

Eric J. Kos

The future of the swimming pools at Franklin (above) and Lincoln parks are to be decided by the City Council.

City Officials Discuss Pools' Future Path

Ekene Ikeme

The future plans for the pools at Franklin and Lincoln parks are being further complicated due to an amended California law.

The two pools are currently operated by the Alameda Swimming Pool Association (ASPA), a non-profit organization. ASPA has been the sole operator of the two pools since the City leased the land at the parks to the organization to build and operate the two swimming facilities in 1959.

The lease agreement between the City and ASPA is set to expire after ten years on Sept. 30. The City can't start another long-term lease with ASPA when the current lease expires due to an amendment of a California law.

In Oct. 2019, California Governor Gavin Newsom enacted Assembly Bill 1486, an amendment to the Surplus Land Act (SLA). The bill requires excess or "surplus" local agency land be made available for affordable housing development. The purpose of SLA is in part to address the affordable housing shortage in California.

The parcels that house the two swimming pools are not considered "surplus" land, however, under the SLA, the sale or long-term lease of any city-owned property can only occur after the City has completed a statutorily required surplus process, according to the Alameda Recreation and Parks Department (ARPD) Director Amy Wooldridge.

The surplus process requires

the City to notify affordable housing developers and other public agencies (e.g., the school district and the park district) that the city property is available for disposition. If one or more of those entities expresses interest, the City must negotiate with them in good faith. If there are no entities interested in the city property or if negotiations could not consummate a final transaction, the City could then move forward with a long-term lease agreement with ASPA or another private entity.

If the Council decides it wants to sign a long-term with ASPA or sell the properties, it will start the surplus process. During this time, the City can agree to short-term leases with ASPA until the process is complete. The City Attorney's office believes the surplus process can take six to 18 months to complete.

However, the City Council might be reluctant to agree to another long-term agreement with ASPA.

Alameda officials have recently met with ASPA to express concerns regarding facility maintenance and safety protocols at the pools. ASPA is financially responsible for all maintenance and operations upgrades. The current facilities have not had any major improvements since being built. Repairs have been done such as concrete work and pump replacement, but ASPA acknowledges that there are significant improvements needed, including water leaks at both pools.

The ARPD has also expressed concerns about safety protocols at the pool. According to the memorandum, the City says a Red Cross certified lifeguard is not always on watch at the pool, which is stipulated in the lease agreement.

The City Council can direct staff to take over responsibility of pool operations. In this scenario, the City would move its aquatic programs to these pool facilities, as feasible, and explore funding options to rebuild the facilities with designs based on community feedback. This option would retain these pool facilities for community use; however, the City will have to find funding for improvement costs.

The third option is for the City to issue a request for proposals for a pool operator. The City would not have to adhere to a surplus process in this scenario because the City would retain significant control of the property. RFP requirements would include operating the facilities as public pools with no membership structure allowed — the pools currently require membership with an annual \$500 fee — and facility upgrades and Red Cross certified lifeguards. ASPA would be allowed to submit a proposal if the Council decides on this option.

ARPD was supposed to discuss this topic at its Feb. 11 meeting, but Wooldridge said the group wanted to receive more feedback from residents. They will make a recommendation to the Council at a future date.

Planning Board Set to Consider City's Recovery Plan at Monday Meeting

Sun Staff Reports

At its next Zoom meeting on Monday, Feb 22, the Planning Board will discuss the city's COVID-19 recovery plan.

The plan addresses the challenges that businesses and workers are facing. These include consumers spending less money and businesses either shortening their business hours or closing altogether.

The plan recommends strategies to assist with economic resilience and recovery over the next 12 to 24 months.

The city has designed these

strategies to help sustain small businesses, organizations and workers during the pandemic and to position Alameda to take advantage of opportunities for future economic growth.

This plan complements the 2018 Alameda Economic Development Strategic Plan, which serves as the long-term guide to economic development activities over 10 years.

The plan was developed with guidance from the city's Economic Recovery Task Force, which comprises 10 Alameda community members representing businesses, nonprofits and workers.

Zoom instructions at at online agenda

By telephone

669-900-9128

Meeting ID:

836 6742 0151

Passcode: 190690

There has been hopeful progress on developing and distributing a COVID-19 vaccine. The city will continue exploring and implementing new policies and programs to support local residents, workers, and businesses.

Mismanaged VA Project at Point Stumbles Along

Richard Bangert

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) healthcare facility and cemetery project at Alameda Point still has not broken ground, a decade after the first round of Congressional funding. Public officials appear to look away.

The latest setback comes with the VA having to re-do the contract for constructing the wetland mitigation plan.

For unknown reasons, in November 2020, less than four months after the VA hired a company to perform the wetland work for \$2.37 million, that company is out of the picture. The VA is now trying to find other companies with the same engineering skillset.

The actual competitive bidding process will follow. The VA estimates the wetland project could now cost between \$5 million and \$10 million.

This newest delay in the unnecessarily long-running effort to do this small wetland project only became known by searching a federal contract website called GovTribe.

