

Brigitte Shearer

From: Patricia Kurtz <
Sent: Saturday, March 19, 2022 2:16 PM
To: P&R Comm
Subject: Concerns about local parks

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for the information that was provided last week on the status of parks in Belmont. I was interested in hearing about all the parks but my major concern is Hallmark Park since I live in close proximity to it. I was pleased to hear that most commissioners were not in favor of expanding the park. I walk through it frequently on my way to walking the cross country course. The tot lot is used infrequently and really does not need to be upgraded for older children. It is now a facility that is not used often and I do not think that the addition of modern equipment will increase its use. The tennis courts are though and need to be renovated as well as the sidewalks. I was also concerned about adding a bocce ball court or creating a facility on the hill. If a bocce ball court is added, you need to address ADA requirements and this area is not easily accessible. The area on the hill looks down into people's homes and impacts personal space. In addition, we may be the only park in Belmont that does not have at least one designated parking space. The only parking is on the street. Street parking can be busy with individuals parking to access the cross county course. I hope that you will continue to support no additional structures and facilities to Hallmark park. It is a beautiful wild life preserve and should be maintained as such.

I have also walked in the Hidden Valley area. I agree that safe paths need to be maintained for bikers and walkers. Bikers often come down quickly off the canyon path and can potentially be dangerous to people sitting or walking in the area. I agree that signage about the wildlife would be educational but it needs to be maintained. Weathering takes a quick toll on signage so that it becomes eyesore if not maintained.

Finally, I was very concerned that comments were made by commissioners that they had not visited some of the parks. How can one vote on changes to a park if they have not seen it? As an educational administrator, I attended board meetings twice a month for over 20 years. I recognize and appreciate the time that a commissioner volunteers to support a program. But I also know that accepting to be a commissioner comes with a responsibility to understand what one is reviewing and voting on. I suggest a field trip to the parks. I frequently watched such activities by board members to visit construction projects in my school district. It provided them with a better lens to make decisions. I encourage all commissioners to visit the Belmont parks so that they can be informed about their needs.

Thanks you for hearing my concerns.

Dr. Patricia Kurtz

Brigitte Shearer

From: Brigitte Shearer
Sent: Wednesday, March 9, 2022 5:45 AM
To: P&R Comm
Subject: Fwd: Hallmark Park

Please excuse any typos!

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jozi Plut <jplut@belmont.gov>
Date: March 9, 2022 at 12:39:47 AM PST
To: Brigitte Shearer <BShearer@belmont.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Hallmark Park

Begin forwarded message:

From:
Date: March 8, 2022 at 5:14:16 PM PST
To: City Council <CityCouncil@belmont.gov>
Subject: Re: Hallmark Park
Reply-To: mimi36626@aol.com

LETTER TO BELMONT CITY COUNCIL

Everyone supports recreation. But isn't walking through a natural setting recreation? Recreation is also enjoying the peace and quiet, exploring nature, seeing birds and hearing them sing. All ages can enjoy this rare and splendid natural environment. We already have a playground and tennis courts in Hallmark Park. We do not need to cover up what's left with yet more structures.

The reason most of us live here in this neighborhood has to do with the natural space around us. You have already cut down perfectly healthy trees of which only one out of four was dead or a problem in the first place. The "excuse" was that their roots were interfering with the path. The path could have easily been modified to accommodate the beautiful healthy trees you cut down and you did nothing to repair the path anyway!

Then you spent more money planting new trees. These new trees will take 20 or more years to begin doing what the trees you cut down were already doing. They were reducing the carbon in the atmosphere, providing a place for birds to nest and supporting the wildlife. You also cut down these trees at bird nesting time, so we lost even more of our habitats for wildlife.

You have claimed that you don't have enough money to maintain what is already there in Hallmark Park. But somehow you found the money to cut down perfectly healthy trees

and plant new trees instead of spending a much lesser amount that could have easily modified the path. Now you want to build more structures which will add a cost you say you can't afford in the first place.

More important is what this park already gives us something most other parks can't: a peaceful natural setting. This little piece of nature sets it apart and is another form of recreation not found in virtually any of the other parks around us. Please don't ruin this little oasis by building more structures. Let's leave something of its natural setting for the enjoyment of peace and quiet and for wildlife to flourish. And think of the money you'll save!

Thank you for your consideration.

Mimi Iversen, resident of Hallmark neighborhood

Brigitte Shearer

From: alireza razavi <
Sent: Wednesday, March 2, 2022 9:29 PM
To: P&R Comm
Subject: Hallmark planning

Hi there

I am the resident of 4 elder dr in hallmark. Upgrading the play structure is very helpful for our family and the rest of families that have younger children. We are in favor of resurfacing the tennis court. I also think it is not a bad idea to have some seating area. This can be few benches. Having a looped walking path is a plus. I am not sure i support other ideas. Adding/replacing fountain to drink water is good idea too. The existing fountain was out of service some times back.

Best

Alireza razavi

4 elder dr, belmont (part of hallmark)

Brigitte Shearer

From: Ignatius Passantino <
Sent: Wednesday, March 2, 2022 3:15 PM
To: P&R Comm
Subject: Preserve Hallmark Park

We are 36-year residents of the Belmont Heights residential area. Our draw to this area was the "natural beauty" and serenity of the landscape, watershed and preservation of vegetation and wildlife. The walking trails afford residents the rare opportunity to enjoy all of the above.

