



Board of Supervisors

825 Fifth Street, Rm 111
Eureka, CA 95501

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
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Dear Supervisors,

The Southern Humboldt Community Park project will be a topic on your agenda on January 5, 2017. Community members contributed \$650,000 toward the purchase of this property in the year 2000 to create a Community Park.

We have enclosed letters of support and signed petitions that have been collected to show the support for the Southern Humboldt Community Park's rezoning and for features of the project.

- **Letters of Support for rezoning:** This is one file containing 588 individual letters of support
- **2 files with Petitions to Rezone 1:** These petitions containing 408 signatures in support of the rezoning
- **Support for Events:** This petition contains 181 signatures
- **Sport field Support:** This petition contains 52 signatures

In addition, I have enclosed information from several of *Community Planning Sessions* input sessions and a short evaluation of a survey completed by 433 people in 2012.

It is interesting to note that community input has remained consistent over more than a decade. There are a few folks whose opinions and they are quite prolific at emails and letter writing.

We have worked very hard to mitigate everyone's concerns that have come before us. The overall community input that we receive has remained unchanged for more than a decade.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Lobato
Executive Director

Southern Humboldt Community Park
PO Box 185,
Garberville, CA 95542
707 923-2928

Carol Van Sant
P.O. Box 825
Redway, CA 95560

December 10, 2016

Humboldt County
Board of Supervisors
825 5th St., Room 111
Eureka, CA

Dear Supervisors:

I have been a board member of the Southern Humboldt Community Park (SHCP), a non-profit 501(3c), for over eight years. When I joined, the SHCP board had just started the General Plan Amendment (GPA) application process, which required a full Environmental Impact Review (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Board has been working continuously to become a legal Park throughout my tenure and even before. The SHCP board has worked with four different Humboldt County District II Supervisors during this effort, and three Humboldt County Planning Department Directors. It has been an arduous, very lengthy, very costly undertaking. It is with great relief and high expectations that we bring our project before you on January 5, 2017.

As a SHCP board member, I write to you to highlight the outpouring of community support the Park has had since its visionary inception in 2000 to this very day. (Summarized on attached chart)

A good measure of support can be based on **community financial support**. The community had to raise **\$650,000 dollars, to buy** this beautiful historic 430 acre property, and the community has had a huge role in **sustaining** it during these long years of process to become a County certified Park & Farm. In addition the Park Board has depended primarily on the community to raise more **than \$350,000 to pay for the EIR.**

The commission and supervisors need to understand that because of our ambiguous legal status for over 15 years, we have not been "shovel ready", using the jargon of the grant world, for significant state or federal grants available for Parks. We learned this the hard way. In 2009 SHCP was a finalist in Prop 50 "River Parkway" grant competition. **If successful that one grant would have brought over \$500,000** to the Park and community for habitat restoration along the South Fork Eel River, trail development and ADA restrooms. Although the Planning Department vouched we would have our rezone within six months of the grant due date, we were disqualified for not being "shovel ready". **In the intervening 8 years The Park, and our Southern Humboldt community by extension, have lost out on similar opportunities.**

Even though greatly handicapped, we have sustained ourselves, though barely. There is a lot of deferred maintenance crying for attention. The community has had a large role in keeping the Park afloat through individual and family donations, local business support, attendance and spending at Park fundraising events, and donating many hours of volunteer time to the Park and Farm. The Southern Humboldt community has been heroic. **Each year our records show increasing support for the Park through donations, spending at fundraisers, business sponsorships and hours volunteered.**

According to SHCP records (2000-2013) **more than 650 individuals or family units have contributed** directly to the Park in response to the initial effort and consequent Board appeals. Since 2000, The Park has raised, through direct appeals and other donations over **one million dollars!** More than 85 community members have contributed over \$4000 and more than 125 individuals or families have contributed \$2000 or more. Also since 2012 Park users have donated through two collection boxes at the Park. Each year the boxes collect more than \$2700.

