

**SUSANVILLE CITY COUNCIL
Special Meeting Minutes
January 4, 2013 – 11:00 a.m.**

City Council Chambers 66 North Lassen Street Susanville CA 96130

Meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Mayor De Boer.

Roll Call of City Councilmembers: Nicholas McBride, Brian Wilson, and Rod E. De Boer, Mayor. Absent: Lino P. Callegari and Cheryl L. McDonald,

Staff present: Jared G. Hancock, City Administrator; Peter M. Talia, City Attorney; and Gwenna MacDonald, City Clerk.

1 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Motion by Mayor pro tem Wilson, second by Councilmember McBride to approve the agenda as posted; motion carried.

2 PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jim Hodge, Soccer Coach, discussed facility needs to support the ability to host tournaments. Soccer tournaments bring people who will spend money into the community. Clinics also generate income, and he talked about some of the sports complexes that have been built in other communities.

Mayor pro tem Wilson asked if the City could charge fees for other organizations to use the facility. Mr. Hancock responded that yes, fees could be charged for tournaments.

Mayor pro tem Wilson asked for an estimate of how many tournaments could potentially be hosted in one season.

Mr. Hodge responded that it is varied, and could potentially be several smaller tournaments or fewer larger ones involving more teams. It would be most effective to coordinate through the schools, although the number will be zero unless the facility built will support that.

Tammy Jones, Sierra Road resident, spoke regarding the increase in traffic on Sierra Road.

3 SCHEDULED MATTERS:

3A Sierra Community Park: Review and discuss scope modification and time extension approved by State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Offices of Grants and Local Services Mr. Hancock informed the Council that the discussion presented at the meeting may be a little unorthodox as he has lost his voice. He prepared a report which he will have the City Clerk read for him so that he may save his voice for the questions and discussion period. The purpose of the meeting is to announce that the State has approved our request for modifications to the park design and has granted a time extension for the City to complete the necessary environmental review. Staff would also like to give the public and Council an opportunity to comment or ask questions regarding the revised project, and get direction from Council on whether or not to proceed with the environmental review portion of the project.

Ms. MacDonald read the following report into the record:

Working on this project has really been a bitter sweet experience; sweet, because it is rare for a community of our size to be awarded such a significant amount of money for a community park, and it was good to see staff come together to solve design, construction and maintenance related issues. Bitter, because there were many questions and concerns that should have been addressed in the application phase of the project and the City was put in the uncomfortable position of petitioning the State to approve a more feasible project design and time extension to complete the required

environmental review.

Based on the direction received from the Council, staff has worked to resolve three primary issues. I will go through each of these issues individually and explain how we have mitigated these issues to the extent possible. While this has not created an ideal situation for anyone we feel that we have taken appropriate steps to alleviate financial risks to the City and provide the City Council with a feasible option if you choose to proceed with the project.

