As you may have read in the news Kaboom which has been happening for decades on our Port, Piers 30 and 32, can no longer host the event due to structural issues at the Piers and so they are looking for another venue to host the event. They’d like to stay in San Francisco and there are special considerations given that it’s a fireworks show in addition to a concert which means that Candlestick Park is one of the few locations that can host the event. We’d love to host the event at Candlestick Park, we think it’s a San Francisco favorite, and we also want to showcase Candlestick Park as a place that people can hold events especially as the 49ers may consider moving at some point in time. We’d like to diversify its usage. It will take place on May 22nd from approximately 4:00 to 10:00 p.m. and the headliner this year will be Melissa Etheridge. She may or may not be a favorite of yours. We’ll reach out to all of the following associations to make sure that we address any concerns that they have. We agreed to reduce our permit fee. They paid the Port $17,500 last year. Typically we charge $40,000 for the parking lot but in return for a reduced fee—they do the event at cost, it’s not a money-maker for them—in return for the reduced permit fee we’ll be receiving approximately $210,000 in in-kind promotions which is pretty fantastic, we’re just thrilled to get the Recreation and Park word out there. We’ll actually see revenue in lots of other ways. We’ll be able to promote our fundraisers, our summer camps, anything that we want to—if you’d like us to promote something, let us know, it will come in the form of PSAs, Public Service Announcements, at least ten a month, listings on their websites and also promotions in their email newsletters that go to 82,000 approximately. So it’s a pretty good tradeoff.

We’re going to partner with the 49ers to do the operations. The 49ers are doing the operations at cost so what we’ll be doing is giving the 49ers the first $20,000 in parking lot revenue and then we’ll be splitting anything above $20,000.

Commissioner Levitan: I just want to say quickly that I am a Foghead and this is my radio station and I think this is great. They are masterful at their sort of outreach, saturation [unintelligible]. Their website is great, their email is great. So this is neat.

Phil Ginsburg: I just wanted to just offer on this point of the marketing resources my profound thanks to Nicole and to her team for negotiation such an incredible deal here. We are a Department that has no marketing or public relations budget to speak of and this is a very, very creative way to generate some desperately needed marketing resources.

On motion by Commissioner Martin and duly seconded, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

RESOLVED, That this Commission does approve a permit for KFOG’s Kaboom (a concert and fireworks show) to take place in the Candlestick Park parking lot May 22, 2010.

PUSH CART CONCESSIONS – JOSEPH L. ALIOTO PERFORMING, GOLDEN GATE PARK, JUSTIN HERMAN PLAZA AND MISSION DOLORES PARK
Nicole Avril, Director of Partnerships and Resource Development, presented this item to the Commission. With the food cart permits our goal is to activate our public spaces, provide amenities in areas where there aren’t amenities and generate revenue for the Department. We’d like all of our menus to feature healthy and sustainable food as well as interesting ethnic cuisines. We did publish an RFP on July 16th of 2009 and you approved the selection of the folks that I’m going to be presenting today in February. So what I’m asking you to do today is approve the permits that we’ve written with the selected vendors.

So you know, we are accepting proposals on an ongoing basis. At the end of my presentation I’ll actually give you a snapshot of the folks that will be coming back to you on May 6th. So if you’ve got a favorite food do let us know, we’ll encourage them to apply. The folks whose permits we’re looking for approval today are Annie’s Hotdogs which is hotdogs, sandwiches, salads and fresh brewed coffee; La Cocina, which is a organization in the Mission District that supports local entrepreneurs, low-income entrepreneurs; Let’s be Frank which is grass-fed organic sausages and hotdogs; and Amagille, which is actually vegetarian Japanese wraps.

We’ll be putting Annie’s hotdogs to start behind the Band Shell; we’ll be putting Let’s be Frank at the Conservatory of Flowers entrance; at Spreckles Lake we’ll be putting Annie’s Hotdogs. At Mission Delores we’ll have La Cocina. At Justin Herman Plaza it will be La Cocina and Amagille and at Civic Center it will be Annie Hotdogs.

The financial impact. We’ll be generating at least $113,000 from these four permits next year. Key terms, they vary. In your staff report there’s a breakdown of what we’ll be getting from each vendor. We’ll be approving all equipment, menu, prices, signage and hours of operations and they’ll be required to clean and maintain the space in which their foods carts are parked.

