

Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes October 16, 2012

1. Call Meeting to Order/Roll Call

The Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, October 16, 2012, at the City Council Chambers, 707 W. Acequia Street, Visalia, California. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Mann at 5:30 pm.

Present: Lesa Mann, Carla Calhoun, Ben Filiponi, Robert Doi, and Dolores Taylor

Guests: Officer Bill Diltz, Visalia Police Department, and Bill Dillberg

Staff: Vince Elizondo, Jeannie Greenwood, Jim Bean, Chris Quintana, and Brenda Miernik

- 2. Review and Approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting, September 18, 2012.** Commissioner Mann requested a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Miernik stated the correct Council member who attended the meeting last month was Steve Nelson, not Mr. Gubler. Commissioner Doi moved to approve the corrected minutes, and Commissioner Filiponi seconded the motion.

MOTION

Motion passed 5-0

- 3. Public Comment:** None.

- 4. Request to the Parks & Recreation Commission to Send the Carpenter Foundation a Letter of Thanks for the \$7,500 Donation.** Ms. Greenwood stated that for many years City staff has envisioned a renovation project for the patio area at the Visalia Senior Center. Unfortunately, funding for the project has not been approved in the last three budget cycles. With the guidance of the Senior Advisory Committee, a plan was established to solicit private funding for the project. Mr. Dillberg, Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Foundation and Chairman of the Senior Advisory Committee, volunteered to head up the fundraising efforts. The Visalia Parks and Recreation Foundation agreed to serve as fiscal agent for project funds.

Ms. Greenwood stated that while making many contacts soliciting support for the Senior Center Patio Project, Mr. Dillberg's journey came to an end when he contacted Mr. Mike Carpenter of the Carpenter Family Children's Foundation. Mike and Joan Carpenter embraced the project as a way to support the seniors in our community and contributed \$7,500 to cover the entire cost of the project. With these funds, work has already begun and the entire project will be complete and ready for use in spring 2013.

Ms. Greenwood stated the project included the following work. Removing mounded areas in the turf, adding a concrete walkway, adding benches and a patio table, landscaping with shrubs, plants, and artificial turf. Additional funding with Community Development Block Grant funds will enclose the entire area with a decorative iron fence.

Ms. Greenwood said City staff recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission recognize the contribution from the Carpenter Family Children's Foundation by sending a letter of appreciation to the Carpenters on behalf of the Commission and the Visalia Senior Center. Ms. Greenwood read a sample of the proposed letter.

Mr. Dillberg stated other donations have been provided by the following people and businesses - Provost & Pritchard, The Bridge Club, Prestige Assisted Living, and Terry Ommen, Visalia historian. He invited everyone to visit the Senior Center to see the improvements that have been accomplished.

Commissioner Mann thanked Mr. Dillberg for his efforts and called for a motion to present the letter to the Carpenter's. Commissioner Calhoun made the motion to provide the letter as requested and Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion.

MOTION

Motion passed 5-0

- 5. Annual Graffiti Abatement Program Report.** Mr. Bean, Parks & Urban Forestry Manager, introduced Ms. Chris Quintana, the new graffiti coordinator, and Officer Bill Diltz from the Visalia Police Department.

Mr. Bean stated the program consists of one supervisor, one hourly graffiti program coordinator and four hourly graffiti abatement maintenance workers. The hourly employees work a maximum of 1,000 hours per year, so the removal workers have a total of 4,000 hours available to remove graffiti City wide and in the parks.

Removal: The goal of the program is to remove the graffiti in less than 24 hours from the date the information is received.

Methods: The program has established a list of select colors of paint that are used throughout the City to deter graffiti.

Property Owners: City staff is continuously improving communication and cooperation with property owners, residential and commercial, who remove graffiti throughout the year. The City currently has 16 individual volunteers who remove approximately 7,500 square feet of graffiti per year.

Public Awareness Programs: The City continues to promote the Graffiti Hotline by posting the phone number on City trucks, enhancing our web site, and participating in City promoted programs.

The Process: Chris Quintana, Graffiti Abatement Coordinator, receives the information from the hotline and prepares a location and description work order for the graffiti employees. She may also receive removal information from Visalia Police officers and emails from the public directed from the City of Visalia web page. The coordinator also works with commercial and private property owners to have them remove the graffiti on their properties.

