

**Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes August 19, 2014**

**1. Call Meeting to Order/Roll Call**

The Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, August 19, 2014, at the City Council Chambers, located at 707 W. Acequia St., Visalia, California. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Carla Calhoun at 5:30 pm.

**Present:** Carla Calhoun, Ben Filiponi, Lesa Mann, Shann Blue, Jason Kent, and Peter Thomas

**Staff:** Vince Elizondo, Jeannie Greenwood, Jeff Fultz, Freddy Arias, and Brenda Miernik

**2. Review and Approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting, July 22, 2014.** Commissioner Calhoun called for a motion to approve the July, 2014, Special Meeting minutes. Commissioner Blue moved to approve the minutes as presented, and Commissioner Kent seconded the motion.

**MOTION**

Motion passed 5-0

**3. Public Comment:** None.

**4. Request by the Visalia Rescue Mission to Amend the Commission Authorized Permit to Include Wednesday, August 27, for the Closure of Lincoln Oval Park to Prepare for the Outdoor Concert on Friday, August 29, 2014.** Ms. Greenwood stated the Visalia Rescue Mission (VRM) is requesting an additional day to close the Oval Park to the public in order to prepare for the concert. She said the plan is to enclose the park with fencing on Wednesday to do the necessary staging work. She said she forwarded the email she received from Mr. Stillwater describing the work and the site plan, to the Commissioners. She said a meeting will be held tomorrow to go over the plans to prohibit any damage to the park.

Ms. Greenwood said the staff recommendation is for the Commission to consider the request and to authorize City staff to issue a permit to allow the park closure on Wednesday, August 27.

Commissioner Calhoun called for a motion to accept the request from the VRM and to authorize the Director of Parks and Recreation to issue a permit for the closure of Oval Park on Wednesday, August 27. Commissioner Mann moved to approve the motion and Commissioner Blue seconded the motion.

**MOTION**

Motion passed 5-0

**5. Annual Report on Youth Enrichment Programs.** Mr. Arias, Recreation Supervisor, said he has been with the department a little over 1½ years, and the division has had a great year of growth. Mr. Arias said his program areas include after school programs, the Manuel F. Hernandez Community Center, the LOOP Bus, day camps, specialty camps, enrichment classes and special events. His staff includes the following employees: Ramon Sanchez, Recreation Coordinator, 2 hourly Program Assistants (after school activities (ASA) and camps), and 35 to 50 Hourly Program Leaders.

Mr. Arias said ASA's include Hurley and Kinder Care, Oak Grove, Manuel Hernandez, and Shannon Ranch and Kinder Care. The programs consist of snacks, homework, enrichment activities, recreation, sports, field trips, and more. These locations averaged 166 students each day and revenues increased by approximately \$6,500 this year.

Mr. Arias reported that the Manuel F. Hernandez Center is a drop-in program, which is free to children ages 6 to 17 years, and consists of arts and crafts, homework, computer lab, dance, arts, sports and more. The Center is open Monday through Friday, 2:30 pm to 6:30 pm.

Participation:

	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2012/13</b>
<b>School Year</b>	48	30
<b>Summer</b>	78	85

Mr. Arias stated that the LOOP bus is free to children 6-17 years of age, and provides safe transportation from neighborhood sites for children to participate in community center activities. The program operates during the summer and ridership has skyrocketed again.

2014	2013	2012
42	31	11

Mr. Elizondo informed the new Commissioners that the LOOP bus program originated from the community-wide Gang Task Force. He said they invited the non-profits in the area (Boys & Girls Club, the YMCA, and Proteus) to a meeting and asked what they needed to serve the public. They said they needed safe transportation so children could participate in Community programs, and the idea of the LOOP bus was created. He said it is a very meaningful endeavor of the Gang Task Force, and it is running smoothly today, through funding from the General Fund.

Mr. Arias said the department participates in the Summer Lunch Program, which is funded by the USDA and administered by FoodLink. He said this summer the department served over 5,000 meals at three Community Centers.

Mr. Arias provided the following information on Day Camps.

- Kids Club – this camp was offered during Visalia Unified School District breaks, Thanksgiving (3 days), winter (3 weeks), spring (1 week), and summer (9 weeks). Each week was themed and included field trips, arts & crafts, recreation activities, and lunch was provided. Summer field trips included the following: Scicon, California Science Center, Avila Beach, the Island Water Park, California Living Museum, and the Fossil Discovery Center. The average daily attendance was 82 this year, compared to last year the attendance was 50.
- Specialty Camps – each camp was held for 1 week, four hours per day. Camps were held at the Anthony Community Center and they included a daily snack, camp T-shirt, and a keepsake photo. In 2014 there were 368 participants, compared to last year's 270 participants. Specialty camps offered were Junior Police Academy, Science, Zookeeper, and Creative Minds Art.