The proposed plans to broaden, excavate, develop and populate one of the last remaining residential parks into a public community. This proposal will bring more automobiles into the area, and disturb the wildlife and peaceful community our families have enjoyed for years. Preservation of the unique and cherished gifts of nature we may ALL still enjoy without modernizing and injecting new development will destroy what has been preserved for years. We are one with nature here. Noise, cars, trash and disrespecting nature's gift is unacceptable.

The cross-country runs already bring hundreds of strangers and vehicles to our quiet community every Fall. Hallmark Park should not become a public recreation area.

We are strongly opposed to the proposed changes to Hallmark Park.

Thank you,

Nace and Bonnie Passantino
Hallmark Drive

Brigitte Shearer

From: Lynn Ashby ·
Sent: Wednesday, March 2, 2022 1:49 PM
To: P&R Comm
Subject: Fwd: Hallmark Park

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Lynn Ashby <dlatahoe@comcast.net>
Date: March 2, 2022 at 12:43:30 PM PST
To: info@belmontprosplan.com
Cc: Dick & Lynn Ashby <dlatahoe@comcast.net>
Subject: Hallmark Park

Hello Belmont Parks Commission,

I DO NOT support the proposed plan to “renovate” the Hallmark Park area.

Currently the tennis courts, children’s play structure, and walking paths are actively used, and enjoyed by Belmont citizens. The existing trees, other vegetation, and the open space should not be replaced with a dog park, additional play structures and bocce ball courts. Available funds should be put toward maintaining the tennis courts, existing vegetation, and walking paths. Older trees should be pruned, and parts of the walking paths have become dangerous trip hazards, and need to be repaired.

Hallmark Park should remain as it is currently designed. Thank you for your consideration.

Richard Ashby

Brigitte Shearer

From: Ines Salazar <
Sent: Wednesday, March 2, 2022 10:47 AM
To: P&R Comm
Cc: info@belmontprosplan.com
Subject: proposed Hallmark Park plan

Hello,

I am a resident of Belmont Heights on Wakefield Drive since 2013. I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed plan for Hallmark Park. Neighborhoods are defined by certain characteristics, and this plan threatens to undermine and even destroy what makes Belmont Heights special.

This is a quiet neighborhood that already attracts many people who live beyond its borders to enjoy the hiking and biking trails. Moreover, we and all our neighbors already experience the traffic congestion and related issues brought on by the frequent cross country meets. We were aware of the meets when we bought our home. This proposed plan, however, would irrevocably change the character of the neighborhood. When we purchased our home, our son was 4 years old. We knew that going to a playground would necessitate going to Fox School after school hours or driving to local park. However, we were drawn to the area for its quiet and for its easy access to nature as well as the excellent school district. We moved from Sunnyvale, which has numerous wonderful large parks, including one to which we walked frequently as a family. But those parks have much dedicated parking and some separation from surrounding homes. Those parks have also been part of the landscape for a very long time.

Even at a young age, we took our son down the path to Waterdog lake and he now at 12, enjoys bicycling the paths on his own or with friends.

I am in favor of updating the tennis courts as well as the tot lot without making it much larger. The path leading to the tennis courts is also in need of serious repair. I think Hallmark Park has no place for a bocce court or wider paved paths. Without additional parking, congestion would increase even further. Note the issues with parking and illegal U-turns and runners darting out into the streets that we already experience during country meets. During the height of the pandemic when we were sheltering at home, I appreciated more than ever that our sidewalks offered us the opportunity to take walks at various times of the day. I don't see the need to create additional paths. These additional features also have the potential to attract late night gatherings. I hear from friends in San Mateo this is in issue at their parks.

Please do not destroy what makes this neighborhood special. A neighborhood can't be all things. We knew when we moved here that we would be unable to walk to errands or to a large park, but the quiet, the extraordinary views, access to nature as well as the surrounding community and schools drew us to Belmont and this neighborhood in particular.

Sincerely,
Ines Salazar
2800 Wakefield Dr

Brigitte Shearer

From: M Cohen
Sent: Tuesday, March 1, 2022 11:57 AM
To: P&R Comm
Subject: Fwd: Hallmark Park

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From: M Cohen
Date: Tue, Mar 1, 2022 at 11:55 AM
Subject: Hallmark Park
To: <info@belmontprosplan.com>

Greetings!

For almost 35 years, we have resided in our home at the corner of Hallmark and Wakefield Drive – just across the street from the entrance to Hallmark Park. We have enjoyed our neighborhood park and appreciate and support a refresh and repair work for safety concerns and restoration of our wonderful views.

The asphalt pathways are unsafe and in great need of repair due to years of neglect and incursion from tree roots. Over time, our original expansive views from the benches above the tennis court have been obscured by fast growing non native pine trees.

We support restoring the natural landscape by removing all non native trees and increasing maintenance in order to reduce the possible fire danger in our area and restore our views.

We support keeping our natural landscape and wildlife habitat which provides us with access to wildlife viewing and environmental education. Interpretive signage should be added to enhance the learning experience. Walking paths in the meadow area would be helpful.

The current tot lot is suitable only for toddlers and preschoolers. We support enhancing it to meet current standards and provide amenities for our neighborhood elementary school children, while maintaining a look and feel that blends into the park's natural landscape. We suggest that the playground have a local wildlife and environmental theme to enhance the environmental component of the park.

We do not think we need additional amenities to Hallmark Park when the focus should be on the natural environment, a children's playground and a tennis court.

We are concerned that adding additional amenities, such as a dog run area, will increase the traffic in our neighborhood, negatively impact the natural setting, and increase city costs for increased upkeep and maintenance.

Sincerely,

Michele Cohen and Lewis Scarpace
2601 Wakefield Drive