

PARKS, RECREATION & BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
City of Fort Lauderdale
100 North Andrews Avenue
8th Floor Conference Room

Wednesday, March 24, 2004

<u>BOARD MEMBERS</u>	<u>ABSENT/PRESENT</u>	<u>Cumulative from 10/02/03</u>	
		<u>P</u>	<u>A</u>
John Rude, Chair	P	4	0
John Melnicoff, Vice Chair	P	4	0
Julie Cameron	P	2	2
Elizabeth Hays	P	3	1
Robert Hoysgaard	P	3	1
Joann Medalie	P	4	0
Robert Missal	P	3	1
Timothy Nast	P	3	1
Michael Natale	P	3	1
Rosalind Osgood	A	0	4
Randy Powers	A	2	2
Victoria Pisto-Revier	P	1	3
Joe Shover	P	4	0
Shirley Small	P	4	0
Andrew DeGraffenreidt, Sr.	P	2	0

Guests

(See attached sign-in sheet)

Staff Present

Ernest Burkeen Jr., Director, Parks & Recreation
 Phil Thornburg, Parks Superintendent
 Vince Gizzi, Special Facilities Superintendent
 Stu Marvin, Aquatics Complex Manager
 Bob Hickley, Park Ranger
 Maybeth Irizarry-Binon, Administrative Assistant
 Lisa Edmondson, Recording Clerk

Call to Order

Chair John Rude called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll Call was taken and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Shover, seconded by Mr. DeGraffenreidt, to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2004 meeting. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

1. Recreation Program of the Month (Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Complex)

Aquatic Complex Manager, Stu Marvin gave a brief history of the Aquatic Complex and its relationship to the Swimming Hall of Fame. He stated that the Complex provides an \$11 million annual impact on the beach corridor, and has been on national television numerous times providing “priceless” public relations for the City. Although the Complex always “runs in the red,” Mr. Marvin stressed that the success of the facility cannot be based on budget dollars alone – consideration has to be given to impact and the international recognition and exposure it brings to the City.

Mr. Marvin indicated that the City Commission has approved the CRA budget which includes funds to rebuild the facility, as the facility is 38 years old, has infrastructure problems, and is not in compliance with current aquatic and sports requirements, creating problems when attempting to attract major national and international swimming competitions. He advised the City is in the process of negotiating for reconstruction consulting services, as well as putting together a citizen advisory committee to decide on facility amenities. Amenities under consideration are medical facilities for sports medicine and therapy; and a water park to attract the public.

With regard to budget cutbacks, Mr. Marvin stated that the Aquatic Complex had been asked to trim between \$25-30,000 in part-time salaries, which resulted in reducing hours of operation approximately 3-1/2 hours per day, as well as consideration of raising yearly parking rates.

Dr. Hays inquired regarding the status of the relationship between the Hall of Fame and the City. Mr. Marvin stated that there are still contractual issues to be resolved, including subsidies and determining future goals. Meetings are ongoing. The Hall of Fame is still considering relocation, although will stay in Fort Lauderdale until the end of their current agreement in 2015.

Dr. Hays also asked regarding outsourcing management of the facility. Mr. Marvin said there are no entities in existence that could provide service adequate for a facility the size of the Aquatic Complex.

2. South Florida Motocross Proposal for Mills Pond Park

Special Facilities Superintendent, Vince Gizzi introduced Mr. Jason McDannold, a Programmer II working at Mills Pond Park.

Mr. Gizzi stated there is a proposal to build a motocross track at Mills Pond Park, with the promoter/developer building and operating the track on a trial basis at his own cost for one year.

Mr. Gizzi indicated that if the track is successful, an RFP would go out at the end of the one-year trial, competitively opening operation of the track. Mr. Pete Scalzo, the promoter/developer, indicated he is willing to invest the monies necessary to set up and operate for one year, knowing there is a possibility he would not be given the contract to run the track in the future. The purpose of a one-year trial is to monitor the facility with the community and financial impact for the City. The developer will pay monthly rental to the City, in addition to the City obtaining income from park gate admissions and the concessions.

Mr. Gizzi reported that a homeowner association meeting had been attended the previous month in an attempt to work with the residents.

The track will be located in the northwest portion of the park and will consist of a track, pit area, and seating.

Mr. Scalzo addressed the Board discussing the history of the sport, his willingness to risk approximately \$75,000 of his own money, and the requirements for building the facility. He anticipated motocross would bring in an estimated \$70,000 in revenue to the City. Hours of operation would be approximately 19 a week: schooling and practice Tuesday evenings, practice Wednesday evenings, racing on Saturday, and practice on Sunday. Mr. Scalzo assured the Board there would be no problem with dust or noise, and asked for an opportunity to prove the sport is "wholesome family entertainment." He expressed a desire to be a good neighbor and accommodate the nearby residents.

Mr. Scalzo stated they conducted noise tests a few months back, going to different parts of the park and the surrounding neighborhood, and it seemed that "everything went well."

Mr. Nast felt that motocross was a great sport and would be a positive addition to the park, asking if regional events would be held.

Ms. Cameron asked about insurance liability and medical personnel and was advised by Mr. Scalzo that he would provide a minimum of \$1 million liability insurance and would have personnel on duty at all times to provide medical assistance.

Mr. Scalzo anticipated that there could be 60 to 70 participants on a practice night and 100 on a race night including 200 to 300 spectators.

