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**FULTON-EL CAMINO RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT**

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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Teresa Higgins**  
Chair

**Michael Seaman**  
Vice Chair

**Kathy Stricklin**  
Secretary

**Laura Lavallee**  
Director

**Vacant**  
Director

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**CONSENT AGENDA ITEM: Minutes 4.1**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2025**  
**6:30 PM**

RICHARD T. CONZELMANN COMMUNITY CENTER  
2201 COTTAGE WAY, SACRAMENTO, CA 95825  
BOARD ROOM

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Higgins called the regular meeting to order at 6:30pm and led with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**Board Members:**

Teresa Higgins, Chair - Present  
Michael Seaman, Vice Chair - Present  
Kathleen Stricklin, Secretary - Present  
Laura Lavallee, Board Director - Absent  
Board Director - Vacant

**Staff Members:**

Emily Ballus - Present  
Mike Chahal - Present  
Ryan Harder - Present  
Jaden Delfer - Present  
Robin Romines - via Zoom  
Dounia Beshara - via Zoom

**Public Attendees:**

Steven Rice, District Resident  
Trinidad A. Esquire, District Resident  
Sandy Bressler, District Resident

**3. Public Comment:**

No public comments were made.

**4. CONSENT ITEMS (Motion)**

The Consent Calendar items are those expected to be routine and noncontroversial. They will be acted upon by the Board of Directors after providing an opportunity for public comment.

Public Comment:

No public comments were made.

- 4.1 Approve the Minutes of December 2024 Regular Board Meeting
- 4.2 Accept Financial Activity
  - a. Summary Financial Statement of Activity YTD December & December 2024
  - b. Receive the Payroll Report for December 2024
  - c. Receive Claims for December 2024
  - d. Receive Parks, Recreation, Facility Rentals, and Security Report December 2024
  - e. Receive the Program Revenue and Refund Report for December 2024
  - f. Receive Revolving Fund Report for December 2024
  - g. Receive Budget to Actual Departmental Reports for YTD December 2024
- 4.3 Accept Parks, Recreation, Facility Rentals, and Security Report December 2024
- 4.4 General Manager's Monthly Update – No report for December 2024

Vice Chair Seaman made a motion to approve the consent agenda, Secretary Stricklin seconded the motion. The vote was postponed after further discussions below.

Director Chahal provided a summary of the financial results. The highlighted areas were salaries and benefits expense, which is the District's largest expense, are under budget for the seven months ending January 31, 2025. It is anticipated that it will continue with the current trend for the rest of the year. Other expenses highlighted included legal and other professional expenses which exceed budget. The legal expense is a result of public records requests about the park "police." The category for other professional services expense consisted of invoices received from the Sacramento Sheriff's Office for dispatch and supports services, including the past two years and a final invoice for the current fiscal year for July through November 30, 2024. Additional expenses and resources will be needed to finalize the closure of the Park Police Department.

The vote taken to approve and accept the consent agenda passes with a vote of 4-0-1-0 (Ayes, Noes, Absent, and Abstain).

Vice Chair Seaman stated he was concerned about the amount of legal expenses. He commented that bond funding could be used to retire the lease obligations.

GM Ballus stated that the legal expenses are due to the high volume of public records requests about the "Police" Department activity and the need for legal assistance in producing those records.

Chair Higgins asked if staff had an idea of how much more legal assistance was needed. GM Ballus indicated that while staff could not project future activity, fewer requests have been made.

## **5. PRESENTATIONS**

- 5.1 Presentation on Safe Play Park, Play-Based Community Spaces That Promotes Culture Change for Traffic Safety.

Director of Parks and Recreation Ryan Harder introduced Kelly Browning, Ph.D., of Impact Teen Drivers for a presentation on the Safe Play Park, Play-Based Community Spaces. Impact Teen Drivers (ITD) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works with teens on driver safety as motor vehicle incidents are the number one cause for serious

injuries for teenagers. Dr. Browning approached and partnered with California Highway Patrol (CHP) to create Safe Play Park, Play-Based Community Spaces, which promotes culture change for traffic safety.

California Highway Patrol (CHP) Captains Kenyon and Hardcastle joined Dr. Browning for the presentation. They provided illustrations of the conversion of our Howe Park north parking lot into the Safe Play Park, Play-Based Community Space. The area would include various road signs to educate people of all ages to understand different types of road signs via shape, color, and content. The parking lot will be painted and include signs that are normally seen on roads, such as Railroad Crossing, stop signs and other types of signs seen on the roads. Captain Kenyon indicated they met with Caltrans to discuss and potentially partner for painting and repaving of the parking lot.

