

City of Santa Rosa
Board of Community Services Meeting
Minutes – July 23, 2008

1. Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by Chairperson Lawson at the Finley Community Center in Santa Rosa, California.
2. Roll Call
Present: Martell, Brown, Costa, Richardson, Lawson
Absent: Regalia, Schwinn, Bañuelos
3. Public comments on items not on this agenda
Allen Thomas, 306 Boyce Street, shared information on the West End neighborhood picnic held at DeMeo Park on Saturday, July 19th and the Bocce ball games held every Friday night. He also distributed a petition signed by neighborhood residents opposing any large events, amplified music, alterations, modifications or addition of outbuildings to the DeTurk Round Barn park site.
4. Approval of Minutes
Costa made a motion, which was seconded by Martell, to approve the minutes of June 25, 2008. 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 Proposed Public Gathering Area at Park Gardens (Imwalle Gardens development)
Bruce Aspinall, Cobblestone Developers, gave an overview of the concept for a proposed public gathering area in the Park Gardens development located off of West Third Street, currently the site of Imwalle Gardens. Ralph Alexander, landscape architect, reviewed the plan concept which would include a low key, low maintenance recreation area with low water usage, a linear path down to the creek, installation of benches to allow creek viewing and a meandering concrete path within the gathering area. It is anticipated some invasive and non-native plant materials from the adjacent top of the creek bank area would be removed as would some native trees from the inland side of the creek access path. Street light type illumination would also be provided. Staff supports the proposed concept and requests the Board's endorsement, which, if attained, would need to be shared with the Planning Commission.

Board concerns included removal of trees, cost of a concrete vs. paved path, and presentation date of the proposed concept to the Waterways Committee. Staff requested all trees be removed from the creek's side of the sidewalk. Some red maples would be planted to balance the remaining street trees and to give it a natural appearance. Concrete paths are lower in cost to maintain than paved. This plan was endorsed by the Waterways Committee in February, 2008 and is scheduled for review on tomorrow's Waterways Committee agenda.

No public comments were received.

Costa made a motion to support the concept with the details to be worked out between staff and the developer. Martell seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

6.2 Budget Update

Richardson shared information concerning the decline of sales and property tax revenues for the last seven consecutive quarters resulting in a General Fund structural deficit of approximately eight million dollars. He presented a PowerPoint presentation outlining strategic approaches being considered as well as an overview of the anticipated impacts on the department to reduce its budget by between \$900,000 and 2.3 million dollars. Department staff meetings are being held to solicit their input and suggestions. Three generic budget reduction possibilities might be: (1) Try to preserve green space used most often and closest to residents and make cuts to facilities; (2) Cut or reduce maintenance to neighborhood parks to preserve facilities that are used most; or (3) Close the most subsidized department facility, eliminate \$100,000 in free recreation programs, reduce median and back on maintenance, and drastically reduce maintenance in, and/or close, neighborhood parks. A recommendation from staff will need to be given to the City Manager by August 8th. A summary of themes that staff would like to be utilized in making budget cut decisions include: Level of service impacts, focus on safety and security vs. aesthetics, core programs that serve the most people and have the greatest cost recovery; and continuing to provide excellent customer service. Staff has also contributed suggestions on how to increase revenue, decrease expenditures and restructure department management and operations/service delivery. A list of principles used in decision making in prior years was also shared. It was noted that a public education campaign will be needed.

Board comments included whether the Senior Center, if closed, could be sold or would it remain an ongoing security issue. There is a current lease agreement for portions of the facility and the department hopes to maintain the existing contracts for leases so revenue could continue to be generated. It is hoped the facility could be refurbished in the future and possibly be morphed into a multi-generational facility with an emphasis on the arts.

Board commended staff for their viable ideas and expressed their support in sharing specifics with the public to help them understand the impact of future budget cuts.

6.3 Request to Name Park

Meredith Strom, Administrative Technician, reviewed the request from Paul Babbini to name a park after his father, Angelo Babbini, a former staff member of the department. No park or facility has currently been identified that lends itself to this request, however, trees could be planted or a park amenity could be named in his honor.

