

Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes
December 18, 2018

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, December 18, 2018, at City Council Chambers, City Hall, 707 W. Acequia. The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair Filiponi at 5:33 p.m.

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

Absent: Shann Blue (Excused)

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

Guests: Mr. and Mrs. Brandon Morse of Morse Racing Productions

- 2. Review and Approval Minutes:** The regular meeting minutes of November 18, 2018, were motioned for approval by Commissioner Woods, seconded by Commissioner Lozano with a correction on a spelling error of the word 'sergeant' located in the last paragraph of Section 4, motion carried 4-0.
- 3. Public Comment:** Visalia resident Bill Huott commented on parks in general in reference to the court decision on camping in parks, mentioning Lincoln Oval Park in particular. Mr. Huott wants the City to determine a place for the homeless population in the park to go.

Mr. Huott asked Parks and Recreation Director Jeannie Greenwood to clarify the name of McDermott Grove. Director Greenwood did so and explained that McDermott Grove is a linear strip of oak trees. Parks and Urban Forestry Manager stated that there is a ponding basin there and that the location is fenced to keep the homeless out of it. Mr. Fultz added that location is in Waste Water jurisdiction, and that is who mandated the fence.

Commissioner Lozano stated that the City is working on the subject by monitoring what other cities are doing. He stated that we are dealing with Seven Oaks, Recreation, Lincoln Oval and Rotary parks. He added that the housing required negates the number of beds sponsored by any organization funded by churches or conglomerate of churches, meaning there are zero beds in Visalia in the eyes of the court ruling, even though we have the capability to sleep 150 people; but this has to be negated because of the conglomeration of churches that make up the Rescue Mission.

Commissioner Woods explained that the Commission listens to and provides advisement. He encouraged Mr. Huott to address the City Council because they can implement and push.

- 4. Review and Approve the 2019 Race Schedule for Plaza Park Raceway, written and oral report by Jeannie Greenwood, Parks and Recreation Director:** Parks and Recreation Director Jeannie Greenwood addressed the Commission to review and approve the 2019 race calendar for Plaza Park Raceway. The City is currently in a lease agreement with Morse Racing Promotions, executed in January 2017. It is a five year agreement through December 2021. The agreement allows the arena use for racing on the dates and times set annually; limited to 28 events per year, restricted to Fridays, with the exception of up to three Saturday evening races per year. The race schedules are brought to Commission every year for approval. Director Greenwood stated that she has received one complaint this year where the track was operating beyond the contractual time for noise. She explained that there had been an injury at the track that delayed their racing calendar, but that Mr. Morse had been made aware that there is community in the area. Commissioner Lozano stated that Visalia City ordinance sets the excessive noise curfew at 11:00pm. Mr. Morse was present to answer any questions. The 2019 race schedule was included for review. City staff has calendared the race dates in the Recreation software system. There are no direct reservation conflicts. Organizers and participants involved in the Renaissance Faire will be at Plaza Park on one of the race dates, but both events have coexisted in the past, and there are no anticipated problems as long as they communicate with each other. Staff is recommending that Commission approve the schedule.

Commissioner Woods motioned to authorize the Director of Parks and Recreation to issue the permit for the dates and times as specified. Commissioner Lozano seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion carried 4-0.

- 5. Park Rental and Facility Management Report, presentation by Laurissa Roggenkamp, Recreation Manager:** Recreation Manager Laurissa Roggenkamp provided a Power Point presentation on annual park and facility rentals, contracts and facility management.

Park and Trail Bookings: There are 37 reservable areas in 16 of the City's parks that feature a multitude of amenities

such as arbors, barbecues, play areas and walking trails. Ms. Roggenkamp compared the number of bookings and revenue amounts from the past three years. There has been a decrease in bookings. Two most significant decreases have been at Plaza Park and Riverway Sports Park. Weekly Park Ranger Reports indicate there are community members using picnic areas with reservations. Picnic areas are available to use on a first-come-first-serve basis when not reserved. Starting May 2018 park reservations a part of the department's online services. To date 143 park reservations have been completed online, saving business office staff approximately 47 hours of work at the counter. The Parks and Recreation Department holds a variety of special events in many of the parks such as Pickleball Tournaments, Senior Games events, fishing derbies, Movies in the Park, Fiestas en la Plaza, Ice Skate Visalia, Corn Hole tournaments and the Mother and Son Campout. Social media continues to be a key form of outreach and all parks are on Facebook. Park visitors can "check-in". The Department Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages update park information such as maintenance and closures. Such updates have proven to be some of the most "Liked", as citizens appreciate the release of timely information for highly trafficked parks and open spaces.

