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**Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
November 19, 2019**

**Call to Order/Roll Call**

The Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday November 19, 2019 in the Council Chambers at City Hall West, 707 W. Acequia. The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair Steven Woods at 5:30pm.

**Present:** Steven Woods, Patrick Lozano, Ben Filiponi, Rick Eastes, Shann Blue, Lisa Walsh (Alternate Commissioner) and Nancy Hawkins (Alternate Commissioner)

**Absent:** None

**City Staff:** Jeannie Greenwood, Jeff Fultz, Eric Ferreira, Tracy Robertshaw and Kathleen Machado

**Guests:** Bonnie Polly (Visalia) with Senior Pride Bingo, Rita Estrada (Tulare) with Senior Pride Bingo and Verna Bowers (Visalia) with Visalia Gadabouts

1. **Public Comment:** None

2. **Review and Approve Minutes**

The minutes of the October 15, 2019 regular meeting were motioned for approval by Commissioner Lozano and seconded by Commissioner Eastes. The motion carried 4-0.

3. **Earth Day Planning Committee Request for Fee Waiver for April 2020 Event**

Parks & Recreation Director Jeannie Greenwood brought to the Commission a request from the City of Visalia Environmental Committee to waive fees to host their Earth Day event scheduled for April 2020 in the Special Events Promenade at Riverway Sports Park. The requested fee waiver amount is \$333. The Environmental Committee is aware that there are other scheduled activities that will take place at Riverway Sports Park on the same day and that parking could potentially be an issue. Director Greenwood is waiting to hear from the City Manager if this is a City sponsored event.

Commissioner Eastes: Would this event conflict with other events at Riverway Sports Park?

Director Greenwood: There is not a conflict with the Special Events Promenade. The Parks & Recreation Department makes it a practice to inform park users when there are activities going on so that they are aware in advance that parking could be an issue.

Commissioner Eastes: Has there been a suggestion that they use a different location, such as Miki City Park?

Director Greenwood: The Environmental Committee wants to use a larger venue this year to celebrate the event's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They are eager to use Riverway Sports Park because the park activity could feed in to their event.

Parks & Urban Forestry Manager, Jeff Fultz: Riverway Sports Park will have soccer, baseball and softball taking place at that time. Parking will be impacted.

Director Greenwood: If everything goes according to plan the City's Youth Baseball program will not be at Riverway Sports Park.

Commissioner Eastes: Will the Parks & Recreation Department have any expenses associated with the event, such as any special monitoring, for this event?

Director Greenwood: Generally, when there are several organizations at Riverway Sports Park at the same time we have staffing out there. Also, park custodial services are placed on a twice daily schedule.

The park is designed to hold multiple events at one time. The north overflow lot will help accommodate overflow parking needs.

The committee is hoping to have a walking event on the completed trail connection in conjunction with the Earth Day celebration.

**MOTION:** Commission Lozano motioned to approve the recommendation for fee waiver to the Visalia Environmental Committee for use of the Riverway Sports Park Special Event Promenade. Commissioner Blue seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

**4. Annual Review and Approval of Senior Center User Requests for Fee Waivers**

Through verbal presentation and a staff report, Recreation Supervisor Eric Ferreira provided the background of and criteria for modified fees for select facility users at the Visalia Senior Center.

The number of fee waiver requests has reduced to two. Membership of the Senior Advisory Committee consists of representatives from Senior Pride Bingo, Visalia Gadabouts, Senior Center Card Players and Senior Center Lunch Program. Because the committee members majority are those requesting a fee waiver, staff has changed the review process for 2020 to have the Senior Advisory Committee only review applications to determine if they meet the established criteria, and will not determine fee modification amounts or waivers.

Visalia Gadabouts is requesting 2020 fees totaling \$2,211 be waived. Direct staffing costs for this group's 2020 bookings at the Visalia Senior Center will total \$338.80. The Senior Advisory Committee has determined that Visalia Gadabouts provides services consistent with the City's mission to provide programs and services.

Commissioner Eastes: Does the \$2,211 request for fee waiver include the \$338.80?

Supervisor Ferreira: Yes

Director Greenwood: The City would be subsidizing the program \$338.80 with a full fee waiver.

Senior Pride Bingo is requesting 2020 fees totaling \$45,479.50 be waived. Direct staffing costs this group's 2020 bookings at the Visalia Senior Center will total \$7,747.97. (Totals are combined from Penny Bingo and Saturday Bingo.)

