



STAFF REPORT

SAUSALITO CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA TITLE:

Harrison Park improvement update.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Receive and file update on Harrison Park

SUMMARY

Since the original play equipment was removed (date unknown) Harrison Park has deteriorated to the point of being a vacant lot in which people let their dogs run loose. For the past few years Staff has been working on various improvement plans, conducted community outreach surveys and meetings, and presented to both the Parks and Recreation Commission as well as the Planning Commission multiple times. Attached are the most recent plans based on the suggestions brought up at the July 21, 2010 Planning Commission. These revised plans will be presented to the Planning Commission at their December 15th meeting.

BACKGROUND

In October 1963 John Davis and Barbara Davis donated the property now know as Harrison Park to the City of Sausalito to be used as a park. In the 1970's the playground was equipped with swing sets, spring type "horses", a sand box, and a merry-go-round. Throughout time the playground equipment became deteriorated and City budget limitations resulted in the lack of funding for the upkeep and maintenance of the playground. The original playground equipment was removed (date unknown) and the maintenance services for the playground are limited to litter and graffiti removal, weed abatement for fire prevention purposes, and fence maintenance. The area has since been used to let dogs run loose and is unsuitable as a site for infants, toddlers and small children.

In 2002 the City and the Sausalito Lions Club joined forces to develop a project to renovate the Harrison Park playground. Since that time the Lions Club has been working with neighbors and City staff and has offered to help in fundraising efforts, partial financing, and construction of the renovations.

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In October 2007, a community workshop was initiated with the purpose of soliciting community input regarding the project renovation efforts. As a result of the community workshop, the project plans were modified to preserve the existing trees which resulted in altering the location of ramps and playground equipment, removal of a picnic table, installation of a new bench, and use and/or replacement of existing fences.

In March and April 2008, the Planning Commission conducted public hearings for the proposed playground renovations. The Planning Commission requested additional information to address the lack of specificity regarding the plans, including the location and color of the playground equipment, in addition to landscaping and whether it was acceptable to prohibit dogs from the playground. The public hearing was continued to a date uncertain.

During the spring of 2009 Parks and Recreation staff conducted a series of surveys with children at schools, preschools, and at the Robin Sweeny Park playground. The results of the survey indicate that the children would prefer a taller play structure with multiple features including a slide. In addition, swings and a teeter-totter ranked high.

On June 16, 2010, the Parks and Recreation Department and Parks and Recreation Commission conducted a publically-noticed meeting to discuss the proposed playground renovations. The Parks and Recreation Commission unanimously supported the project as proposed. The contiguous property owners at 174 Harrison Avenue also stated that they support the project as well, provided that any replacement of perimeter fencing maintains the current fence height or taller and utilizes similar materials. They were, however, concerned about the height of the proposed play structures and requested that they be lowered.

On July 21, 2010, the project was brought to the Planning Commission. The Commission expressed their concern about the inclusion of an unnecessary railing at the top of the rear retaining wall, the amount of concrete that would be visible, and the amount of green space. The Public expressed a variety of concerns including play structure height as well as having the park be an active playground rather than a passive park or dog park. The Planning Commission asked that staff look at these issues, address as appropriate, and come back to the Commission at a later date.

Since the July 2010 meeting Staff has worked with architect Don Olsen to remove the railing on the retaining wall, change the retaining wall to a small curb, add park benches and a picnic table, and increase the amount of green space.

Staff has also researched lowering the play structure height but determined that doing so would dramatically decrease the play value of the propose structures. The circular slide requires a deck height of 6'. If the deck height were reduced a straight slide would be the only option however a straight slide requires additional space in the footprint and due to the limitations on square footage is not feasible without making the structure footprint smaller as well with fewer amenities. In addition, children like the taller, more

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challenging structures. On recent visits to local parks staff noticed that children immediately go to the taller structures, bypassing small structures. In talking with parents, parents agreed that they would let their 2 to 3 year old (or older) go on the higher play structure as it is not only more interesting to a child but it builds their motor skills and confidence more than a lower structure.

The revised plan is scheduled to the planning commission on December 15th for approval. Once approved staff will continue to work with Architect Don Olsen and the Lions Club to move the project forward.

ISSUES

As stated above, the challenge is having an area that is appealing to children, has a high play value, and is not obtrusive to the neighborhood. Staff believes they have accomplished this with the most recent design. The design takes up a smaller footprint than previous designs, has multiple activities for children, does not require extensive grading or retaining walls, and the 6' top deck height and 10' railing height are well below the 32' height limit for main structures and the 15' limit for ancillary structures in the area.

FISCAL IMPACT

Council has committed \$15,000 in grant funds to Harrison Park. The grant will expire in June 2011 so action must be taken soon if these funds are to be used. In addition, as part of the FY 2011 budget, Council allocated an additional \$15,000 from the General Fund. The Sausalito Lions Club has also committed to raising funds and neighbors have said they would make a donation once the project is under way.

