

## Contents

### **Attendees 2**

*Members Present 2*

*Staff Present 2*

*Members Absent 2*

*Introduction 2*

### **Meeting Notes Approval 2**

**Discussion on Pleasant Hill Recreation Facility  
Experiences with Hon. Michael Harris 2**

### **Next Meetings 6**

# Joint Facilities Planning Subcommittee

Notes of Meeting  
September 30, 2014

Mosaic Room,  
Hacienda de las Flores,  
Moraga

## Attendees

### ***Members Present***

- Campolindo High School (CHS): John Walker
- Moraga School District (MSD): Shari Simon
- Moraga Sports Alliance (MSA): Chris Maher, Judy McNeil, Ken Towers
- St Mary's College (SMC): Tim Farley
- Town of Moraga (TOM): Shirley DeFrancisci, Mike Metcalf, Dave Trotter

### ***Staff Present***

- Town of Moraga: Jill Keimach, Jay Ingram
- Moraga School District: Bruce Burns

### ***Members Absent***

- Moraga Sport Alliance (MSA): Harry Crouch
- Moraga School District (MSD): Charles Mac Nulty

### ***Introduction***

- Jay Ingram introduced Shirley DeFrancisci. Shirley was appointed by the Moraga Park and Recreation Commission to replace Phil Crosby, who resigned in August.

## Meeting Notes Approval

- The notes of the September 8, 2014 meeting were accepted as final. Mike Metcalf pointed out there had been no suggestions from revisions from committee members since initial release of the draft notes.

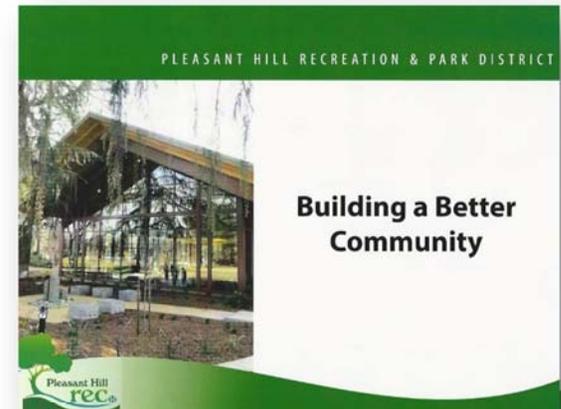
## Discussion on Pleasant Hill Recreation Facility Experiences with Hon. Michael Harris

- Michael Harris introduced himself as a sitting council member in the City of Pleasant Hill. He added that he was a resident of Moraga for many years in the 1980s-90s, and



was a Town Council member in the 1990s before moving to Pleasant Hill. He is well known by several of the subcommittee members.

- Michael recounted briefly the story of the Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District's campaign for a \$28 million bond measure for program of construction of new recreation facilities. He was a co-chair of the Measure E campaign committee: *Building a Better Community*.
- The Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District was formed in 1951, while the City of Pleasant Hill was incorporated in 1961. Accordingly, in Pleasant Hill the tradition of a recreation and park agency separate from city government is long standing. Michael explained that district boundaries are larger than the City of Pleasant Hill. Michael was involved with the campaign for new recreation facilities because the campaign aligned with his personal interest. That he was a sitting council member when the district was working on its bond measure was irrelevant. There was no formal relationship between the city government and the separate recreation district. The city government refrained from taking any formal position with respect to the bond measure which was put to the voters within the recreation and park district.
- For many years the district operated a senior center, which comprised several old Army Quonset hut-style buildings. The conditions at this facility were unsatisfactory. The senior group, which is large and active in Pleasant Hill, wanted a new facility. They embarked on a low-key campaign to build one, but the campaign was not especially successful.
- It was recognized that a funding measure (such as a bond measure) would not be successful unless there was a broad constituency supporting a building program. It became clear that Pleasant Hill senior citizens wanted their own facility after a short exercise that tried combining a Senior Center with a Teen Center. The district desired to upgrade all of their aging facilities. For this reason, the needs of additional users of recreational facilities were identified: Something for Everyone.
  - The senior community was accustomed to having their own facility. They resisted any concepts which would combine their facility with some other, for instance, a community center. While it was clear that savings could be realized by combining facilities, it was also clear that broad support of senior community was essential to a successful ballot measure. The Senior Citizen population was seen as the catalyst for this measure.



