

Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes
February 20, 2018

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, February 20, 2018, at Visalia City Administration Building. The meeting was called to order by Chair Filiponi at 5:32 p.m.

Present: Ben Filiponi, Steve Woods, Shann Blue, Patrick Lozano, Rick Eastes and Lisa Walsh

Absent: Peter Thomas

Staff: Jeannie Greenwood, Laurissa Roggenkamp, Jeff Fultz, Holly Ellis, Joel Hooyer, and Brenda Fernandes

2. Review and Approval Minutes: The regular meeting minutes of December 19, 2017 and January 16, 2018 were motioned for approval by Commissioner Woods, seconded by Commissioner Blue, motion carried 4-0.

3. Public Comment: None

4. 2017 Annual Report – Senior Programs, PowerPoint Presentation by Laurissa Roggenkamp, Recreation Manager

Background: The Visalia Senior Center continues to be a place for seniors ages 55 and older by offering quality opportunities for seniors to socialize, exercise and learn.

Opportunities include:

- **Senior Meals:** Prepared each weekday by Elaine Dakessian of Tres Bien.
- **Free Weekly Activities:** Corn Hole, Pinocchio, Table Tennis, Poker, Contract Bridge, Chess Club, Brain Teasers, Movie Matinee, Fun Fitness Friday, and Bunco.
- **Fee-Based Classes:** Water Color Painting, Oil & Acrylic Painting, Ceramics, Crochet, Hiking Trips, Tap Dance, Contract Bridge, Computer Learning, Tai Chi, Charcoal Drawing, and Crafty Workshops.
- **2017 Special Events:** Spring Open House & BBQ, Fall Open House, Thanksgiving Luncheon, Holiday Luncheon and Monthly Themed Luncheons.
- **Volunteer Bureau:** Community volunteers meeting monthly to discuss the Senior Lunch Program and ways to better the Senior Center plan and facilitate themed luncheons and the Birthday Club.
- **Senior Advisory Committee:** Meeting monthly to discuss programs and operations, and to review facility subcommittee.
- **Non-City Programs:** Visalia Gadabouts, Senior Pride Bingo, and HICAP.

Goals for 2018:

- Continue recruiting quality staff, instructors and volunteers
- Expand program activity offerings, free and fee-based
- Continue to increase program quality
- Begin integrating a Breakfast Program and analyze if it is a good fit for our center

- Increase participation numbers in classes
- Increase meal participation
- Continue to provide quality customer service
- Continue to make facility improvements-mural and community garden
- Attract and retain younger seniors

5. 2017 Annual Urban Forestry Tree Maintenance Activity Report: PowerPoint Presentation by Joel Hooyer, Park & Urban Forest Supervisor

Urban Forestry Supervisor: Oversees the City’s tree maintenance program for City-owned properties; landscape and lighting districts, City of Visalia Right-of-Ways, parks and riparian areas, roadsides and medians. Contractors are used for these types of maintenance.

West Coast Arborists have been on contract with the City of Visalia for tree maintenance, pruning and removal the past ten years. Other local contractors are used for emergency calls and for second opinions when needed. When a Valley Oak’s condition is questionable, a second Certified Arborist is used to perform a Resistograph and root crown excavation testing for further analysis.

2017 Tree Maintenance Summaries:

- **New Tree Plantings:** 1,377 were planted by the Park Maintenance, Urban Tree Foundation, Community Services Employment Training (CSET), volunteers and private contractors.
- **Tree Trimming:** Table below does not include trees trimmed by SCE to clear power lines

Trees Trimmed	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
City Contractor-Valley Oaks	2,022	456	926	973	1,341
City Contractor-Trees (less oaks)	5,189	2,963	3,853	3,705	2,536
Private Contractor (Intent to Prune)	55	49	38	36	50
Total Trees Trimmed	7,266	3,468	4,817	4,714	3,927

- **Stump Removal:** After trees were removed, 314 stumps remained for removal.
- **Oak Tree Permits:** 84 requests to remove Oak Trees were received, 61 permits issued for removal. The City Arborist inspects the tree and makes a determination on the application. Per the City’s Oak Tree Ordinance, a Valley Oak tree removal application can be appealed. The City Council serves as the City’s Tree Committee to review any appeal.
- **Tree Inspections:** The City responds to citizens regarding tree related issues or complaints. Eight hundred private citizens’ requests were addressed in 2017.
- **Emergency Call Backs:** Crews were dispatched to respond to 8 tree related emergency calls.
- **Mitigation Funds:** Current balance is \$25,745. These funds are generated from permit fees and monetary requirement for removing Valley Oaks per the Valley Oak Tree Ordinance. Fees cover removing or trimming Valley Oak trees on private property for low-income residents.

