

*"We are a welcoming, active and business-friendly rural foothill community built on California's rich gold rush history."*



**August 24, 2023, Recreation and Parks Commission**

**Prepared by:** Terry Zeller, Community Services Director

**Subject:** Update on Summer Programs and Projects

I wanted to provide the Commission with a general update on the multiple efforts the department is working on for the Summer and Fall of 2023, as well as items that will be coming up for discussion through the fiscal year. This should give the members, especially the new ones, a better perspective of the scope of work that we do and the types of issues to sort through in the upcoming year.

**Administration:**

Update of nexus study for park impact fees:

The city has required new residential development to pay a fee towards the costs of acquiring and developing new parks to serve the residents associated with the development. The intent behind this assessment is that the level of park and recreation services for existing residents will be preserved as the city grows. The fee is currently \$1,320 per dwelling unit. A more realistic fee needs to be established, as this current amount is not sufficient to provide the expanded parks and facilities it was intended to cover. The City Council has asked for the nexus study to be updated, and staff are working to hire a consultant for that update. It is expected that this will come up over the winter for discussion.

Cannabis Community Benefit Committee:

The city formed a committee to guide and recommend the expending of tax funds captured in the agreements with our two cannabis retail operations in Placerville. These funds are meant to be spent on community benefit, and the committee has met three times so far, and have prioritized their projects for 2023/2024. Two projects were funded for the pool; new stairs for the slide and concrete repair for the decks, for a total of \$15,000.00. The general direction for funding is that there will be a mix of city projects, scholarships, and grants to other organizations approved annually, with an expected budget of around \$70,000 per year. The Commission will be asked to weigh in on priorities for park projects that could be applied to this funding.

Request for Funding Assistance of the Aquatic Center from the County:

Since 2013, the city has received \$20,000 from the County to offset the maintenance costs of the pool. This funding from the County represents an acknowledgement of the use of the pool by non-city residents and seeks to offset some of that use. The city conducted a survey in 2019, and found that nearly 76% of the people who utilize the City's Aquatics Center reside outside the City limits in the unincorporated Placerville area or County. 76% of the costs for maintenance in the FY 2022/23 came to \$112,568. The city requested this amount, but the County reviewed the cost breakdowns and countered with a sum of \$76,500 based on their discretion of what costs could be contributed to the pool users. The city has sent its request based on 76% of the maintenance costs for FY22/23, and this funding will be considered as a supplement to the County budget for the FY 23/24.

## **Volunteer Efforts:**

### Community Pride:

There is a group of volunteers that have been working on public garden beds and areas for the past few decades. At one point there were over a dozen people that were organized and had regular meetings and worked on fundraising for the 20 areas around the city. They have a page on the city's website, and their numbers have dwindled to 5 current volunteers. The city supports their efforts through a \$1750 annual fund as part of the CSD budget. The focus in the near future is to expand both the Community Pride volunteer base, and also work to create a larger volunteer organization in addition, to focus people who want to take on small projects and adopt public sites for work parties, supported by an online presence where people can sign up for these types of projects. As I work through the larger volunteer effort planning, I will bring updates and requests for review of the planning for direction and advisement of the Commission.

### Rise & Shine Day of Service:

This annual volunteer day was started in 2015 by the local LDS church and grew over the years to include other churches and many local volunteers. The city provides some tools, materials and logistical support to organize work at multiple locations around the park sites, and much work is completed that helps out the small maintenance crew we have currently. The date for this year was April 29<sup>th</sup>, and I encourage you to look to the city's webpage for the link to our Eventbrite site around the end of April next year, where you can sign up for a location. The hours are 8am to Noon, which is followed by a volunteer lunch provided by other volunteers at Gold Bug Park's Pavilion on Bedford Avenue.

## **Special Events:**

In February of 2021, the City Council directed the Community Services Department to create a plan to limit the number of events that closed Main Street. This was meant to balance the disruption of commerce and parking with the positive aspects of special events to increase the quality of life for residents and bring new people to our town.

This came about due to the number of events that closed Main Street in 2019. There were 12: Girls Night Out, The AmGen Race, 2 Car Shows, Wagon Train, Brewfest, Antique Street Fair, Winderlust, Oktoberfest, Trick or Treat, Festival of Lights, and the Christmas Parade.

The Council approved 7 of these events to go forward as for road closures. Those events and dates for 2023 are:

June 10<sup>th</sup>-Wagon Train and Golden History Days

August 31<sup>st</sup>-Thursday Evening Car Show

September 16<sup>th</sup>-Placerville Block Party (Formerly Brewfest)

October 7<sup>th</sup>-Oktoberfest

October 31<sup>st</sup>-Trick or Treat on Main Street

November 24<sup>th</sup>-Festival of Lights

December 3<sup>rd</sup>- Christmas Parade

Also in 2021, the Placerville Downtown Association had stepped back from coordinating these events, so I was to take over direct management of them and coordinate them with co-sponsors and develop a budget for funding the direct costs to the city for the venue prep and safety plan. The idea of the city taking the lead was to ensure that there would be continuity from year to year, the ability to keep refining the events, and the ability to control the content and participation to a greater extent than in the past. It also allowed for there to be a safety net in case a co-sponsor dropped out.