Saturday Bingo currently has access to the Visalia Senior Center kitchen. The request for the kitchen was not included on the Facility Use Application for 2020. City Staff is recommending that the Parks & Recreation Commission deny any future requests by Senior Pride Bingo to use the Visalia Senior Center kitchen effective January 1, 2020. The City has recently solicited

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proposals for the Senior Meal Program contract. The prospective contractor has asked for exclusive use of the Visalia Senior Center kitchen. Staff agrees that this is a reasonable request in the best interest of the caterer's food products and equipment that will be at the facility. The caterer is responsible for maintaining appropriate permits and licenses for food service, assuring cleanliness of the facility.

The Senior Advisory Committee has determined that Senior Pride Bingo provides a service to the seniors that is consistent with the City's mission to provide programs and services. Senior Pride Bingo has requested a fee waiver for a booking at the Visalia Senior Center for their annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. City Staff does not agree that this event meets the established criteria for a fee waiver. This date was not included in the cost for the fee waiver.

**City Staff Recommendation:** City Staff is asking the Parks & Recreation Commission to consider the request for fee waiver from Senior Pride Bingo and Visalia Gadabouts and to vote on one of the options provided in the staff report.

Director Greenwood: Commission can elect to vote on a different option for each group.

Commissioner Eastes: Has Senior Pride Bingo used the Visalia Senior Center kitchen in the past?

Supervisor Ferreira: Starting in 2020 the caterer has requested exclusive use of the kitchen.

Senior Pride Bingo has used the kitchen in the past when there was a different caterer.

Commissioner Eastes: Did Senior Pride Bingo pay the caterer for their services?

Supervisor Ferreira: No, they have not paid the catering company.

Commissioner Lozano: Senior Pride Bingo has provided food for themselves. Is what you're saying?

Supervisor Ferreira: Yes, they use the kitchen to prepare food for their activities.

Commissioner Eastes: That seems to be in conflict with new company coming in to run the kitchen. How is that resolved?

Supervisor Ferreira: Staff is recommending that Visalia Senior Pride not be granted access to the kitchen.

Alternate Commissioner Walsh: From a food and safety standpoint it is best not to allow outside access to the kitchen.

Commissioner Lozano: What other meetings have occurred with these groups before coming up with staff recommendations?

Supervisor Ferreira: Staff met with the Senior Advisory Committee in October.

Commissioner Lozano: Do Senior Pride Bingo and Visalia Gadabouts know of the options set before the Commission tonight?

Supervisor Ferreira: Copies were sent to each group. Each group has representatives here tonight.

Commissioner Lozano: Do we need official feedback from each of the groups?

Supervisor Ferreira: No

Commissioner Lozano: Has the actual caterer been selected?

Director Greenwood: One proposal was received.

Commission Chair Woods invited representatives from each group to speak.

Bonnie Polly (Visalia, CA), Secretary of Senior Pride and Rita Estrada (Tulare), Senior Pride board member came forward.

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Alternate Commissioner Walsh: Do you have any objections to covering the costs for City staff?  
Bonnie Polly: Yes, I think it should be waived. Financials can be provided. Senior Pride's money goes to Visalia Emergency Aid (more than \$6,000), senior Christmas gifts, Thanksgiving and blankets.

Director Greenwood explained the difference between the Tuesday/Thursday (Penny) Bingo and the Saturday Bingo. She added that the direct cost for the Penny Bingo can be absorbed because the activity takes place during regular business hours, which is already staffed, and their clientele is strictly seniors. The Saturday Bingo requires staff to be scheduled. The activity is for 18 years and over, and generates the revenue needed for public contributions. The Saturday Bingo subsidizes the Penny Bingo to some extent.

Commission Chair Woods: What types of foods are served at the Bingo events?

Rita Estrada: We make sandwiches and serve pie. Pies are from Ryan's restaurant. Sodas are served.

Commission Chair Woods: Is it possible to serve these items without use of the kitchen?

Bonnie Polly and Rita Estrada: Yes

Director Greenwood: Senior Pride Bingo should obtain its own Health Permit for onsite food preparation.

Commission Chair Woods: Do you feel there are food alternatives too food that you prepare onsite.

Rita Estrada: We have our own locked refrigerator and boxes stored.

Alternate Commissioner Walsh: Where is the refrigerator stored?

Director Greenwood: It's in an area between the Main Room and a room where the sound equipment is. They have some items in the kitchen they will be asked to remove. We believe they will be able to continue use of the beverage room where the ice machine and coffee pots are.

