CITY ADOPTS BALANCED BUDGET

The City Council approved a two-year budget at its meeting on June 19, which will cover operating and capital expenses for the period that began July 1.

The City is entering into a period with revenues flattening, and costs rising due in large part to pension obligations. As a result, the City staff approached the budget planning looking for new efficiencies and opportunities to save money, while not sacrificing services to the community. Although this budget covers the next two fiscal years, work will begin again in the fall to address the longer-term challenges.

To view the Council deliberations regarding the budget, or to read the budget documents and summaries, visit the City’s website at Walnut-Creek.org, and select “public meetings” under the Government tab.

NEW MARIJUANA REGULATIONS IN EFFECT

Following significant public input, the City Council unanimously approved an ordinance regulating personal cultivation of recreational and medicinal marijuana within the City boundaries. The Council also set the framework for local commercial delivery of medical cannabis. The Council’s June 19 action stemmed from the November 2016 passage of Proposition 64, which made recreational marijuana use legal for adults 21 and over. The City’s measured approach was a result of significant research and community engagement. The ordinance will allow for up to two medical marijuana, delivery-only businesses. There are restrictions on the possible locations for those operations, which must be at least 1,000 feet from schools, churches and parks. The City Council also supported allowing up to six plants for personal cultivation at residences in the City.

Patrick Dougherty’s public art installation engages the community

After nearly three weeks and 130 hours of installation, Patrick Dougherty’s latest public artwork “Sure Enough” opened at Walnut Creek’s Civic Park with a public celebration in late May. A diverse group of more than 60 volunteers from the community helped the artist build this dynamic sculpture entirely from willow saplings, woven together to create a vast environment for exploration, play, and amazement. Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the artwork will be on view outside the Walnut Creek Library in Civic Park for at least two years. Enthusiastic visitors to the opening celebration were able to meet the artist and make their own woven willow domes.

There are many other unique displays of public art throughout the City. Join Bedford Gallery docents for a guided walking tour of the public art collection every third Saturday through November starting at 11:00 a.m. Find out more at bedfordgallery.org, or by calling 925-295-1416.

SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13
Here’s what’s happening

**LESHER CENTER**

**JAZZ at the Lesher Center**

The Diablo Regional Arts Association is proud to announce the lineup for this year’s “Jazz at the Lesher Center” 2018 Concert Series. The series runs Saturday evenings from July through September, with a set of not-to-be-missed performances at the 300-seat Margaret Lesher Theatre at the Lesher Center for the Arts. From world-renowned piano masters to soaring vocalists, now is the time to reserve your seats for this year’s series. Trumpet master Bri Skonberg kicks it off with guest trombonist Wynton Gordon on July 28.

**SUMMER SOUNDS**

This year’s “Summer Sounds” concert series wraps up in July with free live music outdoors at the Lesher Center Plaza. T Sisters entertain on July 26 starting at 5:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m., with drinks and snacks available for sale. Visit LesherArtsCenter.org for more information about the series.

**BOUNDARY OAK GOLF COURSE**

Fore! Fourth Friday summer series continues at Boundary Oak

Break out the clubs and head to Boundary Oak Golf Course this summer for a special series of golf, games and food. The $45 entry fee per person includes green fee, cart fee, prize fund and dinner. 5:00 p.m. shotgun starts coming on July 27 and August 24. To register, visit playboundaryoak.com.

**WALNUT CREEK HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Take a walk into history!

Do you know who owned the first automobile in Walnut Creek? To learn the answer to this and many other intriguing questions about our town, plan on joining one of the Downtown History Tours sponsored by the Walnut Creek Historical Society on the 2nd Saturday of each month through October. The easy 90-minute guided walk on city sidewalks brings to life the early times of downtown Walnut Creek. These free tours depart rain or shine at 9:30 a.m. from Liberty Bell Plaza on the corner of Broadway and Mt. Diablo Blvd. A booklet with historic photos of the sites visited may be purchased at the tour for $5.00. Registration in advance is not required. Get more information at 925-935-7871, or at WCHistory.com.

**MUSIC & MOVIES UNDER THE STARS 2018**

Bring your family and enjoy free Music & Movies Under the Stars in Walnut Creek parks! We encourage you to bring a picnic or enjoy dinner at one of the many local restaurants prior to the movie. Movies begin around sunset, following an hour and a half of live music to set the stage for a fun evening for all.

