

**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, April 19, 2016, at the Council Chambers, located at 707 W. Acequia 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:** Shann Blue and Jason Kent

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

**2. Review and Approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting, February 16, 2016.** Commissioner Filiponi moved to approve the minutes as presented, Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion.

**MOTION**

Motion passed 3 -0

**3. Public Comment:** None.

**4. Request by the Guild of St. Mortimer to Host the Tulare County Renaissance Faire at Plaza Park on April 22, 23 and 24.** This will be the 17<sup>th</sup> year the Guild has requested the use of Plaza Park for their event. The hours will be 10 am to 6 pm both days and the organization will utilize the park on Thursday to layout the site, mark booth locations, place perimeter fencing and move supplies and equipment to the site. Friday will be used for set-up and Monday will be breakdown and clean up. The park will reopen to the public Monday morning April 25<sup>th</sup>. The following information was provided.

- This event draws between 5,000 and 6,000 people to the park and is estimated that approximately \$50 to \$75 per person is generated in tourist revenue.
- The rental fee is \$2,475 for one day of set up and for the two days of the event. A damage and cleaning deposit of \$1,000 will be charged.
- The staff recommendation is that the Parks and Recreation Commission authorize the Director of Parks and Recreation to issue a permit to the Guild of St. Mortimer granting special permission to do the following: allow animals in the park, allow vehicles in the park, allow noise that exceeds 60 decibels, allow glass containers and allow overnight parking and camping in the park.
- The City's Special Events Committee will condition the applicant to provide general liability insurance to include liquor liability; an ABC license to sell alcohol; security guards, portable restrooms, portable trash receptacles and bins, health permits for food service; City business licenses for commercial vendors; and an assembly permit. City staff reserves the right to cancel this event in case of excessive rain before the event.

Ms. Cheryl Vera, of the Guild of St. Mortimer, said this year the Guild has expanded their ticket program so that more students can attend the event. Ms. Vera said this year there are twice as many vendors and presenters as last year. She said the jousting event will be moved from the raceway area into the grass area because of dust and heat and double barriers will be erected for safety. She said entrance fees have not increased from last year and the Guild will award two scholarships; one to the Exeter High School music department and the other to a school in Tulare.

Commissioner Calhoun asked staff if any issues were discovered after the event last year. Mr. Fultz said in past years a few irrigation issues came up but nothing significant.

Commissioner Calhoun asked Ms. Vera what she attributed the growth of the event to. Ms. Vera said last year they held a fundraising dinner for the vendors and presenters and it was very successful. She noted that being family friendly made a big impact on attendance. She added that two senior centers in Fresno and schools asked for reduced price tickets and St Mortimer's was happy to comply.

Commissioner Filiponi moved to approve the Guild of St. Mortimer's request to host the Tulare County Renaissance Faire at Plaza Park on April 22 through 24. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion.

**MOTION**

Motion passed 3 -0

**5. Review Petition for a Restroom at Lincoln Oval Park.** Ms. Jeannie Greenwood, Director, Parks and Recreation, said the petition was received at the City Administration office and they referred it to our office. The restroom was removed from Oval Park approximately two years ago due to illegal activities taking place in them. Prior to removing the restrooms, the Visalia Police Department performed a site survey of the park's restrooms, opened and locked. Each day the restrooms were observed at different days and times and the officers reported what they observed. A survey was also done of the business owners in the area regarding removal of the restrooms, i.e. should the restrooms be locked or removed. The response supported removal of the restrooms.

Recently the department was contacted by Lieutenant Alvarez, staff representative for the North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee, who had been contacted by the business owners near Oval Park asking for a portable restroom to be placed in the park. Ms. Greenwood stated it has been department policy not to place restrooms in neighborhood parks. In the last few years restrooms have been removed from several neighborhood park locations and the cost is prohibitive.

Lieutenant Alvarez contacted the business owners and reported that the department did not have an interest to place a portable restroom in the park and it was suggested by the business owners that the business owners would pay the expense for the restroom. The department doesn't feel this would alleviate the problems that were the reason for removing the restroom in the park.

Commissioner Shelton suggested that in defense of the business owners, the City should have a responsibility to provide a restroom.

Ms. Greenwood stated that at the time discussion was taking place about removing the restroom, it was noted that there was a restroom available at the police station across the street. She said the City is under contract with the Visalia Rescue Mission and a restroom was to be available at the Service Center for park users but it is not available at this time.

