

**Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes June 17, 2014**

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

The Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, June 17, 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 5:32 pm.

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

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

**2. Review and Approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting, June 17, 2014.** Commissioner Calhoun called for a motion to approve the June 17, 2014 minutes. Commissioner Mann moved to approve the minutes as presented and Commissioner Filiponi seconded the motion.

**MOTION**

Motion passed 5-0

**3. Public Comment:** Mr. Bill Huott stated that he gave Ms. Miernik an Oval Park brochure and asked her to copy it for the Commissioners. He said the brochure was created by the North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee and it states their mission, history, and gives examples of the type of projects they have accomplished. He asked the Commissioners to consider removing two restrooms in Fairview and Seven Oaks Parks. He said both locations create problems in the parks.

**4. Annual Report on Youth Sports and Tiny Tot Programs.** Ms. Gallardo stated that on July 1 she will have completed her first year with the Parks and Recreation Department.

Ms. Gallardo said Youth Sports Camps are offered during the summer season.

- Volleyball Camp – In 2012 there were 68 participants and this year there were 70. Revenue for last year was \$5,645 and this year it increased to \$6,090. Last year was the last year that Dorothy Collins held her training classes but we did have some of her assistants assisting us.
- New Golf Camp – Last year there were 48 participants and revenue was \$925. The camp will be held in July and we are still accepting registrations at this time.
- New Basketball Camp – Start date is July 7 with current registration at 14 and current revenue is \$700.00.

Ms. Gallardo said NFL Flag Football will begin in the fall. In 2012 there were 433 participants and revenue was \$25,721. She noted that in 2013 there were 379 participants and revenue was \$23,667. She said there was a decrease in most divisions except for minors, grades 3 and 4.

Ms. Gallardo reported the following statistics.

- Volleyball – In the fall of 2012 participation was at 228 and revenue was \$14,109. For 2013 participation was 201 and revenue was \$13,107. Bumpers division decreased but the other two divisions remained stagnate. In spring, 2012, participation was 292 and revenue was \$19,087. In 2014, participation was 356, and revenue was \$23,306. In 2014 there was an increase in all divisions and the team requests program began with 52 requests.
- Basketball – In the winter of 2013 there were 558 participants and revenue was \$36,130, and there were no team requests at that time. In 2014 there were 675 participants and revenue was \$43,006. There were 42 team requests. During the 2014 season there was a large increase in the Tiny Tot (3-4 years) and Minors (grades 3-4) divisions. However, Majors (grades 5-6) and seniors (grades 7-8) experienced a slight decline.
- Baseball – In the spring of 2013 there were 369 participants with revenue of \$24,767, and no team requests. The spring of 2014 there were 406 participants and revenue of \$26,182, and 55 team requests. Tiny Tot and Pee Wee divisions increased and the Little Tykes remained consistent.

Ms. Gallardo said the scholarship program is utilized by Visalia residents for sports programs only.

	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Basketball	38	20
Volleyball	17	9
<u>Baseball</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>14</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>43</b>

Ms. Gallardo stated that one of the difficulties with the sports programs is that gymnasium space is difficult to find. City programs use City owned gyms as well as various high school gyms, and at times the school does not have enough space for the City because of their own programs. There have been times where our classes will be held at one gym one week and another gym the next week. Even though we make every effort to make parents and coaches aware of where the class will be, there are always issues. She said the department also competes with new youth sports organizations coming into Visalia offering the same sports opportunities.

Ms. Gallardo said the goals for 2014-15 are to increase program quality, increase participation, recruit coaches and volunteers, and to implement the National Alliance for Youth Sports Training: anti bullying training for coaches.

Ms. Gallardo said she is excited about the Tiny Tot classes (ages 1 to 5 years). They include the following.

- Enrichment: Art, education, and sports.
- Socialization: Peers, parents, teachers and adults.
- Highlight Programs: Dora & Diego Explore, Soccer Skills, Bitsy Sports Skills, ABC Soup, Kinder Ready, and Tiny Dancers.
- Contract Class: Kinder Music – Wiggle and Grow, Sing and Play, Family Time. These classes are taught by Tara Rodriguez who is specially trained in Kinder Music, which is a national program.
- Attendance:

	<u>2012/13</u>	<u>2013/14</u>
Fall	5	10
Winter	5	7
Spring	5	11
<u>Summer</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>36</b>

➤ Participants:	<u>2012/13</u>	<u>2013/14</u>
Fall	86	87
Winter	63	58
Spring	109	159
<u>Summer</u>	<u>116</u>	<u>113</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>417</b>
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>\$13,745</b>	<b>\$15,678</b>

Ms. Gallardo stated the Hershey’s Track & Field event was held on Saturday, May 17, 10 am to 2 pm. She said the department partnered with the Leadership Visalia Class and called the event the SpecTRACKular and Fitness Expo. She said the combined event included a Healthy Living Fair, vendors, and informational booths. The event targeted 9 to 14 year olds and 51 people participated. The event included a 50 yard dash, 100 yard dash, and a softball throw. Volunteers included the Golden West High School Key Club and they did a fantastic job.

