

Community Services Advisory Commission  
Regular Meeting  
City Hall - City Council Chambers  
777 Cypress Avenue  
Redding, California  
November 18, 2010, 3:03 p.m.

## MINUTES

### ATTENDANCE

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

Also present were Community Services Director Kimberly Niemer, Convention Center Manager John Johnson, Parks Superintendent Mark Burgon and Management Analyst Matt McCallum.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

### CONSENT CALENDAR

The minutes from the meetings on August 18, 2010 and October 13, 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 approve the Consent Calendar.  
(Made by Commissioner Waybright, Seconded by Commissioner McElvain)

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

## **PRESENTATION OF FIRST YEAR RESULTS OF MLK ACTION PLAN**

Director Niemer recalled that at the meeting on June 10, 2009, the Commission approved the adoption of an action plan for the Martin Luther King Jr. Center.

For more than 40 years, the Martin Luther King Jr. Center (Center) has been a valuable community resource in the City of Redding. Over the years, the City has partnered with numerous groups and agencies to facilitate the delivery of programs to serve the needs of our community, including after-school and summer care activities for low-income children. Beginning in 2008, participation levels at the Center dropped significantly. In response, the City convened a Blue Ribbon Committee in 2009 to develop an Action Plan for the Center that addresses program needs and priorities, updates policies and increases awareness of Center activities within the surrounding neighborhood.

The key recommendation of the Committee was a partnership with the Redding School District to establish the Center as a satellite site for the Cypress School After-School Education and Safety Program (ASES) during the 2009-10 school year.

Staffing has been provided through the combined efforts of the Redding School District, the City of Redding and community volunteers. A coordinator hired by the City of Redding, Christina Massey, provides oversight. Ms. Massey's leadership and commitment to the Center have proven hugely successful in spite of the numerous obstacles of jump starting the Center's newly expanded program offerings. In addition to Ms. Massey, three part-time staff have been hired through a contract with Americorps via the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Shasta County.

Staff has documented the progress made on each goal of the 2009 Action Plan. Most of the programs worked, some did not. Additional fine tuning occurs each week and each quarter with the review of the programming calendar. Some highlights for this year are the start of a Boys Council curriculum with the Monday night boys program. This is a research based curriculum found to help boys improve their communication skills, self-esteem, and leadership. The Positively Girls Club has also implemented a curriculum focused on personal enrichment and growth. New leaders of both programs are making a very positive impact.

The Center has also undergone numerous improvements to the campus. Outside, the shade structures were replaced, a new playground installed, and vegetable gardens were planted. Inside, new flooring was installed (courtesy of a Home Depot grant), the interior was painted with volunteer labor, the library was re-organized, and the computer lab completely re-furbished. Upcoming improvements include a remodel for the exterior restroom and a new roof for the Center.

With additional resources and community support, the Martin Luther King Jr. Center has returned to being a thriving neighborhood center. The Action Plan initiated the effort to rejuvenate partnerships, to identify possible resources and to provide a road map to a more vibrant community center. As documented, the Center staff has made tremendous strides in achieving most of the goals of the Action Plan in the first year. Efforts are ongoing to add new programs and improvements continuing the success of the Center for the benefit of the children and families of the neighborhood.

No action was required on this informational item.

## **CVB PRESENTATION BY SHASTA CASCADE WONDERLAND ASSOCIATION**

Bob Warren of the Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association (SCWA) provided an overview of the steps taken since the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) was outsourced in June, 2010. Mr. Warren noted that the group continues to use the name Redding Convention and Visitors Bureau and they have an office in town on Washington Street. Mr. Warren introduced two new staff members, Jenny Zink and Laurie Barker.

The SCWA mission, Mr. Warren shared, remains the same as the CVB: to have more people stay at the hotels in Redding. Industry trends show that 2010 is an improvement over 2009, but occupancy is not back to where the market was several years ago. It is expected to take at least another year to return to those levels.

Mr. Warren detailed that the SCWA is focusing even more on utilizing technology to market the area. Approximately 5% is spent on international marketing, which translates to 10-15% of the revenue. While business travel is down, it only accounts for 10% of our business. Accounting firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers shows that while there was a very steep decline in convention attendance last year, it expected to slowly pick back up. 85-90% of our business is leisure travel and surveys show that 55% of U.S. adults are planning a vacation in the next six months.

Mr. Warren stated that 2010 has been obviously one of the worst years on record for all industries. It is hoped the market will return to 2007 levels in a couple of years. One of the key factors in this projection is the consumer confidence index. It has been as high as 110 and went as low as 39. At present the CCI number is hovering at 50.

Mr. Warren shared that over the past several years the CVB's marketing funds have increased from \$217,000, prior to the Business Improvement District, to \$600,000. This has allowed the CVB to fund marketing for the summer season in greater numbers than in the past and has also allowed for the first time marketing during the shoulder seasons. With various partnerships, it is anticipated that the CVB will soon have close to \$1 million annually to expend of marketing efforts.

