

Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes
July 21, 2015

1. Call Meeting to Order/Roll Call

The Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, July 21, 2015, at the Council Chambers located at 707 W. Acequia, Visalia, California. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Carla Calhoun at 5:33 pm.

Present: Carla Calhoun, Ben Filiponi, Shann Blue, Jason Kent, George Shelton, and Peter Thomas

Guests: Steve Canada, Andrea Strahlo, of HLA, Rick Darnley, of Provost & Pritchard, Maile, Bob Ludekens, and Bill Huott, citizens

Staff: Vincent Elizondo, Jeannie Greenwood, Jeff Fultz, Laurissa Roggenkamp, and Brenda Miernik

- 2. Review and Approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting, June 16, 2015.** Commissioner Calhoun called for a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Kent moved to approve the minutes as presented and Commissioner Filiponi seconded the motion.

MOTION

Motion passed 4 -0

- 3. Public Comment:** Mr. Bob Ludekens noted that the Eastside Regional Park is being discussed tonight and he asked if holes had been drilled on the property to find the sand. He said the City might still receive some rain this year and it would behoove the City to capture it.

Bill Huott thanked the City for the work done at the Oval Park. He also thanked the Parks & Recreation Foundation for the obtaining the grant for the playground purchase. He stated work has also been accomplished at Houston Elementary School by Visalia Unified School District and the City. He commented that the work done on these sites will affect many generations to come.

- 4. Visalia Parks & Recreation Foundation Annual Report.** Commissioner Calhoun said Ms. Hays has been unavoidably detained and tabled the report to the August 18, 2015 meeting.

- 5. Eastside Regional Park & Groundwater Recharge Final Master Plan.** Mr. Canada said Concepts A and B were presented to the commission on June 16. He stated he is now presenting Concepts A1 and B1. He said the maps will be presented to City Council August 17 for approval and then the approved plan will move into the environmental review process (EIR). The chosen concept will then come back to the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council for final approval after the EIR process.

Mr. Canada said maps A1 and B1 reflect the input that was received after Workshop 4, held on June 18, 2015. He said in Community Workshop No. 1, Concept B was the preferred option with a vote of 17 to 14. He said in Concept A, Mill Creek was left in its current form, but people expressed their preference many times for the meandering path, as in Concept B. Another comment was that the youth baseball complex and the adult softball complex are to close together. He said many people asked for more restrooms, picnic areas, and play areas. Most other comments were very minor in nature. He also noted that on all four concept maps the recharge plan stays the same.

Mr. Canada said, in answer to Mr. Ludekens' concern, the City has indeed completed borings on the property to locate the different types of soils and that's why the recharge basins are located where they are.

Concept A1 – The tennis and pickleball courts are moved up a little bit to create the meandering of Mill Creek. Most people felt there was enough separation of the baseball fields with this change. The trail system in this concept has been expanded, from 5.5 miles to 6.3 miles. This accommodates the desired cross country mileage for events.

Questions

- What size is the buffer area between the baseball diamonds and the residential area to the west? From the backyards of the residences there is enough room for two football fields. During the EIR process a sound study will be done and the results will be presented to citizens at a public meeting. This would be the opportune time for those residents to come forward with their concerns and suggestions.
- Concern was expressed that enough parking access was around the softball complex. There are two ways to access it.
- Oak Creek is also within the park area. It is actually a ditch and just terminates.
- How high are the berms around the perimeter of the park? It is hoped to be as high as six feet to help with buffering sound in the park. There is a Site Plan review tomorrow morning and all City departments will be involved to discuss details, and we will not know until then.

Concept B1 – This concept separates the youth baseball complex from the adult softball complex by wrapping soccer fields around them. A group picnic area has been added with a playground.

In Concept A the Resource Center is combined with the Education Barn. It is separate in Concept B and B1.

Questions

- Is there a difference in how much parking is available between A1 and B1? A1 has more parking than B1, by about 150 stalls.
- How many picnic areas are in both concepts – A1 and B1? Concept B1 has 11, two less than B1. There will be informal picnic areas beside the walking paths. These will not be available for reservations.
- What was the reason for separating the softball and baseball diamonds? Many expressed concern that mixing adult and youth play was not suitable.
- Concern was expressed about the closeness of the fields to the residential area. It was agreed that this concept is closer to the residents.

Commissioner Calhoun opened the floor to public comment.

