

**PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2009**

PRCS COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson White, Vice Chairperson Wright, Lynch, Slusser, Swope and Truscelli

PRCS COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Joseph-Hover

STAFF PRESENT: Director Corinne Centeno and Superintendent Chris Beth

Chairperson Shawn White called the meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission to order at 7:00pm in Room 1 of the Community Activities Building, 1400 Roosevelt Avenue, Redwood City, California.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the June Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission meeting were approved noting that the time for reconvening of the July 22 meeting should be 7:00 p.m. not 7:30 p.m.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was received

ITEM 1 – BUDGET UPDATE AND CORE SERVICES DISCUSSION

Director Centeno shared copies of a document from californiacityfinance.com entitled, "Estimated Local Property Tax Borrowing and HUTA Taking" which listed the anticipated reductions for all cities in San Mateo County. She noted that at last month's meeting, she had described the worst-case scenario as being the maximum borrow or take from property tax, gas tax and redevelopment funding and that the current State proposal makes that worst-case scenario a reality. No specific redevelopment take away number for Redwood City has been determined. Estimates of property and gas tax losses for Redwood City are \$2,892,572 and \$1,284,484 respectively, or a total revenue reduction of \$4,177,056 this fiscal year. This amount represents about 5% of the total City general fund budget. The City Manager has begun discussions at the Department Head level to develop recommendations for City Council action in September.

The Director reminded the Commission of the almost \$1,000,000 in Department budget reductions approved in July of 2009 which resulted in four layoffs, closure of Hoover Pool, 12% decrease in building operating hours and landscape maintenance level reductions. She noted that developing these cut scenarios seemed impossible and doing it again within the same fiscal year even more so. She read several passages from the booklet, "Fifty Years in the Making, The Story of Redwood City's Parks 1937-1987" as a reminder that the department not only survived, but has actually thrived facing equal challenges in its past.

The Director described her focus in developing recommended reductions in the context of core services and asked the Commissioners to provide their input. At the request of the Chairperson, Director Centeno provided a high-level overview of the

various functions of the Department. She noted that the staff has defined core services as safe and clean public spaces (parks and buildings) with programming for youth vs. adults, and then other special needs populations that might include seniors, economically disadvantaged, disabled as well as creating an overall sense of community a high priority.

Commissioner Slusser agreed with the priority of public spaces being safe, clean and available; would look at participation numbers for programming decisions; and youth more than senior programming. He noted that facility users have to be comfortable rather than wowed, which could allow for savings with different cleaning or maintenance levels.

Commissioner Swope felt that given the current economy, After School programs and Human Services Programs are priority; that where possible, reductions in staff should come through attrition vs. lay-offs; and that the investment in our park and building infrastructure should be protected.

Vice Chairperson Wright stated that safety was his top priority and would replace only where it was an issue; that he would not advocate park closures; and that we must still service park space. He would prioritize services for youth but there is a need for balance and what gives the most benefit to the most people.

Commissioner Lynch urged exploration of volunteer resources to augment, not replace City staff, such as volunteers/neighbors helping to supervise and/or maintaining parks, to rally residents to our needs.

Chairperson White noted that his top priority was safety and security noting that cleanliness was often an integral part of a visitor's perception of safety. He agreed that youth should be a priority; that we should continue to develop partnerships and activities that foster a sense of community. The Chairperson also suggested consideration of business sponsorships.

Director Centeno asked the Commission for their input with respect to additional revenue generation such as fees for non-profit usage; increases to existing field, picnic, facility fees; and tournament fees.

Both Commissioner Slusser and Chairperson White commented that they would consider non-profit fees as a means of covering our costs and keeping buildings and public spaces open, noting that the fees would likely be lower than other similar venues. Commissioner Swope voiced some concern at increasing fees at a time when many are struggling economically. She noted that one non-profit using space at the Fair Oaks Community Center was facing large increases in the demand for services and could ill afford increases in costs for space.

Director Centeno asked the Commission for input on the issue of the Department's relationship with non-profits, either reaching agreement to move work done by the City to a non-profit, or the Department forming its own non-profit. She noted that the City already has quasi City non-profits in the Library Foundation, the Police Activities League and the Friends of the Veterans Memorial Senior Center, and that in other cities some of our work, particularly in the Human Services Division, is handled by non-profit agencies.

Commissioner Swope commented that we should constantly be looking for partnerships, which will allow us to do more for less cost. Chairperson White suggested the possibility of a "Friends of the Parks" organization. Commissioner Slusser is familiar with the non-profit Samaritan House in San Mateo indicating the organization can draw many volunteers.

ITEM 2 – SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

- **Capital Projects (Joseph-Hover, Lynch and Slusser)**
Commissioner Slusser reported on work on the Hawes Park Design, which includes installation of artificial turf and changes to restrooms, bleachers and parking. A community comment meeting is scheduled for July 30 at Hawes School Multipurpose Room.
- **Fields/Facilities (White, Wright and Joseph-Hover)**
Superintendent Beth reported on the progress made at a meeting earlier in the evening with AYSO and Juventus representatives. He also reported that on an upcoming meeting with Belmont sports groups that serve Redwood Shores youth who are requesting additional use of Redwood Shores Fields.
- **Strategic/Visioning (Slusser, Swope and White)**
There was nothing new to report from this subcommittee.
- **Veterans Memorial Senior Center (Lynch, Swope and Truscelli)**
Commissioner Truscelli reported on various activities and programs at the Senior Center.

ITEM 2 – STAFF UPDATES

- **Quality of Life Element Review**
Director Centeno reported that on July 27, the joint City Council and Planning Commission will be unveiling the new draft General Plan. She reminded the Commission of their August 6 joint meeting with Civic Cultural Commission and the Senior Affairs Commission where they will hear a presentation and have an opportunity to give input to the Quality of Life chapter of the General Plan. One of the principals of the General Plan consulting team will be making the presentation.

Items for August Agenda

The Commission agreed that it would meet on its regular August meeting date in a joint session with the Senior Affairs Commission to review the Veterans Memorial Senior Center Scoping Study.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

-None

The regular meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission was adjourned at 8:15pm to be reconvened for a Special Joint Meeting with the Civic Cultural Commission and the Senior Affairs Commission at 7:00pm on Thursday, August 6, 2009 at the Veterans Memorial Senior Center, 1455 Madison Avenue, Redwood City, California.