Commissioner Eastes: Having a financial report would help us with this review.

Commission Chair Woods: The major difference between this year and last year is the change in the food service contractor, correct Jeannie?

Director Greenwood: It is, and a criterion set forth was that the City would not incur costs, and that's never been rectified. The last monetary contribution from Senior Pride Bingo was in 2014. All of our contracts with youth sports organizations state that if there's to be a modified fee there's to be an in-kind contribution, donations, etc. We're trying to line things up to be consistent, with an established amount.

Commission Chair Woods: Would it be possible to do a 3 or 4 year ramp-up, in the course of 4 years moving up to 100%, with the possibility of each year discussion of services rendered and/or improvements provided to cover the costs of that year's fees?

Director Greenwood: The appropriate recommendation to the Council is for the Commission to discuss.

Alternate Commissioner Walsh: We should at least recover costs.

Commissioner Lozano: It seems fair that a portion of direct costs get covered. Storing belongings at the center also costs the City. It's not just about a fee waiver for direct costs. It's also about allowing the organization to store things at the facility without being charged. If we go in the direction of charging, it should be an equal percentage to both groups to be fair.

Commission Chair Woods – Would you be amenable to a multi-year ramp-up, eventually to

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100% of cost recovery?

Bonnie Polly – Donna Davis should answer that, but to me it seems reasonable.

Commission Chair Woods asked if there was a representative present from Visalia Gadabouts and if they were willing to add to the discussion.

Verna Bowers (Visalia), Visalia Gadabouts Treasurer: Costs presented in the staff report include the use of the Craft Room. Our only use of the Craft Room is to walk through to get supplies.

Commissioner Lozano: Can you tell us what you have available on your books? You charge admission?

Verna Bowers: We ask for \$1 donation at the door per person, averaging 50 recently.

Commission Chair Woods: Is it possible to increase the cost of your trips to cover the cost?

Verna Bowers: No. We try to keep the cost down to keep participation up.

Alternate Commissioner Walsh: I believe that each group can provide a financial statement to Council to determine whether or not the costs are exceeding what their profits are. We can make an adjustment for recovery based off that.

Director Greenwood asked Ms. Bowers if the Visalia Gadabouts members pay an annual membership fee.

Verna Bowers: No

Director Greenwood: As it relates to the Craft Room where storage is, fees were calculated at one-half the rate because both groups have access to the storage.

Commission Chair Woods: I believe it's possible to look at use of the beverage room pending verification of hot water service in the sink and food preparation areas. I believe it would be reasonable to look at a price sharing ramp-up over a multi-year period.

Supervisor Ferreira: Is the ramp-up to 100% to cover the direct cost?

Commission Chair Woods: Yes, for staffing.

Commissioner Lozano: I believe we should ask for a flat percentage, such as 20%, of cost recovery of direct staffing cost for the next year, and not talk about future at this time.

Director Greenwood: I think it would be prudent to see a certified financial statement from Senior Pride Bingo before moving forward.

Commission Chair Woods: Can this discussion be tabled to next month when financial statements can be produced by both groups?

Commissioner Lozano motioned we not require financial statements this year, we institute a 20% stipend for the direct costs for each group with no multi-year process, with the stipulation that neither group be allowed to use the kitchen, but will be allowed to use the room they are currently using for storage. They will need to get their own health certificate.

Alternate Commissioner Walsh: Question to Director Greenwood: We have our next meeting on 12/17/19. If we were to have those financial statements available to us at that meeting we could make our recommendation at that time. Would that be sufficient time to make recommendation to

Council?

Director Greenwood: That would be fine. We are holding the space for their use.

Commission Chair Woods asked for a motion to request financial statements from both organizations and to continue the discussion at the December 2019 meeting.

Commissioner Lozano: I will support that recommendation if the financial statements go to staff and that staff generate the recommendation based on their review.

Commission Chair Woods: With the directive to staff that we're looking at an intention the first year of having a percentage of direct costs.

Director Greenwood: Staff did not include Senior Pride Bingo's volunteer appreciation event as a fee waived booking. I believe we can require the groups include their financial statements with their requests for fee waiver in the future.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lozano motioned as to request a report from staff reviewing the financial statements from both organizations, adding that the Visalia Senior Pride volunteer recognition dinner be struck from agreement, as recommended by staff. Commissioner Eastes seconded the motion. Motion approved 5-0.