Facility Management: Many agencies and community members reserve Visalia Senior Center, Manuel F. Hernandez Community Center, Anthony Community Center, Whitendale Community Center, Rawhide Room and Trulli Building as locations to host meetings, events and family functions. A comparison of the past three years' facility bookings and revenues were provided. Rentals have declined in number since 2013 due to an increase in programs offered by the Department, thus decreasing the available rental space. The loss of ongoing church rentals also contributes to the decline. Revenue is still being generated through Recreation Division programs, classes and leagues registration fees even though revenue from facility rentals has declined. Recreation Division indoor facilities are used for Sunday religious meetings, baby showers, birthday parties and anniversary parties. Community groups and local agencies utilize the Recreation Division indoor facilities to operate events that serve the public such as election polling locations, flu shot clinics and community meetings.

Contract Management: Parks and Recreation Staff manage the following contracts to other agencies. ProYouth began using the Wittman Community Center December 1, 2017. Tulare County Office Education (TCOE) has preschool programs at the Manuel F. Hernandez Community Center and at the Fairview Community Center. Family F.O.C.U.S. leases space at the Whitendale Park for a childcare facility.

Concerns/Challenges: Development of the Children's Theatre adjacent to Garden Street Plaza has proposed outdoor dining that would encroach on the plaza and an exit door leading into the plaza. This will restrict the ability to close off the plaza for ticketed events as the door must remain unobstructed. There is concern about noise interference from events in the plaza with amplified sound which may impact those in the outdoor dining area. The 9th Circuit Court has ruled that the government cannot criminalize people for sleeping outdoors, on public property. There is concern for many of the ancillary activities that occur within campsites in parks, and the stigma community members' associate with the campsites and parks. Community members will not use the parks where they do not feel safe. California Senate Bill Number 946 prohibits any local authority from regulating sidewalk vendors (mobile) from conducting business in a park owned or operated by the local authority, unless there is an agreement for concessions by a concessionaire. City staff has emphasized that parks are for recreation and leisure activities, not for commercial business.

Goals for 2019: Improve outreach efforts of advertising and marketing facilities and rental options available. Create marketing materials to tout the ease and affordability of building rentals. Continue to update and improve the park website pages and mobile app. Increase the number of online park reservations. Add new flooring at the Senior Center and Whitendale Community Center. Projects have been funded and staff is in the process of getting contractor bids.

- 6. Community Development Block Grant, discussion lead by Jeannie Greenwood, Parks and Recreation Director:** Parks and Recreation Director Jeannie Greenwood provided a handout and a Power Point presentation on Community Development Block Grant for funds through 2020 provided by the City of Visalia Finance Division. The goal: review the 5-year Consolidated Plan goals (2015 through 2019); review the last year of the 5 Year Action Plan (2019-2020). There is approximately \$700,000 in CDBG uncommitted funding available to identifying high priority needs. A survey is being conducted to try to determine how to designate the funding. Potential need fulfillments in areas of Parks and Recreation include 6 parks that are eligible: Village, Fairview, Riverbend, Lincoln Oval, Summers and Jefferson Parks. If the Senior Center is still eligible a shade structure over the garden can be proposed. The 'Seniors' population is eligible. A shade structure is being added over the playground at Village Park. A community garden is being added to the Community Campus lot. Director Greenwood discussed potential improvements that could be made at Summers,

Fairview, Lincoln Oval, Riverbend, Jefferson and Village parks. Commissioner Woods commented on playground equipment that had been exhibited at the CPRS conference he though would be worth considering. Public comment and feedback included that CDBG money gets used for ADA compliance. Money will go toward connecting sidewalks. Parks and Urban Forestry Supervisor Jeff Fultz commented that the previous night Council had approved \$172,175 for Houston Avenue pedestrian access. Director Greenwood asked the commissioners for feedback. Commissioner Lozano commented that there are walking paths that need to be completed. He added that lighting is something to add if there is a way to prevent copper theft. The commissioners were in agreement to add a shade structure at the Senior Center.

