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Recreation District Unveils 1964-65 Budget Plan To Public

Loaded with maps and diagrams to explain future expansion plans, Simi Valley Recreation and Park District officials told about 40 people Wednesday night why the district needs a larger budget and more tax money for 1964-65.

Speaking at the public hearing on the proposed budget, the district directors and district manager Les Reed covered nearly all aspects of

the district operation from the after-school recreation program to park development.

Several people urged holding down the tax rate which is expected to increase from 18 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation to an estimated 31.75 cents. Others supported the rate hike and the proposed budget which at \$222,345 is more than 2½ times the current budget.

Explaining the proposed

budget to the audience at the hearing in Vista Elementary School cafeteria, Reed said there is no money in the budget to buy land for parks.

He said that of the \$65,000 set aside for park development, \$15,000 will be spent only if it is donated. He explained that the directors have not decided on which park sites the remaining \$50,000 will be spent for "partial development" during the year.

Frank Setser, chairman of the district board, assured "we haven't settled on any one particular park. We will do our best to get the park most easily accessible to enough people."

Reed pointed out that it is "pretty inevitable" that some of the money will be used for partial development of the park around the site of the planned new recreation district offices near the corner of Los Angeles Avenue and Bridget Street. "Partial development" would include grading, installing underground utilities, lights, turf, trees, some shrubs and paths.

Reed indicated that the new offices—a sales office and model home used by the Larwin Co. for its Simi Park tract—will help ease the "terrifying need for meeting places in our community." The offices would have three or four rooms which could be used for group meetings.

Director Ted Grandson pointed out—when objection to the new offices was raised because of the move to get a community center for the valley—that the buildings could be in use in six months. "They will supplement the community center in the fu-

ture," he added and also noted that the new offices would eliminate present rental expenses.

Betty Kline of Simi told the directors, "The tax levy is inching up and up and up. It is bad in the overall view of the community."

"You have to decide which crisis to handle first—the after school recreation program is growing into a colossus and parks have to be developed in five years, but we can't afford both things at the same time," she asserted. "Please curtail the recreation program until we have adequate transportation for all youngsters."

Art Johnson of Simi answered, "I can't help but be moved at this crisis philosophy on the budget. Fifteen or 20 years from now we would be fighting crisis after crisis. The diversified philosophy the board is now following is best."

Reed, in answering another comment, said, "I hope some (people) feel there is a need for parks for the community. I might not be a swimmer or an archer or much on boys baseball but the facilities for each are good for the community and are needed by the community."

The district has set aside \$25,000 in the budget for half the cost of a swimming pool. Reed explained that the district can contract with the school district for a pool at the high school and said that school officials have a matching \$25,000 in the school preliminary budget for a pool.

When one person asked why the pool couldn't "be more in the middle" of the valley,

Reed answered, "Where could a pool have better use than on the school site; the school district couldn't participate (in the cost) if it were moved from the school."

Joe Appleton, Simi, who said he was representing the Chamber of Commerce and the County Economic Development Association, told the directors it appears that "relatively little" has been accomplished by the district.

After earlier discussing the after-school playground program and several other programs, Reed answered that the district has acquired about ½ million dollars worth of property for parks that "we haven't paid a cent for."

Appleton added, "We are rapidly approaching a tax obstacle in the county. We haven't any appreciable industry in the valley and we are treading on thin ice if we don't measure expenditures by districts such as yours very very carefully."

He said the Chamber of Commerce wants a detailed breakdown on the district's budget and a time set for chamber members to discuss it with the district's directors.

Norman Blacher, executive

secretary of the Ventura County Taxpayers' Association, described the program called for in the proposed budget as "more realistic than last year." But he added that the 14 cent tax increase and the 277½ per cent jump in the budget "is quite a substantial increase."

He said that capital projects called for in the budget are "too large" and said, "you must figure out how much this community can afford to pay."

Blacher suggested that the directors consider a long term bond issue to pay for some projects rather than following a "pay-as-you-go" policy.

He urged cutback of one-third to one-half or \$30,000 to \$40,000 in the budget. "There is a tendency to want to spoon-feed children too much. People don't want a baby sitting program," he said.

When one person complained that there are too many activities planned by the district, Reed answered, "When you can guarantee parents will take care of their children and there is no need for recreation, we won't supply it."

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More Park Land Accepted In Simi

More land for parks in the Simi Valley was set aside Wednesday night.

Directors of the Simi Valley Recreation and Park District accepted a total of 1.8 acres from Larwin Co. developments. This brings to 19 the total number of acres accepted from Larwin under a deed of trust on another 19 acres the firm owns between Los Angeles Avenue and Leeds Street just west of Stearns Street.

Les Reed, manager of the district, said land will probably be developed into two park sites.

Ten to 11 acres will be acquired next to the proposed Sequoia Junior High School on Cochran Street west of the Patterson Railroad spur. The land will be added to 2.6 acres donated to the district from a Lesser development.

