



**EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
AGENDA STAFF REPORT**

DATE	May 6, 2025
TITLE	Approval to Appoint to the Park Advisory Committee: Thomas Omolo, Ward 4 and Judith Smith, Ward 2
DIVISION	General Manager's Office
FROM	Erich Pfuehler, Division Lead of Government and Legislative Affairs Sabrina Landreth, General Manager
APPROVED	Sabrina Landreth, General Manager

RECOMMENDATION

The General Manager recommends the Board of Directors approve the below appointments to the Park Advisory Committee for a term commencing upon adoption of this resolution and ending on December 31, 2027:

1. Thomas Omolo, appointment of Ward 4 Board Director Luana España; and
2. Judith Smith, appointment of Ward 2 Board Director Lynda Deschambault.

BACKGROUND

Per the East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) Board Operating Guidelines, Appendix C, the twenty-one-member Park Advisory Committee (PAC) is established by and for the Board of Directors to provide community perspectives and advice to staff and to the Board on the issues, projects and policies of the Park District. PAC members typically serve a two-year term ending December 31. Board approval would authorize the following to serve on the Park Advisory Committee for the remainder of a two-year term commencing upon adoption of this resolution until December 31, 2027:

Appointee Thomas Omolo is to serve his first two-year term. Guided by a belief in the value of parks for community health and environmental justice, Thomas Omolo is enthusiastic about contributing to the East Bay Regional Park District. With a Master's in Public Health and City Planning from UC Berkeley, where he focused on the essential links between health, planning, community, history, and parks, Thomas Omolo appreciates the complex role of parks and recreational opportunities. In their current position at another park district, Thomas promotes data-driven decision-making, establishes strong park standards, enhances the conversation about the importance of parks and recreation, and advocates for parks in various public spaces. Deeply dedicated to equitable processes, Thomas understands that how decisions are made is crucial for restoring trust between communities and public organizations, a principle that shapes their efforts. As a resident of East Oakland who enjoys biking and hiking at Roberts Regional Park with two young children—one who loves the pump track and the other who enjoys redwood trails—Thomas is eager to support and learn from the outstanding work of the East Bay Regional Park District.

Appointee Judith Smith is to serve her first two-year term. Judith has lived in Oakland (Lisjan Ohlone ancestral land) since 1985. She was born with a passion for nature and raised in the mountains of CO. She spent her childhood camping with her family and riding her horses through the forest. A champion equestrian, she became disabled in a car accident at age 17 and has since used a power wheelchair. Judith's life career was as a Founding Member and Director of AXIS Dance Company, one of the world's first and most celebrated ensemble of dancers with and without disabilities.

Now retired, she has returned to her first passion of all things, nature. Judith received her CA Naturalist Certification at Sonoma Ecology Center in 2021. An environmentalist at heart, she honors the indigenous first peoples and their tradition of sustainable living for future generations. She assists with a Nature for All program at BORP Adaptive Sports and Recreation Program and co-leads accessible birding field trips with Golden Gate Bird Alliance. Judith has served on the CA Coastal Conservancy's Explore the Coast Advisory Board and is currently on Golden Gate Bird Alliance DEI Committee and Solano Land Trust Disability Advisory Board. An avid user of the parks, she served on the EBRPD New Voices Partnership team for the Northern Basin Strip Shoreline Park. She volunteers with several animal welfare and wildlife rescue organizations doing wildlife transport and fostering squirrels. She is also involved with Michael Muir's Access Adventures Adaptive Carriage Driving Program.

Statement from Thomas Omolo:

Having always held California's vast parks and open spaces in high regard, I am excited to serve as a Park Advisory Committee member for the East Bay Regional Park District. Parks have played a significant role in my life, from growing up abroad to traveling around the country and now to living in the Bay Area. My time as an outdoor educator at Yosemite and the Golden Gate Recreational Area has only deepened my enthusiasm for these essential areas. I am now eager to support the incredible work that EBRPD does in providing accessible outdoor opportunities right next to the urban core of the Bay Area. On weekends, you can often find me in our parks, enjoying time with my children, engaging with nature, and seeking moments of peace. I always take pride in showcasing our amazing outdoor opportunities when attending conferences focused on parks.

Statement from Judith Smith:

I am honored to be considered for the East Bay Regional Park District's Park Advisory Committee. As a young disabled person using a power wheelchair in Colorado in the late 70s and early 80s, I was saddened that most of the places I had frequented were no longer accessible to me. I was dismayed to find that one place in particular that I loved was still not accessible in 2015. I moved to Oakland in 1983 and have seen huge and steady progress in making East Bay Regional Parks accessible for people with disabilities like me. Since retiring in 2018, I have been a several-times-a-week visitor to numerous East Bay Parks. Nature is the main place that I find solace. I feel that it is my prerogative to give back to the Park system. As a lifelong advocate for people with disabilities and for the environment, I would love to serve on this committee and to be a voice for accessibility and conservation of our parks and the wildlife that lives there.

ATTACHMENTS

None.



**EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
RESOLUTION NO. 2025 – 05 -
MAY 6, 2025**

**APPROVAL TO APPOINT TO THE PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE: THOMAS
OMOLO, WARD 4 AND JUDITH SMITH, WARD 2**

WHEREAS, the Board Operating Guidelines provides description and procedures of the PAC’s composition, nomination and appointments which includes the appointment of two members by each of the Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, Thomos Omolo, appointment of Ward 4 Board Director Luana España, has been nominated to serve their first two-year term; and

WHEREAS, Judith Smith, appointment of Ward 2 Board Director Lynda Deschambault, has been nominated to serve their first two-year term; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the East Bay Regional Park District hereby approves the appointment of Thomas Omolo, appointment of Ward 4 Board Director Luana España and Judith Smith, appointment of Ward 2 Board Director Lynda Deschambault, to the Park Advisory Committee for a term commencing upon adoption of this resolution and ending on December 31, 2027 as presented to the Board on May 6, 2025; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Manager is hereby authorized and directed, on behalf of the Park District and in its name, to execute and deliver such documents and to do such acts as may be deemed necessary or appropriate to accomplish the intentions of this resolution.

Moved by Director _____, and seconded by Director _____, and adopted May 6, 2025, by the following vote:

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: