

Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes
September 18, 2018

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, September 18, 2018, at City Council Chambers, City Hall, 707 W. Acequia. The meeting was called to order by Chair Filiponi at 5:30 p.m.

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

Staff: Jeannie Greenwood, Jeff Fultz, Laurissa Roggenkamp and Kathleen Machado

Guests: Greg Collins and Bob Ludekens

- 2. Review and Approval Minutes:** The regular meeting minutes of August 21, 2018, were motioned for approval by Commissioner Eastes, seconded by Commissioner Blue, motion carried 5-0.
- 3. Public Comment:** Mr. Bob Ludekens of the North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee reported that Rhonda Haynes had given a presentation. They were able to review the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) and NSP 1 Fund Amendment to allow for a Public Facility. The committee had taken action to approve. The committee has been broken into three groups: Residential, Park and Commercial in that area. Mr. Ludekens set goals for the Commercial group for the next month's meeting. The economy in that area is was discussed, and is discussed on a monthly basis.
- 4. Annual Aquatics Report, presentation by Eric Ferreira, Recreation Supervisor:** Recreation Supervisor Eric Ferreira presented the 2018 Annual Aquatics Report. Mr. Ferreira gave an overview of the Aquatics Division timeline, staffing, staff trainings, programs, certification classes, public events and pool rentals. Challenges that the Aquatics Division faces are the need for more pool space and the difficulties of fulfilling staffing needs. Parks and Recreation Director Jeannie Greenwood added that part of the difficulty in obtaining staff is that Lifeguards and Water Safety Instructors are expected to invest in trainings to be eligible for employment often paying minimum wage. Commissioner Lozano asked if at the end of the season we could refund back one-half of what the staff person invested in their training to give them incentive to stay and work for the Recreation Division. Recreation Manager Laurissa Roggenkamp stated that the Visalia Parks & Recreation is probably the cheapest agency for Lifeguard instruction. She added that \$50.00 of the amount charged to each of the course students goes to the American Red Cross. The students are provided all materials at no extra cost. Ms. Roggenkamp added that as staff returns, their re-certifications are compensated. Supervisor Ferreira added that Lifeguards were able to get pay increases this year. Alternate Commissioner Walsh asked Mr. Ferreira if he has a plan to face the current challenge of the lack of pool space and gave an example of reaching out to different agencies with a pool. Mr. Ferreira explained that he hadn't reached out, and added that local gyms with pool offer the same classes as the department and he didn't think that they would be open to the suggestion. Alternate Commissioner Walsh asked Mr. Ferreira what his true facility needs are, and if one competitive pool would be enough. Mr. Ferreira answered that one competitive pool would ease the burden but the department would still need some access to high school pools to maintain the three swim teams. Access would still depend on the high schools' needs as they continue to grow. He stated that the swim teams could make good use of that space so that there wouldn't be too many persons in the pool at one time. He added that club teams swim year round. Mr. Ferreira listed Aquatic Division goals: to continue participant growth, to recruit a large number of Aquatic job applicants, to continue to provide innovative staff trainings, to continue the partnership with Tulare County Board of Directors for the Dive-In Movies sponsorship and to obtain additional sponsors. Mr. Ferreira concluded his presentation by highlighting some compliments and suggestions received from the public.
- 5. Discussion on Aquatics Wellness Center, presentation by Commissioners Eastes and Blue on USA Swimming's "Build and Pool Conference":** Commissioner Rick Eastes and Commissioner Shann Blue reported on the "Build a Pool Conference" in Anaheim, CA. The commissioners received an initial report by Commissioner Eastes and a survey supplied at the conference.

Commissioner Eastes expressed the emphasized point 'Programming Precedes Design'. He stated that all facilities discussed were indoor, allowing twelve months' use, with both warm and cool water pools. Another emphasis discussed was 'Needs Come Before Wants'. He suggested collecting data from surveys and club meetings to get an idea of what the community is looking for. An additional item of importance is if you're not going to be able to pay for the facility it's not going to last very long and the community's not going to be happy with it. He learned from the seminar that facilities need to meet expenses, plus 10%. Commissioner Eastes shared the point that pools don't lose money, that lack of programming does. Conference attendees were given an exercise to build a community pool with

specific criteria, to work through budgeting obstacles and to meet the demands of the community.

Commissioner Blue said the exercise assigned at the conference taught them to find a starting point, to begin to design based on needs and then wanted features and then to modify based on the provided criteria.

Commissioner Eastes added that a consultant should be hired after the survey. He believes that if a study is done results will show the need for a health care facility, providing a variety of services to the disabled and others that could be set up as fee based clubs with a monthly membership fee. Commissioner Eastes highlights that an aquatics center is needed in Visalia and warns not to get ahead of ourselves with size and cost until we can define what is needed and what programs might be possible. There are examples of other clubs to look at fee structures and offerings as a basis for our own offerings and generation of revenue. A survey will give an idea of what kind of revenue is possible. He believes it will be worth the time and money to then invest in a professional survey. He believes that the revenue will come from community oriented programming, rather than through big swim meets. He believes that health care and health services will be the driving force, along with swim teams, water polo and swimming lessons. Commissioner Eastes added the consideration for safety from parents for their children through swimming lessons. Commissioner Eastes stated that he was encouraged because based on Supervisor Eric Ferreira's 2018 Aquatics Annual Report he was close to breaking even with four pools that he is managing over the entire City. If he had one concentrated indoor facility that could be operated 12 months out of the year and you could put programs against it knowing that you probably have 25-35% revenue recovery, that if you offer the other health benefits he suspects the City could break even. Commissioner Eastes thinks that we should provide information to the City Council so that they believe that cost recovery is feasible. The reality is it could take 3-4 years, depending on financing. A benefit that Visalia has is that we have the land.

Commissioner Blue said that a feasible study could realistically be done for \$20,000-\$30,000. He added that programming possibilities need to be explored. He suggested reaching out to physical therapists for the possibility of renting pool space.

Commissioner Eastes added a point regarding a 50-meter pool; that it wasn't recommended. It's nice to have, but not a 'need to have'. Most swimming events do not require a 50 meter pool. The number of times you're going to need 50 meters to conduct competitions is minimal, particularly in a community the size of Visalia. The 50-meter pools of today are in venues with large capacity seating where a portable pool can be brought in.

Alternate Commissioner Walsh commented that a 50-meter pool could fit into a phased facility. Commissioner Eastes responded by saying that the key is to find out what you need now. Adding to design later gets difficult with items such as piping, air/HVAC and filtering systems that may require dramatic re-modification. This would be something that would need to be pre-designed.

Alternate Commissioner Walsh expressed the thought that the income from membership passes offered at a reasonable price could pay for the cost of a couple of full time employees to operate the facility. This also provides the community with an option that is less expensive than a fitness club.

Commissioner Patrick Lozano commented that a 50-meter pool split in half offers more programming space at one facility. He added that having a covered 50-meter pool that operates year round distinguishes Visalia from the other surrounding area 50-meter pools.

Commissioner Blue recapped as follows: Survey the community to find out what their needs and wants are. Take the survey results to the City Council for feedback/guidance on Council's expectation related to cost recovery. Based on Council feedback and community needs identified by the survey, have City of Visalia staff come to us with what programs can be provided based on population and demographics.

Parks and Recreation Director Jeannie Greenwood asked if there were other people from Visalia at the workshop. The answer was 'no'.

Alternate Commissioner Walsh asked if the 'Aquatics Facility' survey (handout from the conference) is adequate to take to City Council. Commissioner Eastes answered, "No". He added that it needs to be custom designed for the City of Visalia. Alternate Commissioner Walsh proposed using the survey as a basis, to (as a group) review it, suggest

revisions, send them to Director Greenwood, who will recreate the survey and send it back for consensus by the next Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

Commissioner Lozano asked if the Commission should try to have a workshop with the Aquatics working group to include them in the discussion.

Commissioner Blue expressed his opinion to receive the City staff programming suggestions first so that information can be incorporated in to the modified survey.

Commissioner Woods stated that City Council charged the Commission to work with the Aquatics working group in collaboration to work towards a report to take back to the Council. He suggested that Commissioners Eastes and Blue meet with the working group to have a discussion about what was in this report and their experiences at the conference, to avoid losing them as stake holders. Commissioner Woods asked Director Jeannie Greenwood if the research she's done over the years echoed the discussion. Director Greenwood responded by saying that Commissioners Eastes and Blue learned from the conference reinforce what's been learned over the years.

Director Greenwood stated that the next step would be to conduct a survey. She pointed out that at the prior Commission meeting that it was not the decision to break in to groups. She suggested that she and staff take a look at the survey brought back from the conference, to make revisions and then send it to the Commission for the next agenda. She reminded the commissioners that Council gave the Commission six months to work on the project. She asked Councilman Collins to reach out to the Aquatics working group to let them know that the Commission is working on the item and would like for them to participate in that process and to invite them to the next Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting to discuss the survey. Hopefully there will be enough input at the next meeting to complete the survey and to decide on how to distribute it.