- The existing community center was old and in poor condition, considered beyond refurbishment; and the teen center was small and barely workable.
  - The old teen center was very small and limited in terms of functional opportunities. For a teen center to be attractive, it would need to be much larger and provide attractions for modern teens.
  - Shortage of playing field had been a perennial problem. Moreover, the existing playing fields were in very poor condition and in need of major rehabilitation. There was no shortage of support for playing fields.
  - However, there was no organized user group advocating a gymnasium. For this reason, a gymnasium was not included in the package.
- By happenstance, a friend of the Pleasant Hill senior community had a way for developing conceptual design of a facility which would meet the needs of Pleasant Hill seniors. On a *pro bono* basis, this individual developed a concept sufficiently to provide functional layout, architectural theme, and construction cost estimate. The concept package included a scale model (several feet in plan dimension, and several feet in elevation) which was easily transportable to various locations for presentation purposes.
  - Conceptual designs were developed separately for the other facilities: community center, teen center, and playing fields. Cost estimates adequate for ballot measure purposes were developed. District funds supported this work.
  - The district hired Tramutola as their political consultant (at a cost of \$40,000). The contract was funded and managed by the district.
  - It was decided early on to pursue a general obligation (GO) bond funded by a special ad valorem tax on property owners within the recreation and park district boundaries. This approach was selected since it would be the simplest approach to explain to voters.
  - The level of ad valorem tax was such that the ensuing campaign could fairly state that the average household would pay no more than \$100 annually (based on \$29/\$100,000 assessed valuation). This correlated to \$28 million bonding capacity.
  - A GO bond can be used only for construction of facilities; bond funds may not be used for property such as furnishings. For this reason, the district needed to pursue separate funding for all furnishings. This was a challenge separate from the bond Measure E.



- The campaign strategy relied on extensive community outreach and personal contacts. The strategy depended on thorough understanding of the demographics of the voters in the district. The strategy also relied on an all-mail ballot, which would not need to be tied to a general election. The campaign was intentionally low-key. There were no campaign signs, and no campaign literature — only face-to-face, personal contact.
- Likely voters were matched to type of recreation facilities. For instance, households with children would probably be interested in playing fields; households with seniors would likely favor the senior center. It was also attempted to identify those voters who would probably not support the measure for any reason. An intensive street canvassing program was carried out making contact with those voters who were likely to support the measure; those who were unlikely to support were not contacted. Responses of individual voters were recorded, which allowed development of a database of likely positive voters. This strategy required facilitated focus groups, a speaker bureau to conduct discussion sessions with community groups (such as Rotary and Lions) and in private residences, and a large and well-trained corps of people to canvass neighborhoods.
- No senior exemption was included on the basis that, since a senior center was part of the package, it would be inappropriate to offer a way for seniors to opt out of paying.
- The entire campaign spanned several years. There was never any organized opposition. All major community groups supported the measure, including the Chamber of Commerce. The positive vote was 76%.
- Some suggestions shared by Michael:
  - Start early; allow several years to complete a ballot measure.
  - Find out what the residents want and need. Have a reasonably clear idea of what community needs are, then ask voters what they think. Then conduct formal polling to test a wider sample of voters. These combined efforts will help verify voter preferences.
  - Have an understanding of the business model for each of the various facilities.
  - Do sufficient architectural studies to generate credible cost estimates to build and operate various facilities.
  - Understand funding strategies and be prepared to discuss honestly what voting “Yes” will cost.

## Next Meetings

- Monday, October 6, 6-7:30pm, Hacienda – regular meeting to refine and complete the identification of potential projects for further study, and to outline a path forward. The intention is to reduce eight (8) potential projects to 3-4 projects for concept development.
- Monday, November 3, 6-7:30 pm, Hacienda

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