First up is the colorful Disney/Pixar favorite “Coco,” which was shown at Civic Park on Friday, August 17. Civic Park hosts a showing of “The Lion King” on Friday, September 7. Our series wraps up on Friday, September 28, with “The Jungle Book” at Civic Park.

Movies Under the Stars are brought to you by the City of Walnut Creek, Walnut Creek Arts + Recreation, and Walnut Creek Downtown. Movies at Civic Park are sponsored by Up the Creek, upthe creek records.com, and our showing of Moana is sponsored by Zecchi & Associates. No pets, please.

For more information and movie start times, visit WalnutCreekRec.org, or call 925-943-5818.

**BEDFORD GALLERY**

Calling All Makers & Designers!

The Gallery is currently seeking local makers, crafters, and designers to participate in Craft Fest, an indie pop-up shop held annually in the gallery that will feature a curated selection of fine goods. This year’s event will take place Saturday, November 17, 10:00am-5:00pm. The deadline to apply is July 31, 2018; vendor application and details at www.bedfordgallery.org/craftfest.

The World of Frida

This summer, Bedford Gallery celebrates the culture, style, and persona of visionary Mexican painter Frida Kahlo. The exhibition weaves juried and invitatonal shows with a nationally traveling exhibition of iconic Frida photographs by Nickolas Murray. The gallery will host special events during the run of the show, including a paint & sip party and mercado of Frida-inspired items. Viva La Frida!

Tequila Tasting & Paint a Frida: Thursday, August 23, 6:30-9:00pm

Admission includes a tequila tasting, guided painting session with materials, and Latin food from highlighted local restaurants.

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**Chevron Family Theater Festival on July 21**

The Chevron Family Theater Festival returns to the Lesher Center for the Arts on Saturday, July 21. From 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., kids and adults alike will find a packed day of fun, entertainment and education. Free performances will take place throughout the day, and there will also be several ticketed performances for only $5 per ticket. Buy tickets in advance and get more information at lesherartscenter.org.

**Memorial Day**

Walnut Creek’s 30th annual Memorial Day event will air throughout summer. Music and patriotism mixed with a compelling speaker for an event not to be missed.

**Channel info**

Comcast Channel 28 (incorporated WC only), Rossmoor 26, Astound Channel 29, and AT&T U-Verse Channel 99. Or watch the channel online at walnutcreektv.org.

**Find us on Youtube**

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Welcome Kyra to Walnut Creek PD!

Walnut Creek Police Department added another four-legged hero to the force with the arrival of Belgian Malinois Kyra. Kyra joined K9 Officer Solorio last November, and they’ve been tackling crime ever since. Kyra is the third member of our K9 force, joining Danny (and partner Officer Dickey) and Izy (and partner Officer Wallace.) She was born in Holland in 2015, and joined her Officer partner on patrol with building and area searches, tracking and trailing, and helping to apprehend criminals. Officer Solorio is thoroughly enjoying his partner. “I’ve been very fortunate to have a career in the military and law enforcement for the past 14 years,” said Solorio. “I’ve been blessed to have been part of some fun special assignments. Working with the WCPD K9 program and Kyra has been the most fun and every day provides me the opportunity to look forward to my whole life, but having a K9 partner like Kyra is something special. I love the dedication she has to her job and to me. My favorite part about the K9 program is working with other dedicated members of the team and the amount of support we receive from the department.”

Kita City cultural exchange program returns

WEEKEND WORKSHOP (August 6th – 10th) in Photography or Studio Art

Local high school students are invited to join students from Walnut Creek’s partner city in Japan – Kita City. Participants will share in a cultural exchange with peers from across the globe while exploring photography or studio art. They will make new friends, work collaboratively, enjoy unique field trips, and present their work at a celebration event. Choose between exploring the visual language of digital photography, or learning the fundamentals of drawing, painting and mixed media at studio art. Register at CommunityArts.org for course #5080 (photography) or #5077 (studio art).

BECOME A HOST FAMILY!

Parents of middle or high school aged kids are also invited to participate by hosting a Kita City student. Host families are asked to provide room, board, transportation to the workshop and meals to the students. If you’re willing to consider being a host family, call 925-941-8466 for information.

TURN THE KEY – BE IDLE FREE!

