

**Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes April 10, 2012**

**1. Call Meeting to Order/Roll Call**

The Visalia Parks & Recreation Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, April 10, 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, Jeff Boswell and Robert Doi

**Guests:** Kiwanis Clubs of Visalia represented by: Debra Hill, Rita Woodard, Jesus Gamboa, and Brandon Smith

**Absent:** Ben Filiponi and Travis Griffith

**Staff:** Vince Elizondo, Jeannie Greenwood, Jim Bean, Vaughn Melcher, and Brenda Miernik

**2. Review and Approve the Minutes of the March 13, 2012, Meeting.** Commissioner Calhoun made a motion to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Doi seconded the motion.

**MOTION**

Motion passed 4-0

**3. Public Comment:** None.

*Written Communication on the Proposed New Park Concept Submitted by Visalia Resident, Bill Huott.* Commissioner Mann stated that in the packets there is a drawing regarding a proposed park for the Houston Elementary School area. Mr. Elizondo stated the area is 4 to 5 acres and Mr. Huott has proposed the park to several committees and the General Plan Update Review Committee. Commissioner Calhoun inquired what the zoning is on the property at this time. Commissioner Mann said the Commission would take the plan under advice and thanked Mr. Huott for his interest.

**4. Proposal to Formally Name a Section of Packwood Creek (Located east of Stonebrook, north of Cameron) the “Chen Memorial Open Space Preserve”.** Mr. Vaughn Melcher, stated he works in the Engineering Department and his main focus is trails projects. He said a current project is located along Packwood Creek, near Cameron and Caldwell Avenue, north of Costco. He noted the staff report he provided to the Commissioners tonight is a *REVISED* copy. He said the adjacent property owners desired to donate a nearby strip of land to the City for trail use and would like the property be named in memory of a deceased person. He said the proposed name is the Cheng Chih Chen Memorial Open Space Preserve, and requested a plaque for public viewing. Mr. Melcher said the value of the property is approximately \$284,000 and roughly 2.13 acres. He requested the Commission to approve the City staff report and recommend to Council to name the property the Cheng Chih Chen Memorial Open Space Preserve in accordance with the City’s policy on naming parks and open spaces.

Commissioner Calhoun asked if the design of the donated property would be consistent to the trail design. Mr. Melcher said it would.

Commissioner Boswell moved that the recommendation be made to Council as presented and Commissioner Doi seconded the motion.

**MOTION**

Motion passed 4-0

**5. Proposal to Formally Name the Creekside Park Project the Kiwanis Park.** Mr. Elizondo, Parks and Recreation Director, said in January 2012, City staff requested the Commission to consider a name for the neighborhood park site located of McAuliff Street and Tulare Avenue, in southeast Visalia. The park is scheduled to open in the summer of 2012, and it is within the scope and authority of the Commission to recommend a name to the Council for consideration within the guidelines of the “Facility Naming Policy”.

Mr. Elizondo said in a February 2009 meeting, the Commission appointed several Commissioners to serve on a sub-committee to propose park names for consideration by the full Commission. The sub-committee of Commissioners Boswell and Mann met on January 24, 2012, and had a specific proposal regarding naming the park. He said the sub-committee suggested that staff contact members of the local Kiwanis Clubs to see if they were interested in having the park named after their civic-minded organization. It was suggested that since the City already had a Soroptimist, Rotary, and Lion’s Club parks it was logical to contact the Kiwanis.

Mr. Elizondo reported that City staff met with representatives of the clubs on February 22, 2012, and they were excited to have the new park named after the Kiwanis Clubs of Visalia. The representatives were directed to go to their respective clubs and get formal approval to use the Kiwanis Club name on the park. He requested they send letters of support to the department. The letters were included in the packet for Commission review.

Mr. Elizondo stated the City staff recommendation is the Commission accept the City staff report, public testimony, and recommend to Council the naming of the new park at McAuliff Street and Tulare Avenue the new “Kiwanis Neighborhood Park”. He said some Kiwanis Club members are present and they might like to speak.

Ms. Debra Hill, President of the Kiwanis Club of Sequoia, said the Kiwanis is community based and strives to assist citizens of Visalia. She said the Sequoia Kiwanis is proud to have their name on the new park and would participate in any way on the upkeep of the park.

Commissioner Boswell suggested signage with the Kiwanis logo at the park and Mr. Elizondo said it was under discussion.