Summary: 2017 was a rough year for trees due to the drought and water restrictions which impacted the city in all areas including trees and landscaping. We lost a lot of trees and that had become potential hazards. We are searching for better ways to irrigate and preserve city trees, and continue to provide information to the public of their responsibility to preserve their privately owned trees and

remove any trees that can't recover from dormancy.

Q&A: Jeff Fultz asked about removal requests for this month. Oak Tree Removal requests were 19 this month with 5 more coming in day of meeting.

6. 2017 Annual Review of City's Park Ranger Program, PowerPoint Presentation by Jeff Fultz, Parks and Urban Forestry Manager

Background: In March 2007, the City of Visalia initiated a Park Ranger program, currently employing two Park Rangers, one full-time and one part-time. They perform specific law enforcement duties, issuing citations for specific violations in all the City parks. Rangers are not armed and have limited enforcement power, contacting the Visalia Police Department if assistance is needed. They perform many types of maintenance and construction tasks also. Most of their time is being spent at Blain, Plaza, Whitendale and Riverway Sports Parks, because of high use.

The Park Ranger's number one goal is to provide a presence, oversight, and to educate the public on park rules. This ensures a pleasant experience by all park users, and helps facilitate better relationships between the public, Recreation Staff, and Park Maintenance Staff.

Ranger Contacts March 2017 – November 2017:

- Citations-Notices to Appear – 48
- Written Warnings-Notice of Violations – 2
- Verbal Warnings/Incidents Noted – 1,761
- Assistance Rendered by Visalia Police Department – 2
- Assistance Rendered by Animal Control – 0
- Emergency Medical Services Rendered by Ranger – 0

Benefits of the Park Ranger Program:

- Reduction in vandalism – Savings of materials and labor
- Reduction of loitering and park rules violators – Families returning feeling safer
- Increased satisfaction – Helping with rentals, bounce houses and alcohol consumption
- Enhancing relationships between the Police Dept., Parks & Recreation Dept. and users

Future Needs of the Program:

- Training on City's Citation writing procedures
- Attendance at the PC832 – Laws of Arrest training course
- Expand the Ranger Programs full-time staff
- Create a volunteer Ranger Program

Summary: Staff continues to see a reduction of park related issues because of the Park Ranger presence. However, there is an increase in the transient related issues throughout the City parks and trails, using up to 33% of Ranger's duty time. The transient issues rank first in verbal warning violations (533), and are associated with illegal use of alcohol (ranked 4th), smoking near playgrounds, dogs off leash, camping, and shopping carts in parks. Hazardous games or activities have increase due to the overwhelming use of drones and has become the second highest problem for Rangers.

Q&A: Rick Eastes commented articles daily on homeless problems throughout the State of California, not just Visalia. Jeff Fultz commented on a current program to get homeless established in jobs. Managed by an outside company and ran by Able Industries. To date this program has put 16 homeless people to work. To qualify, the person needs to have been homeless for a certain amount of time, and go through the program. Many have jobs before even finishing the program.

Discussion of Topics for March 20, 2018 Joint Meeting with City Council: *Jeannie Greenwood, Parks and Recreation Director:*

Next month is the annual joint meeting with the City Council, discussion for topics to present.

- Transients in parks – to help council understand maintenance time involved with this problem
- Discussed with council last year to add a Ranger, covered by Measure N, still not in place even though council was very supportive.

Lisa Welsh pointed out that Jeff Fultz's presentation tonight points out the current status of this problem, the increased demand and time justifies the position: should be no reason to delay it if it is covered by Measure N. The Visalia PD just got trained on updated equipment; could it be something the Parks & Recreation Ordinances be linked with?

Rick Eastes stated that 50-60 warnings are being issued daily and updated technology would enable the Rangers to track repeat violators. Jeff Fultz pointed out that technology also needs to be updated to also improve the current paper system. Better tools are needed to combat a growing problem in real time and processing to keep Rangers safe.

Commissioner Woods commented that limiting it to the two issues discussed to be the main topics, such as the Ranger position, and transient issues. It would be best to have a Commissioner address the issues for a greater impact; because the council expects to hear such issues from the Director. The Ranger will oversee the volunteer Ranger Program also, with the needed update to technology as a bonus. Such as using an app that allows volunteers to pull up City Ordinances (and numbers) on cell phones, instead of telling park user they don't know. He would like to see an approach based on mobile technology and compensation for mobile plan usage, instead of trying to keep using outdated equipment every few years.

Commissioner Blue said he believes these two topics can be tied together to approach council. Common sense dictates getting the transients out of the parks, the general population will use parks more often.

Commissioner Filiponi discussed various programs he uses that include prepopulated forms, GPS, maps, inventory tracking, picture taking abilities for issues or people, and one that generates time cards for each project. Stated he would like to see City Parks and Recreation update technology.

