

# THE COAST NEWS

## Sale of reservoir ‘off the table’ for now

By [Rachel Stine](#)

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The abandoned Buena Vista Reservoir has not been used in decades. Residents are petitioning the city to turn the gated-off site into a public park. File photo by Rachel Stine

CARLSBAD — Community members came out in droves to Tuesday night’s city council meeting to advocate for a park in the place of the abandoned Buena Vista Reservoir.

“This is what so many small towns do, they take these beautiful spaces they have and they preserve them for their residents,” said longtime Carlsbad resident Connie Chavez, addressing city council. “I can’t believe we even need to convince you.”

The Buena Vista Reservoir is located on Buena Vista Way in the midst of some of Carlsbad’s oldest neighborhoods east of Interstate 5 and off of Carlsbad Village Drive, known as Olde Carlsbad.

Situated on a hilltop with an ocean view, the reservoir has not been used in decades. The property is

overgrown with weeds and hidden behind a locked gate with “No Trespassing” signs.

The city took actions to consider selling the underutilized reservoir land in 2013 for new houses, but never made the decision to put the property up for sale.

Just over 3 acres, the site is zoned for low- to moderate-density residential buildings.

The land is worth an estimated \$2.5 to \$2.75 million, and current zoning would allow about 10 to 12 homes to be built on the site, according to city municipal property manager Joe Garuba.

Carlsbad local Mary Anne Viney and former city planner Kip McBane have led the community efforts to persuade the city to turn the deserted space into a much-needed neighborhood park.

McBane asserted that Olde Carlsbad is being over developed with new homes but no new recreation spaces in a presentation before city council.

He acknowledged that park projects require extensive planning, and suggested that a citizens committee be established to come up with ideas for a park and financing options for the project.

Seventeen public speakers voiced support for a new park at the reservoir site, emphasizing that the recreation space could be a great asset to the neighborhood and city as a whole.

Blanche Ramswick, a 39-year Carlsbad resident, said that the nearby parks are inadequate for residents and an embarrassment.

She pointed out that Buena Vista Elementary School’s playground is gated and locked and Pio Pico Park flooded with traffic noise from Interstate 5. She said that Oak Street Park is nothing more than “a picnic table and a trash can”.

Diane Nygaard of Preserve Calavera said, “Using land (the city) already owns for a neighborhood park is a win-win.”

Mayor Matt Hall explained to the residents that most of the city’s larger parks were constructed in tandem with newer housing developments built after Olde Carlsbad was established.

City officials said that the fate of the reservoir would depend largely on direction from Carlsbad’s newest general plan, the city’s primary guide for land use and development.

But until the upcoming general plan update is approved, officials vowed to not sell the property and establish a dialogue with local residents about potential uses for the land.

“The sale of this piece of property is off the table until there is much more discussion,” said Hall.



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