

MEETING DATE: February 5, 2013

AGENDA ITEM: (1) Receive and File Individual Reports from the Members of the CC Giving Donation/Sponsorship Program Ad Hoc Subcommittee; and, (2) Consideration of a Recommendation to the City Council Regarding the Establishment of a PRCS Commission Fundraising Subcommittee.

ATTACHMENTS

	<u>Pages</u>
A. "PRCS Department Donation/Sponsorship Program Status Update with Recommendations for the Future," a report submitted by Commissioner Yanda.	1 - 3
B. "PRCS Fundraising in 2013," a report submitted by Chair Stuart.	4 - 14

**PRCS Department Donation/Sponsorship Program Status Update
with Recommendations for the Future**

January 21, 2012

Commissioner Yanda

For February's PRCS Commission Meeting

Report on status of the PRCS Donation / Sponsorship Program; Current "Park Hero" materials; Analysis of the future direction and function of ad hoc subcommittee.

The PRCS Commission has historically explored ways to secure additional resources for the PRCS department for many years. In January 2011 the Commission's original program was divided into four categories:

1. Park Amenities (brochure)
2. Facility Improvements
3. Services and Programs
4. Corporate Sponsorships (including naming rights)

There was also a recommendation to Council to consider a floating a bond in the future.

1. Park Amenities Program to date

Additional work by the current Ad Hoc Sub-committee members has resulted in refining step one of the original plan for securing outside funds for park amenities. The current brochure(s) and recommended 1 page template(s) for the PRCS dept website are now in the final draft phase after receiving input from Commissioners and the PRCS Director.

Highlights of the brochure are as follows:

- a. Brochure is designed in Word in order to make it simple for staff to make changes. These changes may include approved price changes to reflect increases, adding or deleting amenities or parks in need; payment options; links to any social media sites run by the city to support the program; Co-branding the brochure to make it easy for service clubs / non-profits and approved groups (chamber of commerce, homeowners associations, sports leagues, etc.)
- b. Brochure was redesigned to use less color making it less costly to print in-house or for those downloading it from the website.
- c. Simple brochure design lends itself to being edited for special events. Photos can be swapped easily and space can be made without the need for graphic designer.
- d. It is recommended that this brochure be the first of several marketing materials to support an amenity donor program. Evaluating how effective the first brochure is at creating interest will be up to staff and commissioner. Alterations or redesign may be needed after reviewing feedback.

PRCS Department Donation/Sponsorship Program Status Update with Recommendations for the Future

Highlights of the recommended webpage are as follows:

- a. The recommended design is one used by Santa Monica, CA after examining the variety of amenity donations websites across the country. This design is simple and easily uploaded and maintained by the city IT dept.
- b. Should include a downloadable version of the Park Hero brochure.
- c. Have the ability to allow visitors to sign up if interested in the program. In addition to name & contact information this e-mail sign up can be used it as a brief questionnaire to establish area of interest, time frame for donation, type of donor (bequest, celebration, corporate, etc.) and to track hits, identify leads and start a database. This is dependent on what IT is able to do.
- d. Second stage of city designed webpage would be to include a simple Park Hero newsletter, and a Big Wish list.
- e. Third stage would be to establish a virtual donor wall online and explore other uses based on staff input.

Additional actions:

- Finalize brochure and website
- Determine whether the design and branding is effective – make changes as necessary
- Design collateral materials to be used as templates by staff
- Long term goal should be to develop a set of branding guidelines (colors, fonts, and formatting) to maintain a consistent quality and protect the PRCS brand.
- Develop a media plan to cover publicity, news, notable donations, social media and newsletters.
- Develop a network of Park Hero ambassadors through those groups already active with PRCS (seniors, sports related, teen center, past donors).
- Use other city events to get the word out about the program – table tops and program placement along w/ Fiesta marketing should be a goal & part of negotiations
- Test and track results – bring back to commission for progress report.
- Determine whether smaller donations (under \$500 / 250 / 100) should have some form of recognition and what form recognition in each category will take.

Steps 2, 3, 4 + Bond – determining what works and how well.

