

Town of San Anselmo
Staff Report
March 16, 2018

For the meeting of March 20, 2018

TO: Park and Recreation Commission

FROM: Dannielle Mauk, Director of Community Services

SUBJECT: Update: Proposed Archery Range at Sorich Park

Recommendation

That the Commission review the attached staff report and minutes from the February 21, 2018 Open Space Committee meeting, and the attached memo from Planning Director, Elise Semonian.

Background

On January 16, 2018 Scott Bullard, owner of Marin Archery Shop, made a presentation to the Parks and Recreation Commission regarding a proposal to repurpose a portion of Sorich Ranch Park for use as an archery range. At that meeting, Commissioners supported the concept of an archery range, although there were concerns about the location. The Commission recommended that Bullard present his ideas to the Open Space Committee and present a proposal that was detailed with square footage, grading needs, project costs and anything else that a Town would require for the proposed change at Sorich Ranch Park.

Discussion

On February 21, 2018, Bullard presented a proposal to the Open Space Committee. The Committee considered the request to dedicate a portion of the park for use as a public archery range. The Committee received 40 emailed comments prior to the meeting, with the majority of the comments supporting the concept of an archery range. During the meeting 18 people spoke, nine were not residents of the town; of the nine who were residents of San Anselmo, the opinions were split about the proposed use. The Committee determined that they did not believe the range proposal was consistent with the current Sorich Ranch Park Master Plan, which has a goal of "passive activities".

Analysis

At their February meeting, the Open Space Committee made the determination that the proposal to install an archery range was inconsistent with the current Sorich Ranch Park Master Plan, which has a goal of "passive activities". The Committee suggested the archery enthusiasts approach the County of

Marin about the potential of using a portion of the newly purchased San Geronimo Golf Course as a possible location.

Conclusion

Staff recommends the Parks and Recreation Commission review the attached materials. The Commission has the option of whether they would like to put the proposed archery range on a future agenda to consider a recommendation to Town Council to support changing the Master Plan for Sorich Ranch Park.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Mauk', with a horizontal line underneath.

Dannielle Mauk
Director of Community Services

Attachment 1: SAOSC Staff Report – Archery Range – February 21, 2018

Attachment 2: SAOSC Minutes - February 21, 2018.

Attachment 3: Memo from Elise Semonian, Planning Director

**TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO
STAFF REPORT
February 16, 2018**

For the Meeting of February 21, 2018

TO: Open Space Committee

FROM: Elise Semonian, Planning Director

SUBJECT: Proposed Archery Range at Sorich Park

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee: 1.) receive the presentation on the request to install an archery range at Sorich Park; 2.) hear public comments; 3.) consider the consistency of the proposed use with the Sorich Ranch Master Plan; and 4.) make a recommendation to the Park and Recreation Committee.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The Town of San Anselmo Open Space Committee will be considering a request by Archery in Marin, to dedicate an area of Sorich Park for outdoor archery use. Archery in Marin, a local archery organization, is proposing to donate a community archery range (target butts, signage, and barrier features) for use at Sorich Ranch Park. The range would be installed under a 1-year pilot program on the Lower Park terrace, adjacent to the gazebo, and occupy approximately .3 acres. It would be installed and maintained by Archery in Marin volunteers, and open to the public during the same hours as the park, excepting downtime for maintenance. Range barrier measures (for the pilot program, temporary fencing and signage to ensure safe access to existing pedestrian paths, and control access to downrange areas) will supplement ongoing erosion control measures at the park, and will be reversible should the pilot range be discontinued or relocated after the first year. As envisioned, the pilot range will require no permanent alterations such as structures, grading, or paving. During the pilot program, temporary accessibility measures (such as paths of interlocking rubber matting on unstable ground surfaces) will be implemented as needed. Should the pilot program prove successful, conversion to a permanent range may involve the installation of more aesthetically pleasing barrier measures (fencing and plantings) and accessibility features, such as compacted-soil walkways and designated accessible parking spaces.

In 1959, the Town of San Anselmo annexed the approximately 60-acre area at the end of San Francisco Boulevard, known as the Sorich Dairy, from the County unincorporated area. The Town entered into an agreement to lease the land, with an option to purchase the property. In

1965, the Town of San Anselmo acquired the site.