Vice Chair Seaman requested that Captain Kenyon advise Caltrans of the Howe Avenue northbound lane between Cottage Way and the Howe Elementary School, and the steep drop off it presents by Howe Park. There are no barriers that would prevent a vehicle from running off the road down to the park and the sidewalk.

Secretary Stricklin indicated the area along Auburn Boulevard by Hwy 80 is accident-prone due to lack of barriers between the freeway and Auburn Boulevard. Dr. Browning acknowledged those issues and indicated she would advise Caltrans and the County to seek assistance to secure that stretch of roadway.

Chair Higgins thanked the ITD for choosing to partner with the District.

## **6. DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION ITEMS (Motion or Approval Required)**

The Board will review and discuss taking appropriate action with respect to the following matters:

### Public Comments on Agenda Item 6.1

No public comments were made on Agenda item 6.1. listed below.

#### 6.1 Approve Discontinuing Interactive Zoom Participation at Board Meetings

Chair Higgins made the motion to discontinue interactive Zoom Participation at Board Meetings and no one seconded the motion.

Chair Higgins requested GM Ballus provide background. GM Ballus stated former Chair Diaz had concerns on zoom participation and that the California trend is to discontinue Zoom public conversation participation but not Zoom public viewing due to public behavior on Zoom. This would not prevent the participants watching the event, but they would not be able to publicly comment on Zoom and would need to be present at the meeting.

Secretary Stricklin asked if interruptions were a concern and questioned if this prevents the community from having a voice. GM Ballus stated that it is stemming from behavior or conduct exhibited on Zoom and not knowing who is on Zoom and not knowing if the person making the comments are part of the District.

Chair Higgins raised concerns about the people commenting residing in the District. She stated that this may not be an issue now, but to prevent this from being an issue in the future.

Vice Chair Seaman indicated he does not like the idea of restricting the public from making comments and there are method and procedures that public comments are made in proper decorum. He indicated there is legislation that CSDA to extend the sunset clause that is in the COVID period rules, and that other public entities utilize tools such as Zoom.

Secretary Stricklin stated that she is very much against not having Zoom for public participation.

Chair Higgins asked Manager Delfer if it is time consuming to set up and conduct a meeting with Zoom. Mr. Delfer stated that time is invested via making sure the equipment is working properly and checking the connection, and creating a procedure via chat room or raising their hand would require time to create and may require more than one person to manage.

GM Ballus indicated that the concept behind the recommendation was due to the interruptive behavior of the public during discussions on the park "police" at previous meetings. GM Ballus added that the trend in California cities is to return to in-person public comments or advanced emailed public comments following COVID.

Vice Chair Seaman stated that COVID merely accelerated the use of ZOOM. He stated that the data from various studies shows the some of the COVID related changes made such as utilizing products such as ZOOM made the public became more engaged in the government and use of the technology made governance better.

Chair Higgins suggested the District continue use ZOOM and monitor it for the rest of the year, then evaluate it.

As the motion was not seconded, no changes were made.

#### Public Comments on Agenda Item 6.2

In public comments, resident Trinidad A. Esquire stated he lives on Lacy Ln, which is directly adjacent to Katharine Johnson Middle School (KJMS) and has concerns about the easement creating a dark alley and has not seen any requirements for the maintenance and security of the easement. Mr. Esquire indicated that he spoke with the principal of the school and asked if the area would have lighting, and the response was no. The easement area as it stands has overgrown weeds which are not maintained. Mr. Esquire would like to have the school provide security and landscape and maintain the area. He indicated that he lived in the area for 35 years and seen lots of changes. The easement area has been open and closed over the years due to problems with the homeless, illegal dumping and graffiti. He asked how the Board plans to deal with these issues when the District.

Chair Higgins thanked Trinidad for his comments and concerns.

Vice Chair Seaman also thanked Trinidad for voicing his concerns and encouraged him to attend the transportation meetings that Supervisor Desmond has scheduled on March 10; to discuss these issues.

#### 6.2 Resolution Accepting the Easement at Katherine Johnson Middle School from San Juan Unified School District.

Directors discussed the easement needs and issues such as access, maintenance, and

security surrounding the easement area.

Chair Higgins indicated that GM Ballus has met with SJUSD numerous times regarding the easement, the District's needs, and finalizing the easement details. Chair Higgins would like to approve the easement.