Mr. Fultz said the park ordinance has been updated and the hours of operation for parks have changed. The park closes at 8 p.m. and opens at 8 a.m. during the summer season, and closes at 6 p.m. and opens at 8 a.m. during the winter season.

Commissioner Thomas asked if there are any other parts of the park supporting undesirable behavior. Ms. Greenwood replied that Oval Park has had several issues arise over the years. She said the department has identified the areas and has taken steps to remedy them, such as: where bushes were involved, they were trimmed so that no one could hide or do inappropriate things there; painting tables green instead of brown so that graffiti would not stand out; and updating the Shopping Cart Ordinance so that there weren't mounds of personal belongings in the park.

Commissioner Thomas stated when it comes to amenities that are up for the cut are the choices limited to restrooms? Ms. Greenwood said each case is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. She noted that Mr. Thomas attends the North Visalia Neighborhood Committee and there has been talk regarding amenities possibly being removed in the Oval Park. No communication has been received by the department seeking the removal so the item has not been placed on the agenda. She suggested the commissioners drive by the area and get a firsthand look at what is happening in order to make a recommendation to Council. Ms. Greenwood said the department works closely with Code Enforcement and the Visalia Police with these issues and is not a proponent of removing amenities.

Bill Huott, citizen, said the Oval Park has gone through a tremendous change. He said a single use restroom might be the way to go. He believes the best solution to the issues going on in the park is to remove the tables and benches. They provide the people in the park a roosting place.

Mr. Ryan Stillwater, of the Visalia Rescue Mission, he said there is a distinction between the context and the convenience. He said the Oval Park is a public area but people cannot be allowed to do what they want, when, or where they want. He encouraged the commissioners to visit the area and see for themselves.

Commissioner Calhoun asked if there was discussion at the Joint meeting regarding the Park Ranger Program so that there would be more "eyes on the park?"

Ms. Greenwood said enforcement was discussed at the meeting, and Mr. Nelsen, Mayor of Visalia, suggested a Volunteer Ranger Program. She said the new Sales Tax Initiative would be a good funding source for it, and that Code Enforcement and the Police Department are supportive of the idea of expanding the Ranger program.

**6. Annual Review and Approval of Fees and Charges.** Ms. Greenwood stated this item is presented to the commission annually for approval. She said in May 2009, Council approved the Commission's recommendation to

adopt a Benefit Based Fee Philosophy that allows fees and charges for programs and activities to be based on a benefit system, i.e., programs with very individual benefits are priced at a higher cost recovery than programs and services that have a community benefit.

Ms. Greenwood stated the pyramid is the best example of this.

- ✓ #1 is a highly individual benefit – personal development highly specialized programs are in this category. The department recovers 100% of direct and indirect costs of these programs.
- ✓ #2 is mostly individual benefit – to recover 100% of direct costs, the departments adult programs fit in here.
- ✓ #3 is individual with some community benefit – the department recovers 75% of our direct costs, the youth enrichment programs, tiny tots, and after school programs are some areas in this category.
- ✓ #4 is community and individual benefit – the department strives to recover 50% of our costs in this category.
- ✓ #5 is the amenities that are open and available to the public at no cost: trails, parks, and open space areas.

Council has decided the Loop Bus and Manuel F. Hernandez are subsidized by the General Fund.

Ms. Greenwood stated park user fees are also based on an amenity based fee structure. Premium amenities include electricity, barbecues, capacity, covered arbor and if restrooms are available. For instance Riverway Sports Park has a splash pad, three playgrounds and many restrooms, it has more amenities thus higher rental rates.

Ms. Greenwood said some additional fees were approved in 2011. These include permits for alcohol (not all parks), bounce houses, water slides (not allowed due to drought conditions) and amusements, i.e., train rides. A special event fee is now charged for personnel services. Neighborhood parks were added last year for rental with a portable restroom. In 2013, in order to meet the demand for parks during holiday weekends, especially Easter, the department designated certain parks as reservable. This has worked very well. The Riverway Sports Park Promenade was added as a rentable area also. Parks added some picnic tables to the horseshoe pits at Plaza Park, so that is reservable also.

Ms. Greenwood stated one new fee addition is being added for the 2016-17 year. There is a parking lot on the north-east corner of Garden and Main Streets that is a City owned lot maintained by the Parks Department. It has been requested for use during special events. The fee for this area is \$30, which is consistent with the Special Event Fee.

She said the rates for Garden Street Plaza are not new but were not broken out in the report as it should have been: Garden Street Plaza – fees are based on group size for events.