History of the park from Open Space Committee Web Site:

Unfortunately, the park was largely neglected. Around 1990 the Open Space Committee, with the support of some of the neighbors, took the initiative to turn it into a real park that could be enjoyed by everyone. The Committee helped plant native oaks and convinced the Marin County Open Space District to install a new trail connecting San Anselmo to the Mt. Tam Cemetery and the Terra Linda divide.

The next step involved the development of a Master Plan for the Park to preserve its open space quality. With the assistance of Tom Murphy, a landscape architecture graduate student from UC Berkeley, the plan was prepared and eventually approved by the Town Council. This enabled the Committee to seek and receive a matching grant for \$20,000 from the State of California. For every dollar and volunteer hour the Town invested in the Park, the State agreed to match that amount. Improvements have included native plants and trees, a drinking fountain, new picnic tables, a new arbor, as well as drainage improvements. In addition, the parking area was relocated away from the central feature of the park, a fabulous rock outcropping. Subsequently, the Committee applied for and received another \$5,000 grant from the Marin Community Foundation and a \$5,000 grant from the Longs Foundation.

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A volunteer community group, the Friends of Sorich Park, meets on the second Saturday of each month to mow weeds, pull broom, plant native trees and grasses, and maintain an irrigation system.

The Sorich Park Master Plan discusses the anticipated uses of the Park and goals for the park (starting on Page 60):

- GOAL 1. Protect the intrinsic values of Sorich Ranch Park-a quiet, neighborhood park and open space that invites passive recreation, exploration and relaxation.
- GOAL 2. Maintain and enhance open space character of Sorich Ranch Park
- GOAL 3. Park area; Upper Park improvements should be limited to minimal trail developments and restoration of habitats and natural systems.
- GOAL 4. Meet some of the park and recreation needs of townspeople while ensuring non-consumptive use of natural resources at Sorich Ranch Park.
- GOAL 5. Promote visitor awareness of nature and environmental issues so they can enjoy and protect the Park more readily.
- GOAL 6. Make Sorich Ranch Park safe and inviting for the park users and nearby residents.
- GOAL 7. Promote voluntary community participation in the Sorich Ranch Park project.

The plan provides that the Town will, “limit public promotion of the park” and “promote low maintenance improvements” (Page 86).

Staff believes the proposed use of the park for an archery range goes against the goals of “passive recreation” and “limiting public promotion of the park.” However, the Town could amend the Sorich Ranch Park Master Plan if it desires to have archery activities in the park. If supported, staff would research issues including parking demand for archery use, disabled access requirements, and Town insurance requirements.

Many comments have been received in favor of the application and one comment against the proposal, which are attached.

Respectfully submitted,



Elise Semonian
Planning Director

Attachments

1. Correspondence
2. Master Plan Sorich Ranch Park

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

February 21, 2018, San Anselmo Open Space Committee Meeting

Planning Director Semonian presented the staff report. She indicated the town received over 40 comments in favor of the archery range and two against the archery range. She did not believe the range proposal was consistent with the current Sorich Park Master Plan, which has a goal of "passive activity." But, the town could amend the plan. JB estimated how much flat area is in the park.

Project proponent Scott Bullard, for Archery of Marin, presented a PowerPoint presentation describing the proposed archery range. The goal of the proposal is to have a safe public place for archery. He indicated archery is safe when practiced with certain design principles and has low injury rates. The archery range in Golden Gate park has a great record. He said it is safer than other activities that take place on public land such as the skate park and tennis.

He described the proposed archery range, which would be a fixed target archery range like in Golden Gate park. Archery is a quiet individual activity but is not necessarily solitary. He noted some benefits of archery: lifetime sport; building focus, attention and coordination; gets kids outdoors; builds community; and is adaptive to many disabilities.

He believed the character of San Anselmo has changed over time and has an all time high population, like the 1970s, when other ranges were active 30 years ago. Few residents can shoot on their own property. He described the few facilities available in the area, which have long waits.

He described the history of Sorich Ranch Park. There were plans in the past to make it more used. In the 1990s people brought it up to current standards.