And then lastly I just wanted to let you know that coming up on May 6th we’ll be asking you to approve the selection of Blue Bottle Coffee, Little Guys Sliders, Sam’s Chowder-Mobile, and Waffle-Mania for behind the Band Shell. The Botanical Society has actually an interesting proposal, they’re partnering with Tofer Delany to do food carts, to have a food cart in front of the Botanical Gardens. Mission Delores we’ll have Blue Bottle Coffee. Duboce Park will have healthy juices. Civic Center we’ll have Leba which is a super-interesting, innovative falafel truck and Blue Bottle Coffee hopefully. We’re still in the words but we’re working on it. And then Justin Herman Plaza just pulled out, so, as of this afternoon. So stuff is coming up.

Commissioner Buell: Great.

Michael Addario: Hello Commissioners. My name is Mike Addario, I’m the chairperson of the San Francisco Street Artist Liaison Committee and originally we had some concerns about the location. During the last almost four hours I had a chance to meet Nicholas and we talked and we think they were alleviated. So at this point three carts might work. We’re looking at the location and we think that might work. The only other thing I would ask is that what I found that when these RFPs go out the outreach has been a little shy. Really, I think there has to be some push of telling the merchants in the area what’s about to happen. They get a little annoyed once things like this come up and they don’t know about it. So I think that’s something that has to be done in the future. Thank you.

Ernestine Weiss: Yeah, Ernestine Weiss again. I want to echo his comments about the merchants. Justin Herman Plaza is a unique area. It is surrounded by a lot of restaurants and a snack food restaurant, etc. So I would say please consult the merchants before you do this. Thank you.

On motion by Commissioner Martin and duly seconded, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

RES. NO. 1004-014

RESOLVED, That this Commission does approve permits with Annie's Hot Dogs, La Cocina, Let's Be Frank and Onigilly for the operation of push cart concessions in various park locations.

GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT

Phil Ginsburg: Let me start off with some incredible news. Yesterday we learned that the California Cultural and Historic Endowment has awarded the Recreation and Park Department $500,000 towards the continued renovation of the Palace of Fine Arts. The city in partnership with the Maybeck Foundation as you know has undertaken a $21 million renovation of the Palace and this is just a terrific result and our partnership with the Maybeck Foundation gets closer and closer and I really want to thank our capital team, Toni Moran, Toks Ajike, for all their incredible work and stewardship. The Palace of Fine Arts renovation is renovation is really happening.
Workreation and rec resources. Our staff just completed the selection of work-reation participants for summer. This is the depending upon how you count, either the 50th anniversary or 51st anniversary or work-reation. It’s a program that is now currently funded by the Department of Children, Youth, and Family. We have the oldest workforce development, one of the oldest workforce development programs in the entire city. We will be hiring—well, 369 youths applied for approximately 100 available positions, mostly as junior camp counselors, the summer season, and their work begins on June 7th.

Some staff news. As Vice President Harrison knows Ramon Gonzalez who has been our Head Gardener in Conservatory Valley is retiring after 40 years with the Department caring for Golden Gate Park. I’ve had the pleasure of getting to know him over the last few months. I actually went out and planted flowers with him in Conservatory Valley one morning. He has been the captain of Conservatory Valley for the last nine years and anybody who walks by there and you see the designs and you see the flowers and you see that place pop. It is truly remarkable. I am still a little perplexed at how we are going to replace Ramon but I’m very confident that there are a lot of very, very, very talented gardeners on our team who are going to be the next Ramon. Anyway, we are going to honor him with a luncheon tomorrow where I will be presenting him with a commendation from the Mayor and thanking him for his 40 years of outstanding service. Vice President Harrison I’m certain you will be there an all other Commissioners are welcome. It is at I am told the San Francisco Rod and Gun Club. I am told correctly.

Upcoming events in our parks between now and the next Commission meeting. Saturday, April 17th because of the great leadership of Commissioner Levitan Stanford Football’s Cardinal and White Spring game will be at Kezar Stadium. I was out this morning with Mayor and Coach Harbough, they were doing a little bit of last-minute promotion for the event. This is going to be fantastic. Stanford is one of the nation’s premier college football teams and a great educational institution to boot. Stanford has generously in addition to paying our full permit fees and Kezar, Nancy, Stanford has also generously committed to donating over $10,000 to fund the recreation scholarship fund with ensures that no child is turned away from our programs based on the ability or inability to pay. Admission is free. Kickoff is at 2:00 o’clock p.m. and if I know this town is a little divisive between our Cal fans and our Stanford fans but at this game you can only root for Stanford.

