



**STAFF REPORT**

**TO:** Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Sean McGrew, Arts & Recreation Director  
**SUBJECT:** Parks and Recreation Commission Annual Report  
**DATE:** February 22, 2022

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**Approved for Forwarding:**

**Alan E. Piombo Jr, City Manager**

1 **Issue:** Presentation of the Parks and Recreation Commission’s Annual Report.  
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3 **Recommendation:** Receive presentation and discuss as appropriate.  
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5 **Background:** The Mill Valley Parks and Recreation Commission plays a vital role in the creation  
6 of a vibrant and healthy community in Mill Valley. Working with both the Recreation Department  
7 and the Department of Public Works (DPW), the Parks and Recreation Commission endeavors to  
8 keep our parks and open spaces beautiful, accessible and safe, while also ensuring that a wide  
9 variety of exciting recreation opportunities are available to the community. Each year, the Parks  
10 and Recreation Commission presents a report to the City Council, which outlines the group’s  
11 activities, accomplishments, and initiatives.  
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13 **Discussion:** The past two years have been challenging for everyone, and the Mill Valley Parks  
14 and Recreation Commission was not immune to these challenges. With that said, the Parks and  
15 Recreation Commission tackled a significant number of important issues in 2021. I would like to  
16 thank the City Council for its commitment to our City’s parks and recreation facilities, programs,  
17 and services, and the dedicated volunteers of our Parks and Recreation Commission, members of  
18 the Mill Valley Friends of Parks and Recreation as well as City staff from both Recreation and  
19 DPW.  
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21 **Important Projects:** The Parks and Recreation Commission and staff continued work on a  
22 number of key projects to improve the quality of the park and recreation experience for residents  
23 and visitor in Mill Valley. The projects including the following:  
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25 ***Golf Course RFP Request for Proposals:*** As part of the staff report, “Overview of the Preliminary  
26 General Fund Budget for 2020-2022” presented to City Council on May 18, 2020, staff  
27 recommended that the City consider a Request for Proposals for third-party management of the  
28 golf course. The City developed a Request for Proposal (RFP) in 2020 and accepted proposals  
29 from vendors in 2021. The goals and objectives of the RFP were as follows:

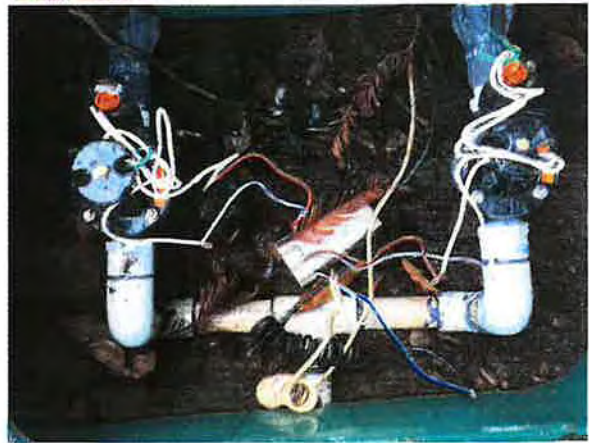
- 30 • Creating financial stability for the Golf Course.
- 31 • Providing an affordable recreational asset for the benefit of all City residents.
- 32 • Providing a positive golf experience for all level of golfers.
- 33 • Enhancing and maintaining the property.
- 34 • Develop and implement a strong lessons base, including a robust junior golf program.

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36 The RFP closed on May 14, 2021, with five groups submitting proposals. This item will be brought  
37 forward to City Council separately.

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39 ***Golf Course Path:*** On December 2, 2019, the City  
40 Council adopted the Golf Course Master Plan  
41 which included the Golf Course Path. In February  
42 2020 -Golf Course Path Task Force formed. The  
43 work was greatly slowed down due to the  
44 pandemic. Between April –June 2021, installation  
45 and work was conducted at Mill Valley Golf  
46 Course. Enhancements such as the one in the  
47 photo, as well as additional signage was completed  
48 in the following months. The path is now open to  
49 the public.