They would make no permanent alterations to the park. They would put up five target bails ("butts"), signage and barrier fencing. They propose a one-year trial and would discuss a more permanent range after that. He suggested setting up a community steering committee, like the dog park. Archery in Marin has raised the budget necessary for the pilot program, estimated at \$5,000-\$6,000. They may need to install rubber matting to get an accessible access to the range. Volunteers would keep the area clean. Insurance may fall under the Town's general liability policy (like Golden Gate park and other ranges) and the sport is not high risk.

He reviewed three potential range configurations entitled A, B and C. A and B would be north of the main trail. Option C uses part of the trail and shifts the trail south. Option C was his preferred option and it is north facing. All the courses would have a hill as a natural backstop.

He described how he believed the use was consistent with the goals of the Open Space Committee, Open Space Plan, Park and Recreation Plan, and Sorich Park Master Plan. He indicated they propose minimal development. He asked the committee to support a pilot program at the park and to assign members of the Open Space Committee to an archery range working group.

SR asked about traffic. Bullard indicated the volume of traffic would be limited by the number of targets and size of the range. They have 700 members in their group in Marin. However, not everyone would participate. The demand is very high for a range, but the capacity of the park would limit use and traffic.

KL asked how they schedule shooting. She expressed concern that many people would show up and there would be no where to park, so they would park in the neighborhood streets.

JB indicated there are only twelve parking spaces in the park. Bullard responded that there is parking along San Francisco Boulevard that could be used. There would be no organized activities at the park and it just provides a place to shoot.

KL clarified that there are no plans for tournaments, no plans for group training, and the archery use would be on a first come first serve basis.

KS asked if the fencing would be up all the time and clarified that the range would only be open during day light hours when the park is open. Bullard indicated the fencing would be needed initially but plantings could deter people from walking on the course later.

In response to questions by JW, Bullard explained that the fencing would be like barrier fencing at a baseball field. Bullard indicated the Park and Recreation Department could make rules to preclude events at the range.

KL asked about the Golden Gate Park range. Bullard indicated it has 9 bales and all are in use during peak hours with one or two people waiting. He said they could limit shooting to, for example, 30 minutes per person.

RV was concerned the parking lot would be filled with cars for the archery use if they have five bales and people waiting for their use. Bullard indicated that if the use is really popular then people will stop going to the range. He suggested they obtain more information on this.

SR opening the public hearing.

Mark Garay, Tiburon, extolled archery as a pursuit. He started 60 years ago. He was in favor of the proposal. He does it with his daughter and it has been a wonderful addition to his life. He urged the committee to give it a chance. It would get young kids outdoors into nature.

Todd Walker, San Anselmo, is a 4-H archery leader and indicated it is challenging to find a place to shoot. They try to find farmers willing to allow them to use a field and have 15-20 kids shooting at 2 bales. Kids are within walking distance of Sorich park. He was in favor of the use and wanted to see a program in their own neighborhood.

Joe Lund, Jordan Avenue, believed it was an awesome idea. His two middle school kids may go into the park if it is available. The Town can use more mixed activities.

Josh Josephson, San Rafael, has been an archer for 30 years and is under pressure to start a junior archery league. He indicated it would give kids a place to do something fun outside. The park is not used during the day. He supported the pilot program.

Judy Kaufman, Merced Ave. and local business owner, loved the sport and is from a family of archers. She is a birder and has a dog she brings to the park. She supports a public range. However, the park is the only place in San Anselmo where you can bring a dog off leash. There must be another place to put an archery range in San Anselmo. She supported the use but was worried about the proposed site.

Ted Baccaia, San Francisco Blvd. and Sacramento, heads up a volunteer group that takes care of the park. He thinks the use would be inappropriate. On Saturday and Sunday, the overflow parking dumps below their house. He noted it is a very busy area with people coming in from three directions and not safe or appropriate. He was concerned it would set a precedent for future activities at the park such as a bocce ball court, putting green or driving range. He suggested they find an appropriate place and suggested the schools, McInnis Park, or the Rod and Gun Club, which could use new members.

