

Community Services Advisory Commission
Regular Meeting
Redding City Hall
777 Cypress Avenue
Redding, California
December 16, 2008, 3:09 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Community Services Advisory Chair Gerrine Peckenpaugh opened the meeting with the following Commissioners present; Leona McCoach, Susan Hinz and Judy Salter.

Also present were Community Services Director Kimberly Niemer, Support Services Director Gerry Kersten, Community Projects Manager Terry Hanson, Community Projects Manager Chris Glover, Management Analyst Matthew McCallum and Executive Assistant Mari Szyal.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

Commissioner Waybright arrived at 3:12 p.m.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The minutes from the meeting on November 12, 2008, the monthly Recreation Division Activity Report, the Convention Center Activity Report, the Convention Center Calendar, the Convention Center Capital Projects List were presented.

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

AYES: Commissioners McCoach, Peckenpaugh, Hinz, Salter and Waybright

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

CITY BUDGET UPDATE

Director Niemer summarized the results of the City Council special meeting held on December 15 regarding the city budget. The global recession is affecting cities throughout California. While Redding is in better financial position than most, the weak economy is having a negative impact on

the city's budget through lower-than-anticipated sales tax revenue and building-related fees. In order to remain viable for the long-term, the city must reduce its General Fund budget. At the meeting last night, the City Council discussed the budget situation in detail and approved approximately \$3 million in budget reductions. These reductions include program reductions the layoff of 14 city positions, including Community Projects Manager Glover.

Recreation staff will reduce operating materials and postage expense for youth sports programs. The Redding Aquatic Center will reduce some services, such as early morning and late afternoon/evening swims and off-peak operating hours at the Riverwalk Grille. The elimination of one Community Projects Manager position will result in delays in park project design work and will impact community projects such as the annual Creek Cleanup, volunteer playground builds, adopt-a-park and trail, Churn Creek trail master planning, and participation with County Parks Master Plan effort.

The Recreation Superintendent position, which has been open since Gordon Carpenter's retirement in June, will continue to remain vacant. With the elimination of one position and another one vacant, the department's resources are substantially impacted.

The Youth Action Council budget was reduced by 50%, which will allow us to staff the program but not fund projects. They will need to look to other funding sources for their projects.

Commissioner McCoach inquired whether the Community Services Department would again be affected should there be another budget cut in the future. Director Niemer noted that City Manager Starman has expressed his desire to implement strategic cutbacks rather than across-the-board, so it is unknown at this time how future cuts would affect the department.

Director Kersten noted that for the Parks Division the elimination of a vacant position will result in noticeable reduction in care of landscaped areas, such as a longer period between mowing. Funding reductions for park maintenance improvements will mean the delay of major repairs to park facilities, potentially requiring playground and other equipment to be taken out of service for extended periods.

Commissioner Salter expressed her concern that as these budget cuts are based on sales tax revenue from the first six months of 2008, she expected there would be further cuts made when the revenue numbers from the remainder of the year are available, as this was when the largest impact was felt from the downturn.

Director Kersten replied that the departments all provided the City Manager with budget reduction scenarios of 5%, 10% and 15%. When put all together, these decreases totaled approximately \$10 million. It is expected that if further cuts are necessary, they would be derived from these scenarios. He also noted that if the unions make some concessions prior to another reduction, this would help to mitigate the impact.

No action was required on this informational item.

PROJECTS UPDATES

Community Projects Manager Glover provided updates on the following projects:

Sacramento River Trail Benches

This Eagle Scout projects involves replacement of the seat and back material for wood/concrete benches. The wood material was installed in the 1980's and will be replaced with Trex-type boards.

Caldwell Park

The unpaved section in the Caldwell Park parking lot near the Aquatic Center, which is used during heavy activity in the summer, was recently paved. Additional landscaping was installed and all of the Caldwell Park parking lots were re-striped.

Benton Dog Park

There are two projects in the works right now - add a water faucet in the small dog area and moving the current water fountain closer to the parking lot area - should be completed soon.