Mr. Bean reported that Ray Palomino, Building Services Coordinator, supervises the graffiti removal program. He has been instrumental in overseeing the removal program and scheduling the graffiti maintenance workers to achieve seven days per week removal.

Mr. Bean said the Graffiti Coordinator also works closely with the Police Department on restitution cases for arrests made for graffiti. The department has experienced a drop in graffiti due to arrests and immediate removal.

Mr. Bean said that in addition to City efforts, the Downtown Visalian's also has an abatement worker who maintains the down town area and Visalia Unified School District removes graffiti on their property.

Year-end totals: July 2010 through June 2011 – the City Abatement Crew removed 870,790 square feet of graffiti. 2011-2012 the program removed 465,242 square feet of graffiti. Funding for the Graffiti program is provided by the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund.

Mr. Bean said the goals for the program are as follows.

- ✓ Graffiti is removed within 48 hours of receiving the location and description.
- ✓ Increase property owner collaboration and volunteer support.
- ✓ Increase community contacts and attend community events.
- ✓ Work on community and department projects: Church Clean-up Day, Earth and Arbor Days, and Make a Difference Day.
- ✓ Work closely with Code Enforcement and Police Department.

Commissioner Mann asked if anyone was ever caught and apprehended. Officer Bill Diltz said there are many ways to catch taggers. He said through simple conversation you can learn a lot. He said going to schools is another way to track them down. They are not only tagging city property but also their lockers, notebooks, textbooks, and walls. He said parents are also becoming involved. Cameras located in parks and public areas discourage vandalism significantly.

Commissioner Taylor asked what punishment is meted out. Office Diltz replied that it depends on who the perpetrator is. He said graffiti has to reach a certain dollar amount of damage to require jail time, and even then it depends on the judge.

- 6. Review Projects for Make a Difference Day, October 27, 2012.** Mr. Bean stated there was a draft copy of the projects for Make a Difference Day on the table for the Commissioners. He said the department has been very successful in gathering volunteers for the event this year. They have come from the department, FaceBook, the City web site, and the Visalia Times Delta. Neighborhood Church has 75 to 100 volunteers, and select members from the Urban Tree Foundation, CSET, and the Boy Scouts of America are volunteering. Mr. Bean said each site would have a work site coordinator and everyone will be in communication with one another.

Mr. Bean gave an over view of some of the projects.

- Packwood Creek (Cameron to Caldwell), plant 200 trees and shrubs.
- St. John's Riverwalk (Ben Maddox & St. John's River), plant 35 trees.
- Fairview Park, plant 10-15 trees.
- Rotary Park, plant 22 shrubs and spread chip.
- Soroptimist Park, plant annual flowers.
- Plaza Park, paint benches and tables at Arbors 4, 5, & 8.
- Santa Fe roadside meet at Ferguson and Santa Fe, remove graffiti.
- Rio Vista L&L (Sue to College), plant 22 trees.

- 7. Tentative Grand Opening of Kiwanis Park on Saturday, November 10, 2012.** Mr. Elizondo stated the tentative opening for Kiwanis Park is November 10. He said invitations will go out soon and the residents in the area will be invited. Lunch will be provided and everyone is welcome to attend.

8. **Review of Commission Goals & Objectives.** Mr. Elizondo said the latest edition of the Commission Goals were in the packets. He said the goals are approximately 2 years old and it would be good to update and revise them. He suggested inviting a facilitator to a special meeting designated to developing new goals.

Commissioner Mann stated that each goal was championed by a commissioner. She also said that commissioners were partnered with a Council member to develop a relationship in order to keep information flowing between the Council and the commissioners. She asked the commissioners how they would like to proceed. She noted that a joint meeting with City Council would be established in early 2013.

Commissioner Calhoun suggested it would be interesting to explore the General Plan of Visalia to seek the applicable sections of it and take responsibility to champion those ideals.

Commissioner Taylor asked if the partnership with Council members was satisfactory. Commissioner Mann said she met twice with Council Member Link. Commissioner Calhoun stated she met with the Mayor quarterly until their schedules were not cohesive.

By consensus the Commissioners decided to have a special meeting facilitated by an outside person to review and revise their goals. Mr. Elizondo said he would advise the commission on a place, date and time for a future meeting.