2. Facility Improvements
3. Services and Programs
4. Corporate Sponsorships (including naming rights)
5. Future Bond

PRCS Department Donation/Sponsorship Program Status Update with Recommendations for the Future

The economy and the city's budget constraints have put more pressure on the PRCS dept than was foreseen when the original project was undertaken by the Commission. Culver City has historically been small enough to weather the ups and downs of the economy but the expectations of residents have increased over the past 15 years as have the costs of running the department. Examining what other cities have done when faced with these same challenges has been useful to understand how to continue to effectively work towards the stated goal of the Commission; securing additional revenue sources for the PRCS dept for the immediate future and developing a mid and long range set of recommendations to send to council for consideration.

Fundraising versus Friend-raising: How does the public view city parks direct fundraising efforts?

Research by the National Parks Foundation and NRPA has established that direct fundraising by parks departments is less effective and tends to encounter resistance whereas the same fundraising appeal by a "Friends of" or other credible NPO results in more donations and support. Passive donation programs such as amenity donations which include memorial plaques do work, however the same rule follows - park boosters are effective in spreading the word and result in increased donations.

Effective fundraising efforts by similar sized parks departments rely on evaluating proposed fundraising / marketing programs through the lens of establishing the true cost of raising money; SWOT analysis to maximize opportunities while avoiding negative public perception and/or unintended consequences of these efforts; identification of key supporters; developing joint fundraising opportunities with other groups; sponsorships; and most importantly setting realistic goals with revenue targets for each category of a fundraising program and tracking the results of these efforts.

All of this requires time, effort and work on the part of the city and department, but the effort can show good results if applied consistently. The ad hoc sub-committee should continue as a valuable link to the commission, community and other partners.

There should be an agreed upon master schedule, project list and an online repository for notes, research, projects and work in progress of this sub committee in order to manage the complex nature of the ad hoc subcommittee's work without administrative support from staff. Both current subcommittee members have begun making use of a system and it is available to the dept director.

It should be a priority of the ad hoc sub committee to meet with the director and put together a master list of recommendations, tasks remaining on current work, projects and timelines along with a progress report and any work that is ready to be sent to the city council for an update at the next commission meeting.

PRCS Fundraising in 2013

INTRODUCTION

"Parks can provide a restive and reflective place for people to get away from the hustle and bustle - serving, in words often credited to Frederick Law Olmstead as 'the lungs of the city'. Parks can also provide a place for active recreation, allowing city dwellers the chance to place basketball or softball or tennis in neighborhoods where backyards and schoolyards are not readily available. Young parents rely on parks to give their tots a safe place to play, and generations of urban dwellers have looked to public swimming pools - often called "plunges" - to find refreshing escape from summer heat. More recently, city dog owners have found designated dog parks an important place to give their dogs freedom and to create a community of their own. With eight in 10 Americans making their home in metropolitan areas, urban parks are more than ever a critical part of American life and urban infrastructure." (Taken from *The Critical Role of Parks in urban and Metropolitan Infrastructure* by William Fulton- a report in a recent roundtable of experts from around the country who gathered to discuss the future of parks and financing in the United States).

The experts attending the roundtable had extension discussions on the ifnancial problems and solutions facing Parks departments today. Some possible solutions were discussed (see full text in attachment):

1. Free vs. fee - when to charge for services, how much and what should and should be considered "free". In Culver City, we have been reviewing this process for the last 2 years and have been updating our fee schedules and permit requirements to meet the needs of the users and the City. This is, and was, an ongoing project done by the Director and his staff. Numerous community meetings have been held and all current stakeholders interface with the City Council and Department when it comes to fees and usage.

2. Partnerships with other Government Agencies and nonprofits. Non-profit organizations often have overlapping or similar missions when it comes to recreation programs (such as the YMCA which provides virtually identical programs that Parks do - so rather than duplicating everything, the City provides the facilities and the Y provides the programming). Several participants spoke of the opportunities that lie in pursuing goals jointly with organizations and agencies that focus on environmental conservation and restoration.

For example, in Culver City, we have many organizations which are already partnering with the City, such as the Exchange Club, Sister City Committee, Rotary Club, Lions Club and the Culver City Chamber of Commerce. But the partnering is not centrally organized and does not have one common oversight method.

