

City of Santa Rosa  
Board of Community Services Meeting  
Minutes – March 26, 2008

1. Call to Order  
The meeting was called to order at 4:12 p.m. by Chairperson Lawson at the Finley Community Center in Santa Rosa, California.
  2. Roll Call  
Present: Regalia, Brown, Lawson, Costa, Richardson, Bañuelos, Schwinn  
Absent: Martell
  3. Public comments on items not on this agenda – None.
  4. Approval of Minutes  
Costa made a motion to approve the minutes of March 5, 2008, which was seconded by Brown. Vote to approve was unanimous.
  5. Approval of Agenda  
There were no changes to the agenda and it was adopted without objection.
  6. Scheduled Items
    - 6.1 Santa Rosa Rugby/"For Pete's Sake" Presentation  
Sy Penry, Steve Wren and John Nagle gave a brief update to the Board of the fundraising, construction, programming and improvements at the rugby field at Northwest Community Park. They also noted the partnership with Santa Rosa Charter School to complete educational gardens and the addition of spring youth clinics. Board Chair Lawson presented them with a certificate recognizing their successful partnership with the City.
    - 6.2 Recreation and Parks Business and Strategic Action Plan  
Richardson reviewed the changes made to the Business and Strategic Action Plan (BSAP) based on comments from the public and the Board at the previous Board meeting held on March 5, 2008. He also reviewed the purpose of the General Plan Amendment (GPA) and noted the upcoming dates for the public input quadrant meetings. Next steps include finalizing the environmental review for the GPA and to possibly bring it and the BSAP forward as a proposal to City Council for review and consideration on Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>. He also reviewed funding strategies and costs for estimated additional maintenance, deferred maintenance and new facilities and identified 4 sources for capital projects: park development impact fees, potential grants, other potential revenue sources, such as a bond measure or parcel tax, and possible partnerships and collaborations. There is a need of \$200,000,000 for priority facilities and new parkland and the constant challenge to keep up with annual maintenance costs of \$3,100,000. Richardson concluded his presentation by noting the need to develop sustainable, long term funding for capital improvement projects and maintenance, the need to develop multiple funding streams to realize community goals and the need to establish a citizen committee to study financing alternatives. He recommended the Board adopt the plan with the changes that have been outlined and move the plan forward to Council for review.  
  
Board comments, concerns and questions included: the difference between a parcel tax and sales tax option, the amount of revenue each could possibly produce and why a parcel tax might be preferred over a sales tax initiative. A number of sales tax initiatives have been presented and there may be voter fatigue in seeking approval of another one. A parcel tax would be levied on all real estate parcels except those that are tax exempt. A sales tax increase of ¼ cent could produce \$7,000,000 per year in revenue; a parcel tax of \$50 could generate about \$3,000,000 per year.
- Other Board concerns: Questions were raised whether Council would designate more money to the department due to the budget shortfall outlined in the BSAP and whether a citizen's committee could open

up other avenues to allow residents to guide resource allocation. The BSAP identifies where problems are and strategic steps the Council could take to help solve those problems. Council could adopt the plan and organize a citizen's committee to focus on finding solutions to the budget problems the department faces. There is also a need to educate the public in regard to the department's budget.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Aldolfo Mendoza, 2177 Erica Street: He has been working with the department to provide afterschool programs in the southwest area. He is now involved with Athletico Santa Rosa, a non profit organization and requested more facilities be built to help youth in the area.

Jessica Diaz, 829 St. Helena Avenue: Thanked staff for their accessibility and help in answering her questions. She would like to see the implementation of a citizen's advisory committee to help foster support for the needed funding mechanisms. She shared her appreciation that the ADA language had been added to the plan and made the following requests: the new parkland classifications (plazas, gathering places, trails and pathways) be consistent with the language in the General Plan; that all residents within the city's urban growth boundary be included in the BSAP; to include density and parks deficiencies in the criteria to prioritize park development; and that the ¼, ½, and 1 mile distances be clarified as to whether they reference "as the crow flies" or actual routes that people can take.

Board questions and comments included: Were unincorporated islands part of this study? No, the community profile of the BSAP does not reflect this area, but is part of the General Plan element portion. Community meetings to be held in April will deal with the unincorporated islands and it is hoped that they will be included in the recommendations made by the Planning Commission to Council.

The mandatory ¼ mile distance seems to be too rigid and needs to be clarified. Board members were reminded of the importance of community input and making sure the plan sent to Council is the best it can be. Appreciation for the addition of the ADA language and the need to be consistent with the language in the BSAP and General Plan was expressed. The question was asked how the standard can include school acreage when there is no accessibility to schools? It was also noted that language concerning the underserved community needs to be included since the southwest area language was removed. Council needs to be made aware that the unincorporated areas need to be included.

Richardson reminded Board members that the General Plan Amendment and the Business and Strategic Action Plan are 2 different processes. Language relative to the southwest area was not removed in the BSAP. Inclusion of language concerning underserved areas and park deficiencies can be addressed through public meetings, Planning Commission and/or the City Council.