In addition, the SHCP board has had incredible community response to Fundraising events. For six years The Walk in the Park, a family event with between 150 to 300 in attendance, depending on the weather, raised enough money to revive Tooby playground and picnic area. A beautiful redwood fence now encloses the younger child play area, old play structures have been revitalized and new ones installed. New picnic tables have been added.

Seven years ago the Park started an annual fundraising event called Fall Splendor held at the Mateel Community Center. In So Hum it has become a favorite costumed event of the year. This year over 400 attended and more than 100 volunteers assisted. **That means over 500 people gave of their time and/or money to the Park for this event.** Park supporters come ready to spend on the food, drink and auctions and fill the donation jars. **In 2015 our fundraising cleared over \$40,000 for the Park.** The books have yet to close, but it is projected that 2016 will top that.

Our local and regional businesses step up each year to support the park through the annual Business Sponsorship drive. Businesses also contribute or give us in-kind assistance for auctions or park needs. Since inception over 100 businesses have donated to the Park, many of them give annually. The 2016-17 Sponsorship drive has been the most successful ever with over **\$21000** raised in cash or in-kind donations from our business community.

The economic support of the Southern Humboldt Community has doggedly kept the Park open during these lean years when the Park has not been fully operational, has been struggling to pay the cost of the EIR, and has not been eligible for grants due to our quasi legal status with the County. **The amount**

raised through donations and fundraising is an amazing feat for a small rural community, and attests to the strength of support for this vision.

Many volunteers help sustain the Park. For Fall Splendor alone over 100 people volunteer. During the course of the year several work parties are called and we can usually count on 20-30 to show with shovels, work gloves or maybe an excavator, depending on the job. Our community farm has a regular crew of about 20 volunteers that help with the gardening February-October. Volunteers help maintain the trails, the disc golf course and the labyrinth which was installed by Redwood Rural Health Center. For over 13 years one heroic volunteer mowed and trimmed Tooby Park and other trails. There are many members in the sports community who cannot wait to volunteer their time to create and maintain the sports area. The Park has had 17 different community members serve on the Board of Trustees. Terms are three years and a member is limited to three terms. Over-all we estimate that the Southern Humboldt Community Park and Farm benefits from **over 2500- 3000 volunteer hours each year.**

We have many signatures on petitions and letters of support for this project. Our district two supervisor, Estelle Fennel, says that she and the other supervisors have received in the mail scores of letters of support. In addition we have collected through the years (always thinking that we were only a few months away from the day we would present our project) over **580 letters of support** and more than **640 signatures on petitions.** You have a CD in your packet that shows these letters and petitions. Plus we know many others have written to you directly and mailed the letter themselves. And we cannot forget our viral friends. As of today there are **1149** likes on the Southern Humboldt Community Park's Facebook page!

The Southern Humboldt Community Park has become a vibrant outdoor center for the Southern Humboldt Community with support coming from a great many community members in many different ways. The Park has advocates and users from all age groups and all socio-economic groups in our community. The Park Board and the Community are looking forward to a new era when we will have some public facilities zoning so that we can become a fully operational and sustainable Park under the environmental safeguards of CEQA.

Thank you very much for your time and your consideration of our project, and your commitment to public service.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Van Sant

Board of Directors Treasurer, Southern Humboldt Community Park



Support for Southern Humboldt Community Park

Summarized in Chart

| CATEGORY | STATISTIC* |
|---|---|
| Individual/family Donors with names 2000-2016 | Over 650 approx. 25% represent 2 people = 812 individuals |
| Direct Appeals and spontaneous donations 2000-2016 | \$1,023,000 |
| Fundraisers in the community and local business sponsorships 2008-2016 | \$201,000 |
| Businesses who have been Sponsors or contributors 2000-2016 | Over 120 |
| Anonymous donations collected at the Park (2012-2016) | \$6,790 |
| Volunteer hours Estimated 2000-2016 | 2,500-3000 hrs. annually = 43,200 hours total |
| Letters of Support | Over 680 collected by SHCP Scores more mailed directly to Supervisors and Commissioners |
| Petitions Supporting Overall Project Supporting Events Supporting Sports Fields | 408 signatures 181 signatures 52 signatures |
| Facebook Likes | 1,157 |
| | *numbers have been rounded down |