Other Government Agencies, for instance, could be the AQMD or EPA. These agencies have multiple "greening" programs that the PRCS can take advantage of if we just have the staff and time to apply for these programs and grants. The City of Los Angeles and State of California have Park improvement programs that can be accessed given the staff and time to do so.

What is needed when it comes to partnering is a direct "line of communication" between the PRCS and other local services/non-profit organizations to create a master plan and commitments. This line of communication starts with the Director and the Commission.

We all agree that contracting with nonprofit organizations to run programs is a major opportunity, as nonprofits are often in the business of running parks and recreation programs anyway. But there is no guarantee that these nonprofit organizations have the organizational capacity or the staying power to run these programs in the long run. The question we must address is how would the PRCS, Director and Staff play a role in helping these organizations maintain long-term stability. What role should parks and recreation play in this effort? Where will parks professionals be most effective? Local government has not traditionally be in the business of mentoring and supporting non-profit organizations in their efforts to provide services - in fact, quite the contrary.

People who use Parks and pay fees for certain services, by and far, believe that they already pay for those services through their payroll and property taxes, and should not have to pay more. That is the new paradigm -

how to help the community understand that your tax dollars simply do not pay for the services they want and they active participation in their community and Parks is urgently needed.

3. Donations from private individuals and corporations. One of the most common methods of raising funds for parks and recreation facilities is to accept donations from private individuals and corporations. In particular, offering "naming rights" on new facilities can lead to major contributions, as can community wide fundraising campaigns for specific new facilities - soccer fields, swimming pools, and so on. This too can be a valuable source of revenue, but parks departments must be careful not to allow the effort to skew their own priorities." What was an interesting conclusion is that these experts opined that private donors tend to favor construction of new facilities over maintenance of old ones, which can make a parks department's deferred maintenance problem worse rather than better. Also, the desire of donors to promote particular facilities important to them may not always conform to the department's own priorities - or the needs of the departments' constituencies. This is an obvious problem in Culver City and we must design our program to fairly improve our Parks and programs. And we all acknowledge that "fix it first" does have the potential to lock in existing inequities - if, for example, affluent neighborhoods have more existing facilities than poor neighborhoods. It can be difficult to focus on correcting these inequities in a time of limited fiscal resources.

1. Although Corporations can be an important source of donations, their agenda is not always the same as the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department. The City Council needs to determine what level and type of corporate involvement is appropriate? To what extent is it permissible for corporate donations to "drive" the products and services delivered by parks and recreation departments? Where does the public interest end and the private interest of corporations begin?

4. Use of volunteers. As financial resources have become more constrained, parks and recreation departments - like many other government agencies - have increased the use of volunteers to complete tasks formerly done by employees. Most often these are low-level tasks, often routine maintenance in neighborhood parks and locations of importance to the volunteers. Public employee unions have sometimes resisted the use of volunteers because they fear Cities will reduce the paid workforce as a result. However, roundtable participants emphasized that when volunteers are supplementing the workforce rather than replacing workers, unions can see that their employees are actually being protected by the use of volunteers.

Another concern, however, is proper management of volunteers. Although volunteers can serve as an enormous source of manpower, paid staff must train, deploy, and manage volunteers in order to be effective. The idea of using volunteers is not new, but in these fiscally challenging times, we need to consider the Super Volunteer - the person who can truly handle the work with limited training and can be relied on to volunteer for that work for an extended period of time. We need to consider how to recruit them, who coordinates with the Departments the Super Volunteer staffing needs, and who supervises these Super Volunteers.

We also need, with a comprehensive marketing program, to change the conversation amongst the elected and staff from "preserving life and safety services" as the number One priority, to "preserving life, safety and community services" - in other words, Parks and Recreation should be right up there with Fire, Police, trees and streets.

We have been working on this project for some time. It seems to us that the project is bigger than originally anticipated due to the demise of the Redevelopment Agency and loss of income streams from those tax dollars. Measure Y does not solve those fiscal problems, but merely maintains the level of funding. We did not, and do not now, have adequate funding for the PRCS.

Parks departments are traditionally the first to get budget cuts. Yet, in these difficult economic times our residents need the Parks more than ever for recreation and supplemental education for our families.

