

**Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 21, 2017**

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

The Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, February 21, 2017, at the Administration Building, 220 Santa Fe. The meeting was called to order by Chair Carla Calhoun at 5:33 p.m.

**Present:** Carla Calhoun, Ben Filiponi, Shann Blue, Peter Thomas, Steve Woods and Rick Eastes

**Absent:** Justin Sweet

**Staff:** Jeannie Greenwood, Laurissa Roggenkamp, Jeff Fultz, Joel Hooyer, and Susie Brown

**2. Review and Approval Minutes** – The regular meeting minutes of January 17, 2017

Vice-Chair Filiponi motioned for approval, Commissioner Blue seconded.

**MOTION** – Passed 3-2-0, Chair Calhoun and Commissioner Thomas abstained

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Chair Calhoun called for comment and reminded the public their comments are limited to three minutes.

Speaker: Ms. Maggie Ramirez, asked for the consideration of making the vacant lot near Village Park a children only park, and for the basketball courts to stay in place, and for the fence to enclose the park.

Speaker: Ms. Angelina Navarro provided staff a petition, “Children’s Park Sanctuary Petition” of 143 signatures and asked for a ‘Children Only’ park with clear signage stating it is a children only park. She asked for a shaded playground and thanked the city for the area next door. She asked for this item to be on the PRC March agenda.

Speaker: Mr. Juan Guerrero asked to be on agenda for March. He reported the Wittman Center does have community events, with the next one be March 31st. He stated the group has good ideas, and they are not interested in changing hours.

Commissioner Woods - reported that Wittman Park has been discussed at a past meeting regarding adding shade to the play areas.

Chair Calhoun asked if anyone had ideas for other opportunities to get families involved at the park.

A student replied that an Afterschool Program for youth should be considered.

Chair Calhoun suggested different groups per quarter, to sponsor events, and suggested events to be hosted by outside groups and for family oriented activities.

Chair Calhoun asked commissioners if wanted on March agenda.

Commissioner Woods suggested group to write down ideas.

Commissioner Blue thanked everyone who was present.

**4. Request by the Guild of Saint Mortimer to Host the Tulare County Renaissance Faire at Plaza**

**Park:** Ms. Laurissa Roggenkamp reported on the staff recommendations. The Faire will be April 22-23rd, and the hours are 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Plaza Park reopens on Monday, April 24th.

Ms. Cheryl Smith and Ms. Micayla Smith, Representative of Guild reported this is their 18<sup>th</sup> year at Plaza

Park. It was reported that a fee increase for admission will increase from \$10/person to \$12. Seniors, military and children under age 12 admission will not be increased. This is the first increase in 15 years. She commented that it has been a well-attended event, and their vendors and participants are respectable to the park property and staff. Staff recommended conditions be approved, and reported the additional security deposit has been paid in advance. The City's Special Events Committee would need to be aware of additional terms.

Commissioner Eastes: Due to the amount of people, what is the port-a-potty requirements.

Ms. Smith – The company used, AAA, bring out the maximum allowed, and pump twice per day, before and after the event. There is no gray water is being dumped. There are extra trash containers brought in. She reported they use the same jousters all the time, and the same security team. Each vendor has a fire extinguisher in their possession during the Faire. There are more local vendors attending this year, and they added two scholarship opportunities. Exeter High School Senior class will benefit from a silent auction, and the students will run the booth, and each VUSD student will have a discount ticket opportunity.

Commissioner Woods – Suggested there be a designated wood working, and steel working, STEM related education, opportunity at the Faire.

Chair Calhoun – Are the glass containers recyclable?

Ms. Smith commented that they are souvenir glasses and not part of the recycle program.

She commented that she is having a hard time getting Visalia Food Bank to pick-up the canned food after the event. They offer a discount ticket if a canned food item is brought in.

Chair Calhoun referred her to Tulare County Food Link.

Commissioner Blue - How many vehicles are driving on the lawn, rain concerns?

Ms. Smith reported there are 40 vendors, each are allowed one vehicle to drive on and off turf. Food vendors are set-up by the tennis courts.