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51 ***E. Blithedale Welcome Kiosk Landscape***  
52 ***Improvement:*** The East Blithedale Welcome  
53 Kiosk received some much-needed improvements  
54 over the past year. The project included an  
55 upgraded irrigation system, new valves, new  
56 Netafim drip tubing to cover the island, and a new  
57 backflow device. After these upgrades, a new  
58 landscape plants were added for color, form, and  
59 balance, focusing on heights from 12” to 24”  
60 at the edges and 24” to 36” in the middle.



61  
62 ***Installation of a batting cage at Mill Valley***  
63 ***Community Center:*** Over the years, batting cages  
64 were added to different areas of the city to facility practice for the kids on the Mill Valley Little  
65 League (MVLL) and Girls Softball teams. Due to SASM’s renovation, the batting cages next to  
66 the Corporation Yard were removed in 2019 and space was added to Alto field for an additional  
67 cage. However, this has created some issues in that all of the cages are at one field, while MVLL  
68 uses three fields (Alto, Boyle and Friends) and Girls Softball uses Hauke North. MVLL reached  
69 out to the Commission about the possibility of adding a batting cage in or around Friends field.

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70 Staff and MVLL worked together to find a suitable location, and with the Commission’s approval  
71 and funds from MVLL, a batting cage was installed at the Community Center.  
72

73 **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** The Commission has instituted a JEDI (Justice, Equity,  
74 Diversity, and Inclusion) Committee to make recommendations to the Commission on ways to  
75 fight inequity, a lack of diversity, methods for inclusion, strive for justice, and battle systemic  
76 racism. The current makeup of the Committee is two Commissioners, two Member of the public  
77 (MV-FREE) and two Recreation staff. The Committee had its first meeting in November 2021.  
78

79 **Adaptive Play Structures:** Adaptive play swings were added to many of the park playground. The  
80 Molded Bucket Seat Swing are inclusive of various abilities. The provide head, neck, and back  
81 support. The are usable for 2-12 years old. Sycamore Park offers this swing. It was something Staff  
82 could install and each swing costs less than \$1,000, meaning more parks can now have an inclusive  
83 swing.  
84

85 **No Clubs, Just Play:** No Clubs, Just Play began in 2020, with a suggestion from members of the  
86 Golf Club. In the tradition of the birthplace of golf, St. Andrews. No Clubs, Just Play closed the  
87 course to golf on a Sunday afternoon and it is transformed into a community park. The Commission  
88 approved an extension and expansion of the concept for the summer of 2021. It was very successful  
89 with over 100 people enjoying the “park” over the summer.

90 **COVID:** In March 2020, the world changed. Parks and Recreation has had to change and pivot,  
91 along with rest of society during the past 23 months. On June 15, 2021, many of the restrictions  
92 were lifted. Some of the changes that occurred during the year were:  
93

94 **Welcome Back Pass:** Here is an excerpt from the staff report recommending the creation of the  
95 Welcome back pass:

96 “2020 was a challenging year for everyone; many people died from COVID-19  
97 during pandemic to fires ravaging Northern California. Marin residents faced these  
98 challenges steadfastly. Whether it was masking up and social distancing, or  
99 preparing to shelter our neighbors, the Mill Valley community showed its  
100 commitment to making society a safer and a better place. Mill Valley was not in  
101 this alone. All the communities of Marin worked together and continue to work  
102 together. Now that restrictions are easing, Mill Valley Recreation would like to  
103 acknowledge that we were all in this together with a pilot “Welcome Back” pass,  
104 that has added value and recognizes that for the past year we were in this together  
105 and that we are one people.”  
106

107 The Welcome Back Pass reduced the myriad of passes (from 36 options to 6), included many of  
108 the group fitness classes, and maintain pre-COVID costs. It was a success and much appreciated  
109 by the community.  
110

111 **Summer Camps:** Summer camps hopefully represented a change from the most restrictive cohort  
112 / essential workers camps of 2020, to a full reopening of camps in 2022. The cohort size increased  
113 allowing for a more traditional camp experience. The swimming pool was open which allowed for  
114 the camp to have a splash (swimming) component to it.

