

Community Services Advisory Commission
Regular Meeting
City Hall - Caldwell Park Conference Room
777 Cypress Avenue
Redding, California
September 8, 2010, 3:05 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

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

Also present were Community Services Director Kimberly Niemer, Convention Center Manager John Johnson, Parks Superintendent Dan Cannon, Management Analyst Matt McCallum and Executive Assistant Mari Szynal.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The minutes from the meetings on August 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.

Motion: To table the minutes until the October meeting and approve the remaining Consent Calendar.
(Made by Commissioner Waybright, Seconded by Commissioner McCoach)

AYES: Commissioners McCoach, McElvain, Waybright and Wilson

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Hinz

PARK MAINTENANCE REVIEW

Director Niemer recalled that last year the City Council approved a 10-member Privatization Evaluation Committee to review specific city services and evaluate whether they should be

outsourced. During those meetings the Parks maintenance operations review was referred to the Community Services Advisory Commission.

Given the volume of information, the staff report was divided into two sections. The first section, being addressed today, provides an overview of the Redding Park System maintenance responsibilities, reviews the current costs of providing these services, and covers existing contracting-out of City activities overseen by the Community Services Department. The second section will be addressed at the October 13, 2010, meeting and will include parks maintenance contracting experiences of comparable jurisdictions, examination of the opportunities, consequences and cost comparisons of additional contracting-out of park maintenance services.

Director Niemer directed the Commissioners attention to the report attachment which details the 'Day in the Life' of a Parks Division staff and shows how their time is allocated. From this it was noted that approximately half of their time was devoted to mowing, pruning, trash removal, janitorial service, graffiti removal, etc.. However, 35% of their time was more complex and included items such as irrigation repair, pesticide application, special equipment use, etc. 15% is considered highly specialized, such as plumbing, tree trimming, Redding Aquatic Center and playground inspection (which requires special certification). A winter analysis of 'Day in the Life' would, naturally, reverse the ratio's where the complexity of the work is higher due to more project-type of work being done during that time of the year.

Director Niemer pointed out that the collaboration and cooperation which occurs between city departments - water, sewer, streets, electric, parks - makes everyone's work run a little more smoothly. Parks Superintendent Cannon related that when one of his crews needed to remove concrete block bleachers from K1 baseball field, they needed a backhoe and a 10-wheel dump truck. The Street Department loaned the Parks Division the necessary equipment. When there are large irrigation breaks, 4 feet deep or more, the Water Division will use their truck to suction out the muck, which saves hours or days of labor manually removing the gunk to get to the pipe. During the winter, after large storms, the Parks Division works closely with the Streets Division to take care of the downed power lines and tree damage.

Director Niemer related that parks maintenance functions have been previously contracted out:

In the mid-1970s, the City contracted out mowing and general landscape maintenance at Caldwell Park, Lake Redding Park and Cascade Park. The initial contract for six months was terminated after three months due to poor performance of the contractor. Concerns included the quality of the work, unprofessional behavior and unsafe practices. Superintendent Cannon added that the landscaper would leave their mowing equipment on sidewalks areas where children could climb on it or get into it. In addition they didn't not clean up after themselves and would leave grass clippings all over the parking lot and sidewalk. Also, if it was on the schedule to mow the park on a specific day, regardless of what was occurring in the park on that day (i.e., wedding, etc.) they would mow the park and not make the effort to make accommodations for people.

In the 1980s, janitorial services for park restrooms were contracted out. Two different vendors provided this service and both contracts were not renewed due to poor performance.

The primary issue was that the contractors were unresponsive to call backs for additional supplies or maintenance incidents which would occur during the day prior to the scheduled cleaning times. With the options of either leaving the restrooms either in an understocked or unsanitary condition, or closing the restrooms for public use until the scheduled cleaning time, Park Maintenance Division staff undertook intermittent cleaning and restocking, thus negating the key value of contracting these services out.

In 2005 the City contracted out park maintenance for Parkview Riverfront Park, a natural area park located just east of Redding City Hall. The annual cost for this service was budgeted at \$20,000 per year, a base charge of \$16,740 and the remainder a contingency. This contract was not renewed in 2008, as it was determined in the midst of budget reductions that these services could be absorbed by the Parks Maintenance Division.

Management Analyst McCallum presented the financial side of City of Redding park maintenance. The actual portion of the annual budget directed toward in-the-field park maintenance activities which could be contracted out is \$1,430,068. The remainder of the annual budget – \$975,742 – is comprised of administration and overhead and would remain the City’s responsibility even in the event of contracted services. To provide a sense of scale, a per acre breakout of actual personnel and maintenance costs for fiscal year 2009-10 costs was \$2,484 per developed acre. Divided across the total acres maintained by the Parks Maintenance Division, the actual fiscal year 2009-10 annual costs were \$1,509 per acre. When broken out further, the monthly costs of developed acres maintained and total system acres maintained are in the range of what a homeowner might expend on landscaping maintenance for their yard (which may be only a quarter acre), yet often involve significantly more complex activities beyond mowing and edging.

