

TUOLUMNE RIVER REGIONAL PARK COMMISSION

Special Emergency Meeting
December 10, 2018 – 11:30 a.m.
1010 Tenth Street, Room 2005
Modesto, CA 95353

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER – By Chair Jenny Kenoyer at 11:35 am.

II. INTRODUCTION OF COMMISSIONERS

Commissioners Attending: Councilmember Jenny Kenoyer (Chair/City of Modesto),
Councilmember Kristi Ah You (City of Modesto)
Supervisor Dick Monteith (Stanislaus County District 4)
Supervisor Kristen Olsen (Stanislaus County District 1)

Commissioners Absent: Councilmember Bret Durossette (City of Ceres)

Staff Attending: City of Modesto:
Joe Lopez, City Manager
Galen Carroll, Chief of Police
Rick Armendariz, Interim Deputy City Manager
Alan Ernst, Fire Chief
Laurie Smith, Director of Parks, Recreation & Neighborhoods
Nathan Houx, Parks Planning & Development Manager
Frank Splendorio, Deputy City Attorney II(
Thomas Reeves, Community & Media Relations Officer
Paul Couchman, Financial Analyst III
Joanne Azevedo, Executive Assistant
Diane Sheatsley, Office Supervisor

Staff Absent: City of Ceres
Toby Wells, City Manager
Jami Aggers, Director of Parks and Recreation (Stanislaus County)

Guests Attending: Councilmember Doug Ridenour (City of Modesto)
Kevin Valine (Modesto Bee)
Chris Guptill, TRRP Citizens Advisory Committee

III. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

IV. CORRESPONDENCE - None

V. OLD BUSINESS - None

VI. NEW BUSINESS – Action Items

- A. Authorizing the City of Modesto to temporarily use a designated portion of Tuolumne River Regional Park, a jointly owned property, to develop and operate a homeless encampment while a more permanent solution is being approved.

Laurie Smith, Director of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhoods, introduced City staff and City's proposed option to temporarily move the current Beard Brook homeless encampment (Beard Brook) to a portion of TRRP Gateway underneath the 9th Street Bridge. She stated that the camp has outgrown its current location and the sloped site has made things difficult to live and manage during inclement weather.

Chief Carroll and Deputy Chief Armendariz informed the Commission that Beard Brook is not governed, but rather self-governed. They reported that several issues can arise from that form of government. Issues, specific to Beard Brook, are the use of campfires for warming/cooking, difficulties policing donations to the community, and entrance/egress problems to the park with cars parked along the road making access difficult.

The proposed relocation is a temporary solution until a more permanent solution is reached within six to nine months. Staff researched and considered several other sites, however, each had their own set of challenges. By formalizing the encampment and moving it to under the 9th Street Bridge area, the County can move forward to hire a managing partner to provide oversight 24/7 including: checking into/out of the camp, assigning campsite locations to occupants and giving service providers a better idea of who is living at the site, providing tents which are waterproof and uniform, and providing more statistical information on what services are being taken advantage of and how many people are being transitioned off the streets. As part of the preparation for the camp's relocation, community partners will construct a road to the site as part of the TRRP Master Plan, and which will remain after a permanent home is located for the homeless encampment.

Commissioners expressed concern and discussed the amount of work that has been done in the TRRP area in recent years. Staff assured the Commissioners that the site will be returned to its current state or better. Commissioners asked about the increase in service calls at Beard Brook. Chief Carroll reported that even though the calls have increased, the general population calls for "quality of life issues" has declined from last year (down approximately 31%), including calls to the Fire Department.

Commissioners further inquired if the Finch Road site had been explored, and were told that Staff and the Beard Brook residents did not find the Finch Road site acceptable for several reasons, namely the site is surrounded on several sides by major thoroughfares which could impose danger when crossing

roads and that it would be inaccessible to services such as doctor appointments and court hearings. Commissioners also asked how the new camp relocation and services would be financed and stipulated that the funding was not from TRRP budget, as this budget cannot bear additional expenditures. Staff informed the Commissioners that there are community partners willing to contribute to the encampment relocation as well as restoration of the site to its current condition or better after the encampment is removed. Commissioners also expressed concern about the children who are part of Beard Brook. Chief Carroll stated that approximately 20 families have been relocated to dwellings in Empire, however, some parents have not yet been persuaded, nor can they be forced to accept services offered.

Chair Kenoyer opened the meeting up for public comment. Chris Guptill spoke on behalf of the TRRP Citizen's Advisory Committee, as the Vice Chair, to provide their input on the use of TRRP Gateway He urged the Commission to recognize all the volunteer work that had been done in the Gateway Parcel with increasing the recreational use of the park and the Adopt-A-River program. He wanted to make sure that the area is returned to its current condition prior to the camp relocation. He also urged the Commission and citizens to visit the area to see what a beautiful area it is, and how important it is to future economic development. Chris stated that he is happy to see the City and County working cooperatively on a solution to the overall homeless issue and is encouraged that a long term solution can be reached within six to nine months. Chris offered his services to find solutions.

Commissioners asked Staff to return to upcoming TRRP Commission meetings with updates on the camp relocation until a permanent plan is established. Staff also confirmed its plans to report to the County Board of Supervisors tomorrow morning, and the City of Modesto Council tomorrow night. Staff also advised that the relocation plan will include significant fundraising efforts and their intent and commitment to find permanent location within six to nine months.

ACTION: Motion (Ah You/Olsen 4/0) Authorizing the City of Modesto to temporarily use a designated portion of Tuolumne River Regional Park, a jointly owned property, to develop and operate a homeless encampment while a more permanent solution is being approved; to include bi-monthly updates to the Commission; plus restoration of the site within 12 (twelve) months without use of TRRP Budget fund.

VII, MATTERS TOO LATE FOR THE AGENDA - None

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 12:25 pm by Chair Kenoyer
Next Commission meeting 2/13/19**