

Department is minimally staffed with one full-time employee and one part-time employee who opens and closes the facilities for night-time events. Staff is currently focusing on rentals of the facilities. The Recreation brochure is currently on hold and he would need to talk to Recreation Supervisor Stone about the Recreation Department Newsletter.

Commissioner Sunshine stated technology has become very important during the pandemic and she asked who dealt with the I.T. issues. Director Escobedo stated the City contracts with an I.T. vendor but many of the technical issues can be handled remotely. The consultant comes out twice a week to City Hall. He agreed that technology becomes very important when attempting to do virtual programming.

Commissioner Koeppel asked if the Public Works Department oversees the parks and the Community Services Department oversees Recreation. Director Escobedo stated “yes”. The Public Works Department maintains the parks and does the improvements.

Commissioner Koeppel had questions about the budget review process. Director Escobedo stated a mid-year Budget review would be done in October.

Commissioner Koeppel asked if the staffing levels were adequate. Director Escobedo stated Recreation Supervisor Stone has been able to handle the current needs since services have been reduced.

Chair Harrison asked Director Escobedo how he saw the Commission interacting with the Public Works Department. Director Escobedo stated they should continue to do what they have done in the past. He reiterated his need to get an update on park projects.

Chair Harrison stated the parks are a very important element in people’s lives during the pandemic and she asked who was checking on the parks during the pandemic. Recreation Supervisor Stone stated he is working from home off and on but has been in the parks quite a bit lately. He has been checking on the camps that are renting space at Piper Park to make sure they are following the County’s COVID-19 safety protocols, etc. He has also made his presence known at the other parks, including the Tennis Courts at Centennial Park.

5.2 Future Programs for Recreation

Director Escobedo presented the staff report. He stated the issue now is “capacity” and the pandemic has made programming very difficult. Staff is working on lots of creative ideas. Recreation Supervisor Stone is working on virtual programming for the fall.

Commissioner Friedel stated the Library has kick-started programming via Zoom and she wondered about the various programs that the Recreation Department could also do via Zoom. She came up with the idea of a “Drive-In Movie” at Piper Park with a screen on the grass and cars parked in the parking lot. Wreck Inc. Crew and other non-profits would certainly donate funds to help make this happen. She hoped that programming could go “live” very soon but acknowledged they need to think “virtual”.

Recreation Supervisor Stone stated he has reached out to many of the after-school class instructors since the announcement that schools will continue to be held “virtually” in the fall. He is working with these instructors on developing some on-line classes. He pointed out these classes need to be unique and taught by instructors that parents are familiar with. The outdoor summer camps are very successful and staff is looking at holding sports and science classes during the middle of the day. He is exploring all options. He would love to do a "Drive-In Movie" but Piper Park might not be the right venue. Staff is looking at all the options.

Commissioner Koeppel stated the Lark Theater is holding a “Drive-In Movie Night” in the Village Parking Lot and will be charging \$30 per car. He stated one of his biggest concerns was how students connect with other students. Kids are feeling very isolated at home. He asked staff to come up with ways to bring the community together and fill the void.

Chair Harrison loved the idea of a “Drive-In Movie” or Movies in the Park if it can be done in a safe manner. It is important to provide things that children can look forward to. Commissioner Friedel stated they could chalk circles in the park and put the movie screen on the stage.

Director Escobedo stated staff wants to provide recreational activities and give people something to do. They need to come up with some unique ideas and hopefully provide some sense of normalcy.

6. Director’s Oral Report

Director Escobedo reported they are trying to get through the staffing changes and are in somewhat of a “holding pattern”.

7. Commissioner’s Reports

Commissioner Friedel gave an update on the Commons Foundation. She discussed the need to keep the “virtual library” funded and help with the budget shortfalls. The Commons Foundation is committed to building a new Library but has shifted gears and is participating in the Annual Campaign for the Library. The target is \$215,000- they have \$40,000 to date.

Commissioner Blauvelt stated she is the Chair of the Larkspur Community Foundation and she has been working closely with the City Manager and the Public Works Director on projects for Piper Park including the new stage, etc. They are looking forward to moving on with some exciting projects and funding some FUN programs in the near future.

Commissioner Sunshine thanked Commissioner Friedel for her efforts in putting together the wonderful “retirement party” for former Recreation Director Whitley.

8. Adjourn Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Toni DeFrancis,
Recording Secretary

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Larkspur Parks and Recreation Commission.

Franklin Escobedo
Franklin Escobedo, Community Services Director