



AGENDA ITEM 8B

MEETING: January 17, 2018
TO: Humboldt LAFCo Commissioners
FROM: George Williamson, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: **Status of the Rohner Community Recreation and Park District**
The Commission will receive an update on efforts to evaluate governance structure options for the Rohner Community Recreation and Park District. This report is being presented for information only.

BACKGROUND

The Rohner Community Recreation and Park District (hereafter RCRPD) was originally formed on July 16, 1968 for the purpose of overseeing the planning, acquisition and construction of a community swimming pool for the benefit of both incorporated and unincorporated residents in the Fortuna area. As such, the District was established as a “dependent” special district with the authority of appointing board members shared by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors and the Fortuna City Council. Specifically, two board members are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the County Board of Supervisors and three members are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Fortuna City Council (non-fixed terms). Currently the District Board is inactive.

DISCUSSION

On September 21, 2016, the Commission approved a Countywide Recreation and Park Services Municipal Service Review (MSR) that included the RCRPD. The MSR determined that the RCRPD Board had not been meeting for several years and had essentially delegated its responsibility for providing services to the City of Fortuna Parks and Recreation Department. Currently, approximately \$16,000 in property taxes generated within the District boundaries are annually transferred to the City of Fortuna. These funds are used to offset costs of providing recreation programs to the community, including services to residents in the unincorporated area.

At the November 15, 2017 LAFCo meeting, the Commission discussed the range of governance structure options for the RCRPD, including: 1) dissolving the District and designating the City of Fortuna as successor agency; 2) establishing the District as a subsidiary of the City of Fortuna; 3) expanding the District boundaries and establishing a sustainable funding source to become a regional park and open space district for the Lower Eel River watershed; and 4) revitalizing the District’s Board and finding creative options for supporting Board meetings and district activities. The Commission directed staff to continue to explore options with emphasis placed on trying to revive the existing District.

Subsequently, LAFCo staff was contacted by a local pool committee that has been meeting as an unofficial working group to explore the construction of a community swimming pool in Fortuna. Since a local funding measure would likely be needed to support construction, the RCRPD could be the ideal fit for establishing a revenue source and providing ongoing governance, management and operations of the facility, consistent with the original objective of the District.

LAFCo and City staff attended a January 10th pool committee meeting to discuss this option in more detail. Those in attendance were supportive of reestablishing the District Board and using this as the appropriate vehicle to fund a community swimming pool feasibility study. The study would assess the physical and financial viability of pool construction, maintenance and operation. City staff is planning to present this opportunity at an upcoming City Council meeting for purposes of seeking City appointments to fill vacant seats on the District Board. Similarly, appointments will also need to be requested by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors.

RECOMMENDATION

This item has been agendaized for information only. The Commission is invited to discuss the item and provide direction to staff as needed.