The conclusion is that the current ad hoc subcommittee method for this project does not work. We are working in a vacuum without support or resources.

We are recommending a full court push to the community, business and staff to educate all and to make the concept of community partnerships, super volunteers and fundraising for the Parks Department a high priority.

The following marketing/fundraising program is merely a jump off point. Before we can even implement a program such as this we need several "institutional" items in place:

1. The PRCS Commission needs to have an established Sub-Committee whose focus is raising money; whether thru partnerships with non-profits, social media, interfacing with businesses or individuals. This will allow up to publicly meet, to get community input, and to have a public forum for this very important, and what should be a permanent function of this Commission.
2. This Sub-Committee needs to be empowered to explore the creation of a Super Volunteer program.
3. The Sub-Committee will need to have a staff person assigned to it, just as the Cultural Affairs Commission and Non Profit does, to facilitate the various projects and efforts of the Sub-Committee and the Director.
4. We are requesting that Council to include the Director and Sub-Committee in any economic development plans discussions.

Marketing

Marketing is an unfamiliar concept for many city governments. It's important that we, Culver cCty, understand that marketing is more than just the old sense of making a sale or obtaining a donation. Marketing is a way to satisfying the consumer and donor needs,

Below are eight steps that will get us started in brainstorming marketing ideas that could make a significant difference in funding for our PRCS Department.

1. **Define our target market**, research similar Cities, organizations and associations.
2. **Determine the desired outcome of our marketing efforts.** What are the various needs, but long and short term, new programs and construction, and long term maintenance.
3. We will Use the information gathered in Step 1 and 2 to develop multiple brochures and marketing materials that describe the benefits, services, donation opportunities, and values of the Culver City Parks and Recreation Department. We need separate materials that address the individual/corporate interests. Other marketing materials can include a Web page for each Park setting forth the needs of the Park and the long range plans.
4. **Develop a social media marketing strategy.** Social media such as Twitter and Facebook can provide us with ways to reach out to those interested in your organization in a low cost and effective way. Social media works great when it comes to reaching those who are passionate about causes that individuals hold dear to their hearts. Social media— including pages like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+ — are playing an increasing role in people's lives, both as a way of connecting with friends and as a way of increasing business activity. Nonprofit marketing in particular has benefited from social media marketing in a number of ways; a recent study has revealed that, since 2007, nonprofit organizations "have been setting the pace for the use of social media in marketing." Of course, organizations of other types have been using them too; but for Culver City such marketing can be especially beneficial for at least five reasons, which will be discussed below.
5. **Surveys and polls** The Department can also use Facebook or Twitter to conduct surveys, which are especially useful because they can enable the Department/cCty to find out what things about them their constituents approve and disapprove of, and use that information to improve what The City offers and how it conduct it's business. But surveys can do much more than that. They can generate interest in fundraisers and other events that are being held by the City or its Partners. They can also learn why their donors are making their contributions, and find out what their people value and are interested in.

6. Develop and maintain a professional internet marketing presence. The City can use this Parks fundraising site as a great resource to display useful information, news, monthly newsletters, events, create community, share alternatives to donating money, and showcase the benefits of Culver City Parks.

7. Research and maintain your databases of contacts. We cannot let these resources be wasted. Use them for special mailings, follow-up telephone calls, event invitations, alliance development, research profiling, and market segmentation.

8. Actively search for alliances with other organizations, commerce, government, advertising media, and business. *This step alone often brings the most benefit.*

Each action we take should follow the the "Integrated Marketing" method.

As set out in *Integrated Marketing triumphs—there's no turning back* by Nancy E. Schwartz
Publisher, *Getting Attention Blog & E-news* integrated marketing is here to stay. This is what Ms. Schwartz has to say about topic:

1) Integrated Marketing. Surfacing about five years ago, and an official trend since 2010, integrated marketing is here to stay.

What is it? It's looking at all parts of how you reach out to your network as a whole across channels, format and content. A great example is the memorable Old Spice campaign (remember the guy in the shower?) that spilled consistent messages and look and feel online (web and social media) and offline (in print and TV ads).

Plus, integrated marketing flips your traditional planning lens on its head, and looks at your activities from your audiences' point of view

To do: Start small with tracking and recording every single message and campaign that goes to your base. Then analyze who gets what and assess if that's the right approach.

