

May 12, 2021 PANIL MEETING
6:30 Zoom call

Main topic: Mosswood Park == What's gong on?

Community Policing Discussion

NCPC Officer M. Gischke gave a report on crimes in the 9x beat for the last three months. Overall, crime in this beat is down or steady, but for Area 2 and the city as a whole, crime has been rising. The beat seen an increase in robberies to 10, up from 6 in the same period last year. George Horton raised the issue of mailbox theft that his neighbor experienced. The police are actively investigating the problem. Asked what can be done to assist police in solving the crimes, the officer said "observe and report promptly." The officer acknowledged there is an ongoing problem with homeless encampments. Asked if homeless are being cited or removed from areas for blocking sidewalks or littering, the officer said they are not, that the Administration views that as "criminalizing" homelessness. Unless they are caught in an active crime, police will do nothing about clearing the encampments. One particularly egregious large camp on the corner of Webster and MacArthur. While Officer Gitschke knows of the site, he didn't know the status, but one attendee reported the settlement was cleared away.

Feature Presentation: Mosswood Park

Terri Westbrook, Park Director at Mosswood, delivered the presentation. She's been in the position for about two years, in the time of COVID great budget constraints, to say nothing of the substantial homeless settlement. Terri reported on the many activities now happening: At this time there is an active after school program. The park overall is officially closed but some activities are permitted. There is an active youth tennis program and courts can now be reserved for play. Basketball hoops were reinstalled this week. On two evenings per week **roller skating** for all ages takes place on the basketball courts, and the group is very welcoming to newcomers. The city is planning a series of murals. Terri provided contact information for Donna Cabello from those who want to participate in the process. Valerie Winemuller expressed her desire that the murals reflect the history and heritage of the park.

There were a few questions on the fate of the historic Moss House in the center of the park. Unfortunately, it has been a frequent target of unhouesd. At the current time it is just serving as storage for the Parks and Rec department, but hope is to open it up to the public for events and perhaps a vendor. [At this writing the homeless camps in and around the House have been removed and the house has added fencing and security.]

On the status of the overall homeless encampment, Terri noted there are about 40 campers, not including those adjacent to the park on the Caltrans property along the freeway. She assured the audience that the situation at Mosswood is top on the list, being address by the City's homeless task force under the direction of Lashonda Simmons, but she stated there would be no actions until the end of the Governor's moratorium on June 15.

New park design. About a year ago, the City invited the community participate in an exercise to plan the new Mosswood Park in conjunction with replacing the burned-down community center. That resulted in a stunning new vision that will be realized in three phases, with groundbreaking to begin in Q1 of 2022. Highlight of the first phase will be a new two-story community center and new tennis courts. Phase two will add a gymnasium and phase three will add a pool. Several people expressed interest in the pool. Terry stated it would be heated, and plans also consider offering swim lessons, though that activity is under a separate group in Parks and Rec. Terri presented a slide show of the artists conceptions of the new facilities.

Here's a link to the City's page all about the new Rec/Community Center from Project Director Chrisine Reed:

<https://www.oaklandca.gov/projects/mosswood-community-center>

In closing Terri invited the community to use the park -- it's reopening - to participate in RAC meetings, and to contact her anytime for questions and opportunities to participate in the many activities.

Terri's contact info
Phone: (510) 882-4369
email: twestbrook@oaklandca.gov

Notices:

Panil Survey sent to those on our mailing list on "What to you want at the Ridge" Visit the PANIL web site www.panil.org for more info.

Also, next month's meeting: Housing over the parking lot behind CVS. Hear all about the plans. On Zoom June 9.

Finally, if you'd like to donate to PANIL to help us inform and advocate for the Neighborhood. You can now do that on the PANIL Web site.