

## Occidental Community Center Advisory Council

Approved Meeting Minutes - February 4, 2014 6:30 pm

Location: Union Hotel Pizzeria, Occidental

### Attendees:

Benjamynn Gabriel, John Greaves, Courtney Meyer, Barbara Gonnella, Barbara Costa, Miriam Redstone, Diane Masura, Terry McNulty, Dotty Joos, Brian Grant, Lee Sandahl, Lynn Hamilton, Victoria Johnston, Michael Johnston, Steve McNeal, Heidi McNeal, Ann Hines, Don Frank, Sara Peyton, Tom Gonnella, Dee Swanhuyser, Jim Blake.

I. **Welcome** new (and prior) attendees; Brief reiteration of purpose

II. **Changes to the agenda**

No agenda was generated. Benjamynn indicated the focus of the meeting would be the review of survey samples and options for publication of the surveys.

### **Corrections to prior minutes**

No revisions, draft minutes of the previous meeting were approved electronically.

III. **Discussion/ brainstorming** re: Developing survey and how to gather community input in an even handed broad reaching manner.

**Recommendations** for minor revisions to the draft survey example provided by PRAXIS Architects included;

- Pertaining to ranking of current uses

Revise language of “activities that you attend” to “activities you and your family attend or have attended”, remove league from basketball and volleyball lines, include check boxes for adult sports and children sports.

- Pertaining to ranking of activities to be implemented

Include check boxes for Educational classes, continuing education classes, local history gallery.

- General group discussion about the goal of the survey and the language for the questions. Language should be friendlier and there should be a short introduction describing who is conducting the survey and why the information is being requested.

- A number of attendees felt the survey should include language that would allow participants to vote for a venue that included continuing education classrooms focused on ecology and the arts with a consideration of partnerships with local artists as well as connections to ecological groups. Groups such as the Bodega Marine Lab, the Audubon Society and Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods should be considered.

- The center should provide an opportunity for non-profits and be a local destination for volunteering and community outreach.
- It is important to make it clear in the survey that the options for consideration are not limited to those in the check boxes and there should be a “other” check box to allow for ideas not previously considered.
- The use of the facility and grounds for expanded and more frequent uses similar to the crafts faire such as flea markets, antique fairs and similar special events.

**IV. Additional observations and suggestions include:**

- The property across Graton Road should be included in the consideration of the planning process as many of the attendees believe the property is owned by the County.
- Many recommended considering how to provide access to the public restrooms as soon as possible. All agreed accessible public restrooms are an important component to the improvement of the building. Questions were raised about Regional parks capacity to maintain and open the restrooms based on the Department maintaining similar facilities County-wide.
- A number of attendees expressed interest in the creation of a visitor orientation center that would allow tourists and specifically bicyclists with a location to gather information about the area as well as access to services such as a public restroom.
- Discussion regarding the duration of the planning process and how to establish a timeframe that is inclusive of community input but also allows the group to proceed with direction to complete the study of the property and the project.
- Concerns were voiced about proceeding to quickly toward decision making without having an idea about what level of financial investment the County is willing to contribute for any proposed improvements.
- A few of the attendees had reviewed the building systems analysis and felt that the report contained a significant amount of helpful information. It was recommended that all the members of the group thoroughly review the report prior to next month’s meeting so as to have a more informed discussion about the existing conditions of the site and infrastructure serving the property.
- A brief discussion was had regarding the sewer and water systems serving the site, and the community’s awareness of the compromised condition of both systems. The impact of any proposed improvement on those systems is important to keep in mind as the planning process continues.

- A request was made for the posting of the results of the tabulation from the voting panels of the February 2013 meeting. It was recommended to post those results on the Regional Parks website.
  - Concerns were voiced about the delayed posting of minutes and agendas to the Regional Parks website. The group agreed that it would be important to establish a Facebook page documenting the activities of the group in a more fluid and expedited manner.
  - Discussion regarding how to inform the community about the survey and how to submit the surveys once completed. Once the survey is created the group agreed that it should be posted on the Community Council website, surveys should be available at the Market suggestion box, its availability should be advertised on sandwich boards and published in the Gazette. The group felt it was important to make the survey as accessible to the community as possible both physically and digitally.
  - A volunteer group agreed to meet to draft a revised survey to meet the group's concerns and address the requested revisions. The goal of the exercise is to have the revised survey ready for review and approval by the group prior to the March 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. The small group agreed to meet on February 26<sup>th</sup> to rework the draft. The group includes John Greaves, Courtney Meyer, Benjamynn Gabriel, Ann Hines, Brian Grant and Stephanie Felch.
- V. **Wrap-up:** The meeting was concluded with a discussion about the primary goal of the March meeting being to approve a revised survey to be published to the community.