Maile – she asked if there was a swimming hole element incorporated in the design of this park? Mr. Canada said no, but he would take the suggestion.

Commissioner Calhoun asked for Commissioner comments.

It was the consensus of the Commissioners that they like Concept A1.

Commissioner Filiponi made a motion to recommend to City Council the adoption of Concept A1. Commissioner Blue seconded the motion.

MOTION

Motion passed 4 -0

- 6. Annual Report on Youth Sports & Tiny Tot Programs.** Ms. Roggenkamp, Recreation Supervisor, stated the Youth Sports Division is dedicated to facilitating programs that are designed to provide children with the opportunity to experience sports in a structured, healthy environment. She said the department is dedicated to the motto, “Kids First, Winning Second.”

Ms. Roggenkamp provided the following information.

Sport Camps

- ✓ Volleyball Camp, 2014 had 60 participants with revenue of \$4,985. 2015 had 58 participants and revenue of \$4,475. The instructor was Casey Norman, Varsity Volleyball Coach at Mission Oak High School.
- ✓ Golf Camp, held at Valley Oaks Golf Course, in 2014 had 54 participants with \$1,350 in revenue. 2015 had 60 participants with revenue of \$1,500. In 2015 two sessions of camp were offered. In 2015, a Spring Golf Camp was offered on March 30 and 31, with revenue of \$750.

NFL Flag Football – Fall

2013 had 379 participants and revenue of \$23,667, no team requests. 2014 had participants of 380 and revenue of \$24,302, and 41 team requests. There were decreased numbers in most divisions except for instructional (Grades 1-2).

Volleyball – Fall & Spring

Fall, 2013 had 201 participants, revenue of \$3,107, with no team requests. 2014 had 234 participants, revenue of \$15,604, and 43 team requests. Fall 2014, experienced a 16% increase in participation from previous year.

Spring 2014 had 356 participants, revenue of \$23,306, and 52 team requests. 2015 had 334 participants, revenue of \$22,344, with 68 team requests. In spring 2014, there was an unusually high amount of participation, but by spring of 2015, the numbers began to even out.

Basketball – Winter

2014 had 675 participants, revenue of \$43,006, and 42 team requests. 2015 had 724 participants, revenue of \$45,720, and 92 team requests. 2015 experienced a 7.26% growth from the previous year. The largest percentage of growth was in the seniors (7-8 grades) division.

Baseball – Spring

2014 had 406 participants, revenue of \$26,182, and 55 team requests. 2015 had 336 participants, revenue of \$22,280, and 16 team requests. In 2015 there was a decrease in participation from previous years; however the season was very successful in recruiting volunteer coaches prior to the start of the season.

Ms. Roggenkamp said the department offers scholarships and the applicants must provide income verification. She noted the recipients must be Visalia residents and the scholarship covers half of the registration cost. The amounts are limited to \$125 per person or \$250 per family for a fiscal year. She said income criteria are based on the U.S.

Department of Food and Nutrition Free Meal Program at public schools. She said the Parks & Recreation Foundation provides funding for this program.

Ms. Roggenkamp stated there are some challenges with sports programming. The basketball program utilizes 4 gyms, volleyball 2 gyms, various fields for baseball practice, and fields for flag football. She said that for these programs she utilizes facilities at College of the Sequoia, Mount Whitney High School, and the Boys & Girls Club, as well as City facilities. Many times games are played from 8 am to as late as 5 pm, which she does not like to do because it sometimes interferes with family plans.

Ms. Roggenkamp said her goals for 2015-16 include increasing program quality, and program participation numbers. She said she would like to improve coach and volunteer recruitment, as well as screening for experience in the particular sport.

Ms. Roggenkamp provided the following information on the Tiny Tot Enrichment Classes:

- The program includes enrichment in art, education, and sports.
- Encourages socialization with peers, parents, teachers, and adults.
- Highlighted programs include Jumping Jollies, Art Explosion, Tiny Dancers, and Bitsy Sports.
- Contract classes include Kindermusik for ages 1-4. There are 4 classes per month, held on Wednesdays, and classes average 10 participants each month.
- In 2013-14, 36 classes were offered, with participation of 417, and revenue of \$15,678.
- IN 2014-15, 39 classes were offered, with participation of 546, and revenue of \$23,675.

