



Administrative Report

J.1., File # PA22-4232

Meeting Date: 6/1/2022

To: PUBLIC ART COMMISSION

From: CAMERON HARDING, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

TITLE

RECEIVE AND FILE DATA FROM THE VETERANS PARK COMMUNITY CENTER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REGARDING FUTURE USES OF THE FACILITY.

PROVIDE A RECOMMENDATION ON FUTURE USES OF THE FACILITY.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1991, the City Council approved the repurposing of the former Main Library building located in Veterans Park as a banquet and special events center to be operated by a private concessionaire. The building was re-named the Veterans Park Community Center ("facility") and was seismically retrofitted and renovated to accommodate its new use. The initial catering and facility management agreement was awarded to Spectrum Holding Company, Inc. ("Spectrum") in 1996. This contract was renewed in 2013 and remained active until it expired on October 31, 2020. At that time, the vendor elected not to pursue a renewed contract and vacated the facility. The facility remains closed as a result of precautionary measures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

On January 4, 2022, Staff presented a draft RFP to the City Council that would provide an opportunity for a concessionaire to manage the facility in a similar model as was done previously by Spectrum. The City Council directed staff to pause on the issuance of the proposed RFP and to conduct community outreach to determine if there are other preferred uses and models for the management of the facility. Staff developed a series of outreach opportunities for the community to provide its input including an online survey, two Open Houses, and multiple community discussions at regular Commission meetings. Staff recommends the Commission provide feedback on key survey results to refine input for the City Council's consideration at a subsequent meeting.

On April 13, 2022, the Recreation and Parks Commission reviewed the data collected from the online surveys and provided its input on key elements to further refine options for future uses of the facility. Input received from the Recreation and Parks Commission is included in this report.

BACKGROUND

The Veterans Park Community Center is an 11,400 square foot landmark building listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It served as the city's Main Library from 1930 through 1991. In January 1991, the building incurred substantial seismic damage as a result of the Sierra Madre earthquake, forcing its closure to the public. In late 1991, the City Council approved the repurposing

of the facility as a banquet and events center and initiated plans for construction of a new library facility adjacent to the Civic Center. The former main library building was renamed the Veterans Park Community Center ("facility") and was renovated to include seismic upgrades and a historic restoration to accommodate its new use. Following completion of the renovation in 1995, the city issued an RFP for the facility's catering and management operations. Spectrum was awarded the contract for operation of the facility in 1996. This contract was renewed in 2013 and remained active until its expiration on October 31, 2020. At that time, the vendor elected not to pursue a renewed contract and vacated the facility. It has remained closed due to precautionary measures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

On January 4, 2022, Staff presented a draft RFP to the City Council that would provide an opportunity for a concessionaire to manage the facility in a similar model as was done previously by Spectrum. The City Council desired to pause on the issuance of the proposed RFP and requested for staff to outreach with the community to solicit feedback on how the facility should be used and to determine if there are other preferred uses and models for the management of the facility. Staff developed a series of outreach opportunities for the community to provide its input including the following:

- Online survey for the community and potential concessionaires from March 7 - 24;
- Open Houses held on Thursday, March 10 from 10:00am to 12:00pm, and Wednesday, April 27 from 4:00 to 6:00pm. Combined, an estimated 75 people attended these events; and
- Community discussions held at several Commission meetings including the Recreation and Parks Commission meeting, held April 13, and the Public Art Commission meeting held May 25.

A copy of the outreach promotional material is included as Attachment 1.

Community and Concessionaire Survey

A series of surveys were made available online from March 7 - 24 including a community survey, consisting of six questions; and a concessionaire survey consisting of five questions. The community survey received a total of 312 responses and the concessionaire survey received eleven. A copy of the survey data is included as Attachments 2 and 3.

