

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

Parks Department

**DATE:** July 18, 2016**COMMISSION MEETING DATE:** August 4, 2016

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Marlene Finley, Parks Director

SUBJECT: Fair Oaks Beautification Association's North Fair Oaks Community Playground and Mini-park Proposal

RECOMMENDATION

Review and recommend approval to the Board of Supervisors of funding under the County's Mini-park Policy to the Fair Oaks Beautification Association for operating support for a playground located at the intersection of Fair Oaks Avenue and Edison Way and a pocket park located at the intersection of Bay Road and 18th Avenue in the amount of \$10,000 annually for three years and improvements to the basketball court at the playground in the amount of \$15,000 for a total of \$45,000.

BACKGROUND

The County's Mini-park Policy adopted by the Board of Supervisors on May 19, 2015, Resolution No. 073780, established the definition, goals and policies for the need, acceptance, requirements and management of mini-parks. It serves as a guiding document for County Park's efforts to manage future adopted or created mini-parks in the County.

The Fair Oaks Beautification Association (FOBA), a 501(c)3 non-profit neighborhood organization, has submitted a mini-park proposal to the Parks Director. Kyle Barriger, FOBA, made a presentation on their proposal to the Commission at your June 2, 2016 meeting. As noted at that meeting, we are bringing staff's recommendation to the Commission for its review and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

DISCUSSION

Unincorporated North Fair Oaks (NFO) comprises a total area of 1.25 square miles and is home to approximately 15,000 residents. It has the highest density population of any community in San Mateo County. Over 50% of the residents are renters, often in complexes without backyards making it difficult to get outside to play, picnic or socialize. Studies show that residents with convenient access to a park are more likely to use parks for recreation and physical activity, resulting in health benefits including a reduced risk for heart disease and cancer, both of which are leading causes of death in NFO.

The playground (Playground) in FOBA's proposal is located at the intersection of Fair Oaks Avenue and Edison Way in a mixed commercial and residential neighborhood. According to the State Parks Fact Finder, there are 6,713 people living within a half-mile of the Playground. The Playground has a basketball hoop, two play structures, a tire swing, sand play, grassy meadow and two seating areas, and is also used for community events and neighborhood gatherings. FOBA and NFO neighbors designed and built the Playground over a Hetch Hetchy aqueduct with license authorization by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC). The license has no expiration or termination clause. FOBA raises funds to pay landscapers and uses volunteers to maintain the play areas.

FOBA's Mini-park Proposal requests five years of annual operating support at \$10,000 per year for the Playground and a nearby Pocket Park at the intersection of Bay Road and 18th Street, and a one-time grant of \$15,000 to upgrade the basketball court at the Playground. FOBA states that its goal is to ensure on-going funding to maintain the Playground and Pocket Park before making improvements or adding other facilities. The Mini-park Policy allows for the "construction of a park facility," so capital improvements at the Playground such as the basketball court are eligible.

Staff recommends that the County grant \$10,000 to FOBA annually for three years for operating support of the Playground and Pocket Park and that \$15,000 be awarded for improvements to the basketball court for a total of \$45,000. The cost for County Parks to maintain these two parks for the public would far exceed the contributions FOBA is requesting to help them continue to provide these amenities. For comparison, Friendship Park in North Fair Oaks has annual operating expenses exceeding \$15,000 per year. As County contract specifications limit the term of agreements to three years, staff recommends three years of funding rather than the five years requested by FOBA.

Next Steps

The Commission is requested to recommend approval to the Board of Supervisors as stated in this memo's *Recommendation* section. Staff would then prepare a report to the Board of Supervisors requesting its approval of the Commission's recommended action. If approved by the Board, staff would then prepare a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County and FOBA. Under such a future MOU, FOBA's responsibilities would be to renovate and maintain the basketball court, maintain any licenses or permits with private landowners and the SFPUC, maintain the landscaped areas including trees, conduct any state mandated playground inspections, maintain signage and kiosks, open and close playground gates, provide garbage service and continue to organize community events and activities and programs. The FOBA Playground and Pocket Park would remain the sole responsibility of FOBA and not be considered County Parks' responsibility.

Performance Measure

This Mini-park Proposal contributes to the 2025 Shared Vision of an Environmentally Conscious Community as it provides recreational services to an underserved community in unincorporated San Mateo County.