This 13-plus acre site has been selected by the valley's Community Center Committee as the best location for a Community Center. Official action on designating the site for the center has not been taken, however.

The rest of the 19 acres, the district hopes for a park between Cochran and Los Angeles Avenue just east of Er-ringer Road, Reed said.

The 1.8 acres come from three tracts the Larwin Co. is developing in which the company will use the county's lot reduction ordinance which allows smaller lots if some of the property is approved for park use.

Reed said the district would officially own the land after the firm writes a legal description of the land, and the district's directors approve it. Company officials estimate the legal discription will take 60 to 90 days.

Park Board Approves Budget After Playgrounds, Tax Hit

Playgrounds, after school recreation and an estimated 14-cent tax hike for park development and an expanded recreation program all came under fire before directors of the Simi Valley Recreation and Park District approved their 1964-64 budget Wednesday night.

Continued from last week, the budget hearing played to a capacity audience of about 25 in the district office and featured a more heated exchange than the first meeting.

It was the final hearing of the budget which will now be submitted to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors. The tax rate will be established after the assessed valuation of the district is determined.

Directors made no changes in the preliminary budget proposed which anticipates expenditures to hit \$222,345 with income estimated at \$224,590.

The budget also calls for a tax rate of 31.75 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation compared to the current rate of 18 cents.

Recreation programs held after school at elementary schools in the valley were hit the hardest with opponents claiming that the programs should be conducted by the school district—if they are conducted at all.

Frank Setser, chairman of the district board of directors, explained that the program "got too big for the schools to handle under the school district's 10-cent override tax. This was one of the main reasons this district was formed," he added.

"Our budget is not concerned with juvenile delinquency; we offer a program of supervised activity for the community," Setser pointed out.

Mrs. Patricia Regele, a

playground leader, submitted a petition with 121 signatures "of people horrified at the thought of having the playgrounds closed. The school has absolutely nothing to do with the playgrounds," she declared.

Les Reed, manager of the recreation and park district, added that his office has received letters from the junior high school PTA, Arcane PTA, Vista PTA, and six adult residents of the Arcane neighborhood supporting the playground program.

He added that 66 adults from the Arcane area have submitted a written request asking that the summer recreation program be continued.

Mrs. Jim Carr, one of the most vocal opponents to the budget, told the directors, "We are taxed right up to where we can't stand it. We have these programs already taken care of."

Mrs. Lucille Estes told the directors "our resentment here tonight" was that the district was formed with a 10-cent tax rate discussed and on the basis of parks being donated. She said that the school district is talking of a 42-cent tax hike and another tax will be added to property owners' bills for the Madera Road extension.

"You're pulling the rug right out from under us," she declared. "What do I get out of it? If I could pay my taxes, I wouldn't fuss." She also said she doesn't support the after school recreation programs.

Mrs. Carr also objected to several programs listed in the budget including jiu jitsu, youth theatre guild, teen charmettes and elementary drama.

Reed explained that these were included in the budget for accounting purposes only and that they would be paid for by enrollment fees and not taxes. He explained at an

earlier meeting of the board of directors that the programs would be carried out only if fees pay for them.

When objections were raised about the tax rate increase and the size of the budget compared to the current year's estimated expenses of \$80,000, Reed pointed out, "Nothing was done in the way of park development last year (1963-64) and we are in a position to do something this year."

He explained that with the \$65,000 in the budget for park development three park properties can be developed to a point where the public can use them. He noted, however, that this would not include wading pools, buildings, or play apparatus.

The money budgeted, he said, would pay for grading

park sites, underground utilities, turf, paths and walkways, minimum lighting, a sprinkler system and some trees and shrubs. Explaining the costs of this work, he said turf runs about \$3,000 per acre, a sprinkling system about \$2,000 per acre, and walkways, 30 cents per square foot.

Stan Gerlach, a director of the Chamber of Commerce, termed the budget the "first step in developing parks in this area." He urged opponents to study the budget "in detail."

Frank Schroeder, president of the Chamber of Commerce, said 10 of the chamber's 15 directors favored the budget as proposed, two said they were not familiar enough to take a stand, one "had some reservations" about it and another said "taxes are high

enough" and that it "may keep us from getting industry."

On a bond issue proposed to finance some of the district's programs, Reed said the directors were told last year that "the economic situation in the Simi Valley would not support a bond issue." He added that the proposal should have been presented and studies completed four to six months ago for it to be included in the 1964-65 budget.

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Recreation Park District Readies Broad Summer Program

The Simi Valley Recreation and Park District has lined up a host of summer recreation activities for residents of the valley.

Les Reed, manager of the district, outlined the activities and special events at his press conference last week. All programs will be in operation tomorrow through Aug. 21 with few exceptions.

The activities include:
NEIGHBORHOOD P L A Y G R O U N D S

Supervised outdoor games, table games, handicrafts, sports, tournaments and physical fitness. Special events every week such as nature activities, creative dramatics and dance, storytelling, puppetry and inter-playground playdays.