Sunday, April 18th, the next Sunday Streets at Bayview Playground. As Tanya noted Sunday Streets in Golden Gate Park was a bit of a washout although I will have you know I was out there with my family, we did a 6-mile loop of the park in the rain and got to meet and say hi to some of the Sunday Streets participants that were out there bravely. But this coming Sunday it is at Bayview Playground, it will be the main hub for the event and it’s going to include children’s games, yoga, hula hoops and interactive eco-activity led by the cast of Wicked and we will be out there promoting our summer programming and our scholarship and out online accounts.

Beginning April 27th at a park in Ernestine’s neighborhood Peter Pan, a whole new way to view theater. The production’s 360 degree theater offers audience members a chance to experience Peter Pan like they’ve never done before. Also, on May 12th, mark your calendars, Produce the Producers will host a special show and behind the scenes look at the production as a special benefit to support the Recreation and Park Department and San Francisco Parks Trust.

Lastly, April 30th an open house at Joe DiMaggio Playground where the public can come see the latest designs and get updates on the library project and meet with Supervisor David Chiu and city staff between 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. And I forgot to mention in talking about the game tomorrow, the Stanford game, Stanford v. Stanford game tomorrow at Kezar, look closely at mid-field where you will see the Recreation and Park Department’s logo adorning the field.

Two more very, very quick items. Let’s start with Nancy Weurfel here who I’m hoping has drunk some of Ernestine’s Kool-Aid and is going to come up here with love and happiness and is going to talk about a resolution which we are very comfortable with that PROSAC has supported and then Katie Patruoni is going to offer you a very, very brief, very brief budget update because it’s important that you know where we are with the budget because we got a supplemental instruction from the Mayor. So Nancy, I’ll start with you.

Nancy Wuerfel: I prefer champagne over Kool-Aid but I appreciate the thought. Nancy Weurfel. Our Les Hilger, Chair of PROSAC, couldn’t stay this late and asked me to read into the record for the Commission our
recommendations having to do with the contingency fund for the Open Space Fund. Les has been meeting with Katie and Phil to discuss the details of what has been charged to the fund to date and it’s an attachment on this resolution. So the background of why there is a resolution is that we did look at what has happened so far and then decided to provide this information to you. On April 6th 2010 the members of PROSAC met and passed a resolution. PROSAC has reviewed and approved the approved uses of the Contingency Fund through March 2010 and found some issues that need policy direction. PROSAC therefore urges the Recreation and Park Commission to one; restrict the use of contingency funds to identify capital maintenance projects listed in COMET and for true capital project emergencies. Two, to devise a method for approval of project cost overruns in accordance with Item 1 of this resolution. And three, to require quarterly reports be made to PROSAC and to the Commission on the uses of the approved contingency funds, cost overruns and fund balance. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Katie Petrucione: Good evening Commissioners, Katie Petrucione here with a very brief update on the budget as Phil mentioned and I think as I mentioned to you at the last meeting as well, the Mayor’s office did come back to the Department with a supplemental General Fund reduction target. The target that they gave us was about $2.8 million. We have submitted a plan to them—actually, they gave us two targets. They gave us a General Fund reduction target of $2.8 million and then they gave us a management reduction target of an additional $240,000. We have submitted to them a plan to meet both targets. For the $2.8 million General Fund target the plan that we’ve submitted is actually only $2.5 million. We’re working on finding the remaining $230,000. We are reaching that target primarily through revenue and also through a proposal to close unused balances in the unused capital project balances in the Open Space Fund. The management reduction target we are proposing to meet through deleting the 0922 position in the Planning Division that has become vacant as a result of our proposed merger of the Capital and Planning Divisions as well as a voluntarily salary reduction by our esteemed General Manager. So I have the detail if you folks are interested in seeing it but due to the late hour I will not walk through the list.

COMMISSIONERS’ MATTERS
Commissioner Harrison: Recently Phil and I went for a walk out at the disk golf thing and I’m wanting to bring that forward so we can have a discussion on that. I don’t think in deference to my fellow Commissioners I don’t think they’re doing what they promised to do regarding the trees. I saw that and I’d like to [unintelligible] a discussion. Maybe some of those folks could come here.

ADJOURNMENT

The Regular meeting of the Recreation and Park Commission was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret A. McArthur
Commission Liaison