Ms. Roggenkamp said the Mother & Son Campout is a very popular special event. In 2014, due to the remarkable increase in participants from the previous year, two sessions were held; one at Kiwanis Park and one at Sunset Park. There were 142 participants.

Ms. Roggenkamp said that in 2015, one campout was held at Kiwanis Park with 158 participants. Camping bandanas were given to participants to wear for team play and it was very successful.

Commissioner Calhoun stated she thinks the Youth Sports and Tiny Tot programs are phenomenal; it just gets better and better every year.

Commissioner Blue asked how much success she has had in recruiting high school athletes for coaching and volunteers. Ms. Roggenkamp replied that she has not been successful in that. She said she has reached out to many clubs at high schools, but only gets 1 or two high school students every year. Commissioner Blue suggested she speak with the Head Coach at the high schools.

Commissioner Shelton suggested that funding for scholarships might be available through the Citizens Advisory Committee. They have a sub-committee that allocates funding to non-profit organizations on an annual basis.

Vince Elizondo, Director of Parks and Recreation, announced that Ms. Roggenkamp recently became married and thus the name change from Gallardo to Roggenkamp. He said she not only manages Youth Sports and Tiny Tots, but manages the Aquatics Program too. He said she does a great job for the department.

7. **Interviews and Potential Recommendations for a New Commissioner and Commissioner Alternates.** Mr. Elizondo stated that in checking with the Deputy City Clerk and the Assistant City Manager he learned that the guidelines have changed regarding filling a vacancy created by a Commissioner “terming out” of office. He said the City must conduct an open recruitment and a new interview process which would include the existing Commissioner Alternates and any interested members from the public. This means the four current Commissioners will interview a pool of four candidates that includes current Commissioner Alternates – Peter Thomas and George Shelton; along with two interested members of the public – Mary Bryant and Justin Sweet. The Commission will be asked to select a new Commissioner and recommend this person to both the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and the City Council for approval. The Commission can also make a recommendation to fill any Commissioner Alternate position that may be vacant. He said the Commission can have up to two Commission Alternates. All four applicants should be asked the same questions by the sitting Commissioners. It is noted that Ms. Mary Bryant did not attend the meeting.

Commissioner Calhoun said the Parks & Recreation Commission’s Mission is to:

- Advise the City Council and City Parks & Recreation Staff,
- To provide a quality parks system that is safe, properly maintained, and equally accessible to all residents of the City of Visalia,
- To provide quality recreational programs for all ages,
- To have vision and the flexibility to meet the ever-changing interests of our diverse, multi-cultural community,
- To develop facilities that will accommodate the needs of our active and growing community,
- And to be open and actively responsive to input from individuals and community organization.

Commissioner Calhoun said a list of nine questions has been created for each candidate to answer. She asked Mr. Sweet to come to the podium, and she commenced the questioning.