1. **Design a quality park that could be completed within the \$2.2 million budget** With the funds approved by the City Council, staff worked with a qualified design firm, Melton design Group, to redesign the facility to be more cohesive and could be supported with accurate cost estimates. By removing selected features and reducing the scope of the park a revised design was prepared and submitted to the State for approval. The modifications were ultimately approved by the State and a time extension was granted. The design modifications significantly reduced the cost of overall construction and staff is content that the revised project can be completed on time and within budget.
2. **Lack of community input for park design** Some community members expressed concerns that this facility didn't address the varied recreation needs of the community and should have included other recreational features such as baseball fields or swimming facilities. Adjoining residents expressed concerns about traffic, noise and lighting. Concerns were also raised about the use of mitigation funds collected in other parts of town being used outside of the immediate neighborhood where they were collected. In order to address these concerns staff contacted the State to gauge their willingness to approve design modifications. We were informed that almost all of the proposed modifications were considered major modifications and while the State would consider reducing the number of a specific feature they would not support significantly changing features, primarily because the funds were awarded through a competitive bid process. When asked if it would be possible to switch out a soccer field for a baseball field we were informed that it would not be approved. Based on this information it became more advantageous to leave a portion of the park undeveloped as a Native Grass mellow that could be used in the future for other recreational activities rather than switching features. The park design was also modified to relocate any significant light and noise from the existing residents to a more central location within the facility. The overall cost reduction of the facility will also increase the possibility of providing paved parking, addressing traffic and roadway concerns and create the possibility of reallocating any unused mitigation funds to an alternate area in town.
3. **Council Concerns** In addition to the above stated concerns members of the Council have expressed specific concerns related to the initial approach to the project. There were concerns expressed that while the City is currently financially stable there is limited flexibility in the budget and that the decision to allocate additional funds for park maintenance was not considered in conjunction with other community and other budget demands. There were concerns that the project may not have been fully defined and cost fully refined prior to the project submittal and that the Council was not informed of these issues. There was also a concern that the parking should be paved and maintenance cost estimates should be refined. While it is not possible to look backwards and correct some of these concerns, staff is committed to addressing these issues in future projects. Staff is also planning to present a midyear budget in early February that will provide an opportunity to discuss budget priorities and financial demands. The project has also proposed in a way that if cost savings are realized through the donation of labor or materials that cost savings would be used to pave the parking area. Staff also obtained additional information regarding maintenance costs and determined that to maintain the facility at a minimum standard equivalent to other facilities within the city it would cost approximately

\$40,000 to \$50,000 per year in the form of one full time equivalent employee and funds for supplies and equipment.

Mayor pro tem Wilson commended staff for all of the work that has gone into the proposal that is being considered today, and that six months ago, it would have been very difficult to even consider moving forward with the facility that was initially proposed. He asked what types of in-kind services could be offered to keep the costs down.

Mr. Hancock responded that the actual cost for the facility is right around \$1.9 million, with a 10 percent contingency. There are certain features that the City will be able to contribute labor through the CCC inmate program, recycled asphalt chips from street projects, and items such as those which will work towards reducing the costs of construction.

At 11:25 p.m. Councilmember Callegari entered the chambers and assumed his seat on the dais.

Councilmember McBride remarked that the lack of paved sidewalks is a concern to him.

Mayor pro tem Wilson asked if this facility will require widening or expansion of Sierra Road.

Mr. Hancock responded that there are two components: north of the site, the streets are within the City limits and south of the project, the streets are in the County. He would recommend completing road improvements in the City but off-site improvements are not an eligible project cost so that would have to be funded by another source. The City has worked with the County and discussed widening the road, installing turn-pockets, and that process will be thoroughly evaluated through the environmental review process.

Mr. Hodge asked if it would be feasible to add stadium lighting or additional roads into the park.

Mr. Hancock stated that the original design as submitted with the application included stadium style lighting, but due to cost had been replaced with pedestrian style lights. The current General Plan identifies an easement from Alexander west of the existing maintenance building, and at some point when the property to the north of the project site is developed it could be re-evaluated at that time.

Councilmember Callegari asked if staff had a cost for completing and overlay of Sierra Road, and that the city should be able to use mitigation funds to complete the work.

Mayor De Boer commented that the mitigation money had been dedicated to the project through the grant application money.

Councilmember Callegari stated that the improvements to Sierra Street are part of the project and cost to upgrade the street should be included.

Mayor pro tem Wilson agreed that staff will have to be creative in using in-kind or in-house labor in order to complete many features of the project, but that use of Park Mitigation funds for street improvements is not an allowed cost, and an overlay would probably be insufficient to address the increased volume of traffic.

Mr. Hancock clarified that Park Mitigation money was committed to the project at the application phase and as money is freed up from uses of inmate labor or other in-kind features, that money could possibly be made available for upgrades to Sierra Road. It needs to be addressed but will not be funded by State money.

