

Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2015

1. Call Meeting to Order/Roll Call

The Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, January 20, 2015, at the Rawhide Stadium, in the Hall of Fame Room, located at 300 N Giddings St., Visalia, California. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Carla Calhoun at 5:30 pm.

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

Absent: Shann Blue

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

- 2. Review and Approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting, December 16, 2014.** Commissioner Calhoun called for a motion to approve the December 16, 2014, meeting minutes. Commissioner Mann moved to approve the minutes as presented, and Commissioner Kent seconded the motion.

MOTION

Motion passed 3 -0, Mr. Filiponi attended the meeting late.

- 3. Public Comment:** Mr. Justin Harris asked for an update on the running and cycling trails in Visalia. Commissioner Calhoun said that information is not on hand at this time and informed him that the Waterways and Trails Committee often updates the Commission with information regarding connectivity. Mr. Fultz, Parks & Urban Forestry Manager, stated that some of the most recent connections are along Walnut, west of Ben Maddox; and on the east side of Lovers Lane, from Vista and across Mc Auliff and Tulare Streets. He said there are more plans in the future, as funds become available. Mr. Harris asked if there was something the public could do to raise funds or volunteer. Mr. Fultz said he should get in touch with the Waterways and Trails Committee and he would be happy to give him that information after the meeting.

- 4. Annual Election of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.** Commissioner Calhoun stated that she is the Chairperson and Mr. Filiponi is the Vice Chairperson. She asked if anyone else was interested in holding the positions. Commissioner Kent said he was content with the status quo. Commissioner Mann read from Commissioner Blue's email that said "Commissioners Calhoun and Filiponi have been doing a good job and he would vote for them to continue in the positions." She said she concurred with him.

Commissioner Calhoun called for a motion. Commissioner Kent moved that Commissioners Calhoun and Filiponi retain the positions of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, respectively. Commissioner Mann seconded the motion.

MOTION

Motion passed 3 -0

- 5. Annual Commission Report to be Submitted to City Council.** Commissioner Calhoun said the Commission reports annually to City Council and she will email the report to the Commissioners for review and comment. For staff review, she said she highlighted areas where she needed assistance. She said she would appreciate all input by Friday, January 23, at noon, and she will return the final report to staff members.

- 6. Discussion of Restroom at Seven Oaks Park.** Mr. Elizondo, Director of, Parks and Recreation, said the City has received numerous complaints from users of Seven Oaks Park regarding problems associated with the park restroom. Problems include drug use, vandalism, and requests to lock the restroom at night to prevent people from sleeping there.

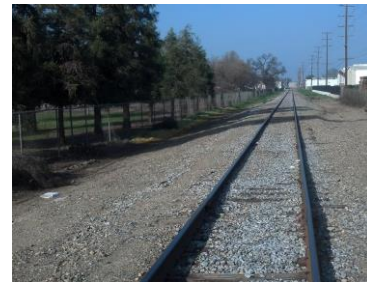
Mr. Elizondo said Seven Oaks Park consists of 12 acres, and is located off Edison Street and Tulare Avenue. Amenities include the Korsgaden Disk Golf Course, a group picnic area, the Alan George Oak Grove, a children's playground, a soccer field, and a basketball court. The park also serves the City as a storm basin.



Mr. Elizondo stated the City has not constructed new restrooms in neighborhood parks in a decade because local neighborhood residents object to them; citing problems stated earlier. In older neighborhood parks, the City has removed restrooms based on area neighborhood concerns. Some of these include the old Soroptimist Park, Jefferson and Houk Parks, and Rotary and Oval Parks.

Mr. Elizondo said City staff is proposing that the Commission discuss this item and determine if there is enough interest to proceed to the next step in the process, which would be to invite area residents around the park to a meeting to see if they support the idea of removing the restroom or would like to leave it intact. Should the Commission receive enough support from the neighborhood, City staff will seek Council support for funding to remove it. The cost to remove the restroom should not exceed \$10,000.

Mr. Elizondo informed the Commission that adjacent to the park are railroad tracks where people gather and they continually cut the fence to gain entrance to the park to utilize the restroom. He said there is a Flyers convenience store nearby, which is why it's a popular hang out.



Commissioner Calhoun asked what businesses are located in the area. Commissioner Filiponi replied a church, a printer, and Giant Chevrolet.

Commissioner Mann asked if usership of the park has diminished at all. Commissioner Calhoun said she visits the dog park and she sees lots of folks using it. Mr. Fultz said he has noted the basketball court and arbors being used, and has seen people sleeping in the arbor.