Paul Babbini, 303 West 8th Street, thanked staff for passing on his request to the Board, shared thoughts about his father and his impact on the City, and requested a park or amenity be named to honor him.

The park naming policy and procedure were reviewed. The Board suggested an existing tree, perhaps in Juilliard Park, could be named in honor of Angelo Babbini. Staff will work with Paul Babbini to find an appropriate tree location and bring the recommendation back to the Board at a future meeting.

6.4 Update on DeTurk Roundbarn Renovation Project

Richardson noted that a series of public meetings have been held regarding the scope of development of the DeTurk Roundbarn and a proposed outbuilding that would provide for storage, public restrooms, and areas for catering needs and staff. Staff would like to operate a cost effective facility and also meet the needs of the neighborhood.

Mark Adams, TLCD Architecture, gave an overview summary concerning the design changes to the building. The dog park, appropriate occupancy, anticipated uses of the building, security of the outbuilding, parking and noise level were concerns expressed by those attending the public meetings. Site drawing revisions were

shared with the Board depicting changes to both the interior of the facility and exterior amenities, and with no inclusion of an outbuilding. It was noted the occupancy capacity would decrease by about 1/3 due should the restrooms, storage, catering and staff areas be included in the interior of the facility. The current drawing has not yet been shared with the neighborhood.

Eric Jorgeson, Deputy Director of Recreation, reviewed how the use plan for the building was created, the vision of the types and frequency of events and the anticipated costs of operations. It was noted that parking for larger events would need to be off site and most events would need to be held earlier in the evening. Approximately 65 to 70% of significant revenue generating functions would need to have about 150 people in attendance. Should the capacity requirement be reduced, a new pro forma would need to be generated.

Martell attended the public meeting on July 17th and inquired whether the neighborhood had contacted staff in regard to forming a committee concerning this facility. An invitation has been extended to review the operational plan but no contact from the neighborhood has been received.

Costa questioned the total amount of participants that could attend due to the proposed reduction in the interior occupancy capacity. Originally it was anticipated about 200 people could attend an event; with the proposed reduction it is estimated that about 130 to 150 participants could be accommodated. It was also noted that all other neighborhood concerns deal with management of the facility.

Brown inquired how the grant money might be affected by changing the historic value of the building's interior. Staff is checking with the state in regard to this concern. The neighborhood prefers no outbuilding be constructed and staff is unsure whether the California Cultural and Heritage Endowment will allow interior modifications. Brown also questioned whether the outbuilding should be more representative in regard to the houses in the area. It was noted that should the outbuilding be allowed, it would still have to be approved through the Design Review process. The consensus is the neighborhood is unaccepting of any type of outbuilding.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Michael Friedenber, President of the Sonoma Arts Council and a former vendor in the West End neighborhood, encouraged the Board to look at this facility as a community resource. He commended the staff for their creative programming ideas and suggested the northeast corner of the property might be a good location for an outbuilding. He requested the Board protect the historic value of the building and not restrict how the building can benefit the whole community now and in the future.

Richardson requested the Board share their thoughts and ideas on the direction staff should take.

Martell shared her concern that neighbors need to attend Board meetings to hear the updated information and to assist the Board with the decisions that need to be made. She would support construction of an outbuilding on the site so as not to destroy the historical value of the barn's interior.

Costa expressed concern over a reduction of the barn's historical value by moving various amenities to the interior of the building and supported including an outbuilding in the plan. She would like to see the design move forward since there are time constraints with the CCHE grant and was hopeful the management issues could be worked out between staff and the neighborhood.

Brown commented on the need to think past today and to also take advantage of the grant. It is a practicality that an outbuilding is a necessity. He suggested it could be situated on the northwest or northeast portion of the site.

Lawson commented on the need to know what can and cannot be done inside the building so as not to impact its historic nature. He also voiced the need for neighbors to be engaged in the discussion on the financial feasibility of this project. Should the building only be restored from a seismic and safety standpoint, what will the neighbors end up with should this park and facility be on the target list due to budget concerns? He suggested that answers are needed from the state as well as knowing the financial and maintenance reality of this project so that TLCDC will know what direction to take. The health, safety and code compliant concerns regarding a developer's offer for satellite facilities across the street also need to be vetted out with the neighbors.