Community Projects Manager Hanson provided an update on the following project:

Sacramento River Parkway

This \$2M project was begun several years ago and consists of four components:

- The first component involved restoration and repaving three miles of the Sacramento River Trail. This work was done on the south side of the Trail and also involved repaving some of the existing parking lots.
- The second component extends the Sacramento River Trail by one mile from the Sundial Bridge to Hwy 44. This involved widening the approach to the Sundial Bridge and the area by the Turtle Bay Café, along with paving one new mile of the Trail leading from the Café to Hwy 44.
- The third component is restoration of 70 acres of land by the Turtle Bay Museum. 40 acres of Himalayan blackberries and some other invasive species were removed.
- The fourth component is \$200,000 worth of interpretive and directional signage, which includes auto-focus binoculars and crank-operated audio boxes. We will also be providing informational touch-screens at either end of the Sundial Bridge.

Community Services Director Niemer provided updates on the following projects:

Caldwell Memorial

The dedication for the memorial to Claude Caldwell, situated in Caldwell Park along the Sacramento River Trail, has been postponed until next Spring in order for the Caldwell family to all be present.

Riverbend Golf Course

A notice was sent to the residents surrounding the Riverbend Golf Course, informing them of an informational meeting held earlier this month. This project is still in the preliminary stages.

No action was required on these informational items.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner McCoach expressed her thanks to Commissioner Peckenpaugh for her years of service on the Commission.

DIRECTORS' COMMENTS

None.

WORKSHOP

Director Niemer recalled that the Parks Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) workshop was requested by the Commission in November to review the existing plan, the available funding and outstanding park project ideas. Prior to this meeting, Commissioners were provided with a tour map of the sites under discussion along with a more detailed map of the zoning and neighboring uses around each site in order that they might take the tour to refresh their memories or see some sites for the first time.

Based on the plan approximately \$1.7 million remains available over the life of the plan. This is less than anticipated, however staff has based this on building permit activity and made significant reductions to the revenue estimates. These estimates may be too conservative, but staff are uncertain as to when development activity will return to more normal trends. The fund owes approximately \$1 million dollars a year in debt service.

It is not our expectation that a specific list of priority projects will be established from this workshop, however, we would like to walk away with a better sense of the Commission's interests. For that reason, we have included a rating column next to each project description.

Management Analyst McCallum noted that the CIP has been updated in the past two months to include changes in revenue and expenditure numbers.

Community Projects Manager Glover then provided an overview of the projects. Director Niemer related that staff is looking to the Commission to provide feedback on their priorities. This will allow staff to focus their attention when looking for funding and partners.

Commissioner Peckenpaugh observed there are items on the list which are almost ready to go.

Commissioner McCoach noted T.R. Woods is an existing park which just needs a refresh.

Director Niemer pointed out that the Riverbend Golf Course acquisition would significantly impact the capital plan. There ensued a discussion regarding the pros and cons of this project, including the timing. Commissioner Hinz expressed her concern about taking on a large project in the current economy. Commissioner Waybright observed that what is weighing heavily in its favor is that this quadrant of the city is so underserved.

Commissioner McCoach noted her opinion that as the Commission is re-prioritizing the CIP, any projects taken off the current list should be left as open space for now, rather than sold as surplus land. Based on the current economy it would make sense to hold on to the land for now, until real estate prices are on the rise again.

Commissioner Hinz stated that her first priority is making sure the debt service is covered, then put some aside for Riverbend, if it becomes available. She is not comfortable spending the entire \$1.7 million. Maybe a couple of smaller projects would be appropriate. She is very much in favor of taking a conservative approach to the CIP.

Commissioner Salter noted that considering the recent budget cuts, she would like to have a better understanding of the park maintenance costs associated with their decisions. She thought it would be difficult to make decisions on projects without knowing their impact on park maintenance staff. Community Projects Manager Hanson noted that Park Superintendent Cannon has developed a formula for average cost-per-acre of developed park or trail. Director Kersten noted he would provide some rough numbers for maintenance of the projects on the worksheet prior to December 31, 2008.

Motion: That all Commissioners submit their worksheets, complete with any appropriate comments, to Director Niemer by December 31, 2008. (Made by Commissioner Hinz, Seconded by Commissioner McCoach)

AYES: Commissioners McCoach, Peckenpaugh, Hinz, Salter and Waybright
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, at the hour of 5:40 p.m. Chair Peckenpaugh declared the meeting adjourned.

Chair _____