

**SPECIAL MEETING
CALIFORNIA CITY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
PUBLIC WORKSHOP ON BALSITIS PARK GRANT
Thursday, January 28, 2010, 6:30 p.m.**

Notes from meeting by Chairman Helen Dennis:

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Chairman Dennis, followed by the salute to the flag.

Chairman Dennis explained the purpose of the workshop to the public in attendance. 20 residents signed in on the attendance log, not including at least a half-dozen children who were present. She thanked the city staff for getting out the notice to the public over a large geographical area, canvassing the neighborhoods within approximately a half-mile of Balsitis Park.

Talking points for the meeting were the following improvements proposed for Balsitis Park:

- Improvements to current amenities, i.e.
Softball and Soccer fields, Restrooms, Basketball Court, fencing, parking and parking lot, playground equipment.

- Potential new construction of a 20,000 sq. ft. regional Community Center

The residents in attendance were encouraged to come to the microphone and make their comments and wishes known about Balsitis Park. Comments are as follows, in the order they were received:

1. Rhonda Vasquez asked what a regional community center would be used for? City Manager Tom Weil said that the idea for that came from comments from the public that many were unable to use the facilities at Central Park because of the distance from their neighborhoods. Parks and Recreation Supervisor Michelle Hornback concurred, stating she had heard similar comments for many years. She added that the facility would be used for spectator sports, and would meet the needs of future growth in the neighborhood. Parks and Recreation Vice Chairman Deanna Sutherland concurred, stating that when she was Parks and Recreation Director for many years, there was always a problem with the city's youth being able to get from one end of town to the other to take advantage of the facilities at Central Park.

2. Bob Russell asked if there was room for soccer fields, and a community center, both? There was discussion about space available in the park boundaries, and that perhaps one of the ball fields currently not being used could be made over into a second soccer field; there was room for at least one new field and the community center. City Manager Tom Weil reviewed the boundaries of the acreage on a projected image. Mr. Russell asked about

skateboard parks; there are other locations in the city where a skateboard park could be built at another time.

3. Rhonda Vasquez asked about the substrate under the playground equipment, and suggested some sources of materials. Mrs. Hornback provided information about her research past and current on legally required ground cover in playgrounds; the City is aware of what must be installed.

4. Kim Collins made his statement about how good it was that so many people were in attendance, and thanked the staff for their outreach to the community.

5. Ann Richardson asked if there were going to be trees for shade in the area. She is a horticulturalist, and has suggestions for plantings. The Committee took her number to get in touch with her if needed.

6. Martha Lopez asked if AYSO was talking to Mrs. Hornback about soccer fields in the city. Mrs. Hornback said she had been talking to them for some time about the need for soccer fields, how many would be needed for league play, the infrastructure that would be required, etc.

7. Al Villegas stated that two fields would be better than one, for divisional play purposes. He also noted that the Little League teams in California City used the ball fields at Balsitis Park as practice fields because there was a shortage of practice facilities in the city.

8. Bob Russell asked about benches for parents to sit in while watching their children at play, and trees or shelters for shade. It was agreed by the Parks and Recreation Commission that those things needed to be taken into consideration when laying out the improvements for the playground area and the other athletic fields.

9. Rhonda Vasquez thanked the public for coming out and the Parks and Recreation Commission for being willing to put in the time to meet with everyone on the need for improvements to Balsitis Park.

10. Al Villegas asked what facilities were already at Balsitis? Mrs. Hornback said besides the current athletic fields and playgrounds, there were one mens and one womens' bathroom, very inadequate for the needs of the park, and also a snack bar that was not operative because of vandalism. Mrs. Hornback said if phase 1 of the grant for Balsitis Park was approved, as stated above, there would be a phase 2 needed from the same source for additional facilities elsewhere in the City and a phase 3 for a soccer center with multiple playing surfaces, both of which could be applied for in future years' grant programs.

11. Bob Russell asked if there was a worry about supplying water to the park; City Manager Tom Weil said water was available for whatever was needed; the infrastructure was in place. He reminded people that in the desert, water was always a concern, but the need could be met at Balsitis Park.

12. Angela Byer was present with her three sons, and thanked the Commission for seeking the grants for Balsitis Park; there is a great need in the area for the regional facilities.

13. Al Villegas suggested that scoreboards might be part of the planning for both the ball fields and the soccer fields; something that could be looked at.

14. Ronnie Lopez, student at California City High School, introduced himself as the Public Relations liaison to the community from the student body at the high school, and noted that he would be taking back a report to be broadcast on the Public Address system at the high school regarding the comments and suggestions made at this meeting. He was given a copy of the talking points to add to his report to the student body. He left his email address for the Commission to get in touch with him regarding progress on the grant.

15. Pastor Samuel Pope, president of the Ministerial Alliance in California City, stated he would be taking back the comments and information from the meeting to the various churches in the community.

That concluded the commentary from the public. Chairman Dennis expressed her gratitude on behalf of the entire Commission that so many people turned out with their children, who were to be the ultimate recipients of the benefits from the grant approval. She noted that community support was very important when it came to requesting grants or other sources of funding for added park facilities. She called the meeting closed at 7:40 p.m.

16. Chuck McGuire, off-subject, presented a model of a plan for the rehabilitation of the pavilion in Central Park, and was asked to show it to the City Council at their meeting on the 2nd of February.

Meeting Adjourned.

Submitted by Helen Dennis, Chairman
California City Parks and Recreation Commission.