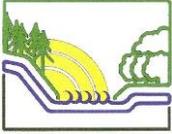


TUOLUMNE RIVER REGIONAL PARK CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, January 16, 2019 – 12:00 p.m.



1010 Tenth Street, Room 2005
Modesto, CA 95353
(209) 577-5346

MINUTES

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Meeting called to order by Chairman West at 12:10 pm.
- II. **ROLL CALL OF CAC MEMBERS TO ESTABLISH QUORUM**
Members attending: Chair Ron West, Vice-Chair Chris Guptill, Luis Jimenez, Darleen Patrick, Jim Bishop * (J Bishop arrived at 12:30 pm – left at 1:00 pm)
Members absent: Balvino Irizarry, Brandy Meyer, Carole Stark
Staff attending: Laurie Smith, PRN Director; Nathan Houx, PPD Manager; Kelly Gallagher, Parks Operations Manager; Joanne Azevedo, Executive Assistant; Toby Wells, Ceres City Manager
Staff absent: Merry Mayhew, County Parks Deputy Director
Guests Attending: Edgar Garibay, Tuolumne River Trust; Juan Telles, Tuolumne River Trust
- III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 19, 2018 – After quorum was reached, Chris Guptill motioned that minutes be approved with the correction of Luis Jimenez’s name, seconded by Darleen Patrick, motion passed.**
- IV. **PUBLIC COMMENT** - None
- V. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - A. **Beard Brook/TRRP Gateway Homeless Update** – Director Laurie Smith reported on the history and decision to allow the homeless to camp in Beard Brook Park due to court decision that it was ‘cruel and unusual punishment’ to ban people from sleeping in public areas when there is a lack of low barrier shelter beds. By allowing an encampment in Beard Brook Park, enforcement of the no camping ordinance could be enforced throughout the remainder of the park system. Staff recognized that Beard Brook was not a perfect solution with the new dog park ready to open and RecFest scheduled, however, it was the best option while looking for a permanent solution. Initially the population remained steady, however, with winter weather and moving homeless from other areas, the population has increased to between 400 and 500 tents and inhabitants. The Homeless Task Force has been providing services to those who are willing to accept those services. The Migrant Camp in Empire was opened to families with children and some families have accepted these services, but they cannot be forced to accept help. When the rain came, it was confirmed that the temporary solution of Beard Brook was not going to work, due to the fact that the park is built on a hill. A new temporary solution was to move the encampment to TRRP Gateway under the 9th Street Bridge. An Emergency Meeting was held with the TRRP Commission, requesting permission of the JPA to move the encampment to this location until a more permanent solution could be found. Commissioners were very clear that they understood the need; however, they stated that the park and area be restored to its current state

within 12 months and that no TRRP funds were to be used for modifications or restoration of the site. The site is in the process of being prepared and some of the modifications are items included in the original Masterplan and will remain as part of the infrastructure, such as a roadway. The site has been prepared by Community Partners with grading, adding a 'race-track' type of sidewalk, lying of wood chips and donated waterproof tents. This week's storms will give the Task Force a better idea whether the modifications can handle the water for the remainder of the winter or additional modifications need to be made. A 'soft move' of the encampment could begin next week. Chris Guptill stated that he found out about the Emergency Meeting of the TRRP Commission on a Friday, and the meeting was called for Monday. He attended as the Vice Chair of the TRRP CAC and expressed his dismay that the CAC was not allowed to give their input on the use of the Park and asked for more consideration in the future, however, he did understand the fact that the timeline did not allow for additional meetings and CAC input. Chris noted the need to put together a statement of policy for the Commissioners to ask them to include the CAC in future decisions regarding the use of the park. Laurie Smith reiterated that as Director of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods, she and the Department were unhappy with the decision to put the encampment in one of the City's parks, but also needs to work with the Senior Executive Team to come up with a more permanent solution to the issue, which has proven to be a dire need in the community. At the negotiations she reiterates the need to restore the site to its current or better state upon the relocation. She also recognizes the economic impact that our parks have for the community. Laurie encouraged the CAC to contact her at any time with questions, suggestions or if they just want an update on the progress.

- B. **TRRP Gateway Construction Update** – Nathan reported that the construction in Gateway Phase 2 has almost been completed. The shade structure that was required underneath the Union Pacific Railroad tracks is here and ready to be installed, but weather is delaying its installation. It is anticipated to be installed next week. This is the last piece of the work that needs to be done to complete Gateway Phase 2. Ron West asked for clarification about the shade structure. Nathan stated that because our trail goes under the railway trestle the Union Pacific requires the installation of a structure in case when a train passes, it causes some of the rock base (ballast) to be dislodged and fall from the trestle and fall onto our trail, where someone could potentially be walking. The shade structure was paid for out of the Grant monies and Union Pacific does not pay for these improvements, just requires them.