Mr. Jeff Fultz commented that regarding the rain issues, depending on the amount of rain or sunshine in April, it usually warms up and we should be good to allow driving on the turf if we do not get rain a couple weeks before.

Ms. Roggenkamp – Staff does a site visit before and after event, and there are on-call staff during that weekend.

**MOTION** – Commissioner Woods motion to approve the staff recommendations, Commissioner Filiponi seconded and all in favor. Approved, 5-0

5. **Annual Tree Report:** Mr. Joel Hooyer, Park & Urban Forestry Supervisor and City Arborist made a powerpoint presentation. He reported the city has had the same contractor, West Coast Arborist (WCA) for the past 11 years. He reported on the financial challenges with maintaining our Tree City.

Commissioner Eastes – Where do funds come from if money runs out?

Mr. Hooyer - Damaged trees have to go, and if out of funds there are emergency funds.

Mr. Fultz – This reporting is on the dedicated funds, but some funds come from the city's General Fund, and Measure N funds will be ongoing. The prevailing wage increased (38%) has been difficult, but WCA didn't ask for increase. City staff works to track trees and budgets.

Commissioner Eastes - When selecting trees, how does staff choose the type of tree to be planted?

Mr. Hooyer – There is a process for what trees fit best in the designated location and size.

Mr. Fultz commented the Chinese Pistachio (Keith Davey variety) is a better tree for most areas. This tree has very few issues with roots, pests and disease. Minimal pruning to shape or direct tree is necessary. The City

has many variety of trees. Many trees such as the Bradford pear tree is messy and have bad limb structure and should be changed out in the City's street tree list. This list needs to be updated.

Chair Calhoun – Asked what is the variety of Chinese pistachio, and what is the TRAQ certification?

Mr. Hooyer responded that it is the Keith Davey variety of pistachio and explained the certification.

Commissioner Eastes - Is there a way to restrict Redwood trees?

Mr. Fultz commented that there can be a restriction made when we look at plans that affect the City of Visalia maintenance, but staff can only restrict our maintenance areas of parkway strips in front of parks and Lighting & Landscape districts that would be maintained by the City, but could not restrict in private yards.

**6. Riverway Sports Park Phase V Update:** Ms. Jeannie Greenwood, Director, apologized for being late as she is at Council meeting tonight also. She provided a presentation of the Overall Program Plan. She reported adding athletic lighting along the side of park on fields and there is one more piece forthcoming which is a study for solar lighting. Director Greenwood commented on the need for parking and with the Riverway School opening in fall 2017, it is possible more parking will be available. Crews will soon know the well location and determine if it is functional. Staff is looking at an intersection issue on the Northside of the park. Ms. Greenwood stated Mr. Fred Lampe, Civil Engineer, was available for questions.

Chair Calhoun - Where are the restrooms near the new concession area?

Commissioner Filiponi reported the whole area is similar to the other baseball area, but larger. There were lessons learned from former issues they incorporated into this design which is about 42 feet and the small area is a bit over 30 feet. All leagues and users commented and decided on bigger.

Chair Calhoun asked if anything was left out due to lack of funding.

Director Greenwood - Being a youth facility, there is no alcohol allowed and City Council decided to build this one for adult use, but with youth being a priority. She stated the softball fields will be lighted, and a 300' temporary fencing will be there for youth play. There is an RFP out for bids to convert lighting controllers on separate controllers, for all phases of the park. She stated there have been several HLA design team meetings, and this was the beginning of their drawings, with some of the commented additions being cooling fans in dugouts (Cal Ripkin), and a pad for BBQ at the concession area. Director Greenwood had requested a budget estimate (from the engineers), with a breakout cost estimate, but that wasn't received before the meeting. She commented the lights will be the final phase.

Engineer, Fred Lampe was present, but had nothing to add. He did comment on the storm drain line being a backfill plan for the site once Shannon Ranch is built out.