7. Aquatic Facility Study:

Update on Community Needs Assessment Survey, *presentation by Laurissa Roggenkamp, Recreation Manager:* Recreation Manager Laurissa Roggenkamp reported that a survey draft had been presented at the last P & R Commission meeting. Commissioner Blue wanted to make sure that all community was targeted. The Monday after the meeting staff handed out flyers at the Candy Cane Lane Parade to get the public to take the survey and to get free popcorn. There have been 82 surveys collected so far. Ms. Roggenkamp listed the questions on the survey and added that both English and Spanish forms were created and available at Liveandplayvisalia.com. Efforts for more results are being made through social media and out in the public. She added that the questions are good and should gather good information to provide to Council. Staff and commissioners discussed wording the survey question that asks the public opinion of a 35-meter pool vs. 50-meter pool in a manner that would help them distinguish the differences and aid them in providing genuine answers.

San Benito High School Aquatic Center – *discussion lead by Commissioner Rick Eastes:* Commissioner Eastes said that there had been an error on the invitation to a workshop at San Benito High School Aquatic Center. He believes that the date on the flyer (Wednesday, 1/9/19) was incorrect, and that the correct date should be Saturday, January 19th. Commissioner Eastes described the basics of the tour and said that vendors would be there to answer questions. He would like to see staff attend. Director Greenwood will determine if staff will attend.

8. Update on City Council Reports and City Staff Announcements:

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

Ice Rink is up and running.

Senior Starlight Ball canceled due to low ticket sales

12/21/18 – Senior Center Christmas Luncheon

12/21/18 – Manuel Hernandez Community Center present giveaway to kids

12/15/18 – Adult Skate Night/Ugly Sweater in Garden Street Plaza

12/22/18 – Adult Skate Night

12/22/18 – Ice Rink will be open 7 days per week through 1/13/19

1/5/19 – Trout Derby at Plaza Park

1/12/19 – Youth Basketball League Starts with more than 900 participants registered.

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

Parks and Urban Forestry Manager Jeff Fultz reported he has met with the City Engineer for the final pre-bid meeting for the tertiary water and the Plaza Park pond reconstruction project, scheduled to start in the middle of or near the end of January after the Trout Derby. Changes need to be made to the irrigation and domestic water systems. The golf course is reducing their pond water levels to take on tertiary water in January. The southeast corner of the pond will be reconfigured. Mr. Fultz asked if anyone knew of someone, such as a biology teacher, who would be interested in moving the fish to the golf course ponds to have them get in touch with him or Director Greenwood.

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

Parks and Recreation Director Jeannie Greenwood discussed handouts provided to the commissioners, one being the Power Point presentation she had given earlier and the other an Economic Update.

Director Greenwood announced that at the previous evening's City Council meeting Council authorized an additional \$1.8 million to complete all phases of Riverway Sports Park. We will be working with the contractor, Forcum Mackey, to see how costs can be reduced.

Community Garden Project bids closed. This was for design. Meeting with Quad Knopf to negotiate price, who is the preferred vendor.

10. Commissioner's Requests & Comments

Waterways and Trails, Commissioner Filiponi: There have been no meetings in three months. Director Greenwood stated that this is something she'll be working on at the beginning of the year. Director Greenwood discussed the possibilities of bringing some of the committee members over to the Parks and Recreation Commission, and will need to work with the City attorney.

Parks & Recreation Foundation, Commissioner Wood reported: The Senior Center Mural and the Parks and Recreation Foundation Agreement were approved by City Council.

North Visalia Advisory Committee: Commissioner Lozano reported: The advisory board decided not to meet.

Motion to adjourn at 7:51 p.m. by Commissioner Woods, 2nd by Commissioner Filiponi, motion unanimously carried.

Respectfully submitted by,
Kathleen Machado
Senior Administrative Assistant