The VA has not kept the Alameda community informed about this project or delivered on its promises for some infrastructure. The last I heard from the VA is that the project would commence in the fall of 2019. The city does not provide regular public updates.

The VA is also seeking qualified companies to do site preparation work for the health clinic and first phase of the cemetery, according to the GovTribe website. The notice states that contractor bids for actually doing the work will be sought "in spring of 2021."

It also says, "This project could be cancelled at any time." This is five years after Congress gave them enough additional funding to do the work, a time period during which the esti-

mated cost for the project grew by \$35 million.

The site preparation involves bringing in 300,000 cubic yards of soil to raise the elevation on the old airfield where the Antiques Faire is held, in order to protect the clinic from sea level rise and flooding.

This will require at least 10,000 truck trips. The city has not offered to the VA one of the idle sites at Alameda Point that are already slated for sea level rise protection.

Meanwhile the VA is preparing to build a hill far away from the transit system.

The VA still faces a number of regulatory hurdles before it can break ground. The permit from the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, issued in January 2014, expired in January 2017 due to inaction and will have to be revisited.

According to the San Francisco Water Quality Control Board, the VA will need to supply a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental report in order to comply with state law for granting a wetland permit. No announcements have been made by the VA or the city that the VA is working on a CEQA report.

City officials seem reluctant to criticize the VA's lack of progress, hiding behind the excuse that "it's federal." But the City became a partner in this federal project eight years ago when it agreed to give the VA 74 acres of city parkland for its clinic.

Public officials have shown no evidence of standing up for veterans or against the mismanaged VA project.

Contributing writer Richard Bangert posts stories and photos about Alameda Point issues on his blog *Alameda Point Environmental Report* <https://alamedapointenviro.com>.

APD Makes Arrest in MLK Jr. Day Threat Incident

Dennis Evanosky

Alameda Police Department (APD) has announced the arrest of Jonathon Gee, 33, as the man who allegedly threatened protesters on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. According to witnesses, Gee was holding what appeared to be a long gun and was threatening the protesters.

When questioned by police, Gee identified the weapon he was holding as an "Airsoft" gun. He told police that he no longer had the long gun.

When APD searched Gee's home they found several pieces of evidence that connected Gee to the incident.

These included the distinctive clothing that Gee was wearing. APD referred the case to the City of Alameda's Prosecutor's office. On Feb. 12, that office announced that it was filing a two-count criminal complaint against Gee.

The complaint alleges that Gee disturbed the peace in a manner likely to provoke a violent reaction and unlawfully altered an imitation firearm.



Indybay

Alameda police arrested Jonathon Gee. They allege he is the person pictured here, threatening protesters on MLK Jr. Day.

INSIDE



HOMETOWN NEWS

Fire Wire Page 2

Police Blotter Page 5

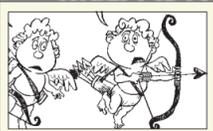
All the doings of Island safety & law personnel



THE CITY PAGE

Pick a Mural Page 3

The city would like public input on new art proposal.



OPINION

Letters & more Page 4

See what Alamedans are fired up about this week.



ISLAND ARTS

Bubble show Page 9

See the bubble magic up close in online show this year.

CONTENTS

HOMETOWN NEWS... 2

THE CITY PAGE 3

OPINION 4

POLICE BLOTTER..... 5

CLASSIFIED 6

FUN IN THE SUN 9

ALAMEDA HISTORY .. 10

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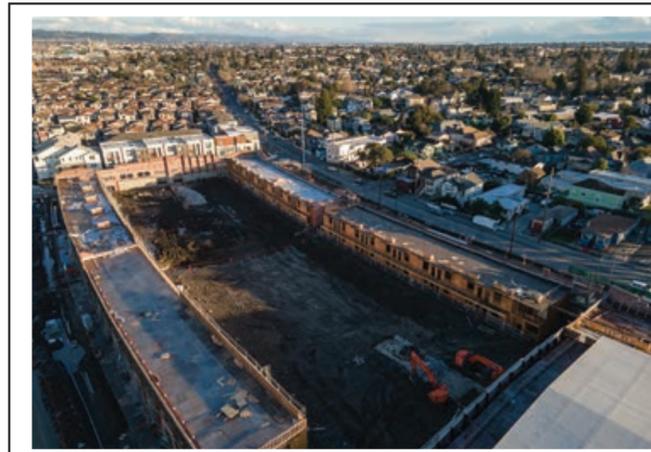
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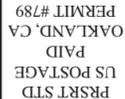
Date	Rise	Set
Today	6:38	17:41
Feb. 19	6:37	17:42
Feb. 20	6:36	17:43
Feb. 21	6:35	17:44
Feb. 22	6:33	17:45
Feb. 23	6:32	17:46
Feb. 24	6:31	17:47



Project Ready for Next Stage

Photo by Maurice Ramirez

The mixed-use residential project at the former Del Monte warehouse on Buena Vista Avenue shows its interior is ready for new construction from above. The site will eventually house up to 589 residential units, 50,000 square feet of commercial space, at least three acres of public access, and a commercial marina for up to 160 slips including landings for water taxi and shuttle ferry service.



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