

MINUTES

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD Meeting of October 3, 2007 7:30 a.m. — Franklin Park — Fort Lauderdale

MEMBERS PRESENT: **OTHERS PRESENT:**

Terry Danger	Bob Harbin, Parks & Rec.
Sharon Kent	Mike Harlan, Parks & Rec.
Marc Kiar	Jaime Plana, Parks & Rec.
Gerald Knight	Gayle Preston, Parks & Rec.
Alanna Mersinger	Chester Pruitt, Parks & Rec.
Quentin Morgan, Chair	Rich Laudia, Parks & Rec.
Stephen Oyer-Owens	Milton Williams, Parks & Rec.
Ed Portner	Jason Lester, Parks & Rec.
Hazelle Rogers	Erik Westberg, Parks & Rec.
Guy Roper	Meoshi Jackson, Parks & Rec.
Sheila Rose	
Steven Sampier	
Bill Spute	
Jack Talabisco	
Milette Thurston	
Gretchen Mink Tindle	

The meeting was called to order by Quentin Morgan at 7:41 a.m., after which all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Stephen Oyer-Owens, a new member appointed by Commissioner Stacy Ritter, introduced himself to the Board.

Gretchen Mink Tindle, who was reappointed by Vice-Mayor Lois Wexler, was also present.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Morgan asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of September 5, 2007. Steven Sampier made the motion, which was seconded by Sharon Kent and passed unanimously.

Employee of the Month for October 2007

Jason Lester was congratulated as Employee of the Month for October. He was applauded for his accomplishments and work ethics and was awarded a framed certificate of appreciation and a gift certificate for an area restaurant.

Mr. Morgan then passed around a thank you card from Charlotte Southard, Employee of the Month for August.

Park Manager's Report

Milton Williams, Parks & Recreation Manager I, welcomed the Board and gave them an update on Franklin Park. The facility was acquired in May 1954 and the community center was constructed in 2000. Franklin Park provides varied forms of recreation such as a billiards club,

a basketball league, and a fitness center. Staff is also working on launching a tutorial program for the computer room in an effort to simultaneously incorporate recreation and education.

Bob Harbin recognized that Mr. Williams has been working for the Parks and Recreation Division for 24 years.

Parks and Recreation Division (Parks) Update

Mr. Harbin informed the Board that the Highlights newsletter is now offered electronically only. It will be e-mailed by the Parks Marketing Section.

The opening ceremony for the Highlands Scrub Natural Area will be Friday, October 5, 2007 at 10:30 a.m.

Central Broward Regional Park (CBRP) is still slated to open on November 9, 2007.

Although Parks lost 28 positions due to the recent budget reductions, no employee has been laid off. Approximately 70 jobs have also been saved by raising revenues. The largest benefit may be from the gate fee increase from \$1.00 to \$1.50 per person, which went into effect October 1, 2007. This increase should generate about \$850,000, depending on variables throughout the year, such as weather. As a result, around 33% of Parks' operating budget, which was previously 26%, will be generated from revenues.

Mr. Harbin reminded the Board that the 2007 Holiday Fantasy of Lights has been canceled. Brandano Displays, Inc. offered to operate the show at no cost to the County. However, after briefing each of the Commissioners, they still felt that the show could send the wrong message when considering electrical costs and budget reductions.

Mr. Sampier asked what area was impacted the most by the loss of the 28 positions previously mentioned. Mr. Harbin responded that the positions had been scattered throughout the Division. However, the Division did gain 36 additional positions that will be placed at CBRP.

Hazelle Rogers asked Mr. Harbin if he would update the Board on what is planned for the CBRP opening. Chester Pruitt, Central District Superintendent, welcomed the Board to attend the grand opening before responding on Mr. Harbin's behalf. A two day function is planned; however, the official opening is Friday, November 9, 2007, at 4:00 p.m. The official welcome with speeches will last for approximately one hour. The Dillard High School Jazz Band will be performing on that day, and light refreshments will be made available.

