

**Summary of Proceedings
Parks Commission
February 14, 2008**

Present: Steve Guggisberg
Brian King, Chair
Manny Szwabowski, Student
Jon Harrison, Mayor
Gary Van Dorst, Quality of Life Director
Rick Cross, QOL Operations Manager
Janet Sherman, Sr. Administrative Assistant

Absent: Dennis Bolt
Patricia Holohan
Kristin Saukel
Tina Sray
Mick Gallagher, Councilmember

Although there was not a quorum of the Parks Commission at the February 14, 2008 meeting, the following issues were discussed. No action was taken.

Chairperson King introduced the new Student Commissioner, Manny Szwabowski, who is a junior at Redlands East Valley High School. Manny aspires to become a chemical engineer and hopes to attend college on a football kicking scholarship, a scholastic scholarship, or both.

Quality of Life Director, Gary Van Dorst, announced we should have a start date for the spring planting for the 1,000 trees project before the end of the week. About 300 to 350 sites have been identified where people have committed to watering the trees once planted. In the next few days, a press release will go out for a photo opportunity. Two hundred saplings donated by Southern California Edison were planted at Ford Park. Some of the trees were planted at Hillside Cemetery, mostly in the areas where the dead oleanders were removed.

Mr. Van Dorst explained that the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocations were on the February 19 City Council agenda. Originally, \$25,000 was allocated from Public Service to go towards tree planting in the CDBG target area. There were also some unprogrammed funds and it was proposed for City Council consideration that another \$30,000 be allocated for street trees. If those two allocations were to be approved, we would be getting close to being able to plant 1,000 trees and to fund those trees this next year and still have enough monies from an ESRI donation to leverage CalFire grant monies when the next cycle comes before us.

Dave Eason reported the Recreation Advisory Commission was updated on the new high school and, with the passage of the bonds, it will have a football stadium and a swimming

pool. There might be a possibility for some community use of the new facilities. Perhaps a review of the joint services agreement with the Redlands Unified School District would be in order at this time to make appropriate updates.

Mr. Eason said there was a very good turnout at the fundraiser for the Redlands Baseball for Youth (RBY) Extreme Team program. After the purchase of uniforms and caps, there was about \$7,000 in the Extreme Team account. There are currently 117 teams for RBY baseball and softball. By the time the high school aged teams are registered, there will be about 130 teams for the season—over 1600 youngsters. The program is having difficulty finding enough space to play all the games and to schedule practices. The chocolate sale begins February 18. The last three years RBY netted about \$80,000 from chocolate sales and netted about \$32,000 a year from sponsorships. Last year the snack bar netted over \$40,000.

Mr. Eason reported that a track coach from the University of Redlands came to the Recreation Advisory Commission and requested putting some kind of a walking and running trail around the duck's head at the sports park and around the area where the kangaroo rats are located. Mr. Eason suggested it would probably be more appropriate for the track coach to bring his proposal to the Parks Commission, but the coach is in class at the time the Parks Commission meets.

Mr. Van Dorst reported the revised trails maintenance agreement was received back from the City Attorney. Mr. Van Dorst will compare the detailed Parks Commission meeting notes and his own notes to the re-draft to make sure everything was captured, meet with Dan McHugh, and make any needed minor changes. Mr. Van Dorst anticipated taking the final draft of the agreement to the Redlands Conservancy within a week or less for consideration by their Board. If things go well, the agreement should be in front of the City Council within 30 days. Mr. Van Dorst stated he thinks this is a great deal for the City.

Chairperson King reported there was very little graffiti at Sylvan Park. He inquired when the spring toys would be replaced. Rick Cross, Operations Manager, explained the Department was waiting for recovery from the vandalism before ordering the new spring toys, but they have now been ordered. Mr. King said 93 new rose bushes have been planted. Mr. Cross stated there might be a Boy Scout project to rebuild the arbors.

Mr. King explained the Ed Hales Park project is moving forward. Mr. Van Dorst was directed to prepare an RFP for the work to be done and it is completed. The RFP includes facilitation on the part of the consultant with the various stakeholder groups. Todd Housley on Mr. Van Dorst's staff is researching potential vendors. The goal was to distribute the RFP within a week to at least a dozen vendors in Southern California with urban design experience. Commissioner King said the City Manager was a big help in getting this project moving forward again.

Steve Guggisberg reported that all the areas of Smiley Park continue to look good with a couple of exception. The wooden structure on the west end of the Park continues to deteriorate after each rain. At the Bowl area, the water fountain near the Mission Gables House and the concession stand is still missing. There are still donor bricks cemented into the ground on a diagonal north and west of the ticket or concession stand.

Mr. Guggisberg reported on two continuing issues at Brookside Park—the drainage into the field from the lower parking lot and the concession building that needs roof repair.

Commissioner Guggisberg has an interest in the Zanja trail proposed by the Redlands Conservancy. He reported that the Conservancy held a public workshop on January 29, which was to present the project. They gave a brief history, discussion of the future of the Zanja, discussed some possible preservation strategies, and had some breakout sessions. At this point, everything depends on obtaining funding.

Gary Van Dorst said the City has applied for grant funding for the acquisition of an approximately 30-acre parcel of land, a grove actually. It is the Wesson property, which is identified on the City's and County's General Plans as a flood detention basin with a park overlay. It is one of the necessary projects for mitigating the 100-year flood problem for the downtown area. If the project comes to fruition, it will also provide us with an added opportunity to return that part of the Zanja, which has been channelized as a flood control project, to more of a natural habitat—that was also one of the selling points emphasized to the State. The State is seriously looking at this grant—they actually walked the property as part of our evaluation.