Eventually you'll need to demo departmental silos (marketing vs. fundraising vs. programs) marketing wise. But take it one step at a time.

2) Social media continues to gain influence

Your use of social media is officially a must in 2013. It's where most of your prospects and supporters spend lots of digital time, and you have to be there too.

That means you need to help your leadership to overcome their fears (show them what some of your competitors are doing online) and find ways to actively engage on relevant platforms. If the U.S. military can do it, so can your charity.

To do: Create a social media strategy that pinpoints the right places to be and how to get there. Move beyond your Facebook presence if that's working now. Then integrate your social media approach into your overall marketing plan. Beware of the new and shiny, like Pinterest. It's vital for you to experiment to know the options, and stay engaged and learning, but that doesn't mean you put everything into play.

3) Email remains a core way to connect with your base

Email is still the workhorse for connecting, communicating and driving action. Unlike social media options that require participants to go there to receive your message, your opt-in email lists give you permission and the conduit for out-going communication.

To do: Although you may be feeling pressured or eager to go all out with social media, email remains vital. Choose your channels according to a) where your supporters and prospects are, and b) what you want them to do.

Use your social media outposts to support the growth of your email list, and make sure every one of your emails is mobile-friendly.

4) Content marketing rules the roost

Content can fuel your relationship building across platforms and devices, leading to more leads and more of the actions you need.

Although one-way outreach still has a role in raising awareness and sending prospects to your website and social media channels, customers (including your prospects and supporters) trust content most!

To do: Provide relevant information that your audiences' want, and make sure it is the highest quality possible.

5) Mobile is a must

You can't ignore mobile without hurting your org. Smartphones and tablets are how people communicate, consume content and research, so ensure your content is present wherever and whenever. Remember, it's about them.

To do: Test your website, social channels and emails to make sure they're easily read, searched and interacted with by users on tablets and smartphones. If they're not, get there a.s.a.p., beginning with the content most accessed and devices most used.

Going forward, design content, layout and navigation on all channels to work on all devices.

6) Search is how your network navigates the web

Don't get complacent and think that just because you've got a good plan for social media and content marketing, you can stop there.

Navigational searches (when searchers look for your organization by all or part of your name or web address—e.g. Chronicle, Chronicle of Philanthropy or Philanthropy.com—rather than searching for a topic like philanthropy) still dominate the top search results. Interestingly, searchers are using fewer words in their searches due to search engine prompts based on the users' past behavior.

To do: Integrate your top keywords in all of your high-quality, original content—on every platform—that is hungrily consumed and shared.

7) Measurement is mandatory

It's no longer acceptable to dedicate an ever-growing proportion of your marketing budget to social media, content marketing and mobile without being able to measure a return on your marketing investment.

2013 is likely to bring new ways of analyzing, measuring, and qualifying current and future marketing strategies, enabling us to more quickly and easily gauge ROI and the effectiveness of specific marketing strategies, plus measure what has been difficult to measure till now!

To do: Incorporate a call to action with a unique tracking code and means to capture the results. Then analyze them. That data is powerful.

The Nature Conservancy used website usage analytics to redesign its site and increased online donations by 15 percent in just five months, and Nurse-Family Partnerships tracks indicators in real-time so it can respond quickly to trends and offer new services, according to *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*.
And finally...

8) Integrate your data, as well as your marketing

By assessing results across *all* channels, you'll be able to combine your findings for deeper insights and for even more integrated marketing that blends all channels and strategies—from social media to search optimization to e-newsletters—together for a more unified message. That will lead to smarter and more effective campaigns.

To do: If you're not already looking at your data as a whole, start developing a process to do so. Because as valuable as your data is broken out into different silos (social media, SEO, email, direct mail), it's much more valuable when combined and looked at as one entity. Do right-things marketing, right now!