1. Will you be able to commit the time needed to serve on the Commission and serve as its representative on other committees?
 - a. *Mr. Sweet: Yes.*
 - b. *Mr. Shelton: Yes, I am retired.*
 - c. *Mr. Thomas: Yes, I would.*
2. Why are you interested in serving on the Parks & Recreation Commission?
 - a. *Mr. Sweet: I joined the Marine Corp right out of high school and I plan to become a firefighter. I want to serve my community; and I have a child now and frequent the parks regularly.*
 - b. *Mr. Shelton – I served the City on the CAC for 6 years and this seems like a natural progression.*
 - c. *Mr. Thomas: When I first applied it was to get involved with the Commission in order to promote Parks as a valuable resource available to the public. I also wanted to learn more about the changing needs of City parks and what the challenges were and to see how I, as an individual, could help meet those challenges.*
3. Are you involved in any other community organizations or civic committees?
 - a. *Mr. Sweet: Not at this time.*
 - b. *Mr. Shelton: I am a member of the Kaweah Fly Fishers and we teach a program called “Trout in the Classroom” with from 800 to 900 students per year at schools throughout Tulare County.*
 - c. *Mr. Thomas: As an Alternate to the Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission, I serve as a representative for the North Visalia Advisory Committee and I volunteer with the Visalia Rescue Mission and Visalia Emergency Aid for the local community. I have also served with the Fresno State Republicans for the last two years.*
4. What experiences would you bring to the Commission?
 - a. *Mr. Sweet: I am good at meeting people and working to bring them together to make things happen. I am aware that everything has a process.*
 - b. *Mr. Shelton: I coached youth softball for six years, I am aware of the City’s processes, and have experience with sub-committees.*
 - c. *Mr. Thomas: As an Alternate to the Parks & Recreation Commission, I feel I am a cheerleader for Parks & Rec. Recently I have learned just how many recreational programs the City offers. I love to promote the Parks and Recreation Department.*
5. Are you particularly interested in either Park resources or Recreation programming?
 - a. *Mr. Sweet: I like recreational activity. I am familiar with planning and coordinating activities.*
 - b. *Mr. Shelton: I am more interested in being involved with the Park resources.*
 - c. *Mr. Thomas: Both, but recently more into the recreation aspect of it and how the City wants to make classes affordable and accessible to everyone. If appointed as a commissioner I want to ensure that our parks remain free to the public.*
6. What do you believe are the greatest assets of Visalia’s parks and recreation programs?
 - a. *Mr. Sweet: I think Visalia’s parks are great. I am especially impressed with the Sports Park and I live close by.*
 - b. *Mr. Shelton: I believe the youth in our City is our greatest asset. There are many good groups out there.*
 - c. *Mr. Thomas: I feel like it’s the availability and affordability of the Parks and Recreation programs. The department does a great job of maintaining the parks and programs for our youth.*
7. What do you believe are the biggest problems facing Visalia’s parks and recreation programs?
 - a. *Mr. Sweet: I think the Oval Park is one of the biggest problems at this time. I appreciate that the park hours were changed.*
 - b. *Mr. Shelton: Funding for parks and programming is the biggest problem, and funding throughout the City.*
 - c. *Mr. Thomas: Maintenance of the parks and trying to keep the costs down, while recognizing the environment in which we live. Trying to maintain the quality of our parks while in a severe drought is tough but Visalia Parks & Recreation is doing a great job.*
8. What do you believe are the biggest concerns of your neighbors, as they relate to parks and recreation?
 - a. *Mr. Sweet: I don’t know. If citizens had more information on how to use the parks (rentals) they might use them more.*
 - b. *Mr. Shelton: I think the North side of Visalia is neglected and needs more parks.*
 - c. *Mr. Thomas: I think they worry about the availability of the parks. I have many friends from high school and college who still play soccer, football, and basketball, and they vie for places to play. I think what the commission did for the pickleball and tennis players was the best for both sports.*

9. Is there anything else you would like to add about yourself as it relates to the position of Commissioner?
 - a. *Mr. Sweet: I have served the nation and now I would like to serve the community.*
 - b. *Mr. Shelton: I really enjoy serving as an alternate for the Parks & Recreation Commission.*
 - c. *Mr. Thomas: I want to thank the Commissioners for helping me this last year in answering my questions. I have been able to learn about the challenges and opportunities available to our community.*

Commissioner Calhoun stated there are ballots on the table for your votes. After you have voted please pass the ballots to Ms. Miernik and she will tally the votes and reveal the results.

Ms. Miernik announced the recommended Commissioner is Mr. Thomas by a 3 to 1 vote.

Commissioner Blue made the motion to recommend Commissioner Thomas as a voting commissioner to the CAC and City Council. Commissioner Kent seconded the motion.

MOTION

Motion passed 4 -0

Mr. Elizondo said it is now to be determined if a second alternate is necessary.

Commissioner Thomas said he thought it would be good to have another alternate and Mr. Sweet has a lot to offer the commission.

Commissioner Filiponi made a motion to recommend Mr. Sweet as second alternate to the CAC and the City Council. Commissioner Blue seconded the motion.

MOTION

Motion passed 4 -0

Mr. Elizondo stated a staff report would be forwarded to the CAC recommending Commissioner Thomas as a voting commissioner and Mr. Sweet as an alternate. Once that is approved the recommendation would go to City Council approval and then the department would be notified. It is possible that all could be approved by the August 18 meeting.

