

Community Services Advisory Commission
Regular Meeting
City Hall - City Council Chambers
777 Cypress Avenue
Redding, California
January 12, 2011, 3:06 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

The meeting opened with the following Commissioners present; Susan Hinz, Leona McCoach, Adam McElvain, and John Wilson. Absent was Commissioner Jason Waybright.

Also present were Community Services Director Kimberly Niemer, Convention Center Manager John Johnson, Management Analyst Matt McCallum, and Recreation Supervisor Jennifer Moore.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Motion: To appoint Adam McElvain Chairperson and John Wilson Vice-Chairperson.

AYES: Commissioners Hinz, McCoach, McElvain and Wilson
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Commissioner Waybright

CONSENT CALENDAR

The minutes from the meeting on November 18, 2010, the monthly Convention Center Activity Report, the monthly Parks Maintenance Activity Report, the monthly Recreation Division Activity Report, and the monthly Tourism Activity Report were presented. Commissioner McCoach questioned the status of the floor at the Convention Center. Convention Center Manager Johnson explained the arbitration originally scheduled in December 2010 has been rescheduled for a later date.

Motion: To approve the Consent Calendar.
(Made by Commissioner Hinz, Seconded by Commissioner McCoach)

AYES: Commissioners Hinz, McCoach, McElvain, and Wilson
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Commissioner Waybright

PRESENTATION ON 2010 WATER-RELATED INCIDENTS AT REDDING AQUATIC CENTER

Director Niemer prefaced the presentation with the fact that while recreation usually represents “fun” activities, safety is a primary concern. In 2008, with \$96,000.00 in support from the California Kids Plates Fund, the Redding Recreation Division established the Shasta Drowning Prevention Coalition.

Recreation Supervisor Moore reviewed the statistics of Water-Related Incidents in 2010 at the Redding Aquatic Center: A Report to the Shasta Drowning Prevention Coalition added that 19% of all drownings are at lifeguard attended pools and 7% of those reported drownings have a parent/guardian present. Drowning is the leading cause of death for children under five years of age. For every drowning reported, there is between one and four non-fatal water related incidents. She went on to say that careful vigilance training is conducted with the lifeguards employed with the City of Redding Recreation Department. Director Niemer added that careful water safety testing is performed on all attendees at visiting the Redding Aquatic Center (RAC) and children must be able to swim twenty-five yards without assistance in order remain active at the Center without a life jacket.

Commissioner Wilson asked for clarification on the incident dated May 25, 2010, reflected in the report under the heading of Aquatic Incident Analysis/Haddon Matrix. Recreation Supervisor Moore advised the report reflected a “close call,” and not an actual drowning.

Recreation Supervisor Moore statede the RAC is proud to have a life jacket loan station on hand (which currently has a stock of 60 jackets) to loan out to adults and children during their time at the Center free of charge. That program is made possible by the California Department of Water Waste. Director Niemer commended Recreation Supervisor Moore, along with Recreation Supervisors Susan Roi and Teresa Urricelqui, for their diligence and dedication to the RAC and the programs place. Director Niemer then recalled a media reported incident where child in Southern California was at a public pool and drowned in front of multiple lifeguards, therefore proving the importance of extra precaution.

CONSIDERATION OF THE CONVENTION CENTER UPDATE REPORT

Director Niemer advised there is an on-going structural deficit with the Redding Convention Center (RCC) in the amount of \$300,000.00. Management Analyst McCallum detailed the provided financial reports showing the budgetary issues. Convention Center Manager Johnson explained there is an entertainment downturn industry-wide of between 30-40%. He elaborated that conventions and concert rentals at the RCC are in decline. Director Niemer commented that on the local level (ie: West Coast/Northern California division), business is down and local, less expensive competition is driving revenues even further down.