Richardson noted the need to meet the legal requirements of the historic preservation of the facility. The neighborhood's concerns of how the building will be operated, the visual impact on the neighborhood, should the outbuilding be included, and locating the restrooms on the exterior as well as who would use them also needs to be addressed. He also noted this may need to be a phased project and the possibility of using a mobile facility containing tables and chairs that could be shared with another facility. Staff may also need to work with the DeTurk Village developer and his offer to provide additional space.

Other neighborhood meetings will be held in the near future. This item will be brought back to the Board when many of the concerns and questions are answered. It was noted that the Board is not the final word on the permitting process.

6.5 Staff Reports

A. Business and Strategic Action Plan (BSAP) Update

Staff continues to work with Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) to develop a tool kit which will be used by staff to inform the community as to the recommendations that are in the BSAP and to educate residents with their options as to financing and the General Plan Amendment. It is hoped that MIG will engage in design work for the Newhall Bike Path in September and that it could be finished by the end of the calendar year. Council has approved staff's request to extend the contract term with MIG for another six months so that these two items can be completed. The Board will continue to be updated as progress is made.

Lawson noted the Planning Commission approved the General Plan Amendment last month. It is hoped Council will review it in September.

B. Roseland Community Park

Earlier this year the department submitted a grant to the Open Space District for funding to acquire the proposed Roseland Creek Community Park and Trail in southwest Santa Rosa. Jennifer Tuell reported the Open Space District has recommended 2.5 million dollars be awarded for this project. The board will meet tomorrow to review all projects and make formal award. Staff will attend and public comments will be entertained.

C. Live at Juilliard Events

Laneil Bryant, Recreation Coordinator, gave a brief review and update of this program. Approximately 2,000 people have attended the first 2 concerts this summer and wine has been added to this year's venue. Staff will continue to refine and improve this free family event. It was noted that the same food vendor will be at each concert.

Board questioned whether offering beer might be an option if the weather is hot and if money had been budgeted for public safety to provide security at each concert. Staff wants to be respectful of the vendor providing wine and will wait to see if the capacity of the audience could support 2 beverage vendors. Bryant mentioned that attractive metal work is used to delineate the area where alcohol is being served. It was also noted that the current attendance does not support 2 food vendors.

Police have not worked this event since 2005. Staff have not felt the need to have police presence there and have been trained in how to quickly request police assistance, should the need arise. Staff has contacted the Volunteers In Police Action, a customer service oriented group and their roll would be no different than if we had our own volunteers keeping their eyes and ears open at the event and they would not enforce any laws or rules. The police department is not prepared at this time to impose a requirement for additional security. This event will continue to be family oriented so as not to require police staffing.

It is also hoped the Mother's Club might provide children's activities prior to the event and that movies could be shown at the conclusion of future concerts.

A request was made that staff contact risk management in regard to any necessary requirements for volunteer security at the event.

7. Chairperson's and Board Members' Reports

Reports were given on the Santa Rosa Waterways, Church of One Tree, Merit Awards, Senior Center and Play Equipment committees as well as the Mayor's Luncheon.

8.2 Other Reports

Costa gave a brief report on the Paul Coussen's field naming event.

Board members were reminded that the naming of the Bayer property will be presented to Council on Tuesday, August 5th.

Council will take the lead on the dedication of Prince Gateway Park. The Board was invited to be ambassadors at the event and to distribute mementos. The event will begin at 4 p.m. on Friday, August 1st with the ceremony taking place at 4:30 p.m. Lawson will attend.

8. Future Agenda Items

9.1 Street Tree Policy

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:24 p.m

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board is scheduled for Wednesday, August 27, 2008 at 4pm at the Finley Community Center in Santa Rosa, California.

Craig Lawson, Board Chair

Yvonne Earle, Recording Secretary