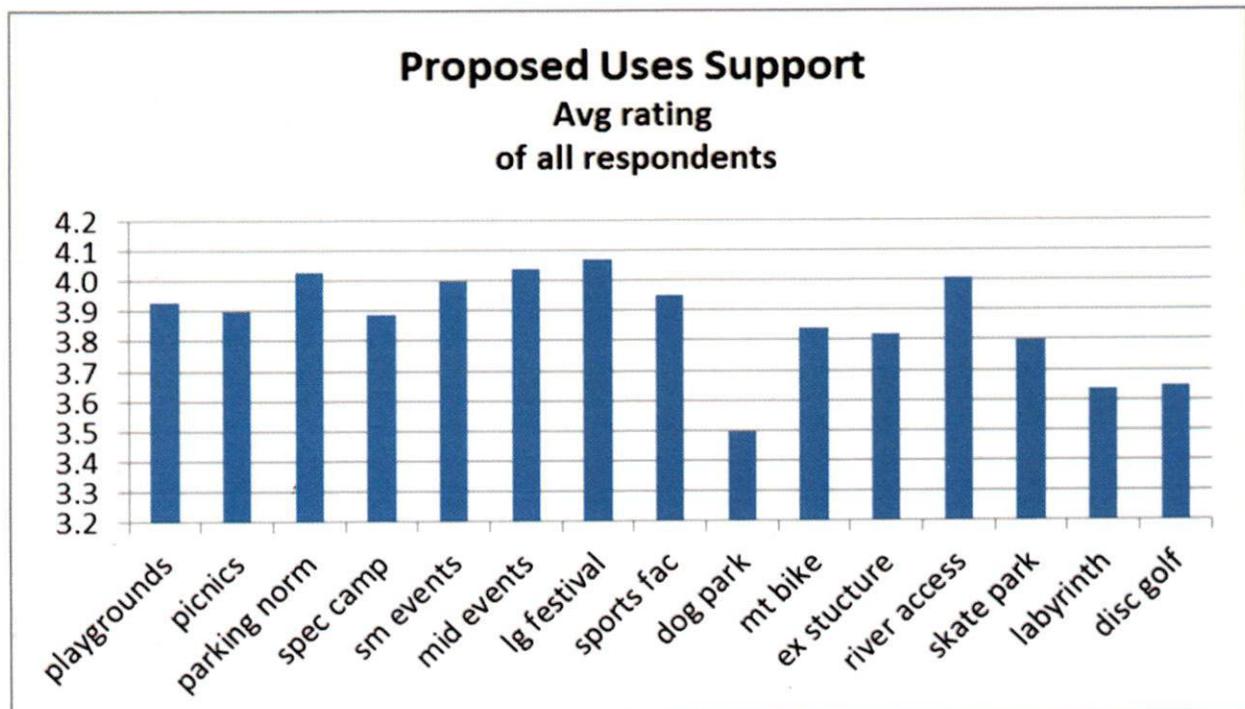


Community Survey 2012

Southern Humboldt Community Park

433 community members completed the survey

In the summer of 2012, the Board of Directors of the Community Park conducted a survey of 433 community members to gauge the continued level of support for various project features at the Community Park. The surveys were conducted at the annual Summer Arts and Music Festival in Benbow. Efforts were made to collect surveys from a broad range age groups and demographics. The survey was one page long and took approximately 5 minutes to complete. The participants were asked to rate their interest in certain activities from 1-4.



1 is low – 4 is high

*Several answers were out of range end.

The results of this survey was consistent with all the previous community input we have received over the past decade and also served as confirmation to our Board that our project planning was reflective of the communities stated desires for the Park.

It is important to note that year after year, the results of the community input remain the same.