Commissioner McCoach questioned if a new rate sheet has been prepared to reflect such changes? Director Niemer advised there has not been a rate restructure, but that the Convention Center Manager has some leeway in negotiating with potential renters of the Convention Center facility. Commissioner Hinz questioned whether the adjusted fee schedule and proposal CSAC gave to City Council was included on the 2009-2010 budget estimates? Management Analyst McCallum explained that the adjusted fee schedule and proposal would appear in the 2010-2011 budget for the first cycle, as the 2009-2010 budget was already set in place. All of the numbers reflect the City of Redding’s ten-year plan.

Commissioner Hinz explained she was very worried about the 53% revenue drop since the proposed changes were implemented. She advised recommendations should be made and a plan for long-term action needs to be supplied.

Commissioner Wilson commented that a 4% increase in Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) seems like a high projection. He also requested clarification on the contract amount with the Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association (SCWA). Director Niemer advised the SCWA receives \$750,000.00 plus 25% of the increase or decrease in TOT from the prior year. Commissioner McCoach questioned the significant revenue drop and highest expense each year at the Convention Center, which looks to be personnel/staffing. She agreed with Commissioner Hinz that a "game plan" needs to be set in motion.

Commissioner McElvain asked if there are any capital improvements to be made after the 2010-2011 budget year? Management Analyst McCallum explained the assumption is the remaining \$230,000.00 in capital improvement funds will not be spent, and rather conserved. Commissioner McElvain explained he didn't think it was a good idea to make hard decisions based on optimistic numbers presented in the City's ten-year plan. Director Niemer advised that City Manager Kurt Starman has agreed to recommend to City Council that \$150,000.00 in debt services could be deferred until a later date - therefore saving \$150,000.00 each year during the next budget cycle.

Director Niemer explained that personnel is currently the highest expense at the Convention Center and all ideas about how to save are being discussed. She went on to say that the TOT is down and is a problem saver. If the TOT returns to prior years amounts, the operational deficit goes away, but not the capital replacement problem. The charge given to Community Services from the City Manager is to develop a plan and present it during the budget talks in Spring 2011. Commissioner Hinz asked for clarification on the \$150,000.00 debt service continuance - there is still a \$150,000.00 gap? Director Niemer confirmed. Commissioner McCoach asked if interest would accrue on the debt continuance? Director Niemer explained the loan was recently moved from the General Fund to the Risk Management Fund and yes, the loan would continue to accrue interest, at the (current) low interest rate of 1-2%.

Commissioner Wilson questioned how far out in the calendar are events booked? Manager Johnson advised that concerts are booked out approximately six months. Commissioner Wilson mentioned the possibility of lowering rates. Manager Johnson advised currently the Cascade Theater rents their facility for a flat rate fee of \$2,600.00 and unfortunately the Convention Center cannot compete with that low rate.

Director Niemer added that all of the "in house" City of Redding promotions were halted some years ago due to the risk factors involved in the business.

Commissioner Wilson asked about the possibility of local conferences and conventions and wanted to know what marketing was being done in that particular area. Manager Johnson advised advertising was being done locally.

Commissioner McCoach questioned how much money it would cost to buy the food and beverage contract back from Paulson's and allow renters to use their preferred caterers? Director Niemer explained the actual dollar amount was not known, however banquets, etc at the Convention Center (CC) service up to one thousand, two hundred (1,200) people at a time and inventory has to be maintained to service such a crowd. The current inventory belongs to Paulson's Catering.

Commissioner Hinz asked for basic numbers (a breakdown of how much it costs to run a concert, just keep the doors open during an un-rented day). She advised perhaps the CC should close its doors a couple days per week to conserve money.

Commissioner McCoach questioned whether or not City Council or the City Manager consider the CC a “public amenity.” Director Niemer advised that yes, the facility is important to the entire city of Redding, however the City Council has had to make some very tough decisions in the past few years and all ideas are being considered.

