



LIVERMORE AREA RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

CAMP SHELLY MEETING

MINUTES

MONDAY, APRIL 19, 2010

6:30 PM

ROBERT LIVERMORE COMMUNITY CENTER
4444 EAST AVENUE, LIVERMORE CA 94550-5053

Board and Staff Members Present: Steve Goodman, Tim Barry, John Lawrence, Ranger Pat Sotelo, Sandra Kaya (minutes)
Approximately 35 members of the public attended.

1. Purpose of the Meeting

General Manager Barry welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the purpose of the meeting: to discuss how to make the camp more sustainable over the long term. He said LARPD has reduced a lot of programs and he wanted to talk about how to make the camp financially successful by increasing revenue. Mr. Barry said the camp is successful from a programming standpoint and the Rangers do a great job. Mr. Barry said the District's intent is to keep Camp Shelly open for as long as possible and the camp needs to break even or better in order to compete with other priorities.

2. Introductions

Mr. Barry introduced Director Steve Goodman, Assistant General Manager John Lawrence, Ranger Pat Sotelo, and Administrative Aide Sandra Kaya.

3. History and Board Directions

Director Goodman said he was encouraged by all the people attending this meeting. He said he has been a supporter of the camp for a long time, but budget-wise, the District is facing some difficult decisions. Director Goodman said that supporters of the camp need to encourage others to support it as well, rather than keeping it a secret; the District needs more people to go to sustain the camp. He said occupancy is pretty full on the weekends, but the District has difficulty filling the camp during the weekdays. Director Goodman said Carolyn Siegfried was unable to attend this meeting, but she said she would be willing to chair a marketing committee. He said the Board was presented with a proposal by staff to increase this year's reservation fees by even more than what it was increased. He said we will see what happens this year and then evaluate the situation. Director Goodman said that if there are a lot of camp reservations and the camp is close to breaking even, another fee increase the following year may

be unnecessary. Director Goodman said that once we lose Camp Shelly, it won't come back and it's something unique to the District. He said that he is supportive of the camp, but as a Board Director, he has to be fiscally responsible.

Mr. Barry said one of the challenges for the camp is that other campgrounds are larger and can bring in more money, they may have more amenities that contribute towards lengthier stays (such as dining halls), Camp Shelly is small and is more primitive. He said one of the challenges is to increase reservations.

Mr. Lawrence said the District is trying to fill the campsite during the weekdays. Weekday campers, he said, are not necessarily people from this area; they're more likely to be 'transient' campers. To help raise revenue, Ranger Pat stated that staff will try a couple of special hikes for fees: one to Carson Pass to see wild flowers and one to Mount Tallac. Mr. Lawrence said that the District is specifically soliciting suggestions from the public, but if supporters have suggestions throughout the year, contact Sandra Kaya at LARPD (skaya@larpd.dst.ca.us).

4. Overview of the Current Budget

Mr. Lawrence explained the Camp Shelly budget. With the changes this coming year, he said, there is a projected \$10,000 deficit; if registration continues at its current rate, there may not be a deficit.

5. Steps Being Taken to Reduce the Subsidy

Mr. Lawrence said that there was a transfer of staff as a means to reduce the cost, instead of having a full-time staff person, there will be a part-time staff person at the camp. To raise revenue, he said, the reservation fee has been increased to \$35 per night for residents or non-residents. Mr. Lawrence said that the District would like the residents to have an advantage to sign up before non-residents and staff will work towards that for next year as well as a group reservation fee.

Mr. Lawrence said that the new Camp Shelly fees seem to be competitive with camps in the Tahoe basin; staff did a cost comparison, but it is hard to compare different camps (some have RV hookups, different amenities, etc.).

6. Suggestions and Recommendations from Camp Shelly Supporters

- Overflow from other campgrounds.
- Work with the School District to inform people about the camp.
- Promote the camp through Farmers Market. Camp Shelly campers can help promote it, Director Goodman will help coordinate this. Mr. Lawrence responded that LARPD programs and services are already promoted at Farmers Market; in general, Mr. Lawrence said, staff will evaluate all ideas, but some may not be feasible.

- Make reservation process easier.
- Provide more information and photos in Brochure.
- Have a positive, community interest story in the newspaper.
- Promote fun things to do throughout the week.
- Sell an annual/season pass.
- Offer discount with a Sycamore Grove pass.
- Friends of Camp Shelly.
- Make donating easier.
- Lower rate for Tuesday/Wednesdays.
- Reduce cost by leveraging costs with nearby camps. Mr. Lawrence responded that staff has been contacting other camps to research whether it would be more efficient if another camp could take out the trash, etc.
- Extend the camping season. Mr. Lawrence responded that the reason the dates have been set as such is because the business drops off.
- Advertise when certain groups will be camping, ie astronomy group, it may be an enticement to some people.
- Scout group to set-up or take-down camp. Ranger Pat responded that volunteer groups have come to help open the camp. He said that a lot of tasks staff does are very basic, but some things are very technical. He said there are specific projects that are good for volunteer groups, such as working on the campfire pit that.
- Sporting goods stores.
- Market as a fun, low-cost vacation.
- Sell annual pass, entertainment book.
- Former General Manager Doug Bell said it is not economically viable as such a small site. He said there is another loop that never got built and having more sites could raise the revenue.

- Camp Shelly t-shirts, check with SlicArt. Can pre-order t-shirts when people register.
- Pay incentive to fill up the reservations.
- If expand the camp, trail hiker camp site (like Zephyr Cover).
- Soften out the two hard turns, may be an enticement to get bigger vehicles, RVs.
- Wi-fi access.
- Coordinate with Tahoe Trail Rim group, backpacking groups, mountain biking groups.
- Advertise in Tahoe area.
- Advertise about different activities, points of interest.
- Marketing materials such as pens, etc.
- Tie-ins to other businesses; ie Vikings home. Cross-marketing w/area businesses.
- Website listings in Tahoe.
- Promote through SIRS groups, monthly bulletin.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Camp Shelly Suggestions (submitted in writing)

- 501c3 or equivalent for Camp Shelly, people can join and become members of 'Friends of Camp Shelly'
 - Annual membership (\$100?), where most of the amount would be a tax free donation. Includes a few perks, maybe advanced registration, lower midweek rates, a Camp Shelly T-Shirt, flyers to pass out, pens, bumper stickers, bear spray, etc.
 - Recognize donations with engravings at the camp.

-Maybe it could be even be started this year with a lower fee (\$50?) and offer the lower mid-week rates with the T-shirts. Advertise the full membership in the winter next year with advanced registration and all the other perks with it.

- Give people who are booking 5 days or more priority booking by 1 week early.
- Keep it open 2 weeks earlier in summer (weekends only) and open through September (weekends only)
- Raise fees to \$45 or \$50 per night
- Require a 4 night minimum, whether you stay or not.