5. **Make-A-Difference Day Recap**

Through a Power Point presentation Parks & Urban Forestry Manager Jeff Fultz recapped Make A Difference Day 2019. The Parks Department had 4 projects at Cherry Meadow Park, Kiwanis Park, Packwood Creek and Soroptimist Park. The Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints, Soroptimist International of Visalia, City staff, CSET, Urban Tree Foundation and other community volunteers participated. Thirty-two volunteers equaled 64 hours of labor. Director Greenwood had 112 volunteers at the Community Garden Project. Ninety trees and 500 shrubs were planted at the Packwood Trail. AT Cherry Meadow and Kiwanis parks combined there were 20 trees and 40 shrubs planted.

Commissioner Eastes: How are the plants being irrigated?

Manager Fultz: Drip irrigation, with moisture sensors.

Alternate Commissioner Hawkins: Who provides the plants?

Manager Fultz: The Packwood Trails plants were provided by a grant. The Parks Department provided the rest.

6. **Naming of the Greenway Trail Project**

Director Greenwood provided copies of the Visalia City Ordinance Relating to the Naming of City-Owned Facilities, Buildings and Parks and the Visalia City Policy Guidelines for the Selection of Names for City-Owned or City-Controlled Buildings, Facilities and Parks to the Commission. Council has asked the Parks & Recreation Commission to create a recommendation for the naming of the trail way project.

Commissioner Blue: How many trails need naming?

Director Greenwood: None of the trails have been officially named.

Commissioner Blue: Could we create a sub-committee? We need community input.

Commission Chair Woods agreed that names should go through a sub-committee, considering

historicity, geographic location, naming of the area and a list of individuals who have provided significant contribution to the City of Visalia.

Alternate Commissioner Hawkins and Commissioner Lozano expressed interest in serving on the sub-committee.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Blue motioned to create a naming sub-committee and commission them to look for individuals in the City who would be interested in helping with the naming over time, and reviewing current park/trail names to make sure adjustments don't have to be made. Commissioner Filiponi seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

**7. Update on City Council Reports & City Staff Announcements**

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

Manager Fultz introduced Tracy Robertshaw who will be temporarily responsible for overseeing the Parks & Urban Forestry Maintenance division to the Commission.

The City of Visalia H.O.P.E. Team will be performing a clean-up effort tomorrow (11/20/19) along the St. John's River, east of Ben Maddox Way. Involvement will include the H.O.P.E. Team, City of Visalia Code Enforcement, Solid Waste and Parks Maintenance departments.

**Recreation Programs/Special Events, *Jeannie Greenwood, Parks & Recreation Director***

10/18/19 Mother & Son Dance at the Visalia Convention Center. 110 attended

10/20/19 Fiestas en la Plaza. 500+ attended

10/26/19 Make-A-Difference Day at the Community Garden Project site. 125 volunteers attended. 10 Eagle Scout projects

11/2/19 Family Campout cancelled due to low enrollment

11/2/19 Skateboard Competition at Provident Skate Park, partnering with Mainland Skate & Surf Shop

11/27/19 Visalia Senior Center Thanksgiving Luncheon

12/1/19 Visalia Police Activities League Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony at Lincoln Oval Park

12/2/19 Visalia Downtown Candy Cane Lane Parade

12/3/19 Skating rink construction begins in Garden Street Plaza

12/7/19 Skating rink grand opening

12/14/19 Winter Trout Derby

12/20/19 Visalia Senior Center Christmas Luncheon

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

Community Garden Project should be done by January

St. John's River Trail Project is done. Landscaping project will follow

California State Parks will visit in November to review the Land and Water Conservation grant and help get contracts executed

Riverway Sports Park Phase 5 is done with some electrical and lighting issues to resolve

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8. **Commissioners Comments and Requests**

**Community Enhancement Foundation Report, Commission Chair Steven Woods**

VF Outdoor attended the last meeting and expressed interest in supporting the Foundation through helping with the Mural Project donation and Love Your Parks Day 2/22/20

Bueno Beverage will be helping out with next 2020 Fromage Frolic. Table 57 has added the event winner to their menu

\$600 profit was made at Fiesta en la Plaza for beverage sales

Carol Hoppert-Hays is stepping down as Foundation President

9. **Adjourn to the Regular Meeting of Tuesday, December 17, 2019**

MOTION: Commissioner Filiponi motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:30pm. Commissioner Blue seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted by

Kathleen Machado

Senior Administrative Assistant

Visalia Parks & Recreation