Superintendent Cannon proceeded to review a Powerpoint presentation showing typical issues which Parks Division crews encounter on any given day. These included irrigation repair, vandalism, tree trimming, Sundial Bridge tile replacement, and Redding Aquatic Center repairs and maintenance. Special Projects included K1 baseball field bleacher removal, salt cedar removal along Old Oregon Trail, a tree house removal, repairs to the Library green roof irrigation, tree stump grinding, and consultation on repairing tree root damage to sidewalks.

Commissioner Wilson inquired whether bidding for the Landscape Maintenance District’s could be conducted through the Parks Department so they could become a Capital Fund. Director Niemer agreed that this could be done.

Superintendent Cannon noted that averaging throughout the year, the Parks Division responds to approximately 5 emergency call per month. These call could include anything from lights not turning on at a baseball field to someone being locked out of a building to sprinklers being stuck and not turning off. The answering service has all the phone numbers for the Parks Division. The first call they make is to Dan. If he is not available they go down the list, which includes home, cell and work numbers. The list is divided into the different areas of responsibility, such as City Hall, Caldwell Park, etc. They do eventually reach someone and Parks crews are available 24 hours.

Commissioner Wilson observed that there are two crew leaders and inquired whether the town is split up geographically. Superintendent Cannon responded that it is. Commissioner Wilson then

inquired whether the two staff who handle Lake Redding and Caldwell Parks take care of everything in those parks. Superintendent Cannon replied that they do. They take care of the parks, the River Trail, the baseball fields, the Redding Aquatic Center, the skateboard park, the playgrounds, the boat ramp, the bathrooms, etc. On addition they handle North Market Street, Quartz Hill medians, and Buckeye Park.

Superintendent Cannon noted that there is another gardener who handles 23 parks by himself.

Joe Machado spoke regarding his experience living next door to a pocket park and the neighborhood usage patterns and maintenance of the park. He noted that this park could probably go away and not be missed, rather that larger parks with more amenities are a better use of city property.

Commissioner Wilson observed that these are tough times and some difficult decisions may need to be made. Some of those decisions may not be popular with the communities, but overhead expenses need to be addressed.

Director Niemer requested that the Commissioners review the Appendices to this month's report and staff will answer any questions at the next meeting. Management Analyst McCallum advised that at next month's Commission meeting staff would provide information on a comparison of Redding to similar California communities in reference to how the parks service is structured, how the services are delivered, comparative pay rates, and other community's experiences with contracting out park services. In addition a SWOT(strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis will be provided. This would include the costs of contracting out services, the opportunities and issues (i.e., prevailing wage) and also look at some costs which would not go away.

Vice Chair McElvain requested that at the next meeting the Commissioners receive a list of undeveloped pocket parks and a copy of the Organization Chart with Total Compensation added. Management Analyst McCallum noted that those items would be included in the next month's report.

No action was required on this informational item.

PROJECTS UPDATES

Director Niemer provided updates on the following items:

Pedestrian Safety Assessment

This was a project which a group out of Berkeley produced after a site visit to Redding. This drills down to specific locations which need improvement within Redding.

Lake Redding Stage

This project is moving forward. Parks Superintendent Cannon is currently reviewing the design.

Hwy 44 Dedication

The completion of this project provides access on the Sacramento River Trail from the west side of town all the way to the Hillop Mall. Next week we should receive information

regarding a grant that will allow us to improve Turtle Bay East and provide access to it from the new River Trail extension.

Downtown Art Dedication

The dedication of this new piece of public art feature will be held this Saturday and will be a nice addition to the Downtown Mall.

Visitors Bureau RFP

The City Council has requested that an RFP be sent out for the CVB Building, which is now vacant. Staff will review the draft RFP with the Commission prior to issue.

Hwy 44 - Eastside

On the north side of the east side of the Hwy 44 bridge, there is now funding for trail easements and the maintenance of those trails by Western Shasta Resource Conservation District.

No action was required on these informational items.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner McElvain reported that Chair Hinz requested him to provide the other Commissioners with copies of the draft letter regarding the Turtle Bay lease revenue. This was discussed amongst the Commissioners at the last meeting. Chair Hinz would like the Commissioners to provide her with their comments as soon as possible.

DIRECTORS' COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, at the hour of 5:34 p.m. Vice-Chair McElvain declared the meeting adjourned.

Adam McElvain, Vice-Chair