Co-sponsors are required to sign an agreement that makes them responsible for the organization, coordination, and content of the event within the closed area. The agreement also has the requirement that the co-sponsor identify a 501c3 nonprofit and provide a percentage of net proceeds or other benefit to that nonprofit. Those are negotiated on an individual basis, with the idea that there needs to be a tangible benefit to a community entity. My approach to the budget for these events was to cover the city's costs. Only 2 of the 7 events, Brewfest and Oktoberfest, are clear net profit generators. Other events have the potential to make a small profit, but my current expectation is that a percentage of the proceeds be received by the city to make the balance of the special event program revenue neutral.

2021 was an interesting transition year, and went mostly smoothly, except for issues with the road closures. I purchased water barricades in early 2022 to comply with the new Homeland Security safety guidelines to separate vehicles from people in the streets. This is still a work in progress, and doesn't work in all situations, such as the upcoming Golden History Days and Wagon Train event in June.

The newest addition to the downtown events was approved at the August 8<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting, that being allowing weddings at the Bell Tower with quite a few stipulations: There can only be 4 weddings per month, each will be allowed one hour total, there can only be up to 5 people under the bell tower, with any guests having to stay on the sidewalk, and the cost is \$500 for the rental with a \$100 refundable security deposit.

### **Facilities:**

#### Scout Hall:

The building at City Park, a log cabin that has been in our inventory since the 1950's has seen better days. It is currently used by two Scout troops and a private school as part of a pool use agreement. This building has been vandalized consistently, and we are working with the City Manager to plan some improvements that would decrease this vandalism and repeated damage.

#### 525 Main Street:

This building, the old DA annex next to the former Post Office, was obtained by the city from the County, and is currently being leased to Arts & Culture El Dorado as their offices and gallery as they fundraise and plan renovations to the Ketchup and Mustard buildings at 487 and 489 Main Street. 525 Main needs a new roof, which is being planned for in the upcoming budget.

#### Softball Field Work and League Impact:

The difficult decision was made to cancel the spring adult softball season and move the summer season up to June 1<sup>st</sup>. The incredible amount of rain that we received through the late fall, winter and spring made the fields unplayable for an April start. The department took on renovations to the fields in the gap, working to flatten the infield lip of both fields, roll and reseed, repair and edge the warning tracks, and continue with the gopher eradication program

we started last year. These were completed prior to the June start, but a sinkhole opened up in the fields late July, and this underlines the need to install a new irrigation system and fix some historic drainage issues with the fields after fall ball this November. The City has funded this project and we should have all new and reliable irrigation early 2024. The Commission has had league players come to many meetings and publicly comment on the field conditions and fees, and this group will be interested in progress made on this project.

Here is a list of the major items the Commission will be hearing this fiscal year in addition to the items covered above:

-A review and revision of all our rental documents. The Community Services Department rents space at Town Hall, shelters at Lions Park and Gold Bug Park, Lions Park Ball Fields, Scout Hall in Benham Park, and now weddings at the Bell Tower. The rental documents and fees need to be revised to allow for greater clarity for the public when looking to rent these spaces.

-Fees for Recreation Programs and Classes. Every year the Recreation Division reviews all fees and provides a review to the Commission prior to taking any changes to the City Council. These fee changes will be coming to the Commission in late fall/early winter.

-Scout Hall Public Input Sessions. The September Commission meeting will take place in Scout Hall so that the building can be reviewed prior to planning public meetings to decide what the future of the building should be. So far, renovations to the interior or replacing it with a rentable shelter have been initially discussed.

-Placerville Aquatic Center Activity Pool planning. The small pool with the play structure, known as the Kiddie Pool or Activity Pool, has been in decline for several years and is rusting and needs to be replaced or eliminated. There has also been discussion around providing a free splash pad outside the pool fence as an alternative to the kiddie pool, which would provide much greater access to the public to cool off for a much longer season, and not require the cost of lifeguards, pumping, filtration and chemicals.

-Grant for replacement of the playground at Orchard Hill Park. The play structure at this park has reached its useful life, and there are some grants available to replace it. This will be a project that will be coming to the Commission over the winter.

The plan for this fall is to hold Commission meetings at different park sites so that the Commission can see the issues first hand. We had done a tour of Scout Hall and the Pool in May, but now that we have a full Commission, I will repeat this tour for our September meeting, and plan on having the October meeting at Lions Park. We can discuss the future locations from Commissioner input for the winter and spring meetings, weather permitting.