Ms. Gallardo said the Mother/Son campout was very successful in 2013. There were 161 participants. It was decided that the intimacy of the event was lost due to the amount of participation and so the event was expanded to two events, on different dates and at two different parks.

Ms. Gallardo said this year, the first campout was held May 17 at Sunset Park, with 80 participants, and the second campout was held at Kiwanis Park on May 31 with 62 participants.

Commissioner Calhoun said that she was a fan of Kinder Music. She asked why the scholarship program has decreased. Ms. Gallardo said the scholarships are not advertised. When the public asks about the program they are given an application and it is rare that anyone is turned down. Therefore, she is not sure why the program has decreased.

Commissioner Kent said he is an avid volleyball fan. He asked about the \$10 fee for a team request. He asked if there was more than one family member involved in the request were they charged additional funds.

Ms. Gallardo replied no, siblings are not separated or charged any more than \$10.

Commissioner Kent also asked about the revenue increase in the volleyball classes. Ms. Gallardo said the spring season had a 22% increase because of participation of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

Commissioner Kent said he noticed that volleyball takes place mostly in winter and summer. He asked if that is due to not having the leagues. Ms. Gallardo replied yes.

Commissioner Kent asked if it had been considered to move volleyball play to an outside venue. Ms. Gallardo said she would be very hesitant to do so due to air quality in Visalia. She said she would be more open to an evening class.

**5. Review of 2014-2016 City Budget.** Mr. Elizondo said he will be presenting an overview of the City’s 2014-2016 budget and how it affects the Parks and Recreation Department. He said Finance presented a two year budget to City Council for their review. He noted the Fiscal Year begins July 1 through June 30. He said the Council has reviewed the budget three times – June 2, June 16, and they hope to adopt it on June 24.

Mr. Elizondo said the Finance Director is pleased that for the first time in 6 years a balanced General Fund (GF) budget is recommended without reducing programs, positions, and capital. Through careful budgeting, the economy improving and pension costs being phased in over 5 years, the City has created a balanced budget.

**Proposed Citywide Budget:**

Fund Type	Proposed Appropriations	
	2014/15 Appropriations	2015/16 Appropriations
General Fund ( <i>Police, Fire, General Government</i> )	\$ 66,101,850	\$ 70,897,500 *
Capital Projects Funds ( <i>Transportation, Impact Fees</i> )	9,482,500	8,369,600
Special Revenue Funds ( <i>CDBG, Police and Fire Sales Tax (Measure T)</i> )	25,806,340	25,800,540
Business-Type Funds ( <i>Wastewater, Solid Waste, Airport</i> )	112,995,620 *	68,379,100
Internal Service Funds ( <i>MIS, Fleet, Risk</i> )	16,732,082	16,973,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 231,118,392</b>	<b>\$ 199,420,370</b>

\* FY 14/15 appropriation for Business-Type Funds includes the Waste Water tertiary treatment and water recharge project. FY 15/16 appropriation for the General Fund includes the construction of the VECC building.

Mr. Elizondo explained that Parks and Recreation, Police, and Fire operate out of the GF. He said the notable CIP items in the budget are the funds for the Waste Water Treatment Plant and the Visalia Emergency Communications Center (VECC).

Mr. Elizondo stated the goals for the GF is as follows.

- ✓ Gradually rebuild the organization by adding back resources,
- ✓ Increase funding levels for Capital Improvement Projects,
- ✓ Fund new debt payment for the VECC project,
- ✓ Increase resources directed at maintaining City facilities, and
- ✓ Replenish Emergency Reserves.