Community Scoping Meeting
Topic: Events at the Southern Humboldt Community Park
Redway School Auditorium
March 18th Meeting:

This was one of seven scoping sessions held during the planning phase of this project. The topic of this session was events at the Community Park. There were approximately 65 attendees at this session.

The following is a tally to gauge community support for the events at the Park:

| Festival sized event at the Community Park | |
|---|----|
| Participant tally | |
| Yes, in favor | 30 |
| Yes, with conditions: | 10 |
| Only with conditions: | 7 |
| No, opposed | 3 |

Comments:

Add another Large event like Summer Arts
 Beware of pressure for more large events

| Medium sized events at the Community Park | |
|--|----|
| 800+ attendance | |
| Participant tally | |
| Yes, in favor of six events | 10 |
| Yes, with conditions* | 35 |
| Yes, in favor of more than 6 events | 5 |
| No | 1 |

| Small sized events at the Community Park | |
|---|----|
| (for example: attendance of 300 or less) | |
| Participant tally | |
| Yes, in favor of all small events | 25 |
| Yes if 300 or less | 8 |
| Yes with conditions* | 8 |
| No | 0 |

* **Conditions:** Types of conditions mentioned included a having a limited number of events (4 was popular), sound, curfew, parking, water, alcohol



Community Park Planning Session II

Summary—The Guiding Principles
May 5, 2009

This scoping session is part of a series of community meetings to assist in the planning process for the future of the Southern Humboldt Community Park. This session focused on “Guiding Principles” for the Park’s. These principles are a critical part of the Park’s Master Plan. They serve as an expression of our values and ideals and provide a foundation for decisions regarding community use and stewardship of the Park.

This session was an active working session in the “World Café” style of group conversation. Each group focused on a different component of the guiding principles. Participants moved from table to table to give input and discuss each of the components over the course of the session.

Five tables were ready with an assigned table host who also served as the recorder for a topic. The table hosts were tasked with exploring specific questions through group process while also encouraging new questions. They were urged to encourage everyone to participate and also to listen to gather knowledge from the group. At the end of each group the table hosts captured the essence of each group’s ideas and relayed them to each of the groups that followed.

Each table was presented with an element from the master plan and group participants were asked specific questions to inspire conversations related to the various Master Plan components. Participants were encouraged to show support for a principle, remove a principle and to suggest an additional guiding principle.

The table hosts reported that there was a general consensus that the Guiding Principles are sound and needed mostly minor revisions. The conversations were lively and a few concepts began to evolve and the discussions moved from table to table with new participants. Each table host has written a report of the discussions, comments and ideas that took place at their table.

Table Hosts Reports:

Natural Resources—Table Host: John Rogers

Question: What are the appropriate elements of a Natural Resource Utilization and Conservation Plan at the Park?

- Ensure careful utilization of park resources for the greatest community benefit.
- Protecting current park resources for their own sake as well as to provide for future community needs.
- Preserve the open space features and scenic beauty
- Protection of prime agricultural soils
- Protect archeological resources
- Prevent large-scale sprawling commercial and residential development
- Protect historic landscapes, resources, and structures.
- Continued restoration and management of upslope forested areas
- Continue to address legacy erosion problems
- Protection and restoration of riparian habitat for endangered fish and wildlife
- Minimize impact of development or construction on park viewshed

Natural Resources Table Summary:

The following Guiding Principles were presented to each of the groups that came to the NR table. It was noted for each group that some of the principles were more general overarching principles and others could be group around more specific topics. It was also noted that while most guiding principles prepared for the NR table were positive statements of desired conditions, two principles were negative proscriptive statements.

In general all the groups were supportive of all the Guiding Principles provided for the NR table. Only the proscriptive principles generated controversy. Discussion primarily focused on refining existing principles.

General:

- Ensure careful utilization of park resources for the greatest community benefit.
- Protecting current park resources for their own sake as well as to provide for future community needs.
- Preserve the open space features and scenic beauty.

