

STAFF REPORT

Rosamond Community Services District

DATE: November 7, 2017
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Ronald D. Smith, General Manager
SUBJECT: Parks and Recreation

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff's recommendation is the Board adopt **Resolution 2017-19** and proceed with a special election for a Uniform Parcel Tax to provide Parks and Recreation to the Rosamond Community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Background

In 1998, the voters of the Rosamond Community Services District ("District") were asked during an election if the District should include Parks and Recreation as one of the District's powers and services—it passed. Included on the ballot was another question that asked if the community would pay for the Parks and Recreation—it failed.

In 2002, the District once again put on the ballot a parcel tax for Parks and Recreation— it failed.

In 2007, the District received Jim Williford Park (Formerly Westpark) ("Park") from the County of Kern ("County"), and in 2008, contracted with the County to receive the revenue from the County Service Area 63.5 ("CSA") to manage Williford Park.

The revenue from the CSA was not adequate to maintain the Park, or create a larger parks and recreation program. The District took an internal loan and established a Parks and Recreation Department with full staffing and programs. In addition, the District used limited Ad Valorem revenues for debt service on the loan and to supplement the CSA revenues for operations.

Since there was not an adequate and reliable revenue stream to fund the Park's operations and maintenance, the funds from the loan eventually ran out. As a result, there was massive layoffs and in 2014 the pool was closed and the pool remained closed for the 2014 and 2015 seasons.

It was determined the District did not do the necessary public outreach, and a proper campaign was not conducted by the concerned citizens in favor of parks.

Currently

In the Fall of 2015, the District's Board gave direction to the General Manager to find a way to re-open the pool and to explore ways to finance a Parks and Recreation program.

Through budget cuts, saved funds from the previous closure, and reorganization, the pool was re-opened for the Pool Seasons 2016 and 2017. The District is now in the position of either acquiring a sustained revenue stream or to return the Park to the County.

Community Outreach

In January 2016, the District conducted a phone poll. The results showed that 88% of those polled wanted the pool to remain open and summer programs provided. Two thirds of those stated that they would agree to pay for the programs.

In 2017, the Board gave direction to the General Manager to proceed with a community outreach program and work towards finding a reliable continuous revenue stream to provide Parks and Recreation.

The District has conducted a major community outreach which included 2 public meetings and 4 public workshops to engage the community and make them part of this important process. The outreach included:

- 5,000 flyers delivered to RCSD office
- 3200 flyers distributed to schools for Back-to-School Night table
- Rosamond News - 8 weeks - full page back cover ad - Aug. 25 - Oct. 9. (Oct. 9 issue contained survey invitation)
- Antelope Valley Press - 3 Sunday paper banner ads on Kern County page - Sept. 3, Sept. 10, Oct. 1.
- AV Press email distribution - 5,000+ for each ad (15,000+ total)
- Antelope Valley Press website banner ad - 30 days with link to RCSD Facebook page
- Eye on Rosamond Group (9,309 members) Facebook posts - Public Meeting invitations + comments and interactions + survey announcements
- RosaMOMS Group Facebook posts - survey announcements - see attached for sample interaction
- Public phone calls to 7,200 RCSD customers for event reminders.

- Direct Mail in utility bill mailing to RCSD customers - August bill flyer
- Additional flyers distributed with permission to
 - Williford Park/Pool
 - Wayside Chapel
 - St. Mary's
 - Rosamond Hills Apartments (Senior Homes)
 - Church of Christ
 - Foster Freeze
 - Jesse's Pizza
 - Albertsons
 - Wanda Kirk Library
 - Karls Hardware
 - Cloud Chaser Realtor
 - Wayside Church
 - SKUSD
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- Survey Oct. 9-Oct. 26 (303 survey participants)
- Survey invitation and reminder emailed to 1,1173 RCSD e-billing customers
- Survey link available through Rosamond News ad, Facebook channels, RCSD website, RCSD Facebook page
- Phone Poll (150 participants)
- Facebook RCSD site update to show our public meetings and process. Facebook Survey was posted here as well.
- RCSD website announcement on homepage and links to Facebook and survey.
- Direct Mail to RCSD customers - Aug. bill flyer announcing meetings - (Lizette has number)
- General Facebook outreach to local, active groups
- Newspaper + News Website Outreach
- Local Business Outreach
- Edwards Base Outreach
- School District Outreach
- Sept. 23 Parade - booth

The process helped the District assess what park amenities were preferred, and what level of community financing was acceptable.

Conclusion

Through this process staff was able to make several assessments.

The community favors keeping the pool at Williford Park opened and making the needed repairs and maintenance. Along with Williford Park, they favor the creation and building of an

additional 6 acre park which could include covered picnic areas, walking and exercise course, kids park, amphitheater, and a dog or skate park.

The acceptable range of financing from the community to provide the parks described above was \$114-\$129.

Funding Mechanism

There were three funding mechanisms presented to the Board: CFD, Uniform Parcel Tax, and Benefit Assessment District.

A Benefit Assessment District would not provide the District with the funds necessary due to the high threshold of showing Specific Benefit as opposed to General Benefit.

While the CFD could be structured to assess properties at different levels, and is similar to a Uniform Parcel Tax, the timing and extent to produce the studies necessary would not allow the Park to reopen in 2018, and the increased revenue would be negligible.

A Uniform Parcel Tax could be assessed with undeveloped properties having a lower assessment than developed properties. The timing for the steps necessary to bring it to an election and placed on the tax rolls in 2018 would allow the pool to open in 2018.

Revenue and Costs

The estimated costs of the preferred parks program would range between \$800,000–\$850,000 per year. A parcel tax of \$119 for developed properties and \$99 for undeveloped properties would bring in an estimated \$810,000 per year starting in 2018.

Recommendation

This Uniform Parcel Tax would not only provide much needed quality of life services of Parks and Recreation, but studies have shown that parks increase property values and attract knowledgeable and talented workers, the ones needed for aerospace companies, to live and purchase homes in the community.

Staff's recommendation is the Board adopt **Resolution 2017-19** and proceed with a special election for a Uniform Parcel Tax to provide Parks and Recreation to the Rosamond Community.