



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** December 17, 2013  
**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers  
**FROM:** Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department  
**SUBJECT:** One-Year Rental Agreement For Skofield House

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council authorize the Parks and Recreation Director to enter into a one-year rental agreement with Troy Scott, for the Skofield Park House at Skofield Park, with a monthly rent of \$2,400, commencing January 1, 2014, and ending December 31, 2014.

### **DISCUSSION:**

When the Skofield Park property was donated to the City for a community park, a residence was included. Since then, Parks employees have lived in the residence in exchange for varying responsibilities related to care and maintenance of the park. With the retirement of long-time parks employee and most recent tenant of the house in December 2012, the Parks and Recreation Department determined that rental of the house to a member of the public would provide valuable income to support park maintenance and park safety needs. Duties performed by the former parks employee were transferred to other Parks personnel, and there was no reduction in service at the park.

With park safety an increasing challenge throughout the City's park system, and the highest priority for the Parks and Recreation Department in developing its Fiscal Year 2014-2015 budget, revenue from the rental of the house was proposed to offset a portion of the cost to add an additional Park Ranger position. The budget was unanimously supported by the Parks and Recreation Commission and later adopted by the City Council. Following an extensive recruitment process, the new Park Ranger will begin work later this month, bringing the total number of Park Rangers to three, to oversee 43 parks, 11 sports facilities and 15 recreation and community center facilities.

The Parks and Recreation Department recently completed extensive renovations to the house. In September, the Department advertised the house for rent, interviewed and selected a tenant, Mr. Troy Scott, for the house. Mr. Scott will be responsible to pay monthly rent of \$2,400 and maintain the yard area around the house. The lease agreement requires the tenant to abide by all park rules and operating hours. The terms of the agreement are a one-year lease with the option to terminate with 30 days' notice.

### Skofield Park Neighbor Concerns

In October, the Department was contacted by several Skofield Park neighbors expressing concerns about the residence no longer housing a Parks employee. Staff invited neighbors to a meeting where a number of concerns were discussed; including afterhours park use, park maintenance, fire safety, and illegal camping. Staff from Parks and Recreation, Fire, and Police departments was on hand to respond to concerns. From residents' comments, it was clear that there were many misperceptions about the role and responsibilities of the former parks employee who lived in the residence. While sensitive to neighbor concerns, staff noted that unfortunately, most of the problems cited occur on a routine and far more regular basis in most City parks. Overall, the meeting provided a valuable opportunity to address neighbor concerns, review park maintenance and safety issues, and discuss how the Department relies on park users and neighbors throughout the City to contact Police, Fire, or Parks, since City staff cannot be present full-time.

### Parks and Recreation Recommendation

A Special Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on December 4, 2013, to hear and consider concerns related to Skofield Park. While sensitive to neighbors' concerns for how this change might impact the park, the Commission noted the difficult challenges faced by the Department related to safety in the City's park system, and voted unanimously to recommend that City Council move forward with approval of the lease.

### **BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

The rent for the Skofield Park house is \$2,400 per month. The \$28,000 in annual revenue will pay for almost half of the cost to add another Park Ranger to the Department, providing extra patrols in parks. There is no fiscal impact to the Department budget for maintenance of this residence.

**PREPARED BY:** Jill E. Zachary, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director

**SUBMITTED BY:** Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office