

# City of Suisun – Lawler Ranch Park 2002-2003 Grand Jury Report

## I. Reason for Investigation

This year's Grand Jury investigated the actions of the City of Suisun City at the recommendation of the 2001-2002 Grand Jury as a follow-up on the ten acre park in Lawler Ranch. That investigation was due to a citizen complaint that park fees collected from the Lawler Ranch homeowners through the developer were not being used to develop the ten acre park as promised when the property was purchased.

## II. Procedure

- Attended City Council meeting
- Attended meeting of Parks and Recreation Committee

The Grand Jury used all of the information from the 2001-2002 Solano County Grand Jury Final Report and the City Responses to this report. That report was published in local public newspapers and copies are available in public libraries.

## III. Background

1. In the responses from last year's report, the City of Suisun City acknowledged using fees for park development but did not indicate that the developer constructed a small park while the City constructed a five acre park. The ten acre park is still not developed while the residents have been paying annual fees to the Park Development Fund Maintenance Advisory District. The purchase contract signed by the original buyers of Lawler Ranch properties originated in 1987 indicated that those development fees would be used for all three parks. The City has transferred funds from the account earmarked for park development in order to build a sports complex and a boat ramp.

2. The community was well represented at a meeting held by the Parks and Recreation Commission on March 20, 2002. The Grand Jury was also present. The Commission heard suggestions from the community as to their wishes for the park design.

3. At the conclusion of that meeting, the Commission stated that the design plans for that park would be completed by the end of summer 2002. A meeting would then be held to present design plans to the community. The Commission indicated that if members of the audience would leave their name and address, a notice of that future meeting would be mailed to them. The results of the park design would be then presented to the City Council for approval and implementation.

4. The Parks and Recreation Commission meeting on April 17, 2002, under the General Business section of the agenda, states "the director indicated that he requested the Commissioners keep a tally of residents' comments of their wants and not wants for the ten acre park design. He stated that there will be future meetings as the design process progresses."

5. At the end of summer 2002, the Grand Jury contacted the City Manager, asked that an updated status on the ten acre park be included on the next Parks & Recreation Commission agenda and stated that members of the current Grand Jury would be in attendance.

6. Notices of the meeting were posted throughout the community. The meeting was held on October 2, 2002 with the Grand Jury present. No design plans were presented for the ten acre park.

7. Staff stated that park development funds were kept separate while annual fees become part of the Parks & Recreation general fund.

#### **IV. Findings and Recommendations**

*Each finding is referenced to the background paragraph numbers*

**Finding #1** - As of October, 2002 no design plans had been presented for the acre park. (6)

**Recommendation #1** - The ten acre park be put on a fast tract schedule for completion. The City of Suisun City should establish an oversight committee to oversee the acre park development. This committee should include Lawler Ranch residents.

**Finding #2** - It was stated by the Parks and Recreation Commission that the funds were used for the Sports Complex and boat ramp. (1)

**Recommendation #2** - Reinstate the 10 acre park development funds.

#### **V. Comments**

The 2002-2003 Grand Jury recommends that the 2003-2004 Grand Jury review the progress made by the City of Suisun City Parks and Recreation Department.

#### **Affected Agencies**

- Suisun City Mayor
- Suisun City Council
- Suisun City Manager
- Suisun City Park and Recreation Department