You can save money, reduce air pollution, and help everyone breathe easier just by turning a key! Turn off your car engine if you’ll be sitting for more than 30 seconds at a car wash, drive-thru or pick up drive. Idling just 10 seconds uses more fuel than restarting the engine. This April, the Mayor and City Council marked Earth Day with a proclamation celebrating the City’s environmental initiatives and encouraging residents and City employees to take the Idle Free pledge, which states that you will turn off your car’s engine while waiting for more than 30 seconds! You can sign the Idle Free Pledge online at IdleFreeBayArea.org.

Video Surveillance Camera Program

Many crimes are solved these days with the help of video surveillance footage, but obtaining that footage is not as easy as you might expect. Walnut Creek residents and business owners, if you are new partner with the Walnut Creek Police Department if you would like to share video from your camera in the event of a crime in your neighborhood.

If you have a residential or business surveillance camera, you can fill out a form on the Police Department website that allows registered business owners to register their security cameras with the Department. This is completely optional, and if you do not take further information, you are not giving us control of your camera or sharing control. You would simply be letting us know you have it, and we would then know who to contact to help us solve crime in your neighborhood. Your information will only be shared with law enforcement personnel, who are investigating criminal activity in the area where your cameras are located. Visit the Police Department website or call 925-256-3318 for details.

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Fall Election Around the Corner

With June’s Primary behind us, the November election season kicks off this month with the availability of nomination papers for residents interested in running for elected office in the City of Walnut Creek. Two City Council seats are up for election, as well as the position of City Treasurer. Nomination period runs from Monday, July 16 through Friday, August 10; if an incumbent chooses not to run for re-election, the nomination period will be extended through August 15.

All of the necessary information and application will need to file to be available from the City Clerk’s office. It takes about an hour to review the paperwork with the City Clerk, so appointments are encouraged. Contact the City Clerk’s office at 925-943-5819. To be eligible to run for either Council or Treasurer, you must be at least 18 years old, a United States citizen, and a resident and registered voter in Walnut Creek. Once again, City Hall is the location where you can drop off your completed ballot prior to the November 6th General Election date. The City Hall drop box makes pre-election day voting more convenient for residents.

Community provides homeless support

The Winter Evening Shelter Program wrapped up at the end of March, providing 78 homeless people with a warm, dry place to sleep and access services during the cold, rainy months. With funding provided by the City and others, the Trinity Center operated the temporary shelter at the National Guard’s Armory. This year, the client population varied in age range from 24-75. Approximately one-third of regular clients were women 60 years or older, who reported they preferred to stay at the Armory for safety reasons, and because the program does not allow alcohol or drugs. Seventy-six percent of the clients were new to the program this year. The Winter Shelter program had significant success with engaged clients: 21 people successfully found housing or were reunited with family, 22 gained either part-time or full-time employment, 13 accessed mental health services, and 39 participated in individual wellness plans.

Homeless Forum Engages Community

More than 130 community members came out to share their views on homeless issues last March in a forum hosted by the Walnut Creek Homeless Community Task Force. Those who attended asked questions, provided valuable insights, and left better informed on the City’s approach to tackling the very difficult issue of homelessness. Panelists included Mayor Justin Weidt, Housing Program Manager Margo Ernst, Police Lt. Sean Conley, Trinity Center Executive Director Donna Columbus, CORE Program Manager Michael Fisher, and Jamie Jenett from Contra Costa County Health Services. The Walnut Creek Homeless Community Task Force is dedicated to discovering how best to deal with issues surrounding homelessness in the City. Task Force members include Walnut Creek City and Police Department staff, the Walnut Creek/Cordor CORE (Coordinated Outreach, Referral and Engagement) Team, representatives of Trinity Center and White Pony Express, business owners and managers, non-profit housing organizations, individual volunteers, and people who live in areas impacted by the presence of homeless people. You can watch the event in its entirety on the City's YouTube channel. For more information about the Task Force, meeting times, and the work in progress, please email wcho Mechercf@gmail.com.
Summer Bike Challenge Underway

It’s not too late to join the 2018 summer bike challenge, 511 Contra Costa’s push to get residents to explore the community from the seat of a bike. Grab a challenge card at City Hall, our libraries, community centers and community pools, or pick on up online at 511ContraCosta.org/SBC. Cross off the destination squares, pick up free treats on designated dates and enter the grand prize drawing.