CAC members asked about upcoming projects. Nathan stated that the next priority is the Neece Boat Ramp and that the design of that project should be starting soon. The permitting process will start after that and the construction could begin about 2021. With the restrictions in the river, there is really a window of about a month and a half that you can construct in a river/near a river per year. After the Neece Boat Ramp will be the River Overlook in Gateway and then the Public Education Grant at Legion Park with the Pavilion and outdoor classroom. CAC members would like to see more positive use of the Legion Area to keep the positive use of the park and reduce the need for cleaning the area. **Nathan will bring the concept plan**

for Legion Park to the next meeting to remind the CAC what Staff envisions for the area in the future. CAC members also asked about possible Urban Greening Grants and Solar on Public Building Grants. **Nathan will research to see if we qualify for any of these grant opportunities.** Nathan doubts that we would be eligible for an Urban Greening Grant since one of the factors is planting trees to shade buildings. There would be Greenhouse Gas credits, but these are Cap and Trade Funds and he doubts we would qualify.

- c. **Tree Trimming at Airport, Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration** – Nathan reported that when the weather gets better, we will begin Phase 3 of our Tree Trimming at the Airport to comply with our plan filed with the FAA. The trees that were cut in Phase 2 are not pretty, they were reduced dramatically and some may not survive, however, some have started to grow again, already. CAC members asked if with the loss of FAA Commercial License at the Airport if we were still required to make the tree cuts. Nathan will check but believes that the tree trimming is necessary in order to maintain any type of airport at the location. **Nathan will check with the Airport Manager about the pressure to remove the remaining trees and restrictions.**
- d. **Modesto RecFest Fall 2018 – Discussion/Update** – RecFest Fall 2018 was a success in spite of the Homeless encampment being invited to be at Beard Brook Park weeks prior to the event and Day of the Dead Festivities on the same day. It was overall a good event. Organizers plan to focus on the Spring RecFest, since that seems to be a more premier time to highlight the use of the park, when everything is green and people are looking for reasons to get out in nature. The events at RecFest included bike trail riding, fishing, kayaking on Dry Creek, guided nature walks, orienteering, and trail hikes. They also planted 160 saplings in Gateway. Thanks to Ken and Nathan with the City for the assistance in the planting. Ron's band played and provided music to add to the festivity of the event.

RecFest 3 is planned for this spring, tentatively March 16th. The organizers are thinking that they may move the event from the Gateway Parcel to the Legion area of the Park, near TRRP A & B Picnic Areas and the Mary Grogan Grove. Last year they held the Kids Day in the Park in this area and can provide most of the same activities that they provide in Gateway at this location. The plan was always to expose people to the TRRP and River Parks in general, with water safety and general recreation in parks. The organizers want to be able to make the event 'movable' to allow for more exposure to the park system. **Chris Guptill motioned that a request be made to the TRRP Commission asking for the fees related to the Event be waived, as in the past, seconded by Luis Jimenez. Motion passed.**

Chris Guptill stated that cleanup work needs to be done at the Mitchell Road area of TRRP, as homeless occupation has grown in that area of the park also. Originally there was an issue on Beard Land Development Land, however, they have hired security to dissuade the activities on their private property, which has moved these individuals to the south end of the Airport and the East end of our park. If we intend to encourage the use of the trail out to the airport during RecFest, this area will need to be brought up to make the best possible impression. Chris will have a couple of clean ups prior to the event.

Edgar also asked if there was planting that could be done as part of RecFest. Planting trees is not an option, since we are cutting trees in the airport, but could there be native planting that could be done with RecFest. **Nathan will look into restoration planting for RecFest.** Edgar and Chris will keep the CAC informed of the activities and plans for RecFest. Edgar also will circle back with Bass Pro who expressed an interest in having an archery display at the next RecFest. **Edgar also will check with Gallo regarding providing supplies, volunteers and other support to the event.**

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Earth Day 2019 (April 20)** – Nathan reported that Earth Day is April 20th this year, which is Easter Weekend. He stated that there is not a lot of staff support available for this event and suggested that the focus be better used on RecFest events. Ron West suggested that we could possibly partner with Tuolumne River Preservation Trust in their booth to provide information and staffing. Edgar stated that the Trust is unsure whether or not to have a booth as they are planning a Fishing Derby at Fox Grove around the same time. It was decided to hold off on a booth for this year's event.