Mr. Brandon Smith, City staff from Community Development and past president of the Kiwanis, said he would pursue the logo idea. He said Kiwanis is celebrating their 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year.

Commissioner Mann asked for a motion to approve the staff report as written. Commissioner Boswell so moved and Commissioner Calhoun seconded.

### **MOTION**

Motion passed 4-0

- 6. Discussion of Potential Items for the Upcoming Joint Session with City Council on April 17, 2012.** Mr. Elizondo said a Joint Meeting was scheduled for April 17, but due to circumstances beyond control, Council and the City Manager decided to postpone the meeting until July or August. He stated this would be the time for the Commission to give staff direction as to what the Commission would like to present to Council or what the Commission would like staff to present to Council. Mr. Elizondo stated the allotted time for presentation would be 1 to 1½ hours. The last three joint meeting agendas were included in your packets for your review.

Commissioner Calhoun suggested a theme be presented to the Council - Parks Make Life Better. She said it could be demonstrated to Council how Parks and Recreation programs contribute significantly to the quality of life in Visalia.

Commissioner Boswell agreed and suggested a possible skit expanding on the theme. He stated he would like to highlight how much the department accomplishes on a limited budget and stated he would be happy to voice the financial needs of the department.

Commissioner Doi suggested the presentation include information on the rising costs of providing services to the community versus a declining budget related to the quality of life and growth in Visalia.

Commissioner Mann stated this is a good start for ideas for the meeting.

- 7. Review of the California Parks and Recreation Society Conference, March 20-23, 2012.** Commissioner Mann asked the Commissioners who attended the conference to share their experiences.

Commissioner Calhoun shared that the highlight of the conference for her was the discussion on the “new normal financial situation” for local and state budgets. She said other cities are just thinking about doing what the Visalia Parks and Recreation Department has already implemented and the community is lucky to have the programs available to them.

Mr. Elizondo said that next year the conference will be held in San Jose. He said approximately 10 years ago, attendance for the conferences was 4,000 to 5,000, but with current budget difficulties only 900 to 1,000 attended this year.

Mr. Elizondo said he and several staff members attended a session on improving employee morale, hosted by the director of the City of Orange. He said the theme was that in hard budget times it is not all about a pay check, but about the bonding of individuals in the work place.

Commissioner Mann said she attended the following sessions.

- Evidence-based programming. Some Senior Centers have support groups for people with chronic diseases and most suffer from depression. Therapists can be trained through a program at Stanford to facilitate support groups for this group of seniors.
- Motion in programming. Movement during any class and program could be implemented. For instance, during the Movies in the Park program, a facilitator would have everyone stand and do a stretching activity. Even in sitting classes some movement could be incorporated.
- Three behaviors that we control, which contribute significantly to death-causing diseases, are alcoholism, lack of exercise and smoking.
- Improving employee morale note: no one is appreciated too much.
- Best of the Best Awards and Networking Social – no one attended this year and next year someone should attend. Commissioner Mann found it valuable in the past.
- Commissioner Mann asked who would apply for the In Motion Outdoors Playground Grant. Mr. Elizondo replied that the Parks and Recreation Foundation would apply for it as a 501©3 non-profit.

**8. Annual Review and Approval of Fees and Charges.** Ms. Greenwood stated that as part of the bi-annual budget process each department is required to submit a schedule of rates and fees for City Council approval.

Ms. Greenwood reported that City staff worked with members of the Parks and Recreation Commission in 2009 to review fees and charges for programs and facilities. The process included studying policies from other organizations and designing a rates and fees philosophy. In May 2009 the Council approved the Commissioner's recommendation to adopt a Fee Philosophy that allows fees and charges for programs and activities based on a benefit system. She said programs with very individualized benefits were priced at a higher cost recovery than programs and services that have community based benefits.

Ms. Greenwood stated in 2009 an amenity based fee structure for park rentals was also introduced and approved by the Commission and Council. The fee structure adds value and cost to park areas with certain amenities or features. She said criteria for determining fees included the following – necessary staff, equipment, supplies or materials, membership or training necessary, insurance, security needs, marketing, discounts or scholarships, postage, utilities and facility rental costs.

Ms. Greenwood stated there have been no changes since it was approved last year and staff recommends the Parks and Recreation Commission review the policy and recommend adoption to the City Council.

