

Council Meeting of
April 14, 2009

Honorable Mayor and Members
of the City Council
City Hall
Torrance, California

Members of the Council:

SUBJECT: Community Services – Approval of Design Concept for the Wilson Park Pond and appropriation of funds.

Expenditure: \$67,930

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Community Services Director that City Council approve the updated design concept for the Wilson Park Pond, appropriate funding for the project, and authorize staff to solicit quotes for pond renovation services.

Funding

Funding is available in the un-appropriated capital project reserve.

BACKGROUND

At its February 2009 meeting, the Parks and Recreation Commission discussed the clean up efforts of the pond at Charles H. Wilson Park. Included in the presentation were potential design concepts for completely renovating the pond, eliminating the pond, or installing a water play-feature. Costs for these options ranged from \$125,000 to \$500,000 (Attachment A). Both the community members and Commissioners in attendance voiced support in retaining the pond as a primary feature of Wilson Park. However, the Commission and audience did understand the difficulty in recommending large capital projects during tough economic times.

The Commission directed staff to develop an interim design that would remediate the pond's current bacterial and wildlife problems, but would allow the pond to re-open as quickly as possible. In March 2009, the Commission approved the updated approach that removes approximately 3"-4" of sludge, treats the clay bottom and makes much needed improvements to both the skimmer and circulation pumping systems. In addition, signage will be installed to discourage releasing animals in the pond, and a biological maintenance program will be implemented. These improvements can achieve short-term success until the pond can be completely redesigned (Attachment B).

ANALYSIS

Staff developed the estimated costs for the simpler redesign with guidance from water feature construction companies and pond maintenance companies. The other costs provided address the purchase of various materials and supplies needed to repair any damage to the clay layer due to the clean up. The updated costs also address purchasing sweeps for the drain system, filling the pond back up with water, purchasing signage, and the costs for the biological chemicals necessary to keep the pond water in good condition. Park Services staff would be providing the labor to address these issues. The approximate costs are as follows:

Removal/Disposal of 3" - 4" of Sediment	\$28,755
Replacement of Skimmer/Circulation Pumps	\$15,000
Replacement of Fountain pump/pipes/spray nozzles	\$15,000
Purchase of bentonite clay/fill with water/signage	\$6,000
Purchase of Biological Chemicals	\$3,175**

Estimated Project Total **\$67,930**

**Annual recurring cost

Respectfully submitted,

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

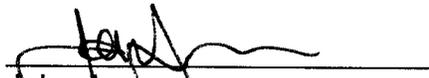


Howard Orpe
Chair

JOHN JONES
Community Services Director

By 
Mike Wilson
Park Services Manager

CONCUR:



John Jones
Community Services Director

NOTED:



LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager

Attachment: A) Parks and Recreation Meeting Minutes Excerpt February 2009
B) Parks and Recreation Meeting Minutes Excerpt March 2009

AO:MW:tlk:parks&fac\wilson\pond\approvalofdesignconceptforpond 4-14-09ci

EXCERPT OF MINUTES

Minutes Approved
 ~~Minutes Subject to Approval~~

February 11, 2009

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
TORRANCE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Parks and Recreation Commission convened in a regular session at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 11, 2009, in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Cook, Gilbert, Hazell, Ning, Robbins, Taniguchi, and Chairperson Orpe.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Community Services Director Jones, Recreation Services Manager Brunette, Senior Business Manager Minter, Park Services Manager Wilson, Manager/Naturalist Drake, and Park Services Supervisor Simoneau.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8A. DISCUSS DESIGN CONCEPTS FOR WILSON PARK POND

Community Services Director Jones introduced the material of record and described the Wilson Park pond and efforts to restore it since August 2008 due to poor water quality. He discussed the three phases of the restoration project--clean-up, conceptual design, and construction. He advised that Phase 1 was complete, with successful removal and adoption of wildlife as well as drainage of pond water, and that Phase 2 has started with researching options for the redesign of the pond.

He described four redesign options and rough cost estimates for development of each and requested that Commissioners provide direction and prioritize them. Option 1 in Attachment B is to keep the pond in its current configuration, install a hard bottom, and enhance the filtration system at an estimated cost of \$432,400. Option 2 (Attachment C) is to decrease the size of the pond, install a hard bottom, enhance the filtration system, and create a picnic area with the remaining footage for approximately \$251,500. Option 3 in Attachment D is to eliminate the pond and create a grass picnic area for approximately \$125,500. Option 4 (Attachment E) is to create a water play feature and picnic area at a cost of approximately \$457,500 to \$500,500. He noted that all options are summarized in Attachment F and recommended that Commissioners consider if wildlife should be reintroduced to the pond if Options 1 or 2 are chosen as their highest priorities.

Responding to Commissioner Robbins' inquiry, Community Services Director Jones stated that development of any of the options could take a full year and that no funding has been identified at this time for the redesign.

Commissioner Cook related his observation that anything that has to do with water is an attractive nuisance and voiced support for Option 3.

