

**Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 19, 2016**

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

The Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, February 16, 2016, at the Senior Center Main Room located at 310 N Locust Street, Visalia, California. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Carla Calhoun at 5:30 p.m.

**Present:** Carla Calhoun, Ben Filiponi, Peter Thomas, George Shelton and Justin Sweet.

**Absent:** Jason Kent and Shann Blue

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

**2. Review and Approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting, January 19, 2016.** Commissioner Blue moved to approve the minutes as presented, Commissioner Kent seconded the motion.

**MOTION**

Motion passed 5 -0

**3. Public Comment:** None.

**4. Review of Annual Tree Report.** Mr. Joel Hooyer, Parks & Urban Forestry Supervisor, said the City now has 385 acres of land in landscape and lighting areas, including public right-of-ways, parks, riparian areas, roadsides and medians. Total acreage has increased 70% increase over the last three years.

Mr. Hooyer provided the following information:

West Coast Arborists is contracted for tree service in landscape & lighting areas, riparian areas and City parks. The contract amount is \$360,000 annually and this is the final year of the contract. The contract will be going out to bid and will allow local contractors an opportunity to bid.

Make a Difference Day and Arbor Day 2015 were utilized for planting 600 new trees in 2015.

The City of Visalia has been a Tree City for 33 years. The qualifications are: the City must have a Tree Board, a Community Tree Ordinance, a Community Forestry Program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita and an Arbor Day Proclamation.

Tree trimming and inspections – 4,817 trees were trimmed in 2015. Common tree problems include severe tree topping, trees planted under power lines, drought and trees planted too close to walls. In 2015 there were 185 oak tree inspections and 725 tree related calls from citizens.

Emergency Call Outs – there were 21 tree related call backs; two which the City crew responded to. West Coast Arborists will respond to these calls within two hours.

Mitigation Fund – the fund is currently at \$209,801. These funds come from permit fees and monetary requirements for removing Valley Oak trees that are stipulated in the Valley Oak Tree Ordinance. The fund pays for removing or trimming Oak trees on private property for low-income residents.

Commissioner Calhoun asked if some of the fund could be used for educational purposes. Mr. Fultz replied that every June the department provides information to the public regarding Valley Oaks and the ordinance.

**5. Annual Park Ranger Report.** Mr. Fultz, Parks and Urban Forestry Manager, said the Ranger Program began in 2007. Homero Alcazar, a full-time employee, works as a Park Maintenance Worker and as Ranger. In 2011 a part-time employee was hired as a Park Ranger and in 2014 the hours of service were extended to include Friday evenings.

Ranger duties and areas of service are as follows:

- Rangers have the authority to issue citations for specific violations, but are unarmed.
- Park Rangers perform many types of maintenance and construction tasks, as well as public relations duties.
- Blain, Plaza, Whitendale, and Riverway Sports Parks are the main parks serviced due to reservations and heavy usage.
- Rangers make an effort to visit nearby park locations on the route to provide a presence and oversight of those other park locations.

Mr. Fultz said the following is an outline reflecting the types of issues the Rangers face in the City park system and covers the specific period of February 21, 2015 through November 29, 2015.

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
• Citation – Notice to Appear:	34	67
• Written Warnings – Notice of Violation:	1	0
• Verbal Warnings/Incidents Noted:	1745	1250
• Assistance Rendered to Rangers From Visalia Police	2	8
• Assistance Rendered to Rangers From Animal Control:	0	2

SPCA officers continue to assist in City parks and no emergency medical services were necessary in either year.

The benefits of the Park Ranger Program include 1) a reduction in vandalism which has led to the savings of material and labor, 2) a reduction in loitering and violations of park rules, 3) increased satisfaction to our arbor renters and 4) an enhanced relationship between the Visalia Police Department, park users, and the Parks and Recreation Department.

6. **Review and Approval of the Parks and Recreation Commission Goals and Objectives for 2016.** Commissioner Calhoun said she made the suggested changes that were discussed at last month’s meeting and simplified the format. She said she would accept a motion to accept the changes and reaffirm the commitment to the Goals and Objectives for 2016-17.

Commissioner Blue moved to approve the Goals and Objectives and Commissioner Filiponi seconded the motion.

**MOTION**

Motion passed 5 -0

7. **Discussion of Topics for the Joint Meeting with City Council on Monday, March 28, 2016, at the Convention Center.** Commissioner Blue suggested a break-down of what is being requested in the department’s budget as a means of advocating for more staff. Commissioner Kent added that with new parks in the City’s future it would behoove the Council to consider the increased needs of the department.

Ms. Jeannie Greenwood, Director of Parks and Recreation, said she attended the Council’s Strategic Planning Meeting and some of the topics were as follows: a financial over view was presented by Finance, a discussion about the homeless issues in the City including code and law enforcement, ground water management, the non-profit grant process and the future council organization directly affected by district voting.

The City worked with two committees, the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Bond Measure Advisory Committee (BMAC) who met independently but arrived at the same recommendation – implementing a sales tax of ½ cent, netting the City \$10 million annually. Each committee presented a strategy of where the funding should be allocated. A survey of Visalia citizens reflected that street maintenance and repair high on the list, with police and fire.