Speaker:

Mr. Alvarez, President of VYSB commented on the concern for drainage in the new softball fields in Phase 5, and asked that we look into the issue, but also any compaction issue. The city installed these drains in CR Shannon after Phase 2 was completed.

Mr. Fultz stated that the drains were installed to help the excess water due to the infield turf, however, there is no infield turf in the softball fields and we may not need them but would pose the question to the architect. He further reported the drainage is by the dugouts are french drains, and were added to drain standing water on fields. He commented on the difference of irrigating turf vs. dust control and will look at the issues, but during rainy season this is a different issue.

Commissioner Blue asked about the amount of walk in traffic, and is there a comparison to Cal Ripken playing four games, every 2 hours. Would it work to make one walking entrance in and exit only gate?

Director Greenwood stated this will be dictated by demand as there would be three big user groups on the field from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. And spring soccer fields are totally booked also. She reported that there has been a compaction issue from day one. There is a 90% compaction, but then the heavy equipment over compacted fields.

Director Greenwood reported the timeline for plans is by end of year; project will be out to bid 2018, with an awarded contract by spring 2018, and first season for use in 2019.

**7. Annual Senior Games:** Ms. Laurissa Roggenkamp provided a presentation, and commented she became overseer of the Senior Center beginning in January.

Commissioner Eastes asked about the garden project. Mr. Roggenkamp reported Leadership Visalia has proposed a mixed garden, but with more vegetables than flora and to include a farm-to-table idea. She is meeting soon with COS instructor.

**8. Housing-Related Parks (HRP) Program Incentive Grant (Taken Out of Order, before item 7.)**

Director Jeannie Greenwood reported the Community Development Department had applied for funding, and HUD had rehabilitated housing, but funds were identified for upgrading parks in disadvantaged areas or specific census tracts with low density. The only census tract to fit the criteria is Tract 11, which includes Lincoln Oval and Village Park. She reported the full amount available is \$600k, but there are options for parks outside eligible areas with funds lowering to \$150k. Director Greenwood stated per the Parks and Recreation Commission to City Council, synthetic turf at Village Park was suggested, and previously the NVAC asked for upgrades to Lincoln Oval Park plan which received funding previously. It was recommended to consider turning the vacant lot (Lot 4) to a turf area at Community Campus, with lighting could be as much as \$400k. Comments were to add shade over playground, outdoor athletic equipment and basketball courts. Other recommendations were arbors and a walking path at Plaza Park, Ruiz Park a playground.

Chair Calhoun asked if additional parking was an option at Lincoln Oval Park.

Director Greenwood suggested the Community Based Organizations for neighborhood get involved.

Commissioner Eastes - Who do you apply to for funding?

Director Greenwood - HUD funded and CDD applies for funding with specific criteria.

Vice-Chair Filiponi - CDBG funds are specific and there are priorities set for the funds.

Director Greenwood will find out after funding is determined and then look at that list. She asked about the status of the lighting at Lincoln Oval Park.

Mr. Lampe stated he will look into the funding and status of the lighting project.

Director Greenwood went back to the City Council meeting.

**9. Joint Council/Commission Meeting: March 27th.** Chair Calhoun reminded the Commission that a regular meeting is set for March 21, and Council has not forwarded any information on agenda items. Chair Calhoun called for topics for the annual joint meeting, and stated last year was clean and safe parks, ordinance updates, park and facility maintenance and homelessness.

Commissioner Blue suggested adding staff, and staff time to be discussed.

Mr. Fultz commented that Measure N funds will help, and there is a need to advocate for upgrades in parks.

Commissioner Blue asked if parks are out of code anywhere.

Mr. Fultz stated there are a couple things out of code at Plaza Park, and that should be priority (Softball, lights

and poles, and arbors).

Commissioner Eastes – Is there an emphasis on new, but there needs to be a plan for upgrades and maintenance.

Mr. Fultz commented that Measure N should off-set some of the maintenance, but it is not enough funding.

Ms. Roggenkamp commented that it is easier for grants to build new, than to upgrade.

Commissioner Blue - We need to care for what we have, and are there funds in General Fund for maintenance, or could we take a proactive stance.