VII. ROUTINE ITEMS – None

VIII. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

- A. **9-2-99 Update** - Chris Guptill reported that the cleanups in October and November focused on the 'island' at Legion Park area of TRRP did a lot of trimming and cutting where the cables will go in at some point. There are still some issues out there and some issues in the swale but if you don't go out to an area very often, it continues to be compromised. December they cleaned the south side of the Gateway Parcel from 7th to 99 and this month will continue to work on the South Side to complete the area in the bottomland this Saturday, the 19th of January, if anyone is available to come and help. They will be meeting on the south side of the river off Zeff Road under Highway 99. Chris is speaking with Ceres and the County to install some type of deterrent to dumping in that area. Chris is trying to get something sustainable on the south side of the river which continues to be a problem. Chris will plan the February and March cleanups for Mitchell and the end of Legion Park area to the Airport in preparation for the RecFest. Chris wanted to reiterate that they have not hosted a cleanup on the North side of the river in quite a while due to the presence of recreation and positive use of the park which deters the nefarious use of the park resulting in the need to host cleanups. This is a good model to show that recreation replaces blight. He would like to see it extend out to the end of Legion and throughout the community in the same way. The boat launch should add to the use of the park and give further evidence that recreation can reverse blight and be the tool to push back on that kind of behavior.
- B. **TRT Report/Update** – Edgar Garibay reported that the County applied for an Active Transportation Grant for the Airport Neighborhood to construct concrete sidewalks and bike lanes to go down to the TRRP Parks along Tioga Drive. The Grant will be decided by the end of the month and it is very possible that it will be funded. That will get Class 3 bike lanes down Empire

all the way down to George Rogers and Legion and then Tioga down to Mary Grogan Grove with a construction timeline, if everything falls into place of 2021. That will help with the work being done in the Airport Neighborhood to promote community development. TRT also is partnering with Public Health, City of Modesto and City of Ceres to bring together all the jurisdictions and community leaders to look at Legion and Mancini Parks as it relates to Safe Routes to Parks. That is a small grant that should be awarded soon. It is a small seven month grant to be used as a seed grant to bring our jurisdictions to the table to address some of the issues in the park and Airport District. A question was asked about the classes of bike lanes. Class 3 is a painted line and Class 1, which will be on Tioga, is a dedicated separate bike trail/lane. With the Adopt-a-River program there is a small group that has adopted the area of Gateway Phase 2 and they have been out there weekly since December picking up the trash/garbage. TRT is also working on the Adopt-a-river donation program to solicit donation of supplies and equipment for the river cleanup programs reaching out to local businesses for donations to support the efforts. Working to possibly do an orientation with the Adopt-a-river groups and have created a Volunteer Guide Manual that gives the groups information on how to organize the cleanups so that they can go out on their own. They are entering year 3 of the program and the groups that have adopted areas are still involved and committed to the program. Edgar is currently working with the neighbors, the Municipal Area Council, and Supervisor DeMartini to create a group to take care of Mancini Park. Edgar also wants to connect with Duane Becker since they have expressed an interest in wanting to adopt the area behind the treatment plant. That would make nine adoptable areas of the river. The adopt-a-river groups are encouraged to hold cleanups a minimum of two times a year.

- c. **HYLC Update** – Luis reported that HYLC held their fall cleanup at the Park October 20th with about 120 HYLC Students. The weather held out for the cleanup and was a success. Planning the next cleanup for April 6th. Soliciting donations for food to feed the HYLC clubs for cleanups. Working on the Speaker competition on February 9th semi-finals. Some members have been invited to judge the competition. The event is open to the public, if anyone wants to come out. It will be at 5:00 in the MJC Mary Stuart Rogers building. Also the monthly cluster meetings are held at MJC Mary Stuart Rogers building the first Monday of the month. Thanks to those who came out to David Durant's Memorial Service. The family was appreciative of the attendance and remembrances.

IX. MATTERS TOO LATE FOR THE AGENDA

Chris Guptill offered to write up a draft of the CAC's position on any other issues in the park to be submitted to the Commission. He will bring the draft to the next meeting for input and discussion by the CAC.

Nathan let the CAC know that at next month's Commission meeting he will be presenting the draft budget and will bring that to the March CAC meeting also.

Toby Wells with City of Ceres advised that they are awarding the contract to construct the Lower Bluff Non-motorized Boat Ramp which is being delayed by the Government Shutdown, but will begin work as soon as they can get their final

permit approval from the Army Corps of Engineers. They are anticipating a construction window of one year. Hope to be done with the permitting by July 1st.

Edgar wanted to add that there is a Community Nature walk that will happen this Saturday, the 19th, Audubon members and community at River Bluff Park from 9 to 11.

Chris asked Toby if the plans include being able to drive down to the boat access. Toby verified that there will be a road with a turn around that will allow for the river access so it is not necessary to carry the boats the entire way to the river as they do now.

X. ADJOURNMENT – Chair West adjourned the meeting at 1:20 pm.