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GARDEN

Friends in charge

East Sac nonprofit poised to run city's
Shepard Garden and Arts Center

BY DEBBIE ARRINGTON

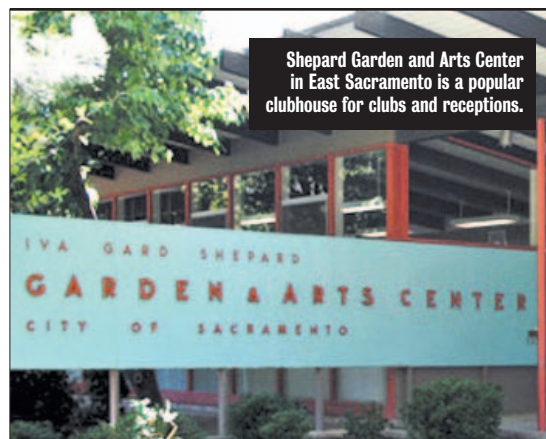


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Center regularly hosts about 30 clubs, who hold flower shows, workshops, plant sales and other events, as well as monthly meetings. A popular venue for family reunions and receptions, the facility is also available for rent by the public.

With so much use, maintenance and staffing issues have been problematic.

"The board has received complaints from clubs including: Monitors not available to open facility as scheduled; room set-up not completed as specified by the club; lack of communication, emails and phone calls unanswered; billing and overtime charge errors; and many calendar scheduling mistakes," according to the notice distributed by the Shepard Center leaders.

"The board explored many options to solve these problems," the notice continued. "We have determined that the best solution is to change management of the SGAC."

The board started discussions with the Friends of East Sacramento about taking over the management of the Shepard Center, too.

At 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 3, Lisa Schmidt of Friends of East Sacramento will answer questions about the potential change at the board's regular meeting at the Shepard Center (3330 McKinley Blvd.)

The advantages come in central management for McKinley Park's major venues.

Said the center's board, "There will be centralized scheduling and billing; direct management of staff including a facility manager, monitors and maintenance crew; the building will be fully operational and clean; there will be timely communications via email, text [and] phone and a weekly calendar of events emailed. ... There is also an opportunity for increased outside rentals."

If approved, the changeover would become fully effective July 1. But it's expected that the Friends of East Sacramento will start handling event scheduling as soon as March 1. □

Sacramento's official clubhouse may be getting a change of management.

The city-owned Shepard Garden and Arts Center may soon join the Clunie Community Center and the McKinley Park Memorial Rose Garden under the umbrella of Friends of East Sacramento. Like the rose garden, the Shepard and Clunie centers are located in McKinley Park at H Street and Alhambra Boulevard.

For several years, Friends of East Sacramento has leased the Clunie Center from the city. In turn, the nonprofit has been in charge of upkeep and scheduling events at the popular venue.

"The organization strives to preserve historic facilities in East Sacramento and protect community assets such as the Community Center, McKinley Rose Garden and Clunie Library," according to the city.

In recent years, the nonprofit Shepard Center board—made up of representatives from the many clubs that use the facility—has overseen the distinctive 2,000-square-foot mid-century Modern building. But the task has been difficult for the volunteer organization, the Friends of the Shepard Garden and Arts Center.

"This board took over management of the facility four years ago from the City of Sacramento," the Shepard Center committee explained in a notice to the clubs that use the facility. "It is responsible for all the day-to-day activities, scheduling, hiring employees, billing, renting the facility to outside users, interior contents and structures, as well as the Japanese garden area and the perimeter gardens."

Built specifically as a meeting space for local garden clubs and other organizations, the Shepard

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