

**LODI CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CARNEGIE FORUM, 305 WEST PINE STREET
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2015**

A. Call to Order / Roll Call

The Special Joint Meeting of the City Council and the Recreation Commission of November 4, 2015, was called to order by Mayor Johnson at 8:51 p.m.

Present: Mayor Pro Tempore Chandler, Council Member Kuehne, Council Member Mounce, Council Member Nakanishi, and Mayor Johnson

Absent: None

Also Present: City Manager Schwabauer, City Attorney Magdich, and City Clerk Ferraiolo

Lodi Recreation Commission Members who were present: Commissioners Carouba and Hamilton.

B. Topic(s)

B-1 Presentation by PROS Consulting, Inc., Related to Strategic Plan for Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services (PRCS)

Neelay Bhatt, Vice President of PROS Consulting, Inc., provided a PowerPoint presentation related to the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Strategic Plan. Specific topics of discussion included levels of service, priority rankings, core values, vision, mission, goals, legacy initiatives, strategy matrix, and next steps.

Mayor Johnson stated opportunities for a large community park or smaller neighborhood parks seem remote in the foreseeable future, especially in light of Lodi's slow growth, and he questioned what the matrix would look like if those were removed from the list. Mr. Bhatt responded that for Lodi's population, Lodi Lake is the jewel of the community and to create another large community park is not realistic; however, smaller neighborhood parks in the 2- to 10-acre range are viable. He stated he could not manually change the survey as this was driven by community responses and the priorities are based on a model. Mr. Bhatt pointed out, however, that it does not mean that priorities will be accomplished in sequential order because it will depend on funding and other factors, such as maintaining existing resources.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Chandler, Mr. Bhatt stated Micke Grove Park is outside the City boundaries and was not included in the level of service equation. Mayor Pro Tempore Chandler suggested it be considered because, even though it is half a mile outside of the City limits, it is a jewel and used by the community.

In response to Mayor Johnson, Mr. Bhatt explained an indoor aquatics center would not be used solely for an indoor pool, but it could be an element of a multicultural center that would offer indoor swimming at night or in inclement weather and include a walking/jogging track, fitness activities, cultural and artistic activities, dance, and various classes. It would be an indoor community recreation space with different uses.

Council Member Mounce pointed out there are City facilities that are in dire need of repair or funding to complete, such as the Grape Bowl and DeBenedetti Park, and asked why the Hutchins Street Square pool is not open at night for swimming. Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Director Jeff Hood responded the warm temperature of the pool is not conducive for swimming; it is primarily used for exercise; and the temperature is difficult to vary throughout the day because it holds too much heat. In response to Council Member Mounce, City Manager Schwabauer stated it appears that a therapeutic swimming pool at Lodi Memorial Hospital is not a

priority for the new chief executive officer and the project will likely be shelved for a number of years. Council Member Mounce stated she would like to see the Hutchins Street Square pool converted to a new use once there is a viable alternative for seniors. Mr. Hood stated Mr. Bhatt has indicated the pool does not meet the needs of a community. Mr. Bhatt added the goal is to create a swimming location that does not separate the community into seniors' versus children's use and stressed the need for year-round swimming lessons.

In response to Council Member Nakanishi, Mr. Bhatt suggested the City of Carlsbad as a wonderful example of a community that is fiscally conservative, yet was able to create the Alga Norte Community Park, which is a true community gathering place that includes a pool, dog park, skate park, and a multitude of activities.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Chandler, Mr. Hood stated Blakely Park pool is used primarily for swim lessons in the summer for six to eight weeks. In 2013 and 2014, free swimming was offered through a fundraising opportunity; however, at the end of the year, problems with participant conduct from repeat offenders ended the free swim offering. The program returned this year at the \$1.50 charge, and staff closed the pool early in the season due to lack of participation. Mayor Pro Tempore Chandler stated he believed there was a disconnect between this plan and actual experience, to which Mr. Hood pointed out that the Blakely Park pool is 60 years old. Mr. Bhatt added the quality of the experience is also important, as is creating a multicultural, multigenerational use.

In response to Council Member Nakanishi, Mr. Bhatt stated partnerships with a school district for swim lessons is an option and some communities have joint use agreements for pools and parks where they become public after certain hours; however, he added it is challenging to build and sustain a positive partnership that still addresses the community expectations. Mr. Schwabauer agreed about the challenge, stating Lodi has a six-week summer program at Tokay High School, but the pool is heavily scheduled for competitive swimming and it is difficult to arrange City use.

In response to Mayor Johnson, Mr. Bhatt stated there is not a huge demand for pocket parks and a 2- to 10-acre neighborhood park with a two- to three-hour window of multiple uses is more viable for Lodi.

Mark Hamilton, Recreation Commissioner, commended Parks and Recreation staff for bringing the Department back into the black by way of cuts and deferred maintenance. He stated the plan is phenomenal, but the reality is that a funding mechanism needs to be developed to maintain City resources that currently exist and to educate the public on what it will cost to maintain them. Mr. Hamilton stated the City will need to be creative in developing walking/biking trails, in serving seniors, in encouraging better utilization of neighborhood parks, and in providing opportunities for adult fitness, special events, and cultural activities. He stated a greater number of public-private partnerships, similar to the kayak rentals at Lodi Lake, should be explored for the Grape Bowl or Lodi Lake. Mr. Hamilton stated the only pushback on the increased fees at Lodi Lake were from non-profit organizations that did not want to pay the fee because the event was a public benefit. He stated he believed the City does not charge enough for City resources and suggested increasing fees at the boat ramp.

Mike Carouba, Recreation Commissioner, stated he believed the reason for the Strategic Plan is to educate the public on what to expect, to demonstrate what other communities have accomplished, and to show the costs associated with the needs. The City lacks adequate funding to complete projects already in motion, and the public needs to be aware of that fact. Mr. Carouba stated he routinely walks the Woodbridge Irrigation District (WID) canal behind his house and expressed disappointment that the area was fenced by WID and can no longer be used as a walking trail. He stated Lodi does not grow at a rate that covers the cost of inflation; therefore, the community must be asked to pay more money to finish existing projects and to undertake new endeavors from the plan with leftover funding. He reiterated the importance of educating the public on the challenges to fund the wants and needs of the community and that this plan works toward that endeavor.

Ed Miller suggested, instead of spreading the limited amount of money the City has over multiple

projects, it should concentrate its funding and resources on one project that it can complete, such as improving Lodi Lake. Further, he suggested forming partnerships with health clubs, of which there are many in Lodi, to spread fitness services across town; with partners that could improve the Grape Bowl; and with entities that could include walking/biking trails along the canal system. Such partnerships would better attract tourism to the wine, hotel, and restaurant industries and further enable the City to better focus its attention and resources toward improving Lodi Lake and other existing parks that need upgrading.

Mr. Schwabauer stated the concept of utilizing WID's canal as a walking trail has been discussed with WID and it appears likely the idea will not be supported by the current board and administration. He added, however, a second concept has been discussed about adding the 101 acres at Knights Lake, owned by WID, to Lodi Lake's park and trail system. This concept had a positive response from WID.

Council Member Mounce stated she often encounters organizations through the League of California Cities who enter into public-private partnerships for promotions and upgrades. Further, she stressed that several years ago, the Council determined Lodi Lake should remain a passive park and that, before this goes any further, another discussion needs to take place to determine whether the City's direction is to keep the park in its passive state or promote it with public events and festivals.

C. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the City Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:54 p.m.

ATTEST:

Jennifer M. Ferraiolo
City Clerk