**Proposed General Fund Budget:**

	2013-14 Projection	2014-15 Proposed	2015-16 Proposed
Operating Revenues	60,465,772	61,117,850	62,596,400
Total Operating Expenditures	51,090,050	55,183,100	56,287,300
Capital	714,630	731,050	677,500
Fund Transfers/Debt	4,656,400	4,113,800	5,126,100
Total Expenditures	56,461,080	60,027,950	62,090,900
Surplus/(Deficit)	4,004,692	1,089,900	505,500

Mr. Elizondo said the GF revenues come from these sources: 32% Property Tax, 46% Sales Tax, 4% Franchise Tax, 3% Business License, 4% Transient Occupancy Tax, 3% Grants, and 8% Miscellaneous Revenues.

Mr. Elizondo stated that in 2006 Sales Tax took a nose dive and the economy went into a recession. However, in 2010 the economy rebounded and the City surpassed their expectations.

Mr. Elizondo stated Property Taxes were doing well until 2010, but then took a nose dive for about 4 years. In 2013 the economy improved somewhat and it is still recovering.

Mr. Elizondo said the GF operating expenses are allocated in the following areas: Police 41%, Parks & Recreation 12%, Fire 18%, Public Works 5%, non-departmental 1%, Administration 8%, Community Development 10%, and Transportation 3%. Mr. Elizondo said 12% for Parks & Recreation is very good, most cities run 8 to 10%.

Mr. Elizondo reported that in 2008 the City had \$13.6 million in reserve and during the recession, it dwindled to \$1.3 million. He said Council members are concerned and want to rebuild the Emergency Reserve Fund for future needs. There is a savings of \$4 million in this year's budget, which will be returned to the Reserve. He said the goal is to reach \$17.9 million in reserves, which is 25% of the total budget.

Mr. Elizondo said the GF Capital was reviewed by City Council on May 19, 2014. Capital projects are projects costing \$10,000, or more. For fiscal year (FY) 2014 there were no funds allocated for capital projects. For FY 2014-15 there are 23 proposed projects for an estimated cost of \$731,050, and for FY 2015-16 there are 15 proposed projects totaling \$677,500.

Mr. Elizondo said some positions were added in the following areas: GF and Internal Service Funds, Public Safety, and Enterprise and Special Funds. Some Public Safety employees were added through grant funding, and others were funded with new revenue sources. He said no new positions were added to the Parks and Recreation Department.

Mr. Elizondo stated that 40 new positions were requested City-wide but there were not enough resources to fund all the requests. During the process positions were ranked by work load, past reductions, current service levels, and future demands. He said the recommended positions will get filled throughout the next two years.

Mr. Elizondo said the GF recommended positions include Information Services, Engineering, Community Development, Fire, Parks & Recreation, and Police. He said Recreation is gaining a Recreation Coordinator and Parks will gain a Parks Maintenance Worker to assist with the 180 Landscape & Lighting Districts in Visalia. The Districts consist of roughly 100 acres of turf, sprinklers, trees, and shrubs. The City utilizes contactors to maintain the L&L Districts and the new employee will assist the current full time employee to manage the contractors to ensure the work is being done according to City Standards.

Mr. Elizondo said the GF recommended biennial budget is balanced, and the surplus funds are recommended to be transferred into the reserve fund. He said the budget includes 15 additional positions, i.e., 7 from the GF and 8 from the Special Revenue and Enterprise Fund. He said some future challenges for City Council include rebuilding the organization by strategically adding employees and programs, while controlling expenses as employee costs increase. He asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Calhoun asked how the Council decides the amount that will be transferred to the reserve fund.

Mr. Elizondo said they project the revenue from sales tax, property tax, and other revenues, then they allocate a certain amount of dollars to build up the fund.

Commissioner Kent asked if grants could be written for positions.

Mr. Elizondo replied that most grants are for capital improvements only. He said sometimes water and irrigation will be added to assist young trees survive for a time, but rarely.

There were no other questions or comments.

**6. Review of Parks & Recreation Commission Goals & Objectives.** Commissioner Calhoun said the goals and objectives in the packets were adopted last year. She said the goals are reviewed annually to ensure they are current and relevant.

Mr. Elizondo noted that a few items do need to be amended, as Dolores Taylor and Robert Doi are no longer Commissioners. He said the Eastside Park Master Plan is relevant because the City is now in the process of negotiations for a consultant to develop a Master Plan. He said this park consists of 240 acres, of which 120 acres will be park land. The planning portion will take place before the end of this year and he informed the Commission that Council will ask one or two Commissioners to participate with a committee in the design recommendation.

Mr. Elizondo said the preliminary design phase for the new Community Center was approved in the budget. The Center will be funded by Park Impact Fees and Commissioners will be asked to participate in this process also.