Chairperson King congratulated Gary Van Dorst on being appointed to the position of Quality of Life Director.

Dave Eason stated the Recreation Advisory Commission is going to form a subcommittee to look at City-owned parcels to see if any of them might be available to meet recreational needs. Commissioner King explained that is where the Parks Commission Master Planning Subcommittee is also headed.

Mr. Van Dorst explained that his meeting with Denny Sattler this morning primarily focused on forming a more cooperative relationship in terms of balancing parks maintenance needs with recreational needs. We want to make sure that we do not overuse certain fields and that the use of the fields is coordinated with watering and light usage.

Chairperson King gave an update on the Park Master Plan Workshop. The subcommittee is still meeting. Mr. King talked to Tom Resh in the GIS Department. Mr. King will provide information so Mr. Resh can do some census data overlays and lay out the park service areas. The purpose of this exercise is to determine what areas of the City are well served by parks and what areas still need parks coverage.

Commissioner Guggisberg stated that between 60 and 90 days ago the Commission talked about being informed of General Plan Amendments and/or projects that would be affecting recreational issues. He reported that a project has come up called the Redlands Common Trojan Groves Concept Plan No. 7. They have issued a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). Mr. Guggisberg obtained a copy of the DEIR at the library. The authors of the report found somewhere in the General Plan the four types of Redlands parks and a definition which Rick Cross and Mr. Guggisberg were not able to find. Mr. Guggisberg would like to bring this back and have the recreation section printed up or delivered to all the Commissioners simply because the Parks Commission might want to challenge or provide comments to what he felt were a couple of errors. The development will have a private park. The potential conflict, since it is a private park, is there is no benefit to the City of Redlands. Redlands East Valley High School, which is not in the City of Redlands, is included in the recreation area. Mr. Guggisberg said these were the types of planning issues that would encourage the Parks Commission to get the Master Plan going. At the same time, this project would hopefully come before the Parks Commission so it could make an analysis and provide some input.

Mr. Van Dorst replied that his presumption was that the private park was probably part of the open space requirements for the development and he did not know that the City would have any ability to do anything with that. Mayor Jon Harrison explained he was not sure, but would guess the project was a Planned Residential Development—a PRD. A PRD is able to rearrange the residential uses and, in so doing, is required to provide 20% of the land for open space. This is the same concept as in the 1980's when the developer would put in a swimming pool and a clubhouse—so that is why it is called a private park. The developers are obligated to do that. If they have recreational resources for their residents, that benefits their residents, and then those individuals are not looking to further tax the public parks. Mr. Van Dorst stated it was his presumption that an HOA would pay for the cost of maintenance of the private park. Mr. King stated the problem was that if the developer were to dedicate for a public park, it would come off the 20% of the land they are providing for open space, and it actually would not work. Mr. Van Dorst said he did not think that stops the City from commenting on the desire for the developer to pursue putting recreational facilities in place that would meet the demographics of the community.

Mr. Guggisberg pointed out that under Quimby the development of the park is a priority and in lieu of fees is a secondary alternative to that. Mr. Guggisberg thought, as Mr. Van Dorst suggested, that the Parks Commission should work with the developers to see if there is something they might do, i.e. grade a parcel that is a current City of Redlands site that we are looking at for a park and maybe provide some backfill. If there were trails nearby, it was not uncommon in Riverside County to have the developer use a small dozer when it was on site to clean up the trails.

Mayor Harrison gave an update on the actions of the Council on the exclusive negotiation agreement for the potential sale of 36 acres of orange groves to Prologis. If the sale goes through, the Council is hopeful it will generate about \$17.5 million towards land

acquisition based upon the percentages originally structured in Measure O. A portion of that could go towards the acquisition of parklands. One of the things the City would like to do is match to the extent it can any money realized through that sale with something like Proposition 84 monies. Perhaps Proposition 84 monies would be used to develop the park or the trail. That is one of the strategies staff will be considering. Part of the action was to make sure there is some sort of a citizen's group to provide some guidance on the strategy that will be followed for open space and parkland acquisitions. Mr. Harrison said that process would be beginning shortly and he would suspect that members of the Parks Commission probably would be participating, as well as members of the Recreation Advisory Commission, possibly members of other Commissions, and some citizens at large; but it has not been formulated how to put the advisory group together yet.

Mayor Harrison explained the Orange Blossom Trail will come to the Council perhaps the second meeting in March for their concept of what the alignment might be and how that might get funded. The Santa Ana River Trail is moving along and he was hoping to get a presentation to the Council later this spring. The last conversation he had, rather than putting the trail on the levee down on the river, the trail would be brought up to where portions of a trail have been built on top of the bluff in town. He thought that alignment would be much nicer, but alignments are still being worked on and he hoped City input would be sought before locking in on a particular alignment. He hoped that workshops would be held before picking an alignment without a lot of public input. Through Proposition 84, \$45 million was set aside specifically for the Santa Ana River Trail. Mayor Harrison is on the Policy Advisory Group for the Santa Ana River Trail and all three counties involved have agreed that money would go towards what is being called the spine—the backbone trail for the whole system. Currently the work program calls for about \$8 million to be applied in about three or four years to creating the portion from about California Street to where the trail would head off into the hills. Mayor Harrison believes the County already has the funding in place for the first stretch of the trail in Redlands, which would be from Waterman Avenue to either California Street or Alabama Street. Work should begin this year.