Ms. Greenwood said there are no changes to the facility fees this year. These fees are also based on amenities available: capacity, kitchen, courtyards, patios and clean up and set up time. Additional fees are charged for stage, alcohol permit, podium and kitchen use.

Athletic Facility Rental: Whitendale Park, Riverway Sports Park, Plaza Park and Jefferson Park contain athletic facilities available for rentals. The department is proposing a \$1 an hour increase for field use. The last increase was two years ago. This increase is to assist in the maintenance costs.

Pool rentals, tennis and pickleball – no fee changes in these categories.

The Dog Park and Skate Park – this would only be closed to the public with permission from commission.

Trails – no new fee proposed.

Ms. Greenwood said City staff recommends the Parks and Recreation Commission approve the fee philosophy policy, the picnic and special use reservation fee schedule, the facility fee guidelines, the athletic field rentals and other fees and the special event fees, which were added, post the original report. The staff also recommends that the commission forward their recommendation to City Council for adoption for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

Commissioner Calhoun said she would prefer to take the Fee Philosophy for vote first. She said there are no new changes this year.

Commissioner Calhoun made a motion to accept the Fee Philosophy as presented. Commissioner Filiponi seconded the motion.

**MOTION**

Motion passed 3 -0

Commissioner Filiponi made a motion to accept the fee schedules and guidelines as presented, and to forward the recommendation to Council. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion.

**MOTION**

Motion passed 3 -0

7. **Update on the Drought in the City of Visalia.** Mr. Fultz, Parks and Urban Forestry Manager, presented the commission with the following information regarding the drought as it pertains to Visalia.
- Visalia has saved approximately 38% from 2015-2016. The mandate was based on 2013 usage to present.
  - The El Niño storms that were expected never transpired and the snowpack is only at 62% of normal. Snowpack replenishes our groundwater.
  - For the last three years no water has been released from the Friant Dam for Visalia but this year a 30% allotment is expected.
  - Visalia is currently in Stage 3 restrictions and watering is limited to two days per week.  
March through November – even addresses on Wednesday and Sunday; odd addresses on Tuesday and Saturday.  
December through February – all addresses – No watering. Water before 8:00 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m., and runoff is prohibited.
  - The City’s goal is to reach 29%.
  - The City is holding bi-weekly drought meetings to discuss alternatives.
  - Average indoor use of water is 375-400 million gallons of water in Visalia per month. Outdoor watering for the month of March was 250 million.

8. **Update of Arbor Day Event, April 30, 2016, at St. John’s River and Harrell Grove Park.** Mr. Fultz said the project is located at Buena Vista and Goddard Streets, from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The project consists of planting 300 trees and 125 shrubs. Please feel free to join the department and parking is allowed at roadside.

9. **Re-appointment of Commissioners Calhoun, Blue, Filiponi and Jason Kent.** Ms. Greenwood stated that Commissioners Calhoun and Filiponi’s reappointments were overlooked in June 2015. They have been contacted and are willing to serve another term. Upcoming reappointments are for Commissioners Blue and Kent; they are willing to serve another term also. Commissioners serve two year terms for a maximum of four terms (8 years).

Commissioner Calhoun	4 <sup>th</sup> term	June 30, 2015 through June 30, 2017
Commissioner Blue	2 <sup>nd</sup> term	June 30, 2015 through June 30, 2017
Commissioner Filiponi	3 <sup>rd</sup> term	June 30, 2016 through June 30, 2018
Commissioner Kent	2 <sup>nd</sup> term	June 30, 2016 through June 30, 2018

Committee members serve two year terms with a maximum of 3 term limits (6 years).

Commissioner Thomas moved to approve the Commissioner’s reappointments and recommend to City Council.  
Commissioner Filiponi seconded the motion.

**MOTION**

Motion passed 3-0

10. **Request to Designate a Commissioner to Participate in the Riverway Sports Park Phase V Proposal Review.** The Parks and Recreation Department is excited to move forward with this project. This will be the final phase and it includes a 4-softball field complex for youth softball but will accommodate adult softball and includes a supporting parking lot. Architectural/design services was put out to bid and the Request for Proposal (RFP) closed on April 8<sup>th</sup>. As in the past, the department is seeking a commissioner to assist in the selection process of the architect for the project. This would involve reviewing the three proposals that were received, completing an evaluation form for each and returning the form and proposals to the department prior to noon on Wednesday, April 27. Based on the rating results City staff will determine who to interview for the position.

Commissioner Filiponi volunteered to complete the project.