Ms. Roggenkamp reported that fund requests get submitted, but other requests are priority.

Mr. Fultz stated staff submits a lot of Capitol Improvement requests during the budget process. He used the example of vehicle requests, this department gets used city vehicles. We are talking about adding Park Rangers, and volunteers and the vehicles suggested are Crown Victoria's from VPD. This vehicle cannot work for park maintenance work. He stated there are ADA compliance needs that need to be addressed in the parks, i.e. playground surfacing, wood surfacing may not meet ADA in a few years and we are going to be required to change it out to rubberized surfaces, however this surfacing may only last 4-5 years before needing to be replaced and it is very expensive to install.

Ms. Roggenkamp mentioned the Measure N Oversight Committee meeting had been rescheduled to March 22.

Commissioner Blue – Inquired about the Volunteer Ranger Program, and is it strategic or do we request more staff?

Mr. Fultz commented that staff will be reviewing the facility maintenance lists, and the suggestion for more staff is a good thing.

Chair Calhoun – Should we refer to the General Plan Park Element, and perhaps that can include additional staff? Can the big picture goals, and 'action steps' include staff and resources?

Commissioner Filiponi – Reported the WW&T Committee is looking at upgrades, and language for trails and waterways signage, but to possibly build on the Ordinance. There is a new Engineer who is looking at many things for WW&T.

Commissioner Blue – Connectivity of trails has been a topic in the past.

Commissioner Thomas – Outreach could help.

Chair Calhoun reviewed the suggestions – Facility and park repairs to bring up to code; usable vehicles; ADA compliance; Volunteer Ranger Program; and General Plan Parks component.

10. **Annual CPRS Conference:** Ms. Roggenkamp commented on the upcoming Conference and who will be attending, including Chair Calhoun.

#### 11. **Updates on City Council Reports & Staff Announcements**

Upcoming Recreation Programs & Special Events – Ms. Laurissa Roggenkamp reported on the following:

- The Annual Father/Daughter Dance was well attended with over 600 each night, last year was 550. Staff did a great job, and Convention Center staff was great to work with. There were many things donated, and catering was the Senior Meals caterer.
- CPRS Conference is approaching and we sending four staffers and one Commissioner.
- Open Mic Night - A flyer will be emailed, and this event is sponsored by the Arts Consorcioum at Garden Street Plaza
- 2nd Annual Senior Games - Flyers for opening ceremony, socials, and volunteers are needed.

Upcoming Parks & Urban Forestry Projects, Programs & Special Events – Mr. Jeff Fultz reported on the following:

- Oval Park irrigation is new on NE end of the park and a planting project forthcoming.
- The Jennings Ditch Trail is currently under construction on the eastside of the Visalia Emergency Communications Center (VECC).
- Miki City Park is getting finished up, but has had rain delays. The event will be connected with the Earth Day celebration on April 22nd.

Director's Report on Administrative Items: Mr. Jeff Fultz reported on the following:

- The Southside Community Center is moving forward with the contract routing
- Pickleball court conversion has begun at Plaza Park.

Commissioner Eastes asked if the user's storage box needs to be looked at as the project moves forward, and suggested the sidewalk to be connect.

- There is an upcoming Foundation meeting and on the agenda is goal setting with a wish list.
- Measure N funds for youth funds, Council approved the Club House with Intel today.
- There are 218 participants registered for Senior Games.

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

• Foundation - Commissioner Woods requested an increase board membership and for Commissioners to ask others. They are compiling a Wish List with prices and will give to Director. They are looking to raise funds by having one annual signature event, and they are interested in larger scale projects.

• Waterways & Trails – Vice Chair Filiponi reported the annual report to City Council is being worked on. They would like to increase membership and are working on goal setting. They are considering revitalizing Bike-to-Work Month with a Proclamation to City Council.

- NVNAC – Commissioner Thomas – nothing to report.

Commissioner Woods motion to adjourned at 8:10 p.m., second by Vice-Chair Filiponi, unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Susie Brown  
Office Assistant