Ron Frederickson remarked that it wasn't right that the City was not allowed to charge fees for park usage, and that a broader definition of what an event is needs to be looked at.

An unidentified woman from the audience asked if modifications to the design were possible at this point, or if the park would just have to full size fields.

Mr. Hodge concurred with Councilmember McBride's earlier statement regarding paved sidewalks, and that the design should ensure safe access to the park by kids riding bicycles from Diamond View School.

Mr. Hancock responded that modifications to the design and public input ideally should have ended upon submittal of the application to the State for funding. What the City is presenting is what the State has approved, and it has to be built as proposed. As the project progresses and the City is able to free up funds through donations, in-house labor, in-kind services from other agencies, then adding features to improve the park could be a possibility. He agreed that ideally, the facility should have curb, gutter, and sidewalk all around the project. At this time, it is not in the budget and the City will be obligated to build the design that has been approved by the State.

Mr. Jones asked if this facility would require additional law enforcement. It's a quiet neighborhood and an attractive area for troublemakers. He asked if the City would be able to support this facility.

Mayor De Boer responded that no, at this point the City is barely treading water. He stated that he has always thought that the park is a great idea, but that that's all it is, is an idea. It's not fair to use park mitigation collected from builders on the other side of town to put a park in on Sierra Road, and he would prefer to see a swimming pool for the community. As much as the Council would like to be able to provide everything for the community, the City cannot afford a Rolls Royce.

Councilmember Callegari stated that as another retired law enforcement professional, he believes that the park can be built, and that it can be done. The community voiced the same concerns when the Skyline Park was built, and law enforcement patrol is always random, and the police cannot be everywhere. The City of Susanville police department is on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week. People will appreciate what they have when they get involved and help to build the facility. It's pride of ownership and the concept that the youth of Susanville are not worthy of this facility or that the police will not patrol is wrong.

Unknown resident of Sierra Street remarked that they would love to see a swimming pool at the site, and asked what the likelihood was of that ever happening.

Mr. Hancock responded that ultimately, if the community comes together and decides to support a pool, the undeveloped meadow portion of the site could accommodate it, but it has not been officially set aside for that purpose.

There being no further comments or questions from the public, Mr. Hancock requested direction from the City Council. The deadline for the Environmental Review was extended to May, however it is imperative that if the City hopes to complete the CEQA requirements that it begin immediately. The firm of Hauge Bruek Associates has been approved by Council to complete the analysis, and in May when the results of the study are complete, the City Council will have the opportunity to discuss the project again. The City is under no obligation to proceed with the project and at this time the only contract with the State is for the completion of the environmental study. The final determination on whether to proceed with the project or withdraw could be made in May.

Councilmember Callegari stated that with any further delays on the environmental process the City will run into trouble.

Mayor pro tem Wilson stated that he was confident that the City would be able to build the facility within the tight budget constraints but his biggest concern is whether or not the City can afford to maintain it. It is

unfortunate that the discussion is occurring now, right before mid-year budget discussions.

Mr. Hodge commented that he has mixed emotions regarding the project as a soccer coach and a tax payer. By the time you factor in costs of improving the street, maintenance is liable to be higher than expected, just as with the golf course.

Councilmember McBride added that with the current park maintenance requirements and lack of revenue, there needs to be more input from the community to make sure this is really what the tax payers want to spend their money on.

An unidentified member of the audience said that it is unfortunate that budget concerns would cause the City to turn down two million dollars of money from the State to build a park for the community.

A second unidentified member of the audience agreed, but asked if the community really does want two more soccer fields.

There were no further comments.

Motion by Councilmember Callegari, second by Mayor pro tem Wilson to proceed with the environmental review process; motion carried unanimously.

It was the direction of the Council for staff to bring back maintenance costs for consideration at the mid-year budget, and to expand the public outreach efforts to gather more input from the community regarding the project.

15 ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Gwenna MacDonald, City Clerk

Rod E. De Boer, Mayor

Approved on February 20, 2013