Ms. Greenwood said when working with Code Enforcement or the Visalia police regarding issues in our parks they always ask “where is it written.” Part of the responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Commission is to recommend policy and ordinances to City Council. The commissioners were provided a copy of the Municipal Code for City Parks and Recreation areas and Ms. Greenwood said this could provide a basis for changes and clarification if the commission so chose. She also said this could be a talking point with Council for clean and safe parks.

Commissioner Kent asked if reviewing the ordinances would take place in a special meeting with the police department and code enforcement. Ms. Greenwood said Council could direct the commission to select an Ad Hoc Committee to review the municipal code and make recommendations.

Commissioner Blue asked when the last changes made. Ms. Greenwood responded that last year the shopping cart and suspending a citizen from a park was added. Commissioner Blue said he thought this should be added to the Commission Goals and Objectives because it would be time consuming and a project that should be handled by the commission.

Ms. Greenwood said this item could be added to the Commission goals and to the Council discussion under Clean and Safe Parks. The impact of homeless in parks and department facilities could also be discussed; as well as advocating for more staff.

Commissioner Filiponi moved to add a fourth goal to the Commission’s 2016-17 Goals and Objectives to be listed as Clean and Safe Parks. Commissioner Calhoun suggested the description to read as follows: The Commission will review and update the Municipal Code and policies as they relate to City parks and recreation areas reflecting current needs and maintenance to ensure clean and safe recreational facilities throughout the community. Commissioner Blue seconded the motion.

## **MOTION**

Motion passed 5 -0

Commissioner Calhoun summarized the topics of discussion: 1) advocate for new staff members, 2) discuss the sales tax initiative, and 3) review the Municipal Code and policies regarding park rules.

Commissioner Calhoun noted that she provided each commissioner with a draft of the Annual Report. She said she would send it to the commissioners via e-mail on Friday morning for review. If everyone would let her know of any changes or additions she would revise and send to Ms. Miernik to distribute to Council.

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

- **Upcoming Recreation Programs & Special Events.** Ms. Greenwood reported the following.
  - The Father Daughter dance is sold out and has been since last week. The department will host 525 attendees each night. The theme is a Royal Ball. Friday is the registration deadline for youth baseball and youth volleyball.
  - Staff is working on summer schedules and budgets.
- **Upcoming Parks & Urban Forestry Projects, Programs & Special Events.**
  - The Oval Park playground bid went out last week and closes on February 26. After that is installed a bid will go out for the fencing. The fencing for the east side of the park is going in this week.
  - CIP funding for the Plaza Park Light Project has been requested.
  - The department will be installing booster pump at Houck Park.
  - Work will be done at the Riverway Sports Park water feature soon. The safety material the kids play on is experiencing some wear and tear.
- **Director's Report on Administrative Items.** CPRS District 7 will be holding their annual Awards Banquet on Friday, February 26, at the Kingsburg Country Club. The Commissioners are welcome to attend. The department will be submitting two applications: one for the Outstanding Program Award for our Senior Games and, one for Kaweah Delta Health Care District for their continued presence in the community, for promoting health and wellness through the Healthy Visalia Committee; and as our sponsor for the Senior Games event.

A ground breaking ceremony was held on February 2 for the Visalia Emergency Communications Center, which will be located at North Burke & East School Streets. Fire Administration and the Call Center (dispatch and 911) will be housed here upon completion.

The California Parks & Recreation Society's annual conference will be held March 8-11, 2016, in Long Beach and Commissioner's Calhoun and Filiponi will be attending with some staff.

The 2016 San Joaquin Valley Parks Summit will be held Thursday, May 12, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; hosted by the Fresno State Community and Economic Development Recreation Administration. Registration will be open on March 1 and sessions include: Land Use & Park Planning, Healthy Parks, Funding Park Acquisitions and Maintenance, Parks & Economic Development, Citizen Engagement & Advocacy and Parks are Green Infrastructure. Ms. Greenwood invited the Commissioners to attend with her.

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

- **Community/Aquatic Center Ad Hoc Committee.** Commissioner Blue said there have been no meetings yet. Ms. Greenwood said there would be a pre-proposal meeting next week to answer any questions the contractors might have.
- **Senior Citizens Advisory Committee.** Ms. Greenwood said she did not attend the meeting.
- **Parks & Recreation Foundation.** Commissioner Kent said he and Ms. Hays discussed Oval Park and the on-going work there. Ms. Greenwood said she is working with Ms. Hays on a Southern California Edison grant for new computers for the Senior Center.
- **Waterways & Trails Committee Report.** Commissioner Filiponi said the annual Goals and Planning Session was held at Café 225.

- **North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee.** Commissioner Thomas said he was not able to attend but there was a clean-up day.

**10. Adjourn to the Joint Meeting, March 28, 2016, at the Convention Center located at 310 N. Locust Street, at 5:30 p.m.**

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

**MOTION**

Motion passed 5-0

Brenda Miernik,  
Senior Administrative Assistant