The ¼ mile goal references access to a trail, creek pathway, park or some other recreation amenity and not to a specific park. Path connectivity is not included as parkland but is included in the definitions relating to payment of park development and in lieu development fees. The value of school parkland was also expressed as was the need to be a little more flexible so that projects can move forward. The ¼ mile reference needs to be a goal towards connectivity.

The acreage in connection with the joint use agreements with schools throughout the City of Santa Rosa exceeds the acreage used in the formula and needs to be part of the public education process. These partnerships need to be included in the BSAP. The funding mechanism wording needs to be changed from a footnote in the BSAP to the body of the text and should be bolded, italicized and underlined. The plan should also note that since 2002, 1/3 of existing park development fees have been spent on existing

facilities. New residents should not be required to pay for new facilities and rehabilitation of existing facilities.

It was noted that the Community Development Department is researching the inconsistencies in the quadrant map. The community profile portion of the plan identified trends in the City of Santa Rosa and included key demographics, population growth projections, age, ethnicity, employment, income levels and education. These are all generalizations and including or excluding 7,000 people in any area of the City will not change the funding problems or strategies needing to be implemented.

School property relates to the 6 acre per 1,000 parkland standard. The board was reminded about the difficulty in mandating to a school district what their practices will be in regard to fencing their property. The 3.5 acres per 1,000 through the current development practices is not going to change.

The Business and Strategic Action Plan includes General Plan Amendment changes to create greater flexibility and to address some of the funding issues from a land use standpoint. It creates a call to action to generate new funding mechanisms for operations and maintenance, capital facilities and refurbishment of existing parks. It also sets benchmarks and performance standards for the department and changes the way park maintenance resources are managed. Raising fees will not solve the problems – a citywide revenue stream is needed to address the funding concerns. The Board needs to consider whether this plan is the direction in which the department needs to go.

Final Board comments included: The plan has uncovered areas which the department does well and some which are lacking; there are underserved areas and not all of them are in the southwest area; we cannot omit school standards and then go back and try to partner with them; the community, staff and MIG were commended for their work on this draft plan; the plan supports and guides the department and the community. There are still a few spots that need language clarification and public comment. Not all schools are accessible which does not give a true picture of what is available to the community.

Regalia made a motion to approve the plan as amended and forward it to Council with the recommendation for adoption. The motion was seconded by Schwinn. The vote was unanimous.

### 6.3 Staff Reports

Hovden reported on a fundraising event by the Lions' Club at Southwest Community Park on Sunday, Aug. 24<sup>th</sup>. It is hoped that \$175,000 will be raised for portable buildings at the park. Prince Gateway Park is close to being completed. Staff is hopeful the historical Hoag House can be moved to that location and that a café/concession could be housed there. The Board will be updated when the grand opening/dedication is planned.

Hovden also noted the availability of redevelopment funding for the following projects: One million dollars for the master plan/first phase of the Bayer property; \$500,000 for Airfield Park and \$800,000 for Southwest Community Park. The first step in the Airfield Park project will be to ask Council on April 8<sup>th</sup> to adopt a mitigated negative declaration which could allow the project to go out for bid later this summer.

The Boback sculpture will move to its' scheduled location on Mendocino Avenue soon and a dedication will be scheduled later this year. The Kahn sculpture is complete and can be viewed at the Comstock Mall behind City Hall Annex. The best viewing time is about 3pm. Dedication of this artwork will be scheduled in conjunction with an upcoming First Friday event.

## 7. Chairperson's and Board Members' Reports

7.1 Committees

Reports were given on the Art in Public Places, Senior Center, A Place to Play Task Force, Play Equipment and Merit Awards committee meetings as well as the Mayor’s Luncheon.

The passing of Paul Coussens was noted as was his service and dedication to the Santa Rosa Youth Athletic Field Trust and A Place To Play. Staff will contact his family in regard to possibly naming the senior baseball field at A Place To Play in his honor. This item will be brought back to the Board at a future meeting.

Regalia requested Seniors, Inc be invited to attend a future Board meeting.

7.2 Other Reports

A few Board members attended the Board and Commission training in Corte Madera on Sat., March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Information was brought back and is available to all Board members.

Schwinn reported on the mini computer lab project that she and her husband installed at “Da Pad”, a neighborhood center which provides recreation and leisure opportunities for youth.

Board members were encouraged to attend as many quadrant meetings as possible to help educate the public concerning the General Plan Amendment. A list of meeting dates and times was distributed to the Board.

Comments about *Legends at Bennett Valley* should be forwarded to Marc Richardson or Eric Jorgeson.

8. Future Agenda Items

There is a need for the Bayer property to be formally named. This item will be brought back to the Board at a future meeting.

9. Written Communications

It was noted that the West End Newsletter and letters from Jack Swearngen, Northwest Santa Rosa Neighborhood Association and Mary and Gary Balcerak had been distributed to Board members. Correspondence will be addressed as needed by staff.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:51 pm.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board is scheduled for Wednesday, April 23, 2008 at 4pm at the Finley Community Center in Santa Rosa, California.

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Craig Lawson, Board Chair

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Yvonne Earle, Recording Secretary