

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

June 18, 2009

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Ron Treabess and Judy Friedman

STAFF PRESENT: Cindy Gustafson, Alan Harry, Bob Bolton, Layne Van Noy, Roger Adamson, & Amy Norman

OTHERS PRESENT: Karen Ellis with North Tahoe Arts, Virginia Graham and Jan Huelle

The June 18, 2009 meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

1. NORTH TAHOE ARTS CONTRACT RENEWAL / RENTAL OFFSET

Bob Bolton began by introducing Karen Ellis who is the Executive Director of North Tahoe Arts (NTA). The two have been working together to finalize the offsets for NTA rent. These offsets are not to exceed \$8,934.24 per year, keeping their monthly rent at \$810 for 2009. Mr. Bolton handed out two lists of proposed offsets, one prepared by Ms. Ellis and the other prepared by Mr. Bolton. He asked the Committee to approve his list and add any from Ms. Ellis' list that they deemed appropriate.

Mr. Treabess agreed that everything on Mr. Bolton's list would qualify. He also mentioned the ceiling of \$8,934.24 that the Board had approved when the contract was renewed.

Mr. Bolton recommended that only 50% of the Kids Art Camp be applied as an offset due to the fact that NTA charges for this camp. The other offsets he recommended at 100% because they are offered free of charge. His list meets the ceiling so he asked the Committee if they still wanted to add anything from Ms. Ellis' list. Ms. Gustafson added that with programs such as Art Tour and Raising Monet art is being sold so these should not necessarily be considered free. She asked the Committee to agree and recommend to the Board next Tuesday on the appropriate list of offsets.

Ms. Ellis brought up all the building improvements NTA has completed on the Tahoe Community Center building such as painting the inside, cleaning the screens and windows, and other items that the TCPUD is responsible for but NTA has done because they wanted to. Mr. Bolton commented that we could credit some of that in the future if the Committee agrees. There is some benefit to the PUD of painting the inside of the upstairs room because we gain revenue from renting it out.

Mr. Bolton would like the support from the Committee to go ahead with the staff recommended list of offsets. Mr. Treabess agreed. He added that maintenance done by NTA that benefits the

TCPUD should also be credited as long as it doesn't bring the total above the ceiling set by the Board.

Ms. Gustafson stated that going forward action items should be put on the Committee agenda so the Committee can make a motion. For now, the Committee approves going to the Board to recommend the staff offsets.

2. RECREATION PROGRAM PROMOTION AND MARKETING UPDATE

Mr. Van Noy began this discussion by recognizing the room for improvement in promoting and marketing recreation programs. He and Mr. Bolton attended a workshop last month concerning these issues. There was a suggestion to utilize the professional services of customers in trade for program participation. He contacted Gretchen Sproehle who has a marketing background. The two met and her recommendations are in the attached memo and as discussed.

- Pocket Guide – a piece that is distributed to hotels, concerts, etc. that includes our programs and special events. The estimated cost of \$1,250 does not include staff time in distributing it on a regular basis. It would also become outdated fairly quickly.
- Social Media – Developing Facebook and Twitter pages for Rideout. This would cost some manpower to keep up-to-date.
- Reciprocal Links – Link our website to other local websites.
- Event Announcements – Submit event information to local websites and calendars. Cost would be approximately \$70 per month.
- Public Relations – Press releases to large local employers to put into their newsletters.
- Outreach – Have a representative available at various local events to promote and answer questions.
- Advertising – Advertising on TART busses and TCPUD utility bill stuffers.

Staff would like feedback from the Committee on enhancing what we are currently doing. Mr. Treabess asked which items on our initial list of what we are doing are actually working and which aren't. Flyers are working, especially at the elementary schools. Press releases are not as effective because reader volume is down. The catalog is very effective and only costs us postage. We haven't been diligent enough with the PUD website to keep it current. We are now using a lot of email blasts through Activenet which seem to be effective because you can pin point who gets the email and use it to cross sell. We also conducted a survey on summer sign-up day and most people surveyed said they heard about activities by word of mouth and through the catalog. Ms. Gustafson pointed out that sign-up day is mainly for kids programs. Mr. Van Noy added that teens and adults would utilize Facebook and Twitter more but it would take time to maintain.

Discussion went back to email blasts. This involves developing a database which Activenet does for us. As we get more customers entered into the system our database will continue to grow. We also personally call last year's participants and coaches and talk with parents concerning youth programs. Banners to promote special events seem useful but we're not getting heavy

feedback on their effectiveness. Mr. Bolton commented on how emailing seems to be going out of style and the new thing is Facebook and Twitter. Blake Beeman uses Facebook to advertise his concerts at Commons Beach and Crystal Bay Club and he says his attendance has increased by 30% since starting his Facebook page. We could have the interns on the evening shifts at Rideout keep the listings current which wouldn't cost us a thing. We would need to get DSL or some other server other than TTUSDs because they block these websites.