Mr. Arias reported an increase in participants in the dance classes. Dance choices were Jazz & Hip Hop, Ballet & Tap, Modern, and Ballet Folklorico. He said the participants were between 3 years to 16 years. He said fall and summer 2013-2014 had 393 participants, and fall 2012 and summer 2013 had 287 participants.

Mr. Arias said the Martial Arts classes, Karate in particular, reported a slight increase for 2014, with 614 participants compared to 2013 with 576 participants. The Judo Club was implemented this year with 197 participants, and next year Taekwondo classes will be implemented.

Mr. Arias stated the Special Events for this year included the Father/Daughter Dance (2014-892 & 2013-792 participants), the Winter Trout Derby (over 300 participants in 2014), the Eggstravaganza, the Dia Del Nino, the Catfish Derby, Summer Night Lights, and Teen Idol. He said a new addition this year will be the Holiday Dance Recital.

Mr. Arias stated goals for 2014/2015 include the following.

- Continue to offer quality services and programs to the community
- Focus on implementing a 3<sup>rd</sup> KinderCare program.
- Develop programs and classes for teens.
- Continue to offer family friendly programming to the community.
- Expand the already popular Father/Daughter Dance and accommodate more guests.
- Re-establish the Visalia Youth Council.
- Look to develop partnerships within the community to help foster special events.
- Expand classes to offer more evening and weekend classes.

Commissioner Calhoun asked what the dollar figure was for the After School Activities. Mr. Arias replied it was approximately a \$65,000 increase.

Commissioner Calhoun noted that she arrived in Visalia in 1999, and the Visalia Youth Council was seeking applications from the public to serve on the Council. She said her oldest son applied, and was accepted to the program. She said she valued the program because it taught him how to organize events, how to volunteer, and gave him a built-in network of friends. She said he still talks about his experience and noted that Mr. Jason Glick was the coordinator.

Commissioner Mann asked Mr. Arias which Specialty Camp was the most popular, and he replied it was the Princess Camp. However, there were so many who wanted to participate in the Fire Camp the department held three sessions.

Commissioner Mann suggested a Service Camp, where children would come together to serve other people. She said she likes "giving back" by volunteering, and training children when they are small is very important. She also asked about the drop-in programs because she is concerned about how much time children spend playing computer games and other technology. Mr. Arias said it depends on how many children are present and an assignment sheet is utilized so everyone gets a chance on the equipment. Mr. Arias said the demographics of the children who use these

programs do not have phones to play games on. Commissioner Mann said it is important to keep kids moving and interacting with other people.

Commissioner Kent said his daughter was involved in the Hip Hop class on Monday nights. He expressed his disappointment that, after four sessions, there was no performance planned to showcase her skills. He said the teacher was handling four year olds and did a fine job, but he would suggest a recital for the parents.

Mr. Elizondo stated that currently the department serves seven after school sites. He said the competition for after school care is Pro Youth Heart and the YMCA, and their programs are free. He said all the programs available are anti-gang and very well managed.

- 6. Update on the Proposal to Establish Children Only Areas in Designated City Parks Under the California Penal Code Section 653b(a).** Mr. Elizondo stated that last month the Commission approved the staff recommendation to support the proposal to establish a playground for children only when accompanied by an adult. An added condition was that staff would check with the City's legal counsel to clarify questions of legality, and then forward the recommendation to City Council for approval. Mr. Elizondo said the recommendation would be presented to Counsel at the September 2 meeting.

Mr. Elizondo said he had a meeting with the City attorney and the law is applicable only to children's playgrounds, not other park areas.

Mr. Ludekens stated he would like to request the Commission establish a committee to study the entire Community Campus area.

Mr. Guerrero said he accepted the information from the City's counsel, and that he agreed with Mr. Ludekens regarding a committee. He stated his objective is to care for the children and keep them safe.

Commissioner Mann asked Mr. Ludekens whom he would like to see on the proposed committee. He replied people from Proteus and CSET, and he would like to see other people, who have experience working with kids, to serve on it also.

Commissioner Mann asked if he would serve as the Chair, and Mr. Ludekens replied he would.

Commissioner Mann asked if there was anyone serving on the North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NVNAC) interested in the proposed committee. He said a meeting was held in the Scouts conference room and there were two members of the NVNAC present. Commissioner Mann said Commissioner Thomas was the liaison for the Commission to the NVNAC. Mr. Ludekens said he would welcome a commissioner to the meetings.