9. **Update on City Council Reports & City Staff Announcements:**

- **Upcoming Recreation Programs & Special Events.** Ms. Greenwood reported the following.
 - The Senior Center Open House was held on September 21 and was a great success. There were 33 informational booths and 192 participants.
 - The Second Annual Derek Shaw Memorial Skate Competition was held last weekend at Providence Skate Park. There were 18 competitors for prizes and honors. The Shaw family was there and the Hall of Fame plaque was unveiled. The plaque program was began due to the interest of the skaters in the community. It serves two goals, 1) to show the skaters in our community that good things come from the sport, and 2) when skaters are honored the users tend to take better care of the park. Ms. Greenwood stated there were over 100 spectators and 18 competitors.
 - Tulare County Office of Emergency Services is holding a drill this coming Thursday at Fire Station 55. They will present the scenario of a jet aircraft crash. They will be using Lion's Park as a staging area.
 - The Healthy Visalia Festival will be held Saturday, October 20, from 1 to 4pm at the CR Shannon Baseball Complex at Riverway Sports Park. It begins at 7am.
 - The Spooky Sprint will be on Saturday, October 27, at Plaza Park beginning at 7am.
 - The Senior Center Patio Project is moving along, a concrete walkway has been poured and two benches and a patio table have been installed. Artificial turf to follow as well as installation of an ornamental iron fence.
 - Upcoming approved projects – Senior Center fencing and Manuel Hernandez Center door replacement.
 - Allison Lambert and Michelle Fitzgerald will be attending the National Recreation and Park Association's 2012 Congress held in Anaheim this month.
- **Upcoming Parks & Urban Forestry Projects, Programs & Special Events.** Mr. Bean, Parks & Urban Forestry Manager reported the following.
 - Blain Park has two parking lots and both will be repaired in the next few weeks.
 - Aerification of the City's parks will begin soon.
 - Summers and Fairview Parks will soon be receiving shade structures.
 - Mr. Bean ordered the shade structures for Garden Street Plaza and the project should begin around November 26.
 - Mill Creek Park bike path will begin in the next few weeks.
- **Director's Report on Administrative Items.** Mr. Elizondo stated he received an e-mail from Mr. Russ Desch, former Parks & Recreation Commissioner, that stated he lives near Blain Park and he is concerned that the park is being over used. Mr. Elizondo said he responded to Mr. Desch in a timely manner and that the City would look for ways to control large groups in the park.

Commissioner Filiponi asked Mr. Elizondo the status of the Splash Pad at Recreation Park. Mr. Elizondo stated that agreements are being drawn up between the City and the Rotary, the City and the Rawhide and the City is hiring a consultant to design the project. The project will then go to City Council for approval.

10. **Commissioner's Requests & Comments:**

- **Parks & Recreation Foundation Monthly Report.** Commissioner Taylor said she attended her first meeting and was asked to be a member of the board. She reported they were seeking board members and the annual retreat will be in November. She said they reported on the Garden Street Plaza project.
- **North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee.** Mr. Doi stated he attended a meeting last week and there was a proposal to add a new park on the North side of the City, near Houston School. Mr. Elizondo stated Ms.

Stephanie Bartsch representing the Neighborhood Church, has been working with Bill Huott on this project. He said it remains to be seen if this project comes to fruition. He said at some time in the future it will be presented to the Commission.

Mr. Doi said the plan for the Oval Park Service Center is almost complete, they are awaiting a final inspection. Mr. Elizondo, offering some background information for the new commissioners, said the City and the Visalia Rescue Mission (VRM) are under contract for the VRM to provide recreational programming for the residents of the area. The goal is to bring in more families for positive activities.

Mr. Elizondo noted the expansion of VRM's new facilities. They have increased the capacity for helping the homeless. Mr. Elizondo stated the creeks, trails and parks are being utilized by the homeless more than ever before. Mr. Doi said at the committee meeting business members were complaining about the homeless also.

- **Senior Citizens Advisory Committee Update.** Commissioner Mann said that at the meeting she informed the seniors about the new Pickle Ball courts and they were excited.
- **Waterways & Trails Committee Report.** Commissioner Filiponi said he was unable to attend the scheduled meeting.

Commissioner Calhoun said she is now without a committee.

11. **Adjourn to Regular Meeting October 18, 2012, at 707 W. Acequia, City Council Chambers at 5:30 pm.** Commissioner Filiponi made a motion to adjourn and Commissioner Doi seconded the motion.

MOTION

Motion passed 5-0

Brenda Miernik
Senior Administrative Assistant