While the cost of the play equipment is known to be \$20,000, the rest of the costs are unknown at this time. Cost will vary a great deal depending on the level of community support, spearheaded by the Lions Club, in obtaining donations of construction equipment, labor, and materials. Once a plan is decided on these figures will be more readily available.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Receive and file update on Harrison Park

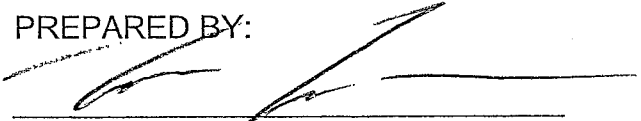
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Overhead drawing of proposed park.

Attachment B – Proposed play structure

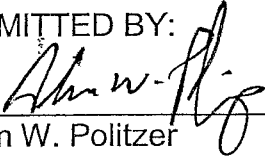
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PREPARED BY:



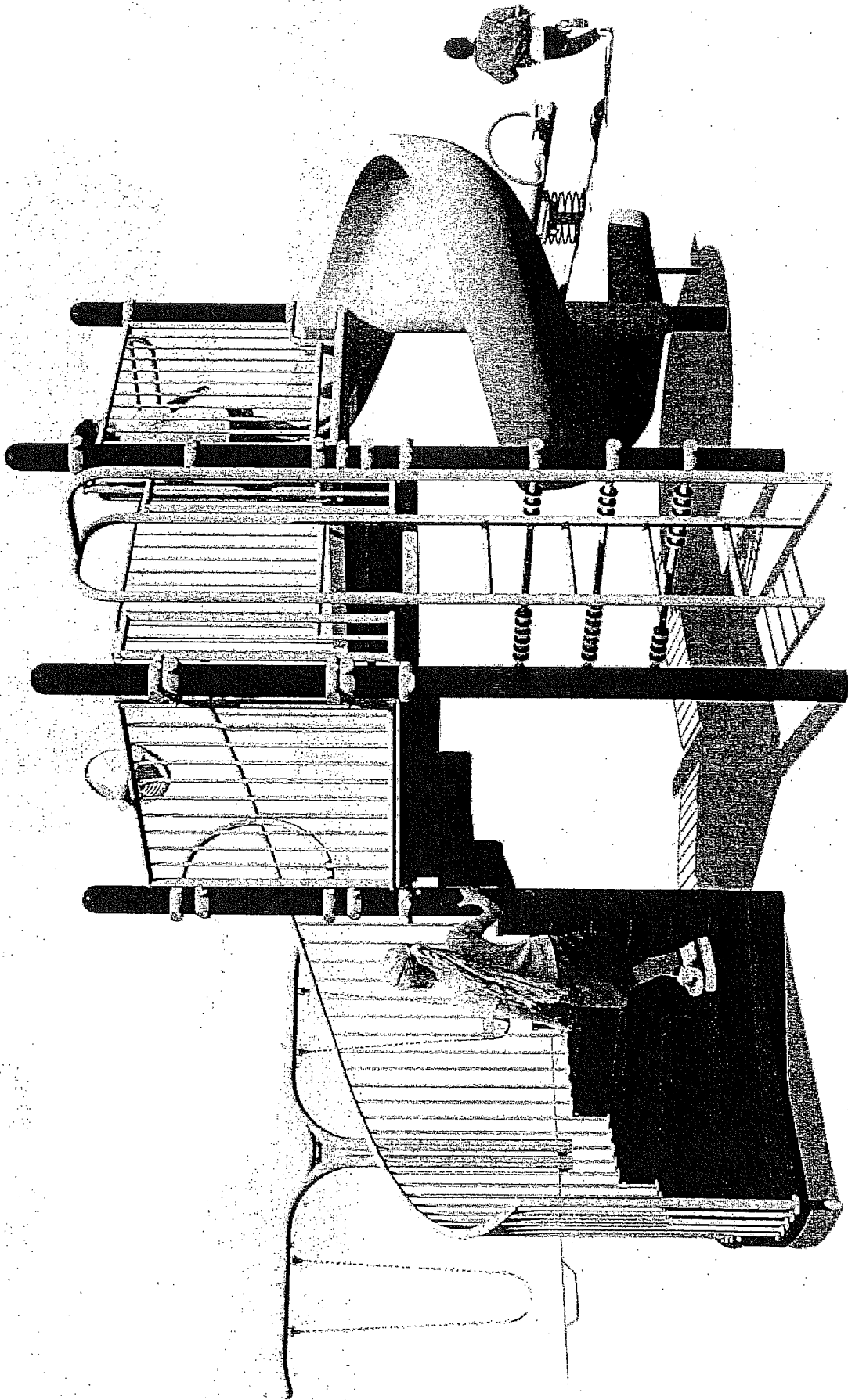
Mike Langford
Parks and Recreation Director

SUBMITTED BY:



Adam W. Politzer
City Manager

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