Commissioner Woods offered to assist with developing the online survey. Commissioners made suggestions on survey distribution (electronically, physically, mailers, etc.). Director Greenwood added that input is needed from special needs organizations such as Special Olympics.

6. Update on City Council Reports & City Staff Announcements:

Upcoming Recreation Programs and Special Events, Laurissa Roggenkamp, Recreation Manager -

Recreation Manager Laurissa Roggenkamp made the following announcements and updates:

Corporate Games has 19 teams registered, begins 9/21/18. Closing ceremonies will be 10/5/18

9/12/18 Visalia Senior Center Fall Open House had 169 attendees

10/5/18 Cornhole Tournament, Garden Street Plaza

9/16/18 Hispanic Heritage Celebration, Manuel Hernandez Community Center & Summers Park, had 200 attendees

9/30/18 Fiesta en la Plaza event cancelled because the scheduled band backed out. Scheduled again 10/28/18

10/13/18 & 10/14/18 Central California Pickleball Tournament

10/13/18 Mother Son Dance, Anthony Community Center

10/19/18 Visalia Senior Center 'Puppypalooza'

Upcoming Parks & Urban Forestry Projects, Programs and Special Events, Jeff Fultz, Parks & Urban Forestry Manager

Parks & Urban Forestry Manager Jeff Fultz made the following announcements and updates:

10/27/18 Make A Difference Day, Main event at McAuliff & St John's and an event at Packwood Trail with Rotary Club members between Caldwell and Mooney Boulevard. There will be a small project at the library grounds. There will be a planting project at Riverbend Park. They will be cleaning out planters along Dinuba Boulevard and Shannon Parkway. They will also be doing a small chip project at Riverbend Park. Activities will be beginning at 9:00am.

The well pump at Sunset Park has been replaced.

Director's Report on Administrative Items, Jeannie Greenwood Parks & Recreation Director

Parks & Recreation Director Jeannie Greenwood made the following announcements and updates:

Jefferson Park project bids came in to remove dugouts and foul line fencing, and add turf to the infield.

Working with the Parks & Recreation Foundation, there is a grant opportunity with Major League Baseball for

scoreboards and home run fencing at Phase 5 of Riverway Sports Park.

Riverway North, property north of Riverway Sports Park – closing Riverway Drive. Tulare County, Cal Trans, VUSD are in favor of it. Working with Urban Tree Foundation on a Prop 68 Grant to take out the road and tie in with recreational aspects such a half-court basketball court and/or an ADA playground.

The AYSO agreement will go to the next Council meeting.

A church group (Hood Ministry) has been discovered at Lincoln Oval Park on Sundays providing meals to the less fortunate people. We are working with the Tulare County Health Department to help them go through the proper process.

Director Greenwood stated that she has had an internal meeting with Nick Macias, Mario Cifuentes, and the City Manager regarding the Park Ranger Program.

Commissioner Eastes asked for the status of the South Side Community Center. Director Greenwood explained that the report is scheduled to go to the mid-month Council meeting in October.

Commissioner Lozano asked if there had been a recruitment to fill the Parks and Recreation Commission alternate position. Director Greenwood responded, stating that there hadn't been a recruitment held yet, because if the Waterways and Trails Committee disbands there may be an opportunity for one of those committee members to fill that vacancy, still representing trail ways. She added that a recruitment can be initiated if so desired by the Commission.

7. Commissioner's Requests & Comments:

Parks & Recreation Commission, *Chair Ben Filiponi* reminded the commissioners that emails communicating Parks and Recreation Commission business be sent to Director Jeannie Greenwood or Parks and Recreation Senior Administrative Assistant Kathleen Machado and not distributed amongst the Commission.

Parks & Recreation Foundation, *Commissioner Wood reported:*

Negotiations continue with the City for the new agreement.

Received the Proclamation for Visalia Love Your Parks Day. Proceeding with planning the event.

North Visalia Advisory Committee: *Commissioner Lozano reported* he was not able to attend the last meeting, but has kept in touch.

Waterways & Trails: *Commission Chair Ben Filiponi* asked about the status of the Waterways and Trails Committee. Director Greenwood said that there were three members at the meeting, which made the quorum with only 4 on the committee.

Motion to adjourn at 8:28 p.m. by Commissioner Woods, 2nd by Commissioner Blue, motion unanimously carried.

Respectfully submitted by,
Kathleen Machado
Senior Administrative Assistant