We wish have a conversation with Council about the following and would hope that we can have staff input compiled for presentation at the time it is agendized:

1. Overview of sub-committee approach to present day (pre & post Measure Y) needs for funding PRCS beginning w/ amenity improvement / replacements.
2. Analysis of what types of outreach / fundraising campaigns would be most effective / least effective in fundraising.
3. Discussion of passive fundraising mechanisms & staff / administration costs.
4. Discussion of active fundraising methods & additional administrative costs - staff & other city depts.
5. Discuss cross-linking amenity donations to special event / fundraisers - as well as utilizing cultural affairs programs that are now under parks dept.
6. Stakeholders expectations; needs and turn-offs to participation - residents, businesses, non-profits & visitors.
7. Structuring the program and it's components - recommendations and scope of work to be done by sub-committee for consideration of commission / council.
8. Role of staffing in support of mission of sub-committee.
9. Estimated timeline & goals

With the Council's guidance, we (the PRCS Department and the newly established Sub Committee) need to:

1. Establish Goals—What you need to accomplish

What are our organization's main one to three goals? And what are our one to three marketing goals (how marketing can best contribute to achieving organizational goals)?

- Examples:

- Organizational goal:
 - Improve and upgrade our Parks infrastructures and programs.
- Communications goals:
 - Build awareness about the Parks Department work and impact.
 - Increase understanding of the relationship between our Parks and the “liveability” of our Community.
 - Motivate area residents and businesses to advocate.

2. Establish Benchmarks and Measurement

- *Part One—Benchmarks:* What are three to five concrete, specific and measurable (when possible) steps to complete en route to achieving your marketing goals?
- *Part Two—Measurement:* How to measure if you are moving at the right speed down the right path?
- Key question—What are 3-5 concrete, specific measures that will show you you’re on the right path (or not) to achieving your communications and fundraising goals? Vague benchmarks will get you nowhere.
- Examples:
 - Finalize partnerships with two organizations to cross-promote advocacy campaigns, within two months.
 - Increase the number of incoming inquiries (coming from a partner org website, a volunteer advocate or another source) from prospective volunteer advocates by 10% in 2013 and by 15% additional in 2014.

3. Situation Analysis—The Conditions Inside and Outside The Parks Department

What is the environment in which we are working? Does it need improvement and if yes, how to do it.

4. Target Audiences and Segments

Who are the one to three top audience groups we need to engage to meet our marketing / fundraising benchmarks? How do they break out into segments (with shared perspectives, habits and wants)? What are the wants, habits and preferences of each segment—so we know how to connect with them? *We cannot reach everyone! so let's reach the top audience*

- Key question—Who are the 1-3 top audience groups we need to engage to meet our communications objectives and what do we need them to do? Most importantly, what are the wants, habits and preferences of each group?
- Examples:
 - City residents—Build their understanding of the needs in the Parks and how they can improve the situation, so they are motivated to advocate for the Department.
 - Staff members of prospective partner businesses and organizations working in the region—Build understanding of the Park Department’s role and impact in maintaining a strong healthy

Park and Recreation system so that prospective partners see the partnership as providing value to their own impact, and want to collaborate.

5. Calls to Action—What you want your target audiences to do

What are we trying to get your target audiences to do? Be specific.

- Key question—Given our target audience groups and the actions we want them to take, what are the best ways to motivate them to do so?
- Examples:
 - Branding—Define, convey and reinforce a robust PRC brand (the unique way in which the organization delivers services in improving the community and the value that it provides) for all target audiences. Consistent, memorable branding helps our base to keep our organization top of mind, and spread the word about it.
 - Expand marketing reach to engage more individuals in each target audience group.

6. Framing the Message—Benefit Exchange and Barriers to the Call to Action

- *Part One—Benefit Exchange*: Why should our target audiences care? What's it in for them?
- *Part Two—Barriers*: What challenges do we face in motivating the action? What's going to be difficult?

7. Strategies—The best way to achieving our marketing goals

How can we best motivate our target audiences to act?

8. Tactics—How to bring our strategies to life

How to connect our organization with our target audiences via these strategies—the nitty-gritty?

- Key question—How to deliver the messaging to our audience via these strategies?
- Examples:
 - Message platform—Development, implementation throughout communications and in conversations.
 - PRCS "look and feel"—Design a new graphic identity (logo, colors, typefaces) to be used consistently throughout online and offline communications.
 - Empower staff, the Commission and volunteers to be effective communicators on PRCS' key issues and its impact in that arena by clearly specifying each individual's role as a marketer and by providing any necessary training.
 - Standards guide—Create a guide (PDF) for staff and volunteer messengers to use to make decisions on messaging and "look and feel" of communications.