Overall, Staff is pleased with the volume of survey responses as well as the thoughtful feedback provided by the community. Results from the community survey included the following:

- 91% of respondents were residents of Redondo Beach;
- On average, approximately 75% of respondents were relatively familiar with the facility;
- 50% of respondents have attended an event or activity at the facility before;
- An outdoor patio space and a performance area/bandshell were the two most desired new amenities; and
- A traditional community center and a pop-up space for rotating uses were the two most preferred facility uses. Other uses such as an art museum, an art gallery, café or daily food service, and a rental facility for private events were relatively equal in score thereafter.

Additionally, survey respondents provided a lot of valuable qualitative data byway of comments and suggestions, which included the following most popular themes:

- An overwhelming desire to utilize the facility in a way that would provide it for events or meetings at a low cost for residents;
- Utilization of the facility with an art-focus such as a gallery, museum, and/or sculpture garden; and
- Utilization of the facility as a café or restaurant that would extend to an outdoor patio or picnic space.

Responses received from participating concessionaires was very supportive of similar facility uses.

Recreation and Parks Commission Input

As previously noted, the Recreation and Parks Commission reviewed the survey data and community input collected so far at its meeting on April 13. Staff requested the Commission to further refine key elements of input received through the survey data to better inform future uses of the facility. The Commission was asked the following questions:

1. Considering the desire to utilize the facility as a pop-up space:
 - a. Are there certain uses you would prefer?
 - b. Are there certain uses that would not be favorable?
2. What preferred uses should be considered as part of a shared use concept?
3. How best can the City support the community's desire to have the facility available to them for low cost while utilizing it to its fullest potential?

Further details on the Commissions' discussion and input on each question are included below.

QUESTION 1: Considering the desire to utilize the facility as a pop-up space, are there certain uses you would prefer? Are there certain uses that would not be favorable?

Pop-up spaces are venues that are meant to be temporary, anywhere from one day to several weeks. Essentially, vendors or concessionaires would utilize the facility for a short time to allow a different type of use to follow. Examples of different types of pop-up space uses that were provided to the Commissions included an art gallery or art studio; a café or restaurant; or a live performance venue.

Input received from the Recreation and Parks Commission included the following:

- An overall favorability to the pop-up space concept to allow a greater audience to enjoy the space.
- A desire to include usage of the outdoor space, if possible.
- Consider a way to prioritize community groups' usage of the facility at low cost.
- A general agreement regarding an art-focused use of the facility.

QUESTION 2: What preferred uses should be considered as part of a shared use concept?

A shared use concept is similar to a pop-up space in the fact that it allows for a variety of uses. However, this concept does not allow for a regular or ongoing rotation of vendors or concessionaires. For example, a model that was extrapolated from the survey data could include uses such as an art gallery/museum during the day and then a private rental facility in the evenings for meetings or small gatherings. Other examples provided to the Commissions included an art gallery/museum with a café or restaurant component utilizing the outdoor space west of the facility; or usage of the facility during the day for community classes/activities followed by private rentals for meetings or small gatherings in the evenings.

The Recreation and Parks Commission provided the following input on this concept:

- A general favorability to this concept with concern regards to ensuring the facility remains accessible to the community.
- A desire to utilize the space for community classes and activities; private rentals; an art-focused use; and a café.

QUESTION 3: How best can the City support the community's desire to have the facility available to them for low cost while utilizing it to its fullest potential?

Considering the overwhelming desire for the space to be utilized by the community, expressed in the survey comments as well as comments received at the Open House events, staff asked the Commissions to provide creative approaches to achieving this while being mindful of how the facility could be used to its greatest potential. Some examples that were shared included the designation of certain areas throughout the facility that could be utilized by local groups at a low-cost such as a meeting or existing storage room. Another example included the development of a unique resident rate for private usage of the facility.

The Recreation and Parks Commission generally liked the idea of dedicating a certain space in the facility for community use if it can coexist within other uses of the facility. Overall, there was support for a sliding scale or reduced rate for residents.

The final outreach effort is to have the Public Art Commission review the survey data and comments received thus far and to provide its recommendation to the City Council. The City Council is scheduled to receive a comprehensive report of all public outreach efforts at its meeting on June 7.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Community Outreach Flyer
2. Community Survey Results
3. Concessionaire Survey Results