Commissioner Calhoun stated a strategic planning meeting could be held to set new goals, or this set of goals could just be amended.

Commissioner Blue said several months ago a sub-committee of Commissioners was formed to discuss the possibility of the City adding a fourth swim team. He said he was a member of that sub-committee and the recommendation to the Commission was that the situation would be evaluated this year, with possible changes next year. He said he volunteered to go to practices and observe processes.

Mr. Blue stated he attended practices after they began, no one knew who he was, and so he went unnoticed. He said he was surprised at the inconsistencies from team to team. He noted he was at one practice for an hour and he could not tell who the coach was. However, he said the practice he attended last night was much better. Mr. Blue said he would continue his observations until the end of the swimming season.

Mr. Blue said he wondered if there were problems with other sports. He said he wondered about training structure, balanced training, and if the coaches had adequate training themselves. He said he would like to champion consistency of programming.

Commissioner Kent said he would be happy to be the champion for the Marketing/Outreach goal.

Commissioner Calhoun asked if anyone had a problem with changing the Connectivity Vision to Program Consistency Vision.

Ms. Gallardo said volunteer coaches should be trained with materials on anti-bullying; how to recognize it, and what to do about it. She said swim coaches are paid hourly employees with different coaching styles, but with training they will be more consistent.

Mr. Elizondo noted that Ms. Gallardo makes a good point, that our sports programming – volleyball, basketball, and flag football, utilize volunteer coaches. The swim team coaches are paid personnel and the level of expectation is much higher. When coaches are volunteers you may or may not get a knowledgeable coach.

Mr. Blue said all coaches would benefit from coaching clinics. For instance, the City could bring in college and high school swim coaches to share ideas and methods of coaching. Volunteers would also be eager to learn from these professionals. Forums to share training and answer questions would also be helpful. Mr. Blue said children deserve the best we can offer.

Commissioner Mann said she thought Connectivity should be replaced with Consistency. She said Commissioners don't have much control over connectivity as say, the Water Ways and Trails Committee would. She said she thought Commissioner Blue would be a good champion for Consistency and that the Commission should seek consistency in all their goals - whether its quality services for our citizens or good coaches for our children.

Commissioner Filiponi said the Water Ways and Trails works on connectivity at all times.

Commissioner Calhoun said it has been decided, by consensus, to change Connectivity to Consistency and Commissioner Kent will champion Marketing and Outreach.

Commissioner Mann said she thought Equal Services throughout the City should be eliminated and covered under Consistency.

Commissioner Calhoun said she would like to see Equal Services throughout the City continued as a goal because it helps the Commission to be mindful of every individual's need for good services.

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

### **• Upcoming Recreation Programs & Special Events.** Ms. Gallardo reported the following.

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Mother /Son camp out was held on Saturday, May 31, from 4 pm to Sunday at 9am. It was held at Kiwanis Park with 62 participants.
- JugFest was also May 31, and was held at Plaza Park. She said the event had an estimated 13,500 attendees, and upon reaching capacity, they turned away several thousand people. She said there was absolutely no damage reported to the park.
- June 9 was the first week of our summer programming. Camp Kaboom had 89 participants. This was an increase of 20 over last year. Fire and Police Camps, and Zoo Camp were held.
- The new pickle ball leagues started with 16 participants.
- Youth baseball and volleyball leagues have ended with an awards night.
- Swim lessons begin next week. She said all lessons are at capacity and private lessons fill first. Commissioner Mann asked if the department needed to offer more private classes. Ms. Gallardo said, as an instructor, once a child has reached a certain skill level and they are more stroke oriented, they need more support from other children. Say the child is fearful, if the other children are having a good time it will make the fearful child want to have fun too. Commissioner Mann asked if the department offered classes for special needs children. Ms. Gallardo said no, we do not discriminate. She said a few children with autism are registered for classes and the parents are questioned about their children's skill level and a good match is found, possibly in a group class. She said adult private swim lessons were offered but no one registered so we filled that time with children. Commissioner Mann also asked if accommodations would be made for a Downs Syndrome child. Ms. Gallardo said it would depend upon the severity, but if the parent said their child would grow with a group lesson, they would be registered. Commissioner Blue asked if the instructors were trained and Ms. Gallardo replied they were.
- Swim teams are full and have been practicing since May. They have begun to attend swim meets.
- The first Concert in the Park was held in Kiwanis Park on June 14.