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

- **Upcoming Recreation Programs & Special Events.** Ms. Greenwood reported the following:
 - The Annual Catfish Derby was held last weekend. Thanks to Commissioner Calhoun for attending the event. There were 187 participants at the event.
 - We are currently taking football and volleyball registrations for the fall. The discount registration day will be the first weekend in August.
 - We are gearing up for Corporate Games.
 - The fall brochure is bringing back the Tiny Tot Olympics at the end of September.
 - Teen Idol also occurs in September.
 - The newest event is our Senior Games. We are adding softball as our ninth event. There have been three committee planning meetings. The fourth one is tomorrow at 5:30 pm at the Senior Center. We have received out title sponsor, Kaweah Delta Hospital.
 - The Fall Winter brochure will be out the first part of August. The theme is “Let the Games Begin.”
 - The Fiscal year has closed and the numbers a good. The supervisors are passionate about their work and excited to present their reports.
- **Upcoming Parks & Urban Forestry Projects, Programs & Special Events.** Mr. Fultz reported the following:
 - The Riverway Sports Park is still experiencing a few glitches with the irrigation but it is greening up for the fall soccer season.
 - Mill Creek Park is now on-line with water.
 - Drought efforts are continuing.

Commissioner Blue stated the parks are looking better than people’s yards.

Commissioner Calhoun said people have commented to her that its nice having parks to go to when their yards are gold, and she feels that the City is maintaining an important community asset.

Commissioner Shelton asked how long before the wastewater treatment plant expansion is completed, and if they would be providing water to service the parks. Mr. Fultz replied that the water service will be for the golf course and Plaza Park only at this time. The project is about two years out before completion.

- **Director's Report on Administrative Items.** Mr. Elizondo said the water restrictions for the City are very tight. Mr. Fultz is limited to watering the Landscape and Lighting Districts just 2 days per week, parks less than three acres are limited to two days per week, and larger parks are given exemptions for a little more water. The City has an aggressive water enforcement team of eight people watching for violations of the water ordinance. The first violation is \$100, the second is \$300, and the third time is \$500.

Mr. Elizondo reported that City Council has approved the removal of Seven Oaks Park restroom. It will be removed this winter at a cost of approximately \$5,000.

Mr. Elizondo noted that Commissioner Shelton had said girl's softball has been under served in recent years. Mr. Elizondo said the last phase of the Sports Park will be a 4-field, lighted, girl's softball complex. The City has received a proposal from Steve Canada, of HLA, for the design and it will go to Council in late August or early September for approval.

Mr. Elizondo asked the Commission to mark their calendars on September 2, for the California Association of Park and Recreation Commissioners & Board Members regional workshop. The workshop will be held at the Convention Center in Visalia, 9 am to 3 pm, and lunch will be provided. This is a great opportunity to meet other regional commissioners and share information and experiences. This has been done in years past and is sponsored by the State Board of Commissioners.

9. Commissioner's Requests & Comments:

- **Eastside Regional Park Task Force:** Commissioner Calhoun said she has nothing to add to the presentation received tonight.
- **Community/Aquatic Center Ad Hoc Committee.** Commissioner Blue said the committee has not met again yet.
- **Senior Citizens Advisory Committee.** VACANT. Ms. Greenwood said the last meeting was very short. There are no issues to report. She said they were asking for information on the mural. Ms. Greenwood said she had a rendering of it and she needed to complete an application for a mural permit.
- **Parks & Recreation Foundation.** Commissioner Kent said he received the minutes from the May meeting. He said they received enough money from the Rosa's fundraiser to purchase the iPad for the department. He said they also accepted a new member, Mr. Roberto Brady, a planner for Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG). They are also developing a plan for increasing membership. The Foundation was awarded the First 5 grant for playground equipment at Oval Park. He said the Foundation is partnering with the Visalia Rescue Mission on the Oval Park Christmas Tree Lighting Project.
- **Waterways & Trails Committee Report.** Commissioner Filiponi said he attended the meeting and it was the presentation of the Eastside Regional Park and Groundwater Recharge Facility.
Mr. Elizondo stated the Committee is working on updating their bike plan.
- **North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee.** Commissioner Thomas said there are some calendar items for the committee and he would email them to the Commissioners.
Mr. Elizondo said he attended the meeting and Ms. Carol Hays presented the Parks & Recreation Foundation Annual Report to the committee. Included in the presentation was information on the grant they were awarded.
- **Public Arts Task Force Report.** Commissioner Kent volunteered to represent the commission at this meeting.

10. Adjourn to the Regular Meeting, August 18, 2015, at the Council Chambers located at 707 W. Acequia Street, Visalia, CA.

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

MOTION

Motion passed 4-0

Brenda Miernik,
Senior Administrative Assistant