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***DPW Summer Internship Program:*** Operations Superintendent Boyd reported that 2021 was the first time that DPW did a summer internship. In the past, it has always hired part-time seasonal help. The idea was to attract local youth to have a meaningful experience and get paid for it with thoughts to cycle through the different departments within DPW to get a sense of how different parts of the city work. Two applications were received but due to scheduling difficulties these interns did not get a chance to cycle through all of the departments. They did however spend time working at the golf course, in the parks, and with the streets and sewer crews and were able to get good exposure to many aspects of each department. Staff is looking forward to doing it again in the summer of 2022.

***Naming the Boyle Park Snack Shack in Honor of Suzanne “Suzie” Wickham:*** In 2021, Mill Valley experienced the loss of many. Perhaps, no loss was as great as the passing of Suzanne “Suzie” Wickham. As Caroline Joachim wrote in an email, “Earlier this year, Suzanne Wickham, who grew up in Mill Valley and volunteered countless hours to Mill Valley Little League, passed away. Suzie contributed greatly to MVLL. As one of our Board Members put it, Suzie was known by every parent and child who bought snacks at the Minor league snack shack. She had a smile on her face and would laugh at the drop of a hat. She raised five children all of whom played baseball or softball. She also served as the rookie league commissioner. We often kidded Suzie that she cooked more meals for the families of Mill Valley than her own.” The Commission wholeheartedly supported the Mill Valley Little’s request to rename the snack shack after Suzie Wickham and recommended this project to Council for approval.

***Field Allocations:*** Over the past years, the field allocation process was a difficult process for staff, the Commission, and the Youth Sports Organizations. Staff and the Youth Sports Organizations have worked over those years, to develop systems to make it less acrimonious. Over the past few years, trust and understanding has developed between the staff and the Youth Sports Organizations to the point that for the first time ever, the field allocations were on consent and passed on consent. The hard work of the Commission, the Youth Sports Organizations and staff were realized on that day.

**Administration & Business Services:** Commission and staff worked together on several important administrative projects and strengthening key partnerships including the following:

***Aquatics & Fitness Center Pass Fees:*** The Commission and staff continued the review of fees, which began in 2019 (Park use fees). Aquatics and Fitness pass fees were reviewed, and a major overhaul of the fees was recommended to the Commission based upon the success of the Welcome Back Pass and feedback from both staff and community members. In December, the overhaul of fees was approved by the Commission. Fees were simplified and included almost all of the fitness classes

***Partnerships:*** The Commission looks forward to working with staff, community members and organizations like our established non-profit partner, the Mill Valley Friends of Parks and Recreation (FoP&R), to provide additional funding and support toward parks and recreation facilities, programs, events, and activities.

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**Priority Projects:** Every two non-COVID years, the Commission and staff attend a retreat in which the Commission creates a Priority Project list to recommend to City Council. In June 2021, the Commission met and approved recommending the following projects for Council consideration.

- **Synthetic Turfing of Athletic Fields:** Staff to explore the possibility of converting at least one of the athletic fields to synthetic turf to increase recreation opportunities and, if the project is feasible, research funding opportunities with various community partners.
- **Renovation/Redesign of Bayfront/Bell Ropers Pathways and Layout:** Staff to examine, propose, and if funded, redesign Bayfront and Bell Ropers fields to increase useable space. Staff recommended that this project be part of the overall turf replacement discussion.
- **Tam Transportation Loop:** Staff to explore the viability of a shuttle service to connect Marin City and Mill Valley Recreation opportunities.
- **Adaptive Play Structures:** Staff will plan the addition of adaptive play structures and/or elements to existing play structures. Staff will explore funding options to increase play opportunities for children with disabilities.
- **Sand Volleyball Court:** Staff will work with an existing community group to design, develop, and install sand volleyball court(s) in the Bayfront Park complex as mentioned in the Bayfront Master Plan.
- **Community Coffee:** Staff will continue to work with Integrated Community Services to create *Community Coffee* at the Community Center.

**Attachments:** None.