- There was a public swim on June 14, sponsored by the Wal-Mart Super Center on Mooney, with 70 participants.
  - Dive in Movies, sponsored by the Tulare County Step it Up Program, had 120 participants.
  - Movies in the Park will begin this coming Friday showing Frozen - the Sing Along, at Riverway Sports Park.
  - The Parks and Recreation Department will be assisting the Foundation with the July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration at Mineral King Bowl.
  - July is Parks Makes Life Better Month and the department has put together programming provided to the citizens free of charge to celebrate. This is a great way to showcase our programming and advertise.
  - Adult sports update: line dance class – 30 participants, there are 112 softball teams, Visalia Youth Baseball – they are hosting a 12 year old 50/70 Western Regional at CR Shannon Baseball Complex. Twelve teams will be coming from Washington, Utah, and Arizona. The winners will move on to the Cal Ripken World Series.
- **Upcoming Parks & Urban Forestry Projects, Programs & Special Events.**
    - The AT&T cell tower at Riverway Sports Park has been placed on hold. AT&T is in negotiations with Direct TV to provide cable service for the area. The project is slated to begin again in January 2015.
    - Blain Park restrooms should be completed by the end of this week.
    - The ground breaking on the pickle ball courts should take place on Monday at Recreation Park. This project should take about 60 days.
    - JugFest takes many hours of coordination and inspection. It was very successful with no major damage to the park.
    - Mr. Joel Hooyer, Parks and Urban Forestry Supervisor, recently passed a test for Quality Applicator License. He is knowledgeable in pesticides for weed control.
    - Solicitation for candidates for the Parks Supervisor position is taking place. It will be going out for public review in the next few weeks.
  - **Director's Report on Administrative Items.** Mr. Elizondo stated that a few weeks ago the annual editorial on the Oak Tree Ordinance was reviewed in the Visalia Times Delta. It covered the rules and regulations for Oak Trees, how to get a permit to remove them, and to be aware that in the summer time trees can fall. Mr. Elizondo extended congratulations to Commissioner Filiponi for being recognized as an Emerging Leader by the Chamber of Commerce. He reminded the Commissioners that on June 26, the City will be recognizing the Committees and Commissions of Visalia for their work and dedication. The event will be held at the Valley Oaks Golf Course, and heavy hors d'oeuvres will be served at 5:30 pm. Steve Nelsen, Mayor, will speak at 6 pm, and you are welcome to bring your spouse or a guest. He said the Chairpersons of each Committee and Commission to introduce each member. He stated July is Parks Make Life Better Month and Commissioner Calhoun accepted the Proclamation from City Council on the behalf of the Commission. Mr. Elizondo stated that in previous months the Commission presented City Council with five recommendations for Lincoln Oval Park. The Council adopted those recommendations and a grant has been applied for from the State of California for approximately \$150,000. The City should receive a letter soon on the status of the application. The award of the grant will fund the top two priorities, which are 1) replacing the lighting at Oval Park and the installation of security cameras, and 2) installation of wrought iron fencing along the eastern side of the park to direct the public to the crosswalk. Mr. Elizondo said chances are good that the City will receive the grant because it is based on how many low income projects the City had in the preceding year, which dictates how much money the City will receive. Mr. Elizondo informed the Commissioners that he had an orientation meeting with Commissioner Thomas who volunteered to be the representative for the North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee.

#### 8. **Commissioner's Requests & Comments:**

- **North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee.** Commissioner Peter Thomas is not present this evening.
- **Senior Citizens Advisory Committee.** Commissioner Mann said the seniors are happy that there are more hourly employees now. The lunch program is steady, 35 to 50 people per day; and they love the new cook and the menus. Commissioner Mann said big thanks go to the Senior Pride Bingo group who provided window film tinting so the rooms are cooler and it helps the utility bills.
- **Parks & Recreation Foundation.** *Vacant.* Mr. Elizondo stated their current focus is the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration. He said they have said this is their last year of supporting the event due to time constraints and they are working to find another sponsor.
- **Waterways & Trails Committee Report.** Mr. Filiponi said Christine Chavez, a very active member of the Committee, now works for the City of Visalia. The Committee recently completed the Safe Route project near Hurley School. The current chair is Joshua Hickey.

#### 9. **Adjourn to the Regular Meeting, July 15, 2014, at the Council Chambers at 707 W. Acequia Street, at 5:30 pm.**

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

**MOTION**

Motion passed 5-0

Brenda Miernik

Senior Administrative Assistant