Commissioner Calhoun said she has to drive to get to the park and she would like to hear from other users who possibly drive to use the park also. Mr. Elizondo said the department will have records on recent organized events held at the park and they can be contacted regarding the meeting. Commissioner Calhoun suggested flyers be posted at the park inviting residents and park users. She also stated the focus of the meeting should not be limited to whether or not to remove the restroom, but to gather ideas to improve the park for everyone.

Commissioner Filiponi stated that in the last few years this restroom has deteriorated immensely. He suggested, that due to the odd shape of the park, addresses should be sought in a 500 foot area as opposed to the 300 foot area.

Mr. Elizondo agreed that the area would be included.

Commissioner Kent asked what the process is to invite people to a public meeting. Mr. Elizondo said the department uses a computer program to get lists of addresses and sends letters to homeowners and residents inviting them to a certain place and time for a public meeting.

Commissioner Calhoun made a motion to accept the report as presented and to invite homeowners, residents, and other users, to a future meeting to discuss the restrooms and ideas for increasing appropriate park usage. Commissioner Mann moved to accept the motion, and Commissioner Kent seconded it.

MOTION

Motion passed 4 -0

- 7. Discussion of Topics for the Joint Meeting with City Council Tuesday, March 17, 2015.** Commissioner Calhoun said copies of past agendas were in the packets to use as guides for the discussion.

Mr. Elizondo said the meeting will take place right after the Commissioners return from the CPRS conference and everyone will be excited and refreshed with new ideas. He stated the Commission and Council meet every year and it is an opportunity to share what is on your mind and things you might like to see happen; and it is important for them to hear this information. He said staff is here to support the Commission. He noted there are 19 Committees and Commissions for the City of Visalia; and the only two groups that meet with the Council are the Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Commissioner Calhoun said that normally the Commission and staff prepare a presentation to share, and each Commissioner has a part in it. She suggested preparing a slide to address the CPRS conference and a Commissioner to share their experience at the conference. She said one of her favorite topics is current trends and issues that might affect both the Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Commissioner Calhoun asked for ideas or comments from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Mann stated there will definitely be conversation about the Eastside Regional Park, the Southside Community Center and the aquatics facility.

Mr. Elizondo informed the Commission that the Eastside Task Force has been established and will have their first meeting this Thursday evening. He said the Southside Community Center Task Force has held two meetings already. He said there will be many conversations about these two projects in the future.

- 8. Review of Commission Goals and Objectives.** Commissioner Calhoun said there is a copy of the goals and objectives in the packets. She said goals are what the Commission strives to accomplish, such as the Eastside Regional Master Park Plan, the Community Center and Aquatic Facility, and Consistent Program Quality. She said

visions are not program specific; they are qualities the Commission is mindful of when items come before the Commission and matters the Commission can speak of with City Council.

Commissioner Mann noted that when Commissioners attend conferences and visit other areas they should be seeking innovative programs and ideas to keep abreast of trends and programs. Commissioner Mann said the staff does a wonderful job at innovating but she thinks it is something everyone should do.

Mr. Elizondo informed the Commission that the Council Retreat is taking place this week and he said the Pickle Ball courts will be discussed. Council member Gubler was a strong advocate for the court and a big reason for it being built. Another topic Mr. Gubler is advocating for is Senior Games. He said Ms. Greenwood has been researching the topic but has discovered that cities who host the games have \$60 to \$70k budgets to coordinate them.

Commissioner Calhoun wondered if the schools or groups would volunteer to help coordinate the events.

Ms. Greenwood stated the City of Pasadena said it took them 18 months to coordinate their first event.

Commissioner Mann asked Commissioner Thomas what vision he might like to champion. He replied he would like to partner with Commissioner Kent on Outreach.

Commissioner Calhoun called for a motion. Commissioner Filiponi moved to assign Commissioner Thomas to co-partner with Commissioner Kent to the vision of Outreach. Commissioner Kent seconded the motion.

MOTION

Motion passed 4 -0

9. **Upcoming CPRS Conference March 10-13, 2015, in Sacramento, California.** Mr. Elizondo said those who attend will leave on Tuesday and return on Friday. Two vehicles will be rented and leave independently at different times.

10. **Update on City Council Reports & City Staff Announcements.**

- **Upcoming Recreation Programs & Special Events.** Ms. Greenwood reported the following.