Ms. Freidman asked about the demographics of our customers. Also, how do we know that our marketing efforts are working if we aren't tracking them. She suggested asking people when they sign up how they heard about the activity. We can track this using Activenet. She went on to state that we need to identify our audience before we define a marketing plan, not vice versa. A catalog that only comes out twice a year is pretty much outdated as soon as it is printed. Ms. Gustafson added that we need more public relations, more direct people to people. We have to get out to the people and see what they want. We need to reach out to those leaders in the community who facilitate getting the word out, especially to their employees.

Mr. Bolton pointed out that we can develop a marketing plan but the hardest part is the maintenance of it, especially as we let staff go. He and Mr. Van Noy will develop a schedule for which events each can attend to promote our programs. They can take information on programs with them and also ask what programs people would like to see offered from the PUD.

3. BURTON CREEK OPERATING AGREEMENT RENEWAL

Burton Creek is used for the Cross Country Ski Area. The PUD has been in an agreement with the California State Parks since 1977 for use of this land. We are up for a 10 year renewal. We had some concern about maintaining the bike trails located there in the summer months because of the added liability. State Parks has agreed to change the terms of the lease to run from October 1 through April 30. Mr. Bolton asked the Committee to recommend to the Board that they approve the contract. Mr. Treabess asked if our legal counsel had reviewed it which he has. Mr. Treabess then stated that renewing the contract will have the Committee's endorsement.

4. PARKS AND RECREATION IDENTIFIED COST SAVINGS FOR 2009

Ms. Gustafson began by discussing the budget situation the state is in and that they could take up to 8% of the property taxes the PUD currently gets. We should be prepared before this occurs and make some cuts now. When the state budget comes through we can reconsider some of our cuts once we see what happens to our share of property taxes. Parks and Rec already has a very tight budget but we have to look for more ways to save. Her handout showed where we can possibly save more. The bulleted items are the ones we should reconsider putting back in the budget if the state doesn't take our tax dollars or if we can find money elsewhere. These items were then discussed.

9. Reduce Bells Landing maintenance work to minimum required for health and safety. We had budgeted \$15K for improvements at Bells Landing. There are several safety issues

happening there that need to be addressed, but we could put off some major repairs. The recommendation is to cut \$10K out of this budget and use the remaining \$5K to make the necessary improvements that are an imminent health/safety issue. Bells is not only used by the rafting company but also the general public; we have a responsibility to provide something safe. Also, the rafting company pays us \$10K a year to use this area except for those years that the rafting season is cut too short.

10. Defer capital for Bocce Court, Dog Park and Bike Trail Signage. We could look for public and grant money to help pay for these. We also have to factor in the cost to maintain these new facilities, especially since we are looking to cut our seasonal staff. Mr. Harry suggested some areas to look into to raise money. We could ask the Humane Society for fundraising ideas to raise money for the dog park. And we could look to service clubs to raise money for Bocce Ball.
11. Grant for Connors Field Scoreboard from Johnny B. We received \$2K in grant money from Pete N' Peters in exchange for advertising. There will be an article and photo in the paper thanking them for this.
12. 1 year reduction in ball field maintenance. A three year plan was started last year to improve the ball fields. The results have been extraordinary. We can save \$8,900 by suspending this for a year but the results will be noticeable. Overseeding wouldn't occur; they wouldn't lay cinder, clay or turf. The quality of the fields wouldn't necessarily drop too much but they would not improve as planned.
13. Reduce six seasonal staff at the end of August. This will have several impacts, especially starting in August through the end of the summer season. Parks currently has eleven seasonal workers plus two more at the Boat Ramp. This would mean cutting six out in August. This would make a noticeable difference on garbage and restroom maintenance to name a few. Ms. Gustafson asked about possible signage to let the public know about the cuts and how they are affecting the conditions at the facilities. Even though this is not scheduled until August we need to get the message out now. We need to ask the public to help out – save your tax dollars by helping, pack out your own garbage, etc.

As far as maintenance is concerned, things would be scheduled on a must do for health and safety priority. Deferred maintenance items would continue to be deferred and the list would grow. Ms. Graham asked if this would occur the beginning of August or September. Mr. Adamson responded that it would happen in September and affect September and October.