Commissioner Hazell stated that he liked the pond and, when he inquired about corporate sponsorship, staff advised that soliciting funds was possible but that they are not at that point yet.

Chairperson Orpe stated that whatever is created for Wilson Park will be there forever and will have to be paid for forever.

Commissioner Ning suggested approaching other cities to determine positive and negative effects of having ponds and to consider other options for the area that might include an art park rather than a picnic area.

Commissioner Taniguchi voiced support for the pond but recommended that no wildlife be reintroduced.

Commissioner Robbins stated that he wanted to hear from the public and needed more staff input and time to weigh options before making a recommendation.

Robert Shellaburger, Sepulveda Boulevard, voiced support for Option 1.

Glenn Bazell, Date Avenue, expressed support for Option 1 and suggested ways to keep the pond clean and control bacteria. He offered to find volunteers willing to donate their time to assist him in maintaining it.

Billy Adams, Evalyn Avenue, stated that the pond attracts vandals and recommended filling it and turning it into a picnic area.

Janet Payne, Engracia Avenue, stated that the pond is an incredible feature and that it seems criminal to fill it in. She urged Commissioners to look at alternatives that would save at least a third or half of the water element.

Chairperson Orpe suggested leaving the pond as it is until funding sources have been identified.

Community Services Director Jones stated that it was possible to remove the plastic, let the sludge dry out, add a cleaning product and circulation system, remove the rocks, and refill the pond. He offered to bring back more information about this option that could possibly buy a few years' time until funds become available.

In response to Commissioner Hazell's inquiry, Park Services Manager Wilson discussed challenges staff have faced in trying to maintain the pond. He stated that it has an inefficient design with poor circulation and skimmer systems. He recommended installing a heavy-duty vinyl bottom that is easy to clean and is almost impermeable. He advised that something needs to be done in the short-term because the plastic is deteriorating and accumulates rainwater that staff needs to pump out.

Commissioner Ning stated that from a financial perspective it is difficult to make a choice at this time that would be ideal. He suggested leaving the pond as it is until 2013 when the economy improves.

Commissioner Taniguchi suggested that Commissioners take more time to do research and talk to community members and requested that staff bring back more information.

Commissioner Gilbert voiced support for Options 1 or 2 and stated that filling in the pond would be a permanent mistake.

MOTION: Commissioner Robbins moved to direct staff to bring back more research and solicit additional public input regarding restoration of the Wilson Park pond. Commissioner Taniguchi seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

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EXCERPT OF MINUTES

√ Minutes Approved
 ~~Minutes Subject to Approval~~

March 11, 2009

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
 TORRANCE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Parks and Recreation Commission convened in a regular session at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 11, 2009, in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Cook, Gilbert, Hazell, Ning, Robbins, Taniguchi, and Chairperson Orpe.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Community Services Director Jones, Recreation Services Manager Brunette, Assistant to the City Manager Sunshine, Park Services Manager Wilson, and Park Services Supervisor Simoneau.

7. OLD BUSINESS

7A. DISCUSS DESIGN CONCEPTS FOR WILSON PARK POND

Community Services Director Jones provided background on design concepts for the Wilson Park pond presented to the Commission on February 11, 2009. He noted that several audience members and Commissioners expressed concern over the potential loss of the pond as well as costs associated with design options. Staff was directed to explore the option of restoring the existing pond as a short-term alternative. He presented an option, as well as associated one-time and recurring estimated costs included in agenda material, that would reopen the pond as quickly as possible while making improvements to both the skimmer and circulation pumping systems. He mentioned that filling the pond only costs \$250 to \$300 and that draining and refilling the pond on an annual basis could be considered. He recommended that the Commission approve this alternative that would maintain the integrity of the pond as it was designed at minimal value in order to buy three to five years or even longer based on maintenance practices.

Commissioner Robbins stated that this option would cause minimal disruption to activities in Wilson Park and be much easier to sell to the City and public.

Responding to Commissioner Ning's inquiry, Park Services Supervisor Simoneau confirmed that biological chemicals introduced into the pond would not harm ducks, cats, dogs, or humans and that releasing fish or turtles is a citable offense by State law. Glen Bazell, Date Avenue, presented a proposal to design and build a system that would separate solids and liquids by agitating the top surface of the solids of

the pond. He stated that his proposal would cost approximately \$4,000 to design and build, that implementation would be made up of volunteer effort, and the only unknown is how to dispose of the solids. He estimated that his system could clean 16 cubic feet per eight hour period in a gradual process that could take up to six months for the entire pond.

Community Services Director Jones advised that there are companies licensed to collect and remove solids and brought up the possibility of using Mr. Bazell's proposal as a maintenance practice.

Commissioner Ning commented that implementation of staff's proposal makes sense and then the Division could experiment with the maintenance feature presented by Mr. Bazell.

Commissioner Taniguchi expressed appreciation to Mr. Bazell for his offer but stated that she supports the short-term solution presented by staff.

MOTION: Commissioner Robbins moved to approve the proposal presented by staff to renovate the Wilson Park pond and to continue to explore the proposal presented by Glen Bazell. Commissioner Taniguchi seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

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