Chair Hinz enquired whether there was a proportional relationship between the expenditure of marketing dollars and room occupancy, specifically whether three times more marketing dollars expended would in turn result in three times the number of "heads in beds" and greater transient occupancy tax receipts. Mr. Warren responded that there was no specific correlation, and room occupancy levels were dependent upon numerous other factors beyond marketing expenditures alone. In a challenging business environment, Mr. Warren explained, increased marketing may merely help to retain Redding's existing market share or minimize its decline, as opposed to expanding that market share. At present, said Mr. Warren, there are no metrics in place to definitely measure the impact of marketing expenditures and initiatives undertaken by the CVB.

No action was required on this informational item.

## **PARK FUNDS FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Management Analyst McCallum noted that each March staff provides the Commission with a detailed annual report concerning the City of Redding's Park Funds and the Department's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Recently, each September the Department began providing the Commission with a mid-year report on the status of the Park Funds and the CIP as of the end of the fiscal year as a supplement to the annual report. Due to staff resources dedicated to the Park Maintenance Review, the mid-year report was delayed until this meeting.

The current status of the three Park Funds are:

- Park In-Lieu Fund finished FY 2009-10 with a positive available cash balance of \$1,296,416.
- The Park Development Fund finished FY 2009-10 with a positive available cash balance of \$2,359,818.
- The Park Capital Grants Fund finished FY 2009-10 with a negative available cash balance of \$1,455,077. As the Commission is aware, this particular Fund is designed to run with a negative balance as expenditures are reimbursed through grant receivables.

The starting balance for the Park In-Lieu and Park Development Funds in FY 2009-10 was \$4,208,309. Fee collections for the fiscal year were approximately \$60,000 below projections

Fee collections for the first four months of fiscal year 2010-11 are trending behind last year's pace.

The CIP cash flow, based on planned expenditures and projected revenues, will maintain a positive balance through FY 2015-16 (the final year of the current CIP). The projected ending cash balance of \$2,735,277 in the final year of the CIP anticipates a net outflow of \$920,957 over the life of the plan, which includes expenditures of \$644,660.

While many of the projects on the CIP have variables, there is an immutable obligation: the \$1.07 million in annual debt service through March 2015. Annual fee collections continue to be below the amount needed for these debt payments, but the positive cash balance in the Park Funds provides a reserve to supplement this payment if new revenue generation continues to fall short.

The residential construction market continues to remain sluggish, and most national indicators suggest it will remain so for the near term. Under the circumstances, the City's Park Funds remain in good shape and continue to fully fund all the activities detailed on the CIP with a positive cash balance for the life of the plan. A more detailed analysis of the Park Funds and the residential construction market will be provided to the Commission in March.

No action was required on this informational item.

## CONSIDERATION OF PARK MAINTENANCE REVIEW RECOMMENDATION

Director Niemer noted that in July, the Commission approved a scope of work for review of park maintenance operations. In August, the Commission toured the Park Maintenance Division facility at the City's Corporation Yard. In September, staff presented a report providing information relative to the background and scope of park maintenance operations, the overall costs of providing those services, and a review of current and previous contracting-out efforts. At the October meeting staff detailed extensively the issues of cost, quality and oversight over maintenance functions.

The findings of the two reports are that outsourcing park maintenance services in whole or in part will not achieve cost savings and will not have a positive impact on quality. Research found that communities which have decided to outsource their park maintenance services have not achieved cost savings. Often outsourcing has been a solution to correct other problems within a park maintenance department, such as cities with a poor corporate culture in their park maintenance service delivery or for other issues not directly related to cost-benefit. These issues are not present in the City of Redding.

The need to be cost-efficient with both staff and material resources has long been a focus and necessity of the Parks Maintenance Division. The study conducted over the last few months provides a solid foundation for evaluating costs which will serve as additional guidance moving forward. Five specific recommendations are presented for the Commission to consider:

1. Parks Maintenance staff are extremely valuable because they have a wide range of skills that allow them to perform a full range of duties which in many cases negates the need to hire contract specialists at a much higher rate. The Division needs to continue to provide technical training and field cross-training to ensure the staff is as versatile as the needs.
2. For the performance of the tasks identified as "basic maintenance" which includes mowing, blowing, and pruning, staff assigned should reflect balance of roughly half and half permanent and temporary workforce. This balance will provide a mix of abilities for cost that is more favorable than a contracted rate.
3. Pursue adjustments to the labor contract that would allow for the use of part-time employees in addition to full-time temporary employees. This would provide for additional flexibility with staffing and the ability to keep employees year round in a part-time status.
4. Utilities count for \$365,000 or 15% of the Parks budget. Staff is investigating utilities savings to be realized through the installation of smart controllers that can be programmed remotely and react to the various micro-climate conditions in Redding. Such controllers have saved other communities tens of thousands of dollars annually. Staff plans to implement a comprehensive program in 2011.
5. Staff continues to supplement park maintenance services through the highly successful Adopt-a-Park, Adopt-a-Trail and Community Clean-Up programs. These efforts provide additional care to our valuable park assets without incurring costs to the park maintenance budget.

Each of these endeavors presents an opportunity to realize cost savings and/or minimize future cost impacts to the General Fund without incurring negative consequences to the quantity or quality of park maintenance services delivered.