On Saturday, November 10, 2007, from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., there will be a wide range of events, such as net ball, flag football, soccer, and cricket. Event planning for these activities has been a collaborative effort for the last seven to eight months between County staff and staff from cities such as Lauderdale Lakes, Lauderhill, Plantation, Oakland Park, Fort Lauderdale, etc. Mr. Pruitt also felt that it was representative of the input received from those who voted on the 2000 Safe Parks and Land Preservation Bond Referendum, as well as those who had the opportunity to give input as to the amenities that will be available in the park.

Ms. Rogers asked if a food/beverage vendor had been selected for CBRP. Mr. Harbin explained to the Board that the Parks and Recreation Division currently operates all of the food and concessions in County parks. For the first time, however, the Division is in the process of selecting a private sector food/beverage concessionaire for CBRP. Mr. Pruitt added that the same basic menu items found in the other regional parks are intended. Additionally, the menu

will adhere to the Commit 2B Fit wellness initiative by offering healthy options, as well as authentic and diverse menu items for the unique clientele expected to come out to CBRP.

Bond Construction Update

Jaime Plana reminded the Board that Roosevelt Gardens Park, a new neighborhood park with a community center, will be opened on November 26, 2007.

Although there are some issues that need to be worked out, CBRP will be opened in approximately 30 days on November 9, 2007.

Mr. Oyer-Owens asked if the facilities at Roosevelt Gardens and CBRP are green (designed to be energy efficient and environmentally friendly). Staff believes they are, but they do not have any certification to confirm that. Staff is also trying to prepare the facilities so that residents can evacuate to these buildings temporarily when a hurricane is approaching.

It is anticipated that the Long Key Nature Center will be opened by January 2008. Mr. Plana said that new technologies are being applied at the nature center, such as aluminum boardwalks (non-skid).

There have been numerous flush valve thefts in the parks. Staff is taking anti-theft measures for the valves.

Nine prototype projects for basketball covers, corporate shelters, and maintenance facilities are in permitting now. Construction will start very soon for them.

Bill Spute asked the status of Deerfield Island Park. Mr. Plana responded that construction is nearly complete, with the exception of the docks.

Old Business

Mr. Sampier asked that staff respond to all public input received at the September 5, 2007, Public Participation Forum, whether it be spoken or in writing.

At the last Board meeting, Mr. Chris Priester made a request that Delevoe Park offer more educational resources and have them administered by educated professionals. Mr. Pruitt explained that he met with Mr. Priester, who happens to be working toward implementing his own computer and tutorial program. Mr. Priester was unaware that the Parks and Recreation Division recently entered into an agreement with a company that received a grant from the State Department of Education. As a result, five neighborhood parks will be utilizing Jay's Learning Tutorial Program, and they will be overseen by paid and certified school teachers.

The Board had much discussion on the effectiveness of advertising for the Public Participation Forum and holding same in the evening. A variety of issues arose such as:

- The public may not realize how important it is for them to come to the meetings and offer input.
- There should be more focus on making the meetings very user friendly so that more people will know that they are welcome to be present during the discussions of general business by the Board.
- What was the difference between the public forum held in February that had poor attendance and the one held in September?

- Staff could consider including some upcoming events/programs in any public services announcements published for the meeting.
- Unless the subject matter is controversial, the attendance may still be limited.
- Staff should develop an e-mail list for homeowner associations or civic groups, advising them of upcoming Advisory Board meetings.
- There will be two evening meetings a year.
- Staff should place a hyperlink to the Advisory Board website in the eHighlights electronic newsletter.

Mr. Morgan asked that Mr. Harbin report back to the Board on these issues at the next meeting.

New Business

Drop Zone Laser Tag

The Parks and Recreation Division received a request from a local company to offer Drop Zone Laser Tag at Brian Piccolo Park. Mr. Harbin explained that he and staff object to it, particularly because of the perception it may pose when patrons are pointing what appears to be weapons at each other. The company also approached Vice Mayor Lois Wexler's office with this request. Vice Mayor Wexler asked that Mr. Harbin bring this before the Advisory Board for their input.

After much discussion, the Board agreed that this type of activity would be more appropriate in a contained setting or facility, and that the potential misconceptions could be damaging. As a result, Mr. Talabisco made a motion not to allow Drop Zone Laser Tag at Brian Piccolo Park, which was seconded by Mr. Roper and passed unanimously.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on November 7, 2007, at the Quiet Waters Skate Park.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 a.m.