Agricultural values:

- Protection of prime agricultural soils

Cultural values:

- Protect archeological resources
- Protect historic landscapes, resources and structures

Restoration:

- Continued restoration and management of upslope forested areas.
- Continue to address legacy erosion problems
- Protection and restoration of riparian habitat for endangered fish and wildlife

Proscriptive or negative:

- Minimize impact of development or construction on park viewshed
- Prevent large-scale sprawling commercial and residential development

Group One

This group focused on issues surrounding agricultural use.

One additional guiding principle emerged:

- Natural resource planning should include all available data sources and analysis

Additional comments:

NW side is prime agricultural area

South end difficult to farm

Use poor soils for parking

Use prime soils for agriculture

Facilitate/protect use of park recreational resources

Group Two

This group also focused on agriculture use policy along with discussion of potential site development for residential and other uses.

Additional guiding principles:

- Management of prime agricultural soils should recognize habitat values as well as agricultural production
- Any development should leave the park in its original condition (as it found it) after it's useful life

Modified principle:

- Prevent large-scale sprawling commercial and residential development

Additional comments:

Protection of prime agricultural soils does not equal plowed fields.

It was noted that restoration will impact agricultural soils and potentially raise water tables as eroded gullies are restored to higher level stream beds creating the potential for additional wetland areas, at least seasonally, within the park.

The guiding principle "prevent any residential development" was proposed. There was much discussion, but a consensus of support did not emerge.

Group Three

This group focused more on experiential aspects of park use. There was much discussion of how to incorporate the spiritual value of natural, scenic and open spaces as a guiding principle.

The groups reiterated support for slightly modified versions of two principles:

- Preserve the open space features and scenic beauty.
- Ensure careful utilization use of park resources for the greatest community benefit.

After subsequent email exchanges with two of the group's members a recommended guiding principle emerged that I believe is consistent with the intent and concerns of the group:

- Enable opportunities for park visitors to experience spiritual renewal in a natural, undeveloped setting.

Group Four

This group noted that implementation of park goals and objectives will require resources and oversight of park activities and recommended this additional guiding principle:

- Ensure that adequate funding and staffing are available to implement the above guidelines

Group Five

This group focused on the long-term sustainability and ecological integrity associated with any improvements implemented at the park.

Possible Guiding Principle based on the conversation:

- Any "permanent" improvements shall be designed to be self-sustaining and self-maintaining and to protect the long-term sustainability and ecological integrity of the park.

(Rio Anderson and Dave Hope gave specific input regarding the phrasing of the above principle and may be willing to review and refine the above phrasing.)

Additional comments:

Don't fight the landscape!

Do it right the first time!

Additional recommendations:

Work toward the development of an overall stewardship plan for the entire park.

Set up conservation easement(s) to protect park resources in perpetuity.

Community Benefit –Table Host: Dennis Huber

Question: How can the park provide the most benefit for the community?

- Ensure the use of this park by the community in perpetuity
- Create access for the community through a series of interpretive trails and picnic areas, linking to a regional trail system
- Support community use for active recreation areas such as a soccer, baseball, or football fields
- Support community use for event
- Reserve areas for future community needs

Community Benefit Table Summary:

Question #.1:—Ensure the use of this property by the community in perpetuity.

Participant Comments:

- Define Perpetuity
- How is it guaranteed?
- Review Golden Gate Park mission statement

Question #2:—Create access for the community through a series of interpretive trails and picnic areas, linking to a regional trail system

Participant Comments:

- General agreement
- Devil is in the details
- Town Square connect top priority
- Contemplative area needed
- All advocacy groups need to meet established criteria

Question # 3:--Support community use for active recreation areas such as soccer, baseball, or football fields

Participant Comments:

- Flexibility needed for placement
- Reserve area for marginal croplands such as olives
- Economic benefits
- Maintenance costs analyzed
- Only non-agriculture areas
- Pool
- Aesthetics important
- Top priority in planning
- Financial concerns
- Good governance
- Would prefer a membership non-profit better-let voting determine
- Allocation of water important
- Community involvement in decision
- Other locations already serving needs
- Large carbon footprint to travel outside our community for this type of recreation
- Keep in balance with agriculture needs
- Bring in folks who understand requirements
- Lower priority

Question # 4:--Reserve areas for future needs

Participant Comments:

- Good planning is needed
- Master plan needed
- Long-term ecological planning
- Yes

Question #5:-- Support community use for events such as the Summer Arts Fair

Participant Comments:

- Capacity study
- Located properly
- Scale important
- Small events preferred--350 persons
- Non-profits only
- No tax money used
- Summer Arts OK
- Only generated by and for local community
- Flexibility needed
- Loud, late concerts No!
- How is enforcement handled?
- Method for community input needed

Agriculture – Table Host: John and Lisa Finley

Question: What is the best role for the Park in agriculture in Southern Humboldt?

- Promote a higher level of agricultural production than under past management
- Protect the prime agricultural soils
- Promote more *intensive* rather than *extensive* agricultural production
- Encourage dry farming and water conservation
- Encourage organic farming
- Encourage economically viable farming operations by providing basic infrastructure needs and administration
- Facilitate cost-sharing between multiple farming user groups

Agriculture Table Summary:

The major response was that the guiding principles for agriculture at the park are sound. There seemed to be a general desire to clarify certain definitions.

- **Promote a higher level of agricultural production than under past management.**

“Past management” is too broad a term, in that while the park is more agriculturally productive than under Tooby ownership, it is less productive than under Woods management. A number of participants shared a vision of vibrant diverse agriculture on the land. Orchards, vineyards, and grazing were mentioned as wishes.

- **Protect the prime agricultural soils.**

This general notion is supported by consensus. One participant brought up the point that prime soil is currently in use for species habitat. It was pointed out that preserving habitat is also a way of preserving prime soils. Another participant brought up that even some of the lesser grade soils at the park (Hookton) still have agricultural value, (Hookton can, for example, produce 2 or 3 tons of hay/acre annually) and should also be protected from development and parking.

It was generally agreed that if the land is protected as open space, and if creative parking alternatives could be found, that the agricultural integrity of the land is protected.

- **Promote more intensive, rather than extensive agricultural production.**

In each group this statement was identified as being confusing and ambiguous. This is also where we came into the discussion of how to integrate multiple uses of the park facility, while suffering no net loss of agricultural potential.

- **Encourage dry farming and water conservation.**

Again, this was agreed upon in principle. Participants discussed the desire for installing orchards, and others questioned whether we have the water to do so.

- **Encourage economically viable farming operations by providing basic infrastructure needs and administration.**

- **Facilitate cost sharing between multiple farming groups.**

There is an awareness that the park is in possession of considerable agricultural resources that could be managed to bring income to the park. How that could be implemented was discussed. Moderators shared their understanding of how this can work.

(Addendum)

One question that needs a public answer, is the issue of how the rezoning of the land into Public Recreation will affect the future of agriculture at the park. Some claimed it is the "end" of agriculture, while board member Tim Metz said it would have no effect at all.

The community would be well served by a clear statement from the board on this matter, once all the information is in and an answer can be presented.

Economic Sustainability and Fundraising – Table Host: Yashi Hoffman

Question: How can we best ensure economic sustainability for the Park and Park advocate groups?

- Develop long-range plan for economic stability for the park
- Promote community values, health and economic development of the immediate area and region by providing additional safe, attractive and convenient recreational opportunities
- Encourage the entrepreneurial spirit of advocate groups where it is consistent with our goals
- Support continued operation of long-established, locally owned gravel operation providing valuable resources for the community
- Use careful, ecologically sound housing units to enable the park to create an endowment that supports park operations in perpetuity.
- Support housing that may include, but is not necessarily limited to, intergenerational housing and eldercare to help to meet community needs

Economic Sustainability and Fundraising Table Summary:

Revenue Sources-This list of possible revenue sources was collected from the various groups (In no particular order)

- Bequests from wills.
- Green burial sites
- Hayfield cultivation
- Park memberships
- Special district supported by a tax assessment
- Olive trees
- RV campground at Tooby park
- Ecotourism

- Canoe and bicycle rentals
- Walk-in campground facilities
- Food vendors
- Permaculture demonstration gardens
- Partnerships with local organizations
- Tourism promotion through advertising
- Youth programs from out of the area
- Support for advocacy groups to present their plans
- Sell the gravel operation and use cash to payoff debt

Housing

There was widespread support for housing at the park as a means of long-term income. There were two expressed oppositions to any housing. The concerns for housing were centered on location, environmental compatibility, use, containment of runaway growth and visibility. Intergenerational housing and eldercare were welcomed with concerns about the level of care and the hospital's capabilities.

Concerts

Initially, there was a wide mix of opinion on concerts expressed but as discussion continued and issues regarding size, decibel levels, frequency, end time, parking and traffic was addressed, support grows to over 75% in favor.

Gravel

Majority position is not comfortable with gravel pit association with the park. Some do not agree with its inclusion with the guiding principle, many do not know the details of the relationship of the gravel pit to the park and want clarification. Many feel a gravel extraction business is incompatible with the parks overarching goals.

Cash Donations

Solicit funding from the local alternative green economy. Appeal to this vast revenue source as a way to give back to their community. A few insisted that a full public accounting of funds to date was necessary and indicated their reluctance to pay for interest on the loan. One suggestion was for a targeted donation option. This would be a donation that would have a % (set by the board) to go toward debt retirement and operational cost and the remaining % to go the advocacy group of the donors choice (i.e. stream restoration or John and Lisa's community farm).

Community Participation—Table Host: Peter Ryce

Question: In what ways can the park, the community, and individuals benefit from increased community participation? What would you like to do to help?

Community Participation Summary

Community Input

When advocates for Park use come forth with proposals they should be put on the website and the public should be allowed to comment on the proposals before they are approved. Have a better explanation of the advocate process.

When a project reaches a certain level of development have a public poll on its impacts, usefulness and relevancy before continuing its development

Need a mechanism to ensure public input is heard and action is taken. Where is the carry through?

When new master plan is developed there needs to be public input, comment period and processes before it is submitted.

Governance

Have Board members responsible for particular areas and let the public know who they are so they can contact that Board member with their concerns. Keep it all cohesive. There should be a clear process for board evolution.

The Park has evolved beyond its 'start-up' phase and a new model for governance may be warranted.

Current Board is doing great. They have done an incredible amount of work. Their governance works well.

The Park should be a membership organization in order to give the public a sense of inclusion or ownership. However, membership can bog an organization down. At least board meetings should be open. There should be public and fiscal accountability at all times. If the Park creates a membership and charges dues it will help seek 'inclusion' and gives a voice to the people.

Have a 'site' committee (like a planning commission) to oversee and assist in Park planning.

Communication

Have this type of 'World Café' three times per year so that there can be public discussion and conversation on issues affecting the Park. However, the information gets lost because there is no lasting value that gets 'implemented.'

More and better communication between the Board and the public is needed. Use the Website. Have an advisory committee, use the radio, have newsletters, more outreach.

Have a Facebook page. Tell what services are available, what sites, at what cost? Park needs higher profile. Show the Park as a county/regional facility. Make presentations to the Board of Supervisors, Chamber of Commerce, service groups, local businesses, etc.

Keep local neighbors well informed, they are a resource and supporters. Use e-mail. Keep them in the loop.

Additional Comments

1) Organize energy for volunteer efforts. Appoint a community member to do this. 2) Have a booster club. 3) Look to older (or other) Parks for models of organization, governance and

planning, i.e. Bidwell in Chico, Ashland Community Park 4) Train docents give tours, i.e. restoration, farming, fauna, flora, etc. 5) Income could be produced by selling advertising on the website.