Commissioner Boswell expressed his frustration that the City is not renting neighborhood parks and they are heavily used. Ms. Greenwood said the parks were designed with no restrooms, no parking, and to accommodate only the nearby neighborhood; therefore the City cannot rent them. Mr. Bean noted rentals would bring in more people, trash, and parking would cause complaints from residents in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Mann moved to accept the fees and charges related to facility use and special events as presented, and Commissioner Doi seconded it.

**MOTION**

Motion passed 4-0

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

• **Upcoming Recreation Programs & Special Events.** Ms. Greenwood reported on the following events and classes.

- The Annual Vi-Tri was successful with 200 participants. It was moved from Sunday to Saturday, and the route was improved including a time change.
- The Eggstravaganza, Saturday, April 7, overall was a good event. She said the newspaper reported 1,500 attendees but more than 2,000 were in attendance. Parky, Tipper (the Rawhide mascot), the Easter Bunny, and two other characters were present and a dance-off was held. There were food and information booths, bounce houses and slides for entertainment. Ms. Greenwood stated the department provided 10,150 eggs for the hunts. Of this total, 150 eggs were special because they included tickets that could be redeemed for prizes, i.e. coloring sets, soccer balls, stuffed animals, and plastic snakes.
- Mother & Son Campout is scheduled for April 4, at Sunset Park. At last count there were 90 participants registered.
- Spring Break Day Camp was last week and was successful.
- April 28, the Annual Dia del Nino Kids Festival will take place at Summers Park.
- Swim team tryouts and registration will take place this weekend.
- Our Summer Brochure is currently being printed and will be mailed out this month.

• **Upcoming Parks & Urban Forestry Projects, Programs & Special Events.** Mr. Jim Bean, Manager of Parks & Urban Forestry, reported the following:

- Houk Park's restroom has been removed and cleanup is continuing.
- Creekside Park should be completed in the next 60 days.
- The Urban Tree Foundation and CSET are working on the St. John's Riverwalk project; the irrigation project is underway. Arbor Day is April 28, the entrance rock will be in place and plans are to plant trees, grass and shrubs.
- Earth Day is Sunday, April 15. Two projects are planned, Mill Creek at Lover's Lane and Riggins at St. John's Parkway.
- Rotary Park restrooms have been removed and City crews are working on sidewalks.
- Community Development Block Grant funding was used at Recreation Park to install a new variable speed irrigation pump and the project will begin in 3 weeks.
- Riverway Sports Park Phase III 50% plans have been reviewed.

Mr. Bean remarked on the trails projects Mr. Vaughn Melcher is working on. To name a few – the Santa Fe Trail, the Packwood Creek Trail, and the Modoc connection to St. John's River Park project.

Mr. Elizondo stated there are actually 32 active trails projects in progress. He said he will be lobbying for a joint meeting between the Commission and the Waterways & Trails Committee, which will give Mr. Melcher the opportunity to share the details of the projects.

**Director's Report on Administrative Items.** Mr. Elizondo announced that Thursday night is the Rawhide's Opening night. Games will be played Friday and Saturday nights.

Mr. Elizondo stated that Commissioner Griffith has resigned effective today. He asked the Commission if they wanted to seek new alternates and they confirmed by consensus that they did.

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

- **Waterways & Trails Committee Report.** No report.
- **North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee.** No report.
- **Senior Citizens Advisory Committee Update.** Commissioner Mann reported that the Spring Open House was very successful with 150 attendees and 24 booths. The seniors are working on the outside arbor to create a place to assemble.
- **Parks & Recreation Foundation Monthly Report.** Mr. Boswell said he was not able to attend. Mr. Elizondo stated the Foundation's focus at this time is the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration.
- **General Plan Advisory Committee.** Commissioner Calhoun said the most recent meeting was the same night the Commissioners traveled to the CPRS Conference and she did not attend. She said the next scheduled meeting is April 19.
- **CAPRCBM.** Commissioner Doi stated he would like to resign from this for a while due to the required travel. He said he would be happy to serve on the North Visalia Advisory Committee.

**11. Adjourn to Regular Meeting, May 15, 2012, at 707 W. Acequia, City Council Chambers at 5:30 pm.**

Commissioner Boswell made the motion to adjourn to the next meeting, and Commissioner Doi seconded the motion.

**MOTION**

Motion passed 4-0

Brenda Miernik  
Senior Administrative Assistant