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14 July, 2014

Dear Mayor Turner and Fort Bragg City Councilmembers,

The new Coastal Trail listed under the Parks and Community Services category of the proposed Capital Improvements Program will be amazing, with stunning views. I know that I'll use it and I'm eager to share it with visitors. The Chestnut Street Trail will likely also be a nice addition to the City.

We have an existing park that has fallen into some disrepair and is sorely in need of improvement. Bainbridge Park is a true community park, serving as a backyard for many Fort Bragg residents. It's used for family get-togethers and birthday parties, for annual school field trip picnics, as a community gathering space, and as a place to exercise and practice tai chi. The basketball court and tennis court are popular and the tennis court is used for school tournaments. Wiggly Giggly Playground is the place to go according to local children. The area has a rich history and the nearby Veterans Memorial Building and Mendocino County Library add to the community atmosphere.

There are facets of the park in need of not just repair, but improvement. I respectfully request that you add Bainbridge Park to your Capital Improvement Program. I was surprised to see that the program, which is projected through 2019, does not mention Bainbridge Park. In 2007, the Public Works and Community Development Departments were directed to develop a Bainbridge Park Improvements Master Plan. New restrooms were designed and built, but other improvements have yet to be made. It's time to review and update the Master Plan. Bainbridge Park has the potential to be a model of green engineering.

The park no longer has a horseshoe pit, a volleyball net, or picnic amenities and the sidewalk is uneven. I still frequently see families arrive ready for a birthday party only to find that there is nowhere to sit and eat. They then have to leave to gather tables and chairs to use if they are physically unable to or don't want to hold the party on the ground. Improvements need to be made to prevent the park from seeming to be unwelcoming to local families and to prevent it from becoming a blighted area.

Here are a few improvements (in no particular order) that I'd like to suggest:

Update with low-wattage lighting and install proper shades on the tennis court lights to eliminate the current light trespass into neighboring homes – it now shines brightly into second story windows.

Improve grading and drainage to remedy the flooded grassy areas in the winter.

In the former restroom location:

- Create a permeable surface pavilion or picnic area with a pergola roof and trees on the perimeter.

- Install picnic amenities: tables, benches, grills, and trash and recycling receptacles.

- Build a low stage or gazebo with a seating area for public events (theatre, acoustic concerts, puppet shows, speeches...).

Replace the pavement between the tennis court and the playground with a pervious or permeable material and install new sidewalks of the same material to reduce or eliminate storm water runoff.

Install a rainwater collection system on the restroom. It could be an inspiration for residents.

Move or remove the maintenance shed. Or create a barrier to make its south side inaccessible. It is a popular place for people to hide while drinking, taking drugs and selling drugs.

Reattach the volleyball net and adapt the poles so the height can be adjusted for playing either volleyball or badminton.

Add benches near the sidewalk along the west side of the park.

Repair the tennis court to correct the pooling of water that occurs in the west court, rendering it unplayable, after even a light mist or rain.

Replace the tennis court fence – with black cyclone fencing to complement the black Wiggly Giggly fence. Tennis court fencing has been discussed but not yet replaced. There is an uninviting, unsafe sharp rusted pole poking out at about head height near the tennis court entrance.

Install a black perimeter park fence to match or complement the Wiggly Giggly fence. It will serve as a visual frame for the park as well as make it easier to keep children from running into the street and make it more difficult for those who perform illegal activities there to make a quick escape.

Plant natural landscaping or xeriscaping.

Install public art: some permanent, some temporary and some interactive.

Give residents a chance to participate in planning their park by holding community meetings and conduct a survey to solicit more ideas and suggestions.

I hope that when you attend the City's 125th Anniversary community barbeque at Bainbridge Park on August 9th you will take a look around and envision just how lovely the park will be if you want to make it happen. And I hope you agree that the residents of Fort Bragg deserve a community park with park-like amenities.

Sincerely,

Kathy Silva