Commissioner McElvain expressed his concern over the budget and specific numbers provided by Management Analyst McCallum. He relayed that talks in the past included sponsorships of the parking lot, etc. The Commissioner requested that perhaps a letter be drafted and send to City Council updating them on the current situation with the CC and perhaps look at the whole master plan (including the Riverfront Property Plan).

Valerie Long spoke in opposition to the idea of closing the Convention Center even though the budget numbers presented do not look “good.” She advised that she and Ginne Mistal have been working diligently, developing marketing strategies for the Convention Center as well as possible future endeavors for the facility and surrounding areas. Commissioners Wilson and McElvain urged Mrs. Long to forward the information she has been collecting to Director Niemer’s office for review.

Motion: To request updated master plan of Convention Center and Riverfront Property Plan.
(Made by Commissioner McCoach, Seconded by Commissioner Hinz)

AYES: Commissioners Hinz, McCoach, McElvain, and Wilson
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Commissioner Waybright

Motion: To approve staff recommendation to defer debt payments from the Risk Management department loan.
(Made by Commissioner Hinz, Seconded by Commissioner McCoach)

AYES: Commissioners Hinz, McCoach, and Wilson
NOES: Commissioner McElvain
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Commissioner Waybright

PROJECTS UPDATES

Director Niemer provided updates on the following items:

John Reginato River Access

This project is under way and the contractor is on-site. The entire project, along with the new trail extension along the Riverbend Golf Course, should be completed by Summer 2011.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Restroom Renovation

This project, funded by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money, is also underway.

Parks and Recreation Summit

The lead staff from the Parks and Recreation divisions met, shared goals and discussed problem solving and resource allocation. Three specific initiatives were established and teams assigned to work on them. The work of the Resource Allocation Team will form the basis for the Parks Maintenance Request for Proposal (RFP), which required at least four neighborhood parks to be included in the privatization report. More than likely it will include more.

Lease Proposal - Convention & Visitors Bureau building

City Council reviewed the proposed lease agreement between the City of Redding and the Greater Redding Chamber of Commerce for the former Convention & Visitors Bureau building which was vacated in July 2010. After review, it was decided that the terms were not a good match for the two entities and a letter was sent to the Greater Redding Chamber of Commerce advising of such.

Planning Commission Workshop

On January 11, 2011, a joint training was held in the Community Room with CSAC and the Planning Commission. Director Niemer advised there would be three additional training opportunities available if the CSAC members were interested in attending. Commissioners McCoach, McElvain, and Wilson agreed that the training was beneficial and would like to be notified of future training sessions. Director Niemer advised she would send out future Planning Commission Agenda's to the CSAC as they are received (usually about a week prior to the meetings).

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Hinz asked if the supporting documentation and the Request for Proposal (RFP) for Parks Maintenance would be available to review during the February 2011 Community Services Advisory Commission meeting. Director Niemer advised the RFP would be available. Commissioner Hinz explained she had requested and received a copy of an RFP, a staff report and a contract from the City of Modesto and would share the information at the February 2011 meeting. Commissioner McElvain recommended the other Commissioners keep their "thinking caps on" with regards to the Convention Center, as any recommendations for future action will more than likely originate with them.

DIRECTORS' COMMENTS

Director Niemer relayed that the Diestelhorst Bridge is being renovated and the Sacramento River Trail will encounter a detour during the time frame of August 2011-April 2012. Commissioner Wilson inquired as to whether "Recovery" money was used for the Diestelhorst Project. Director Niemer answered that to her knowledge, the funds for the project was remaining money from the Lake Redding Bridge project. Commissioner Wilson then asked if any type of Grant money could be submitted or requested to rehabilitate a building - the Convention Center in particular. Director Niemer advised she was not familiar with any such available Grants at this time, but that she's open to finding some. Commissioner McCoach questioned the status of the Lake Redding Park pavilion. Director Niemer replied that some minor revisions were underway and hoped the project would proceed later this year.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, at the hour of 4:44 p.m. Chair McElvain declared the meeting adjourned.



Adam McElvain, Chair