



## City of Sebastopol Planning Department

Date: March 24, 2026  
To: Planning Commission  
From: Victoria Henkel, Permit Technician; Jane Riley, Interim Planning Director  
Subject: Re-Creation of Parks Ad Hoc Subcommittee and appointment of Members, with Discussion of Duties, Time Frame and Alternatives

### **Executive Summary & Recommendation:**

With two specific parks-related issues pending but expected to be completed within the next year, Staff is recommending that the Commission re-establish the Parks Subcommittee for a period not to exceed one year and to name two (2) members to serve on it. This agenda item will also include a discussion of the subcommittee's duties and the time frame for their work.

The Commission is invited to also discuss the alternative of establishing a Standing Parks Committee. While staff does not recommend this alternative at this time because of the costs involved, the Commission's discussion could guide staff in preparing any necessary budget and follow-up items. Such a Standing Committee could not be established unless and until the related costs are estimated for review and action of the City Council.

### **Background:**

The Planning Commission also serves as the City's Parks Commission. The Planning Commission previously had a Parks Ad Hoc Subcommittee, comprising Commissioners Oetinger and Fernandez. That committee was disbanded due to the absence of a specific ongoing purpose.

### **Analysis**

The City has the current needs related to Parks planning within the next year:

- 1) Resolution of potential conflicts between the approved concept to naturalize Calder Creek within Ives Park (Master Plan element), currently unfunded but progressing via partnerships (e.g., California Urban Stream Partnership/CUSP for engineering, design, and grant funding pursuits) and the Sebastopol Rotary Club application for urgent repairs, replacements, and enhancements in Ives Park (e.g., new Jewel Avenue entrance/ADA ramp, replacement of Little League concession stand/bathrooms, and creation of Rotary Centennial Plaza), which are aligned with short-term Master Plan improvements and Rotary's 100th anniversary celebrations.
- 2) Recently, per City Council direction, the Design Review Board and staff (and most recently added to the Planning Commission's work plan) are developing plans for the City's 125th anniversary of incorporation (June 2027). This could be an item discussed at the subcommittee if approved and brought forward to the full Parks Commission.

Two options are discussed below for the Parks Committee to handle this focused work:

1. A temporary Parks Ad Hoc Subcommittee; or
2. A permanent Standing Parks Committee (Not recommended due to the increased costs to City to establish, staff and administer another Brown Act Committee, and because of the limited term and nature of the needed work).

### **Committee Options:**

#### **Option 1: Ad Hoc Subcommittee Committee (Temporary, Specialized)**

An ad hoc subcommittee is a temporary, advisory group appointed by the Planning Commission to address a specific, time-limited issue (e.g., Ives Park implementation phases or related parks matters). It disbands upon task completion, typically within 1 year or less.

#### Key Characteristics:

- Formed for a defined objective with a clear endpoint.
- Ceases upon delivery of recommendations for assigned project(s)
- Staff recommends two Planning Commissioners, consistent with our prior practices; the number cannot be more than 2 to avoid a quorum.
- The subcommittee cannot include members of the public.
- Advisory only: Provides research/findings/recommendations to the full Commission
- Enables focused review of complex issues without full Commission involvement in details.
- Generally exempt from Brown Act open meeting requirements (no 72-hour agenda posting) if advisory, < quorum of the body, and limited in scope/time (Gov. Code § 54952(b); see *Joiner v. City of Sebastopol* (1981)).

#### **Option 2: Standing Committee (Permanent and Ongoing) (not recommended)**

A standing committee would provide continuing oversight of parks-related matters.

#### Key Characteristics:

- Meets as needed (irregular or scheduled) on all Parks projects/proposals/issues.
- Permanent unless formally dissolved.
- Fully subject to Brown Act (public meetings, 72-hour agenda posting, recording of meetings, minutes).
- Operates independently, making recommendations to the Planning Commission with Council approval (dependent upon the item).

### **Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends forming an Ad Hoc Committee composed of two Planning Commissioners with the defined scope set forth herein and a duration of not more than one year or when work is completed, whichever comes first. This option is the least expensive and could be initiated immediately. The Commission would:

1. Create an Ad Hoc Subcommittee and appoint two Commissioners to serve; and
2. Agree to the scope, objectives, and duration as outlined herein.

If a Standing Parks Committee is preferred by the Commission, this item would be continued until staff can perform an analysis of costs and bring to the Budget Committee and City Council for direction.