- The adult sports registration just closed. The department is holding a new winter Softball League, with 46 teams signed up.
- Another new program for the department is a winter Men's Basketball, with 30 teams registered.
- Adult volleyball is full with 20 teams.
- This Saturday, 1/24, is the Tule Fog Run at Cutler Park, beginning at 8 am.
- The following Saturday, 1/31, is our discount registration day for youth baseball and volleyball, at the Anthony Community Center beginning at 10 am.
- The Senior Center was closed for a week due to replacing some pipe in the kitchen area. We discovered a line that we weren't sure was live or not so the gas had to be shut off for testing. It turned out to be an abandoned line and the lines being used are fine and working properly. The Center is open at this time.
- There was an article in the Visalia Times Delta about the Visalia Youth Committee. This committee will serve in an advisory capacity to staff to help plan and carry-out events for teens. The committee has been dormant for several years but is being revived again. Freddy Arias, Youth and Teen Supervisor, is gathering applications and spear-heading the project.

Commissioner Mann asked what ages were being recruited for the committee. Ms. Greenwood replied Junior High and High School, and it would be ideal to have one representative from each school in Visalia. She said the program is funded by the Parks & Recreation Foundation, who sought a grant and received funding of \$1,200.

- The City's new website will be launched soon.
 - The spring brochure will be mailed out mid-February with a new cover design. We have contracted with BMI, a local printer, to add professionalism to our brochures. You will see a new mobile app for the department also.
- **Upcoming Parks & Urban Forestry Projects, Programs & Special Events.**
 - Landscape Inspector for Landscape and Lighting position – tomorrow is our second interview for this new position.
 - In a week or two there will be new fencing installed at Plaza Park, fields 1 and 2. In-field renovation should be complete this week on Fields 2 and 4.
 - The department is working with Natural Resources to replace lighting at Ruiz and Perry Parks with LED lights.
 - Arbor Day and Earth Day will be celebrated April 25 and we are partnering with Natural Resources at St. John's Riverwalk. The ceremony will begin at 10 am. Bus rides are free that day.
 - **Director's Report on Administrative Items.** Mr. Elizondo stated he would update the Commission on the Council Retreat next month.

11. Commissioner's Requests & Comments:

- **Community/Aquatic Center Ad Hoc Committee.** Ms. Greenwood said the committee met right after the first of the year and staff had prepared a Request for Proposal for architectural services for a Conceptual Master Plan. Discussion included location, what type of facility is needed, and receiving feedback from interested parties in the community. She said staff would contact the aquatic company to get some general ideas on building and maintenance costs. She said at a future date the company would meet with the committee and other interested parties to discuss costs and maintenance.
- **Senior Citizens Advisory Committee.** Commissioner Mann said she will attend tomorrow.
- **Parks & Recreation Foundation.** The next meeting is this Thursday and Commissioner Kent said he would review the minutes and report to the Commission next month. He said they have instituted new Policies and Procedures and they are actively seeking new members.
- **Waterways & Trails Committee Report.** Commissioner Filiponi said Council voted 3-2 to allow the North Visalia Advisory Committee to continue as a committee, even though the City is currently dividing the city into districts, because they still have enough influence in the City to continue. Mr. Vaughn Melcher gave a Trails update regarding the Greenway Trail. Mr. Hickey spoke on the feedback he received on his report to Council. Council took issue with maintenance and solutions. He said Council approved two projects for the Committee, i.e. housing clean-up and a trail connectivity project. He said they will be meeting next month to set their goals for this year.
- **North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee.** Commissioner Thomas said he spoke with Mr. Bill Huott who explained the vote by Council regarding the committee. He also shared some important statistics about the area.
Commissioner Thomas noted that he was at the Riverway Sports Park on the weekend and he noted some graffiti on one of the restroom structures. He asked how the department handles graffiti at the park.
Mr. Fultz stated staff goes out with spray paint and covers it up or the graffiti crew will take care of it. Certain times of the year community volunteers will assist to remove it. Mr. Fultz said individuals should call the Graffiti Hotline, which is 713-4451.
- **Public Arts Task Force Report.** Commissioner Mann said she has not been contacted yet.

12. Adjourn to the Regular Meeting, February 17, 2015, at the Tulare County Library, located at 200 W. Oak Street, 2nd Floor, at 5:30 pm.

Commissioner Filiponi moved to adjourn and Commissioner Kent seconded the motion.

MOTION

Motion passed 4-0

Brenda Miernik,
Senior Administrative Assistant