Rohannah McLaughlin, San Francisco Blvd., is a local hiker, resident and volunteer. She was not opposed to archery and her husband taught her family archery. But, she was opposed to having it in the park. She thought it would be a threat to people, wildlife and passive recreation. The use was not what Sorich Park was created for. The parking backs up down San Francisco Boulevard. Since the 1990s the plan has been implemented and it is beautiful, and the range would not enhance that appearance.

Nancy Bennett, San Francisco Boulevard, also speaking for her neighbor Michael Anderson, appreciated giving people and kids a place for archery but this use was not what the town had in mind for the park. She was concerned with liability for the town and county, traffic, and parking. She opposed the placement in the picnic areas. She did not support the proposal.

John Poppin, San Rafael, was a 38-year archer. He grew up on the archery range in San Francisco and was at a competitive level. He described the Golden Gate park range as having 9 bales and 7 parking spaces on the street. He has been there at all times of the day. Some old events there. It has never been overcrowded since people share. Thousands share the 9 bales. There are dogs, walkers and kids in the area and no one has been hurt. The hill in back of the proposed locations is a great safety factor. He noted this use would bring funds to the community since they would eat locally afterwards.

Marcus Berry, Corte Madera, is a 4-year archer. The sport reminds him of golf and meditation. Everyone is helpful, mentor others, and are conscious of safety. The other parks are too far away.

Steve Emory, San Francisco Boulevard, indicated his mother got milk at the former dairy that was at this site. Archery use is not an open space activity and is incompatible with his concept of open space. The park is a transition to a realm of tranquility and this will invade that. He is also concerned with the owls that nest there. He supported nature without spaces filled with activities, just open space.

Argan, San Rafael, wants a place to shoot around San Anselmo. He believed people would figure the parking out and would walk or use public transit. He suggested obtaining real data from archery ranges regarding risk. If it is small, then it is not an issue. He believed this could be the start of something amazing.

Bruce Sedonig would like the town to investigate the feasibility of the proposal and to put together a committee to look at it. He believed kids would love it and it would be a great way to connect with his kid.

Ellen Caldwell, Laurel Avenue, hikes Sorich twice a day and is a birder. She indicated Sorich is a very special place and an open space sanctuary for peaceful activity, climbing rocks, seeing the creek. She promotes archery but feels remote places with private parking lots are different. The park was created for a reason and it was not for archery. She was concerned it would create a huge parking problem and the footprint is too big.

Bret Loxley, Carolina Avenue, supports the proposal for San Anselmo. He likes the town since there are no big chains. He believes it will make the town an interesting and appealing place to live.

Sheri Sandberg, The Alameda, is excited for archery since she can do it with her granddaughters. It would be a dream for her. It is quiet, everyone knows the rules and kids learn rules. Although she can't walk like she used to, she can do archery.

Steve White, Fairfax, supports the range.

Rex Bell, Lagunitas, is a 35-year archer and has never seen an accident, parking problem or litter at an archery range. He indicated it is a great activity and will be a nice place to enjoy the park. He supported trying it for a year.

SR closed the public comment period.

JB indicated that he was directly involved in 1990 with the development of the Master Plan, grant applications and securing matching funds for the work. It took 30 years to make the park what it is today. He believes they have a responsibility to uphold the Master Plan and consider impacts to it and ramifications. He did not believe it was consistent with the Master Plan goals and read Policy 1 and 2 from the plan. He could not find archery or a lot of other sports compatible with those policies. He can't recommend it. He is concerned with displacing the current users. This will be very popular. It will potentially impact the neighborhood as parking is pushed off. What if there is a proposal for bocce or a bike course? Will they be open to other uses? There are no restrooms or port-a-potties and people do not currently stay long enough to need a restroom, which could change. He believes the Master Plan would need to be revised for the use. He suggested using the old Red Hill Junior High amphitheater area space. Maybe the school would be amenable to a lease. The space is unused and there is no one around.

JB read Brian Crawford's comments. BC is in support of the use in the Ross Valley, but not in Sorich Park. He is uncomfortable allowing people to shoot without monitoring. It is in violation of the plan. Recreational activities are not allowed. The parking lot is already full. He is against the proposal.

JW was in support of archery and noted no accidents. But, he believes this will make it less clear what is or is not allowed at the park. How will they define passive use? He is worried about the precedent this may set.