11. **Discussion on Process to Review Park Ordinance, Rules and Policies.** Ms. Greenwood suggested a few ways to accomplish the goals. Commission could designate a few members to meet with City staff to assist in identifying potential changes to our ordinances or City staff can bring different ordinances to the commission to review at each meeting. She asked who might be interested in participating in the process. Commissioner Filiponi suggested a sub-committee who would review each ordinance and bring to commission those that need revision, perhaps ranking them by priority.

Commissioners Filiponi and Sweet volunteered to serve and it was noted that Commissioner Kent had expressed an interest in participating, Commissioner Thomas will be an alternate.

Ms. Greenwood said the department would be contacting the sub-committee soon.

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

- **Upcoming Recreation Programs & Special Events.** Ms. Greenwood reported the following.
  - This weekend is the Renaissance Festival, the Color Vibe Run and Earth Day.
  - The Summer Brochure should be out this weekend. It is full color with a record number of pages.
  - Dia De Los Niños will be held April 24<sup>th</sup> at Manuel F. Hernandez Community Center from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
  - The first Central Valley Pickleball Tournament will be held April 29 through May 1, at Plaza Park.
  - A new event is the Mother-Daughter Princess Tea to be held May 7<sup>th</sup>, at Mayor's Park, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
  - The department issued a request for proposal (RFP) for the Senior Meal Program. Only 1 proposal was received and that was from the existing contractor, which is good, as we are happy with her services.
- **Upcoming Parks & Urban Forestry Projects, Programs & Special Events.**
  - The Oval Park playground installation began today. Mr. Fultz said it should be in by the end of the week. Following this task is the fencing and the playground surfacing. Engineering is handling the camera and lighting for the park.
  - Turf and irrigation has been removed at the Rawhide Stadium for extra parking.
- **Director's Report on Administrative Items.** The conceptual design bids for the Southside Community Center have returned and the most favorable bid (#1) was over budget and very expensive. Bid number 2 was within the budget and discussions are going to be held with bidder #1 to negotiate pricing. Once the bid is approved a contract will be implemented and community meetings will be held with the consultants. They will also present to the commission through the design process. The consultants will then present two or three conceptual plans to the commission for approval and recommendations for Council.

The City is working on an educational program for the Sales Tax Measure including presentations and public meetings. If you know of a group that would be interested please let us know.

Finance has approved funding for flooring for the Senior Center and Whitendale Community Center.

Miki City Park is going out to bid for the grading and electrical. This project will be funded by a drought tolerant project grant. This project has a completion date of September 2016.

Commissioner Calhoun was asked to discuss the distribution of the packets.

Commissioner Calhoun said that in the past the commission has received packets via mail but there are other ways to receive them. The choices are mail, e-mail, or they could be delivered at the meeting. She asked the commissioners for their opinions. Commissioner Filiponi said if it was decided to switch to e-mail he would need to change his address to home. Commissioner Calhoun said she appreciates receiving her packet by mail and reviewing it on Sunday before her work-week starts. She also noted that if the packets go via e-mail it would be nice if it could be in one e-mail. Commissioner Thomas said he could go to e-mail but he does appreciate the printed copy. After discussion it was decided to remain with mailing the packets.

### 13. Commissioner's Requests & Comments:

- **Community/Aquatic Center Ad Hoc Committee.** No report.
- **Senior Citizens Advisory Committee.** Commissioner Shelton said he could not attend the meeting but he also hasn't received anything from Ms. Baker. Ms. Greenwood reminded him that the meeting is tomorrow.
- **Parks & Recreation Foundation.** No report.
- **Waterways & Trails Committee Report.** Ms. Greenwood reported that a new member, Mr. Frolli, was approved by City Council last evening. She said there are several seats available.
- **North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee.** Commissioner Thomas said he attended the Joint Meeting with City Council and some of the members of this committee were present too. He said after the meeting they expressed interest in the new Volunteer Ranger Program.

Commissioner Shelton inquired who sets the number of commissioners to serve. Ms. Greenwood responded that City Council does. He said with the reappointments this evening the alternates are allowed to speak but are at least 18 months away from a voting position.

Commissioner Filiponi noted that the Planning Commission also has 5 members and 2 alternates. He said at one time the Water Ways & Trails Committee had 17 members and went three months with no meetings for lack of a quorum.

Mr. Shelton said he was not interested in waiting two years to be able to vote. He said it was a waste of his time to wait two years.

Ms. Greenwood said she would follow-up with City Administration on this topic.

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

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

**MOTION**

Motion passed 3-0

Brenda Miernik,  
Senior Administrative Assistant