Commissioner Mann said she commended Mr. Ludekens for his activism and vision while working for the youth of Visalia. She said she would support his efforts and the Commission will be talking about the proposed committee in the future.

Mr. Elizondo asked if Mr. Ludekens was speaking as a private individual or as a member of the Boy Scouts and their Board. Mr. Ludekens said he was speaking as a private individual.

Commissioner Calhoun suggested that if a meeting date is scheduled for the proposed committee, Mr. Ludekens should provide the information to the department for dissemination to the Commission.

- 7. Review of the Parks and Recreation Commission Goals & Objectives.**

Commissioner Calhoun said she revised the current goals to reflect some of the discussion points made at the Special Meeting held March 1, 2013. The purpose of the meeting was to develop goals that were sustainable for two years. She said since new Commissioners are now on board it might be good to reflect on that discussion. She presented the Commissioners with a draft copy, dated 8/19/14, and welcomed input.

Commissioner Calhoun said she used two thoughts to blend past and current goals. She said she felt that *Visions* should not be project specific, they should guide comments and input on any subject that might come before the Commission. She provided examples.

- Health & Wellness - it could be asked if there are healthy snacks available at an event when it comes to the Commission for approval.
- Sustainability - when a park project comes before the Commission for approval, it might be asked if smart controllers are being installed in the park.

Commissioner Calhoun said her second thought was that *Goals* should be specific. She referred to the SMART Goals at the bottom of the draft copy. S – Specific, M – Measurable, A – Attainable, R – Relevant, and T – Timely. She said the Eastside Park Master Plan and the Community Center & Aquatic Facility certainly fits into this category. Commissioner Calhoun reviewed the Goals and their definitions with the Commissioners.

Commissioner Calhoun asked for Commissioner input.

Commissioner Mann said she thinks equal services throughout the City is a vision, not a goal of Marketing/Outreach. She said this is on-going and all-inclusive of every item that is brought before the Commission.

Commissioner Calhoun agreed, and said at the last meeting everyone agreed to leave it as a goal. She said everyone had taken on an issue to champion and that one was left on its own.

Commissioner Kent suggested amending the marketing and outreach to include equal services throughout the City as part of the vision.

Commissioner Mann said she thinks marketing is something the staff does, not the Commission.

Commissioner Kent said at the first meeting he attended the Eastside Park Master Plan was discussed. He said during the discussion of people using the trails, he had an idea for marketing the trails. His idea is to develop an iPhone App for kids walking on trails. The theory would be that every time a child passed a pylon they could scan it and collect different badges to add fun to the experience. He said this would be inexpensive and a great marketing and outreach tool for the department. He said he felt that marketing should remain as goal of the Parks & Recreation Commission.

Commissioner Calhoun said marketing is actually a method. She suggested that the goal of Equal Services to become part of Marketing/Outreach and the description to read “explore methods, such as marketing, to reach all segments of the community and to advocate for equal services throughout the City.”

Consensus was achieved among the Commissioners to make this change.

## **8. Update on City Council Reports & City Staff Announcements.**

- **Upcoming Recreation Programs & Special Events.** Ms. Greenwood reported the following.
  - The fall brochure is at the printers and should be in mailboxes this weekend.
  - Summer was a busy season. Freddy’s division generated an additional \$35,000 over prior years, primarily with the Day and Specialty Camps. She said the aquatics program was also filled to capacity and performed well.
  - There are now 7 ASA sites, including the KinderCare sites, and there is only about a week between Day Camps close and the ASA sites open.
  - Teen Idol will be held on Saturday, September 13, at 6 pm. It will be at the LJ Williams Theatre and you will receive tickets again, as in past years. Our next Concert in the Park is held the same day at Sunset Park. Brad Wilson will entertain with a rocky-blues musician.
  - The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Corporate Games begins Friday, September 26 through Friday, October 10. Originally it was held over 10 days but has been expanded to 14 days. Events include foot golf (new), Family Feud, Soccer, Darts, Pickle Ball, and more!
  - Staff members experienced foot golf at the golf course during a staff meeting. A new family game package is being offered at the golf course, whereby a family pays a flat fee to play.
  - The Senior Center will host a Fall Open House. This is an evening event to be held September 10, from 4 to 7 pm.
- **Upcoming Parks & Urban Forestry Projects, Programs & Special Events.**
  - The Pickle ball courts will be breaking ground this week.
  - The Park Ordinances were adopted by City Council last night and will be implemented at Seven Oaks, Oval, Papas, and Providence Skate Parks. The result of this is that during the summer months – from March to October – parks will be closed from 8 pm to 8 am. In winter months, parks will be closed from 6 pm to 8 am. New signage will be in the parks by September 19.
  - Make a Difference Day will be held October 25, and projects and volunteers are being planned for the event.
  - AYSO starts next week at Riverway Sports Park. The Park is ready to go and field painting is taking place now.
  - A meeting was held this week with Human Resources for the Park Maintenance Supervisor position, and twelve candidates will be interviewed on August 26.