Ms. Gustafson again mentioned that these cuts will be noticeable and that is why she is recommending that several come back if possible, depending on what the state does. Several involve safety issues and need to be maintained at a certain caliber – we should try to fund these. We should look for funds elsewhere and try to cut only two seasonal, not six which will make a huge impact. Mr. Bolton pointed out that Parks knew this was coming and has already cut nine of eleven seasonals down to 32 hours a week. This has already had a noticeable impact.

14. Eliminate fall swimming lessons. This would save \$2,800. This was a fairly popular program last fall. It did not run at capacity but last year was its first year. We can't project if we would fill the program this fall and thus cover costs. If it did as good or a little better than last year we would still probably lose the \$2,800.
15. Close Rideout on Sundays for the summer. This would only save \$800 but if you look at the Recreation budget \$800 has an impact. Ms. Friedman asked when this would start. Mr. Bolton answered that all recommendations would begin July 1.
16. Close Rideout at 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday for the remainder of the year. This would save \$2,600. Most classes are finished before 8:00 p.m. It wouldn't have to impact the gym as far as leagues go because we could ask someone involved to supervise. Ms. Gustafson recommended we start this right away considering it is summer and most people are outside enjoying the warm weather.
17. CalPers 2 month medical premium holiday savings on parks and recreation employee premiums. This means two months without paying premiums. David and Marynell have had their hours cut for this reason.

Mr. Bolton stated that we have made several cuts over the past few years and more cuts will definitely have an impact. He will go in front of the Board next week and go over these additional cuts. Mr. Treabess asked that when this does go before the Board that he doesn't go through each item again. He will move that the Board approves these Parks and Recreation cost savings and in order to realize these savings we start them July 1.

6. PLACER COUNTY MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT EXTENSION

We have had an operating agreement with Placer County for Lake Forest, Commons Beach and Heritage Plaza which is due to expire at the end of June. Placer wants to do a three year extension with only a COLA increase. The PUD is spending much more on these facilities than Placer County is giving us. Mr. Bolton told them he can not recommend a three year extension. Placer countered with a one year extension of the contract, they raise it by the COLA, and during the next year we review the costs with them in an effort to get more dollars from them. Placer has asked Mr. Bolton to request the one year extension from the Board.

Ms. Friedman asked how far off they were in covering costs on the \$67K they pay us yearly. Mr. Bolton replied that for some facilities this only covers 50% of the costs. She then asked what if we provide fewer services since they aren't reimbursing us appropriately. Mr. Treabess said that we could provide justification that these areas are being used by tourists who aren't providing us with property tax dollars. He then stated that a one year extension is fine but we can't let it slide by until it's time for another one year extension. Talks need to begin immediately. Placer has requested a copy of the budget from us that shows the cost for the services we are providing at these facilities. Ms. Gustafson cautioned about sending them our budget before we sit down with them.

5. REVIEW PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD REPORTS / STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Bolton reported that he, John Britto and Ms. Gustafson will meet next week to go over the final changes in the lease for Rideout. Creekside originally had shown an interest in leasing space at Rideout but now they are interested in Fairway. Their goal is to find a place to settle in so they are not moving every couple years. Coldstream is not moving out of Rideout but they are switching areas to the back rooms. This will allow easier outside access to the field for Kidz Club and other programs.

Mr. Adamson reported on Parks. Parks is extremely busy right now.

Mr. Van Noy reported on Recreation. Girls Softball had a good cost recovery of 70% which is way above the goal of 50%. We are seeing good numbers in our adult sports. Ms. Friedman gave a thumbs up to the Little Lakers soccer program which currently has 16 participants!

Mr. Treabess asked who was monitoring the parking and supervising the staff at the Farmers Market. Mr. Bolton said that today it was Susan with her son but she would have someone helping her in the future. He was concerned because they were not wearing the vests. We need to keep an eye on this because the PUD is ultimately responsible.

7. PUBLIC FORUM

Jan Huelle introduced himself and took the floor. He is a resident of Tahoe Tavern Heights. He asked how the Parks facilities and Recreation programs are being subsidized. Is it by the rise in the rates for water and sewer? Mr. Treabess replied by saying no, these are funded by the fees the participants pay and by property taxes. Ms. Gustafson went on further to say that the PUD is given a fixed share of property taxes which is based on the services we provide such as water and sewer. There is new legislation stating that we can't drop a service we are currently providing without losing tax dollars.

Mr. Huelle then asked what North Tahoe Arts is getting in these offsets. This is what they think they spend that is a direct benefit to the Parks and Recreation Department. These are offsets against the rent they pay the PUD.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

Amy Norman, Administrative Assistant

Prepared by Amy Norman