Director Greenwood commented that without a system to track repeat offenders, especially with the Police Department, the continual warnings Rangers give offenders and those who are banned from all City parks, cannot be enforced. The City Council passed an ordinance two years ago, stating that if someone committed certain types of crimes in a City park, they could be banned from all City parks. This was passed without any system in place or planned to identify who the offenders are. Without having shared information between the Parks and Recreation and the Police Department, the PD will

not know whether or not someone has been banned; therefore unable to enforce this ordinance. She will send out an outline for the detailed topic discussion details with the City Council Joint Meeting in March.

Upcoming Parks & Urban Forestry Projects, Program, and Special Events - Jeff Fultz, Parks and Urban Forestry Manager, Attempting to replace batteries along Packwood Trail, solar batteries seem to only last about five years. Ranger begins again full-time on March 3rd. March is the beginning of the ordinance change for landscape irrigation 3 days per week. We are working with the drought committee to provide information to the public to ensure that privately owned trees are getting irrigation during the drought as well. Staff is in the process of repairing Jim Byrd playground at Riverway Sports Park due to erosion to the wooden/plastic planks from sand, bark and foot traffic. Budgets are getting finalized, and the Measure N Landscape Inspector position is out on the streets to be filled.

Upcoming Recreation Programs and Special Events & Director's Report on Administrative Items: Laurissa Roggenkamp, Recreation Manager:

- March 2nd - 3rd, Director Greenwood is hosting Board Meeting for California Senior Games Association.
- Manager Roggenkamp is hosting one final planning meeting for all the Visalia Senior Games volunteers February 21st at 5:30 pm.
- Gearing up for the games; March 10th & 11th, as well as the 17th & 18th.
- March 2nd is the CPRS Awards Banquet, the Senior Center Garden has been nominated for a facility award to be announced at the banquet. Commission is invited.
- March 8th we are bring back the 90's with "Rec on the Move" offering games and activities at various city parks on different dates.
- Senior Games Social from 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm at Plaza Park the opening night, need to purchase tickets for meal. This event is being coordinated with the assistance from three different local Lion's Club groups.
- CPRS Long Beach Conference, being attended the weekend between the Visalia Senior Games.
- Daryl Tillman, Coordinator at Manual Hernandez will be coordinating special events such as movie nights, enrichment activities and special activities for teens.

Updates:

- Father Daughter Dance was sold out both night 600 tickets for each event, very successful.
- Jan 27th Winter Trout Derby, much more successful event this year than past events, another sold out event with 160 fishing participants. Derby received great press received from the Visalia Times Delta.
- February 1st Manager Roggenkamp spoke at Fresno State on Community Recreation to an Introduction to Recreation class, hoping to get future interns.
- While completing budgets, staff completed spring work plans and are now beginning to work on summer work plans: excited to see staff's new ideas for expanding summer programs and classes.
- Youth Baseball, registration just closed. Prior year's registration has been very low, but numbers have increased, making this program very successful. Tiny Tots alone has over 200 signed up, which is about as many as the entire program had a few years ago.

Jeannie Greenwood, Jeff Fultz and Laurissa Roggenkamp will be meeting with Fred Lampe from the Engineering Department to review the Riverway Sports Park 100% plans to get the softball complex accomplished. Still working on budgets and software implementation with progress happening.

Commissioner's Requests & Comments:

Foundation – *Commissioner Woods reported:*

- Benches donated by Rotary installed at Miki Park.
- The trailer wrap looks great, and the trailer was set up and on view at the ice rink.
- About \$16,000 will be needed for fencing around the archery range location at Plaza, due to requirements based on its location at the airport.
- Meetings are continuing with regard to the Senior Center mural, and monies are ready for it when a final decision is made.
- Met recently with the team working on the graphics and informational kit for the Visalia Love Your Parks Day committee.
- Approved to send in grant applications for the Archery Range, Neighbor Games, and First Five.

North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory – Commissioner Thomas was not present.

Park Ordinance Review: South Side Community Center: *Manager Roggenkamp* reported they are still waiting for concepts to come back for review.

- **Waterways & Trails:** *Commissioner Filiponi* reported: Waterways and Trails got a new member, has had issues with quorum due to small size of committee.
- Committee is working on letter of rebuttal to the Visalia Times Delta about a letter on bike riding that did not mention the trails in the city.
- That updated on project for trail from Imagine U to the new 911 Center is almost complete.
- Modoc Trail where it crosses with Santa Fe Trail is almost done.
- St. Johns Trail has new lighted crossing.
- Santa Fe Trail will soon get lighted street crossing installed.
- Big trails all the way to Riverway Sports Park to begin soon. Researching a trail head rock, like the one at St. Johns Trail.

Motion to adjourn at 7:34 p.m. by Commissioner Blue, 2nd by Commissioner Woods, motion unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by,

Brenda Fernandes
Office Assistant