Commissioner Kent asked how the parks were enduring the drought. Mr. Fultz replied that there are some dry spots. He said the trees that have been lost have been lost due to other circumstances.

- **Director’s Report on Administrative Items.** Mr. Elizondo stated there were 45 resumes for the Parks Maintenance Supervisor position and Ms. Greenwood had 150 for the Recreation Coordinator position.

Mr. Elizondo informed the Commission that the new Parks Ordinance, restricting park hours in certain City parks, will go into effect in 30 days. He said if the law is violated a person can be evicted from all City parks for a period of time.

Mr. Elizondo said City Mayor, Steve Nelsen, has questioned the function of the North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NVNAC), and has asked the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to review the future of the NVNAC. He said the NVNAC was formed in 1977, and according to the original charter and bylaws, is supposed to have 15 members. They actually have seven or eight active members, which means they never have a quorum. The committee has been known to make recommendations and take actions without proper procedures. The Bylaws also say members must live in the designated area and none of them lives in that area. The Council also questioned the fairness of individuals representing a 4-block area of the community when other areas of the City are without representation.

Mr. Elizondo noted that within a year and a half, Council will be changing to district elections, which means Council members would be elected by district. He said it would make sense for committee members to be chosen by district also, in order to keep their Council member informed of what is happening in their district. He said the idea has been sent to the CAC for their consideration and recommendations.

Mr. Elizondo said the Eastside Regional Park will be going to Council on September 15 to authorize the department to contract with a design consultant. He said Council will ask a Commissioner to sit on an advisory committee that will be formed to design the park. This has been done in the past with various other parks.

Mr. Elizondo said he is going to Council on September 2, asking them to appoint a Council member to serve on an advisory committee to begin plans for the new community/aquatics center. He said a Commissioner will be asked to serve on this committee as well. He said at this Council meeting, Ms. Hays, of the Parks and Recreation Foundation, will be giving her annual report and it will be on the September agenda for the Commission.

## 9. Commissioner's Requests & Comments:

- **Aquatics Swim Teams Evaluations.** Commissioner Blue said a meeting was held at the Anthony Community Center. He said he felt the teams were friendlier than he reported at the beginning of the season, but there is still some competitive friction. He said one of the things that impressed him was that the three teams had more balance in their rosters this year, over past years, and conversations took place about adding a fourth team. Commissioner Blue reported that the numbers do not constitute adding another team at this time. He said one of his concerns is that the coaching turnover is 2 to 3 years, maximum. He said he coached for 10 years and he said that is a good tenure for continuity and consistency; and for that, kids have to go to VAST or TNT (private swim teams in the community).

Commissioner Blue suggested speaking with Redwood High School because the school does not have a swimming program, and that pool is hardly used and they might be interested.

Commissioner Blue reiterated that the numbers do not constitute adding another team at this time, and the cost is prohibitive.

- **North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee.** Commissioner Peter Thomas said he did not attend the meeting.
- **Senior Citizens Advisory Committee.** Commissioner Mann said she met two new employees at the Senior Center and they are very helpful. She encouraged everyone to attend the upcoming Open House. Commissioner Mann informed the Commission that she now has a conflict in her schedule with the committee and will not be able to attend the meetings. She said she would be happy to receive the minutes and report to the Commission.

Commissioner Calhoun said the Commission would be happy for Commissioner Mann to report for the committee.

- **Parks & Recreation Foundation.** Commissioner Kent said he and Ms. Hays have called one another but have not conversed yet. He will have a report next month. Mr. Elizondo stated they meet Thursday and would be reviewing the final report on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration.

- **Waterways & Trails Committee Report.** Mr. Filiponi said Joshua Hickey is creating a PowerPoint presentation for Council, which will include information from Vaughn Melcher, information from Water Ways and Trails, and an updated bikes & trails map. He said connectivity will be a focus of the report. He said the committee has many new members and it will be informative for them.

**10. Adjourn to the Regular Meeting, September 16, 2014, at the Council Chambers at 707 W. Acequia Street, at 5:30 pm.**

Commissioner Blue made a motion to adjourn and Commissioner Kent seconded the motion.

**MOTION**

Motion passed 5-0

Brenda Miernik, Senior Administrative Assistant