Hours of operation will be 1 to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The program is designed for boys and girls grades three through six.

Knolls Elementary School playground will be open each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and the other elementary schools, which will be open five days a week, are Arcane, Belwood, Lincoln, Park View, Santa Susana, Simi, Vista and Walnut Grove.

EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM

The district will conduct an experimental program this summer for first and second graders at the Arcane playground. The program was set up at the request of parents of the neighborhood who have also volunteered their help. It will contain games, crafts and special events.

SECONDARY SCHOOL PLANS

A junior high school program will be provided at Center Junior High School Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1 to 5 p.m. and on Mondays and Fridays from 7 to 10 p.m. The Monday evening and two afternoon sessions will be devoted to sports and games, including badminton, basketball, volleyball and table tennis. Friday evenings will be for social recreation, primarily record dancing.

The Simi Valley High School program will be held Tuesday, Thursday and Friday evenings. Sports and games are planned Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 to 10 p.m. with record dancing in the school cafeteria on Fridays.

CRAFTS

Elementary children's instruction at each playground

will include paper bag puppets, cotton loop hot mats, stained glass painting, plaster casting, raffia baskets, pebble coasters, burlap and felt pictures and mosaic projects. The class will operate once a week at each playground, and since class size is limited, the first children to register will be accommodated.

TEEN CHARM COURSE

Registrations are being accepted at the district office for two "charmette" courses

Holmes Injured

A Santa Susana motorcyclist was injured Thursday night when his cycle and a pickup truck collided on Tapo Street north of Shopping Lane. Walter R. Holmes, 4783 Leeds St., drove his motorcycle out of a private driveway and into a eastbound pickup truck driven by James H. Paul, 1736 Buyers, Simi, according to the California Highway Patrol.

Holmes was taken to Conejo Valley Hospital.

which will begin June 30. One class is for girls 12-15, and the other for girls 16-18. Enrollment fee is \$3.50 for six lessons in the course which includes introduction to charm and modeling, social etiquettes, beauty tips on make-up, hair styling and care of hair, wardrobe planning, posture, poise and fitness.

TEEN SWIM PROGRAM

The Tapo Country Club swimming pool will be open to teen-agers in a program set for each Wednesday from 7 to 10 p.m. The cost will be 50 cents per person. The pool is 3803 Walnut St., Santa Susana, west of Tapo Canyon Road.

ADULT SPORTS

Sixteen teams comprise softball leagues in the valley with games played at Center Junior High School Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 7 and 8:30 p.m. League play continues through July.

A basketball league is being formed to play Thursday nights during July and August. Any teams interested should contact the district's recreation supervisor at the district office.

SENIOR CITIZENS

The Simi Valley Senior Citizens Club, sponsored by the district, will schedule several events during the summer. The club is planning potlucks, card parties, trips and other activities every second week. Information is available at the district office.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Some of the many events planned to observe June as National Recreation Month include:

June 13, golf tournament at Sinaloa Golf Course.

June 14, Simi Valley Day at Dodger Stadium.

June 19, softball exhibition.

June 21, Horseman's Hootenanny (equestrian contests).

June 27, Recreation Circus.

June 28, senior citizens' potluck.

July 3, Chamber of Commerce's fireworks display.

Reed pointed out that many community groups are providing the summer including: baseball leagues, Bobby Sox softball, county library, square dance groups, YWCA, churches, the archery club, barbershoppers, Boy Scouts, Campfire Girls, camera and coin clubs.



Watermelon Feed

One of the most exciting events at Simi Valley playgrounds during the summer is a watermelon feed where all youngsters share in the fun. Playgrounds are only one aspect of a wide variety of summer recreation programs lined up by the valley's Recreation and Park District.

Recreation Circus Termed Big, Multi-Ring Success As 500 Attend

More than 500 people attended the first annual Recreation Circus Saturday evening at Center Junior High school, according to Jim Hand, Recreation Supervisor for the Simi Valley Recreation and

Park District.

"It was really a success," Hand declared, "and we'll have months, instead of days, to plan it next year."

Twenty civic organizations and commercial firms took part in the entertainment and exhibits, this year.

Among the several performers was Pam Binder, who received several encores when she played her accordion. The Barbershoppers and the Bobby Sox Beatles were popular. The Simi Valley

Striders made their debut as a singing group and ran races with the Blue Angels of Moorpark.

Displayed on the football field were exhibits such as a Boy Scout Camp and a variety of horses and ponies with many kinds of riding equipment arranged by the Wranglers and Trail Seekers.

Peter's Pet Shop showed some 20 bicycles and the B—W Store gave an exhibition on the latest Singer sewing machines.

The Simi Valley Music Center furnished some of the entertainment and the Simi Valley Art Association displayed about 50 paintings. There was a Cub Scout handicrafts corner and the Coin Club exhibit, which invited new members to sign up.

Larry Walker gave an exhibition of the fast draw for the Western Trails Sporting Goods.

Other displays were shown by the YWCA and the Campfire Girls.

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