Fundraising Plan

Nonprofit organizations and for-profit businesses alike often use fundraisers to earn money for their respective causes. Planning a fundraiser can be a timely process full of complex details. An integral factor in fundraiser planning is the marketing aspect. If you don't have donors, then you won't have a lucrative fundraiser, and marketing serves as a tool to get your message in front of people who will support your initiative. One of our goals is to reach out to various charitable organizations in the community for the partnership and expertise to hold fundraisers for our department and its programs.

Fundraising Plan Components

Our fundraising plan should include several essential elements. Fundraising plans need to feature an end goal, a detailed mission statement, a description of the fundraising strategy and a set timeline. The end goal is the amount of money you hope to earn with the fundraiser. The mission statement clearly defines the purpose of the fundraiser, such as raising money to provide food for a local animal shelter. Fundraising strategies are basically the fundraiser events or activities, such as a silent auction or a donation website. The timeline clearly states when the fundraising will commence and end.

Types of Fundraisers

We can choose from many types of fundraisers – from elegant, formal events to casual get-togethers. Some popular types of fundraisers include benefit dances and dinners, silent and live auctions and sports tournaments, such as golf or basketball tournaments. If you are trying to plan a fundraiser for a youth group or school organization, consider planning a car wash, bake sale or raffle.

Target Audience

One of the main keys of a successful fundraiser is targeting the best donors for our cause. This can be a challenging aspect of the planning period, as sometimes people who truly believe in our cause may not have the financial means to donate significant amounts. We must find creative ways to draw out donors who are sympathetic to your cause. For example, if we are planning a pancake breakfast to raise money for a new park equipment invite people who have children in our schools.

Marketing Strategies

After we've chosen your target audience and type of fundraising event, we can plan our overall marketing strategy. The overall goal of our marketing efforts is to get people to our event to donate money to your cause. If for instance, if we are planning a large-scale community event, we need to advertise it in the local newspaper and radio stations, as well as send out formal invitations. If we are planning a casual fundraiser and don't have much of a marketing budget, we can create a viral marketing campaign via email and social networking websites.

In "7 Golden Rules for Nonprofit Fundraising Success, Guerrilla marketing tactics that can take the guesswork out of raising money" taken from Entrepreneur Contributor (August 18, 2010):

Guerrillas are not taken by surprise with the winds of financial change; they know they can become a fundraising force of nature because they understand the rules of fundraising success and apply them in their development outreach. Just as there are rules in nature that can be used to predict the weather, there are rules in marketing that can take the guesswork out of fundraising. Here are the guerrilla golden rules of fundraising success.

1. Know Your Donors: The urgent need for your nonprofit is to know your donors as well as you possibly can. Having a good knowledge of your donors and their contributing habits is key to persuading them to donate their money. You'll become a master communicator by listening (a guerrilla trait), and scratching below the surface.

2. Educate Your Donors: Guerrillas know the meaning of the adage "What people are not up on, they are down on." They make sure they educate their supporters, because an educated donor is a happy donor. Education also builds trust and assures your supporters that all is on course. They trust you because you stay in touch with them and let them know what their donations have done. (People want to know they are helping to bring about a positive change. They may generously donate money, or volunteer their time, but deep down their prime interests is in seeing what impact they can make.) You send brochures with colorful pictures and testimonials of how your organization changes lives. You reach out to them and keep the lines of communication open—not always asking for help, but showing the results of their support. Guerrillas work hard to stay in touch with donors because they know the result of their hard work is a base of supporters who give joyfully.

3. Help Donors Find Personal Fulfillment: People want to make a difference. They are seeking personal fulfillment through supporting your cause. When your organization can find a way to help people solve their problem of finding fulfillment through charity work, they will be more willing to jump on board to help your cause. The hard part for you is coming up with a

creative way to show the need for donations in a way that is also compelling to the perceived needs of the donor.