New Exercise Equipment at the Park

Kids burn off plenty of energy when visiting Civic Park; now adults have the same option, too, with the installation of new exercise equipment on the east side of the park. The outdoor gym is a good fit for people who live or work downtown. The equipment is free for anyone to use, and because it is made from recycled steel, RecycleSmart funds covered the City’s costs.

When Seconds Count

How to get emergency information

The 2018 fire season is underway with a vengeance, and Walnut Creek is not immune from the risks. While there are steps you can take to prepare your home and property in the event of fire, getting reliable and official information is a key component to saving lives. Walnut Creek is part of the countywide “Community Warning System,” which allows the City and other public agencies to alert residents of significant incidents, from a need to shelter in place to an order to evacuate. If you have a landline phone, either a listed or an unlisted number, you are already registered. You can register for warnings in English or Spanish, and the system is TTY/ TDD capable as well. That is only step one, though, and you will want to consider setting aside time to make sure you can receive alerts in a way that is most useful to you.

To receive alerts on a cell phone, a VoIP phone, by email or by text, you need to opt in. Visit https://inwalarts.com, and follow the steps to register. You can enter multiple phone and text numbers, and personalize the area for which you will get notifications. By adding in up to three addresses, you can ensure you are getting alerts for emergencies that happen near your home, your office, or even your child’s school. The City also uses the Nixle warning system, which will give you information on everything from fires to road closures. You can register for cell phone alerts by texting your zip code to the number 888-777; please note that is not a telephone number. You can also register and get more information at Nixle.com.

While those are the primary channels for emergency notification from the City, you can also get information by following us on Twitter (@walnutcreek.gov and @walnutcreekpd) and Facebook. We’re on Nextdoor as well.

Mountain Shadow Film Competition

Mark your calendar for the weekend of September 14-15 as the Mountain Shadow Film Society presents the Fourth Annual Short Film Competition. It will be held at the Las Lomas Theater, with two identical showings each night. Last year, more than 340 submissions were received from all over the country; thirteen finalists were selected to present their outstanding animated, live-action, narrative and documentary short films in person for audience-choice cash awards. This year’s line-up promises to be better than ever.

Mountain Shadow Film Society is a non-profit arts-education organization, dedicated to bringing the best in foreign and independent filmmaking to Walnut Creek. For more information, call 925-787-6665.

LimeBikes make their way downtown

The lime green and yellow bikes that first started popping up around the Shadelands area have now become available in the downtown Walnut Creek as well. May’s annual “Bike to Work Day” featured the kickoff of the bike sharing operation in the core downtown area. The City Council authorized a year-long pilot program in January to allow a dockless bike share provider in the City; the City, however, does not operate the program. The City does require that the bikes be parked safely on sidewalks or near bike racks in areas out of the public right of way. If you have questions about the City’s pilot project, how to use the bikes, or want to provide feedback for the City, visit walnut-creek.org/bikeshare.

The public drafts of the North Downtown Specific Plan and the Environmental Impact Report have now been released, and the City will be seeking public input on the plan throughout the summer. The City Council will have a study session hearing on the plan on August 7. There are a number of other opportunities for public input at various commission meetings as well. If you want to review the documents and get more information on how to provide your feedback, visit walnut-creek.org/northdowntown. The North Downtown area extends from Civic Drive to Parkside Drive and from Highway 680 to the Iron Horse Trail.

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Conference in Civic Park Inspires Youth to be Active Leaders

Future leaders of Walnut Creek took control at Civic Park on June 27 for the Youth Leadership Commission’s first event, a regional conference just for young people. Energize, engage and empower was the theme, and the attendees were treated to all of that and more with a keynote speaker, panel discussions, entertainment, educational panels and more. The Commission encourages youth to take an active leadership role in the community, and the conference showcased their ability to inspire others while having a great time with new and old friends.

More Parking Options Available

The Broadway Parking Garage, at 1390 North Broadway, has added capacity for an extra 80 vehicles. Now it’s even easier to find a spot, whether you’re shopping, grabbing a bite to eat, or just parking for a day at work. The additional parking options come on the heels of a spring safety upgrade at all three City parking garages, with new and more efficient lighting. The additional capacity is a result of a new pilot program that uses attendant assisted parking to help when the garage gets full. You can find out all you need to know about City parking meter and garage options from a link at the City’s homepage. If you want to see how attendant assisted parking works, you can find a video “how to” on the City’s YouTube channel.