GM Ballus indicated that the Board originally instructed her to obtain easement access from Belport Lane to Creekside Nature Area that was 15 feet wide, which she accomplished. Subsequent discussions suggested adding lights, waste receptacles, benches, which the area cannot sustain and have adequate ingress, egress, and access to maintenance vehicles. Currently, the area does not belong to the District as the easement has not been approved by the Board.

Vice Chair Seaman stated that the District would want to control access and to determine to install a gate at Belport.

GM Ballus indicated that the Lacy Lane easement is owned by SJUSD.

Vice Chair Seaman and Secretary Stricklin indicated that they have heard conflicting reports on this ownership. GM Ballus stated that it is owned by the SJUSD as the school district has verified this through the County Recorder's Office. Vice Chair Seaman recommended that the District have the access from Lacy Lane to the Creekside Nature Area put in writing.

Chair Higgins stated that there would be a separate easement and suggested that approval for the current proposed easement should be made.

Chair Higgins called for a motion to adopt the resolution accepting the easement agreement with SJUSD for public access to the Creekside Nature Area with future clarification on the Lacy Lane access. Secretary Stricklin seconded the motion, which the motion passed with a vote of 4-0-1-0.

## **7. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS (No Action Required)**

### **7.1 Correspondence/Announcements**

#### **a). Board of Directors Notice of Vacancy (posted on February 11, 2025)**

GM Ballus advised the Board that there are time limits for replacing former Director Dias' board seat with a replacement appointment needed within 60 days from January 31, 2025, when Director Dias resigned.

Secretary Stricklin indicated she would not be present at the March board meeting but is confident the Board can select the Director in her absence.

#### **b). The Social Security Fairness Act Increases Social Security Benefits for Some Public Employee Pensioners**

Chair Higgins and GM Ballus informed the Board of the changes made by Social Security as it impacts District employees who now get full Social Security benefits rather than pro-rated benefits due to their concurrent CALPERs pension.

#### **c). CARPD Annual Conference**

GM Ballus requested Board members provide her with their plans for attending the CARPD annual conference so staff can make arrangements by the early bird registration date of March 14.

d). NRPA: Top Trends in Parks and Recreation 2025

GM Ballus referred to the Board to the flyer included in the Board Packet regarding the latest trends.

e). SMUD Charges for Operation and Maintenance and Non-Standard Equipment on Street and Outdoor Lighting Service Rates

GM Ballus informed the Board about changes in energy prices charged by SMUD. Vice Chair Seaman requested staff have discussions with SMUD as the District partners with them. Staff should negotiate rates as the District provides service to the public.

## **8. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

8.1 Personnel and Finance - Chair, Director Lavallee: Chair Higgins asked Emily to inform the Board of items discussed at the meeting. GM Ballus referred to items that Staff Chahal discussed during the Consent Agenda item.

8.2 Programs, Facilities and Projects - Chair, Director Seaman: Did not meet.

8.3 Community Relations - Chair, Director Stricklin: Did not meet.

## **9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/MATTERS INITIATED/ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE DIRECTORS**

Chair Higgins asked for Directors comments:

Director Seaman discussed the selection of the new Board member and recalled when he was new and there was no onboarding system and would like to create a package or system to bring them up to speed. He recommended providing space at the CARPD conference for the new Board member. He indicated he completed his Ethic training. He added that he went to the District website and found issues with error pages. He provided positive comments on the planned Afghan festival that Supervisor Rich Desmond is sponsoring at Howe Park in partnership with the District.

Chair Higgins indicated she is committed to better fitness this year and enjoyed riding her bike around the park. She indicated she would like to discuss how to eliminate the Seely "pond" water accumulation during heavy rains at that park. She would like to have a "wow" factor from the use of bond funds.

Secretary Stricklin discussed the District's 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday coming up in 2026. She indicated several candidates for potentially be interested in providing sponsorship to the Birthday party. She had various ideas for the party.

## **10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/MATTERS INITIATED/ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE GENERAL MANAGER**

GM Ballus indicated she concurs with Director Seaman's comments regarding the Afghan

festival and excited about the event. She indicated that few trees came down during the most recent storm compared to the prior year.

## 11. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chair Higgins adjourned the meeting at 8:16pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Mike Chahal, Director of Finance and Administration / Clerk of the Board.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Teresa Higgins, Chair, Board of Directors

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kathleen Stricklin, Secretary, Board of Director