Staff has researched the cost of work performed in the Park Maintenance Division compared to prevailing wage classifications for similar work, other community's pay scales, and the rates of existing City of Redding landscape contracts. The cost of the work performed by City staff would cost more under any of the other scenarios evaluated. The work most compatible with contract labor is the "basic maintenance" tasks. The combination of permanent and temporary forces performing this work today is about 30% less than the contract rate.

With in-house staff, the City pays the least amount for the labor provided. The continuity of staff and training provides for the most efficient work and responsive service. Other efforts will be pursued to reduce costs in utilities and labor and expand upon volunteer efforts.

Chair Hinz opened the meeting to public comment on this topic.

Mary Machado, executive director of Shasta Voices, noted her support for outsourcing park maintenance functions and urged the Commission to seek out bids for private firms.

Mary Schmitz next commented that she regularly utilized the city parks and she is extremely proud of them. She and her husband often stop to talk with the workers to note their appreciation. She is strongly opposed to privatization of park maintenance because of how well the parks are currently maintained. She does not believe that outsourcing the maintenance will provide an equal or better work product.

Greg Balkovek, Chairman of the Greater Redding Chamber of Commerce, noted the Chamber urges City staff to request local vendors to provide the City with quotes which would assist with further cost savings.

Kent Dagg of the Shasta Builders Exchange added his support to the comments by Mary Machado and Greg Balkovek.

Chair Hinz noted that in looking at the staffing of the Parks Maintenance Division, it appears to be very top-heavy. There are a lot of people who do a lot of jobs in many areas. What she is struggling with is that we need to benchmark. We won't know until we go out to bid what can or can not be saved. She understands how the numbers were derived, but expressed a general discomfort level to take recommendation as presented.

Commissioner McElvain recommended a benchmark could be derived from putting the 24 pocket parks put out for bid to see if they can be outsourced for less than the cost of the full-time employee who currently maintains them. He further related that the Commission is only seeing part of the picture and does not believe that a recommendation can be made to the City Council until an RFP is sent out and a cost comparison is done between current park maintenance costs and privatization costs.

Commissioner Wilson suggested that staff look at outsourcing the work performed by seasonal temporary workers for the pocket parks to see what savings might be achieved. He added that this would not impact the structure of the Park Maintenance Division.

Commissioner McCoach inquired whether temporary workers would be used for new medians which are added to the inventory. Director Niemer noted that new maintenance work is added every time a new park, trail or median are added to the city's inventory. She offered the possibility that future park expenditures could be included in Landscape Maintenance Districts. Commissioner Waybright supported this position.

Commissioner McElvain repeated the need to establish a production analysis benchmark and framed a motion, seconded by Chair Hinz, that the Commission direct staff to prepare an RFP for maintenance services at the City's 24 pocket parks. Director Niemer advised that the Commission does not have the authority to let an RFP, as this matter would be a meet-and-confer item under the union contract, which is a Council responsibility, and it would violate Council Policy against bidding work without an established funding source. The Commission only has the authority to recommend this course of action to City Council. Commission McElvain restated his motion.

**Motion:** To recommend to the City Council that an RFP be put out for the total maintenance of the 24 pocket parks  
(Made by Commissioner McElvain, Seconded by Commissioner Hinz)

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

**Motion:** To adopt staff recommendation to the City Council that the City of Redding retain the Park Maintenance Division as is with direction to implement the five steps noted in the staff report and add future parks to Landscape Maintenance Districts.  
(Made by Commissioner Waybright, Seconded by Commissioner McCoach)

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

## **PROJECTS UPDATES**

Director Niemer provided updates on the following items:

### John Reginato River Access

This project is going out to bid. The project will renovate the former South Bonnyview boat ramp area and include an update to the restroom facility, a new kayak launch and a new boat ramp itself.

T.R. Woods Grant

The Active 20/30 Club was successful in its grant application to the Shasta Regional Community Foundation. This will help create a new playground/picnic area.

Proposition 84 Grant

Staff submitted two proposals for these grant funds. One for a Community Center located in Caldwell Park and the other for a Community Center and playground on a future park site located along Lake Boulevard. Staff received a letter noting that both of these grants were denied. Staff will continue to look for funding for these projects.

No action was required on these informational items.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Wilson inquired whether staff has looked into a rotation of Planning Commissioners attending the CSAC meetings. Director Niemer will look into that. Commissioner Wilson asked about the status of the Goodwater Estates Trail Easement. Director Niemer related that was put into staff recommendations and Planning Department staff is currently meeting with the Developer.

**DIRECTORS' COMMENTS**

Director Niemer related that the Chico Outlaws baseball team Tiger Field visited yesterday as they are looking to hold some games here next summer.

Fantasy Fountain is 10 years old and has been having quite a few problems in the past couple of years. Staff is working with community partners to raise funds to replace the fountain with other spray park type features. This would allow the spray park to be open longer hours, as it would not be necessary to have staff present.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, at the hour of 5:43 p.m. Chair Hinz declared the meeting adjourned.

  
Susan Hinz, Chair