SR is in favor of archery in Marin, but not at Sorich. He thought it was not compatible with the Sorich Park Master Plan. The Town Council can amend the plan.

KS loves archery and sees the high demand in the area. However, she did not believe this park would be a fit and it would be putting a square peg in a round hole. There are issues with all the areas proposed including walkers and dogs that run freely. She did not believe the high demand will equate to a low impact on neighbors. She suggested the San Geronimo Golf Course.

KL agreed and indicated that she is a proponent of archery and wants to find a place for it. It is a family affair. The Open Space Committee respects what others have done before them. The Master Plan is specific. She would follow the trial run if the Master Plan was changed. But, until then, would not support the proposal.

RV thanked everyone for their comments. He loves archery and wants to accommodate it. However, he did not believe it was compatible with the Master Plan and he would not change the plan. He did not believe that people's opinions have changed about the park. He read design criteria including the following:

Play. Parks provide opportunity for play which is inherently valuable. Provide "wild places" without programmed activities or formal restriction on use, to enhance sense of freedom, encourage creative play and foster environmental awareness.

Safety. Park users should not be exposed to hazardous situations; known dangers should be removed from the park environment. Plan page 79.

Passive Recreation. Passive recreation activities for individuals or small groups that draw on the intrinsic values of the Park should be promoted. The majority of community members polled felt that, facilities for active recreation, which might attract large groups or could currently be pursued at other parks in Town, were not appropriate for SRP. Opportunities for non-athletic use of the Park ought to be promoted. However, active use of the trails by hikers, walkers, runners, equestrians and bike riders should be provided for in the Plan (see Trails and Access Plan). Plan page 127.

RV would like to see it and suggested San Geronimo Golf Course or Deer Park. He did not think it was compatible with Sorich Park and the fencing bothers him as not compatible with the natural open space. He dislikes plan "C" the most because it displaces hikers and dog walkers. He is not in support and it is not consistent with the Master Plan.

Motion made by Jonathan Braun and seconded that the San Anselmo Open Space Committee determines that the proposed archery range at Sorich Park is not consistent with the Sorich Park Master Plan.

JW suggested they recommend that the Park and Recreation committee look for other places around San Anselmo to locate the park. The motion was not amended and passed 9-0-3.

**TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO
MEMO**

TO: David P. Donery, Town Manager
Dannielle Mauk, Director of Community Services

FROM: Elise Semonian, Planning Director

DATE: March 16, 2018

SUBJECT: Proposed Archery Range at Sorich Park

The Town of San Anselmo Open Space Committee considered a request by Archery in Marin to dedicate an area of Sorich Park for outdoor archery use on February 21, 2018 (see staff report and draft minutes, attached).

Planning Department staff advertised the meeting by mailing notices to residents near the park and along San Francisco Boulevard, and by posting an announcement on NextDoor. To date, the Town has received over 50 written comments in favor of the proposed use and a few written comments against the proposed use.

The Open Space Committee heard the request, heard public comments, and determined that the proposed use was not consistent with the Sorich Ranch Master Plan. The Committee did not make any recommendation regarding whether they thought the plan should be amended to allow the use. But, several committee members expressed concerns with the proposal, including parking and displacing existing users of the park. There were many members of the public that spoke in favor of the request and many residents that spoke against the proposal.

Staff agrees with the Town Open Space Committee that the proposed use is inconsistent with the Sorich Park Master Plan. The Town could amend the Sorich Ranch Park Master Plan if it desires to have archery activities in the park. To amend the plan, staff would recommend following a public process like the process used to develop the Memorial Park Master Plan. Meetings should be held with the various stakeholders (archery proponents, runners/hikers, dog walkers, neighbors, etc.). In addition to holding public meetings, the Town must investigate parking demand, any necessary environmental documents required under the California Environmental Quality Act, disabled access requirements, and Town insurance requirements.

The Planning Department's current workload is full with planning applications and implementation of Town Council strategic plan goals, including the programs in the Housing Element. Planning Department staff would need to hire consultants to lead this effort and there is no budget for this project.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elise Semonian". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "E".

Elise Semonian
Planning Director

Attachments

1. Open Space Staff Report
2. Draft Open Space Meeting Minutes