

Regional Park and Open-Space District

Background

The Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space Department became Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District in 1991 by vote of the electorate. The district was formed, in part, to stabilize funding and allow for a benefit assessment to be considered by the electorate. Funding is currently provided by a property tax allocation, user fees and charges.

The principal purpose of the district is to address, protect, acquire and manage regional parks, trails, outdoor recreation, archeological and historic sites and natural resources.

The district is independent, although governed by the board of supervisors, which sits as the board of directors.

The mission statement of the district is, "To acquire, protect, develop, manage and interpret for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of all people, a well-balanced system of areas of outstanding scenic recreation and historic importance."

At the present time, the district manages and operates more than 44,000 acres which includes forty parks, reserves, historic or archeological sites and ninety miles of regional trails.

This report is limited to the Blythe Marina Mobile Estates operated by the Regional Park and Open-Space District.

In 1963, a twenty-seven-acre parcel of land located in Blythe was deeded to the County of Riverside.

In May 1971, the Regional Park and Open Space Department entered into a lease agreement with a private party for the development and management of twenty-two acres of the twenty-seven-acre acquisition to be known as Blythe Marina Mobile Estates.

In 1990, due to the failure of the private party to develop the property as required by the terms of the lease, the county filed an unlawful detainer action.

In resolution of the dispute, on October 13, 1992, the county acquired the remainder of the leasehold interest for the sum of \$500,000. The county also purchased nine mobile homes from the lease holder for \$97,800. In the parks director's request to the board of supervisors, he indicated the district would manage the site unless it was in the best interest of the county to lease it.

In seeking approval for the unsecured loan of \$500,000, the parks director stated the district intends to repay the loan in full upon the *sale* of Blythe Marina Mobile Estates.

In March of 1993, the board of supervisors authorized a contract for the on-site management of Blythe Marina Mobile Estates by a private management company. In 1994, the one-year contract was extended for five years.

Findings

1. In August 1998, due to many complaints from tenants concerning improper maintenance of the pool, clubhouse and grounds, the district canceled the management contract. The current district management, who inherited this situation, assumed the day-to-day management and maintenance of the Mobile Estates. They accepted responsibility and addressed problems and necessary repairs are underway.
2. The parks district has now selected a company to further develop the mobile home park and the adjacent Queshan Park.
3. The Blythe Marina Mobile Estates is not a park, has no historic or archeological value, and is not an open space.

Recommendations

Board of Supervisors acting as the Board of Directors of the Regional Parks and Open-Space District:

1. Thoroughly review the chronological history of this twenty-two-acre parcel of land from 1963 to the present.
2. Not proceed with plans for the further development of the Mobile Home Estates.
3. Sell the Blythe Mobile Home Estates and the proceeds be used to fulfill the mission statement of the district.