4. Build Trust in Donor Relationships: Can there be honesty in marketing? Guerrillas know the answer to that question is yes. But do the people you are asking to donate believe it? A recent national poll showed that a whopping 53 percent of Americans say they sense a "feeling of deception" about marketing. This distrust of marketing is also transferred to the outreach marketing conducted by nonprofits. Guerrillas are honest in all their marketing because they know that even if their marketing is 99 percent honest and 1 percent dishonest, that 1 percent will stand out in the minds of their target audience. Examine every facet of your marketing closely. Is every sentence completely honest? Does the truth ring out from every word? Is your organization's theme truly believable, or does it mimic the hyped tone other organizations use in their marketing? Can people see evidence of what you have done? Is there fruit in your marketing life? What about your visuals? Are they fake-looking? Are the models smiling in situations where people don't ordinarily smile? Be careful not to set off the disbelief alarms.

5. Respect Your Donors: Most nonprofits say they care about their donors, but guerrilla marketers prove they care. Your marketing can say all the right words and tell donors how important they are to you, but unless you take concrete steps beyond those words, they won't believe you.

For example, show your donors and prospects that you sincerely care by preparing a written document outlining the principles of your service from the top of the company down.

6. Focus on Current Supporters: Did you know it costs five times as much to raise a donation from a new donor than from an existing one? That's why it is so important to keep in touch with your current donors. You already have a list of your donors. Go back to it often to update contact and donation information, and keep communicating with them so when it's time to give, it will be easy for you to ask. Do this with letters, postcards, e-mail, newsletters, phone calls, surveys and, if you can, at trade shows and fundraising events. One other way to focus on current supporters is with a focus group of your most involved donors, though you could certainly try it with those who give the minimum, as well.

7. Make Giving Fun: Your guerrilla marketing is outlined by a serious and specific marketing strategy, but that doesn't mean you can't have a little fun while raising money. It's no secret that your organization has to do something different to get the attention of donors. Nothing gets people's attention better than a little fun!

Here are a few examples of ideas that have worked with various organizations and individuals to increase their donations:

- **Auctions:** Gather people to bid on art, jewelry, cars, antiques, baskets of food—almost anything. Have an old-fashioned down-home affair, or break out the black ties and tails. People love going to auctions, and companies love giving away merchandise and services to sell at auctions because they also get the benefit of doing a little fusion marketing with your organization.
- **Long-Distance Marathons:** You can add "A-Thon" to just about any event and make it more fun and raise funds. Serious athletes and amateurs alike love raising support from sponsors in honor of your cause. Marathons also make excellent public relations events.
- **Pledge Drives:** Have a special event where people can sign up to support your organization. Host a formal dinner at a nice hotel and make the case for your organization. Or send people out with saddle bags asking potential donors to pledge to give. One side of the bag has blank donor cards, and the other side will fill up with completed pledge cards in no time.
- **Questions for a Buck:** One company raised money by having their boss charge donations for each question asked of him. Since he was constantly being asked

questions, this made perfect sense. Word spread throughout the company about what he was doing, and everyone continued asking questions and paying for it.

You don't want the cornerstone of your donations to hinge on fun events, but it certainly adds flavor and spice while attracting donations. Make sure you include these ideas in your marketing plan and calendar. You can also evaluate and analyze them later for their effectiveness.

Follow these golden rules to engage in marketing that will amaze the public and motivate your donors.

9. Resources—What's needed to implement

- *Part One—Roles and Responsibilities:* Who does what? Existing staff? New staff? Outsource? Social capital (board members, volunteers, other connections)? How many hours (per week or month) is it expected to take? What training is necessary to build necessary skills?
- *Part Two—Budget:* How much is it going to cost?

10. Step-by-Step Work Plan—Start with a 90-day plan, then extend it to cover six months

How to roll out the program? What are the immediate steps to take once you have an approved plan?

CONCLUSION

All of these ideas are worthy and what we have found is that we need to make a Plan, be able to discuss it with the public and with services organizations and businesses, create the structure for businesses, service organizations and volunteers to become meaningfully and long term engaged. That takes structure. That structure cannot currently be done by the Department as it is stretched too thin now. That structure needs to become institutionalized so that it lives beyond this Commission and Council. And, if there is any chance of raising significant funds over a long term, that structure, that permanent PRCS Sub Committee needs City staff and financial support to do so.