Dr. Hays was concerned regarding noise and dust as the nearest homes are less than one-quarter of a mile from the track. Mr. Gizzi noted that during the noise tests, they were unable to differentiate noise coming from I-95 and the motocross vehicles. Mr. Scalzo stated they had never had problems or complaints due to dust, which is controlled with an onsite water truck or sprinklers.

Mr. Shover inquired regarding cost to the City and was assured by Mr. Gizzi that the motocross would be self-sufficient and not require additional onsite City park personnel, unless paid for by the event promoter.

Mr. Burkeen voiced his confidence that the events would take place without additional expense of park personnel or police.

Mr. Natale felt motocross was a wonderful idea, but did have an issue with the noise.

Mr. Gizzi offered to redo the noise testing.

Ms. Edna Elijah, President of the Lauderdale Manors Homeowners Association, pointed out that although Mr. Scalzo had spoken with their Association, many of their concerns had not been addressed, i.e., noise, dust, and traffic. She felt that proposed noise controls were inadequate. She also stated that a survey of the residents indicated approximately 75% were against the motocross track.

Mr. Gizzi assured the residents that this was “far from a done deal,” as it was their practice to discuss these matters with the homeowners; however, staff had to be first convinced that the motocross was a viable idea and there would be noise and dust controls.

[The floor was then opened for public comment.]

Mr. Wilmar Alexander advised that he had been present during the noise testing and had assisted in getting this issue on the Lauderdale Manors agenda. He suggested that no action had been taken without the knowledge of the residents. Mr. Alexander spoke in favor of the track.

Mr. Dennis Ulmer asked how many vehicles had been involved in the noise testing; Mr. Scalzo responded that six of the noisiest vehicles had been used.

Mr. Ernest Cameron was concerned regarding the availability of emergency assistance.

Ms. Serbraster Foster, Mr. Thaddeus Winston, and Ms. Shirley Hart spoke against the track.

[Thereupon, the public hearing was closed.]

Chair Rude stated he did not believe the Board was ready to make a recommendation to the City Commission at that time. He recommended that they wait for more community input and an opportunity to negotiate everyone’s concerns. Chair Rude also brought up the issues of contamination of nearby wetlands and notifying residents in Wilton Manors who would also be affected by the track.

Mr. Burkeen asked that staff be allowed to go back to the community to see if common ground can be found and return with a recommendation to the Board.

***Motion** made by Mr. Hoysgaard, seconded by Dr. Hayes, that staff be allowed to return to the community and return with a recommendation to the Board. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.*

3. Historical Plaque Placement Request

Parks Superintendent, Phil Thornburg asked that the Board approve placement of a historical plaque recognizing the Lewis family at Southwest 9th Avenue on the south side of the New River, due to their pioneering and historical significance to the City. Mr. Bellavance provided a historical account of the family.

***Motion** made by Mr. Shover, seconded by Mr. Hoysgaard, to approve placement of the plaque. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.*

In response to concerns voiced by Dr. Hays regarding the size of the monument, Mr. Thornburg assured the Board that if the plan becomes elaborate, it would be brought back before the Board for review. He anticipated that the plaque would be bronze set in a coral rock base.

4. Prohibit Skateboard Use on Riverwalk

Mr. Thornburg reported that staff is seeing more damage to walls and railings from skateboarders on Riverwalk.

Mr. Shover agreed that skateboarding should be restricted from Riverwalk, however, he cautioned that the City should provide a place for this activity.

Mr. Hoysgaard, quoting from a sport magazine, stated: "Public skate parks are a huge asset to a community. It also helps to alleviate kids skating in streets and on private property."

Park Ranger Hickley acknowledged that most of the damage is done by skateboarders, although there is also damage due to rollerbladers jumping up on railings. He suggested imposing a fine for violators as a deterrent.

Mr. Nast agreed that the skateboarders need a skate park, stating that he did not believe restrictions should be implemented until another location is provided. Ms. Medalie did not believe one park would be sufficient, adding it is the "thrill" of the jumps that makes the sport dangerous and challenging.

***Motion** made by Mr. Shover, seconded by Ms. Pristo-Revier, that the City prohibit skateboarding at Riverwalk and, in addition, speed up efforts to provide a skateboarding park. In a roll call vote as follows, the motion passed 9-4: Mr. DeGraffrenreidt, yes; Ms. Small, yes; Mr. Shover, yes; Ms. Pristo-Revier, yes; Mr. Natale, no; Mr. Nast, no; Mr. Missal, yes; Ms.*

Medalie, yes; Mr. Hoysgaard, yes; Dr. Hays, no; Ms. Cameron, no; Vice Chair Melnicoff, yes; Chair Rude, yes.

5. Beach Signage

As a followup to the Board's previous discussion, Mr. Thornburg reported that he has addressed the sign issues brought to his attention by Ms. Medalie. Work will continue on the large wooden signs on the beach and the dog signs on A1A. The dog signs have been ordered with ADA wording and will be replaced. He added that staff is looking into alternative materials for the wood signs, i.e., recycled plastic, and obtaining prices. A prototype will be made and installed to determine its visual impact and durability.

6. People for Parks Foundation

Mr. Gizzi showed the Board an old gift catalogue he found in the archives for the People for Parks Foundation, an organization developed to obtain contributions for City parks. He stated the contributions could be made specifically to purchase items or donated for use at specific events, such as March for Parks. Mr. Hoysgaard stressed the necessity of the community knowing the Foundation exists and its continued promotion by the City, especially in light of the City's financial situation. Mr. Burkeen stated in order to be successful that task needs to be undertaken full time as it is about identifying and developing relationships. He stated his department does not have the resources available. He suggested a subcommittee be established.

Mr. Burkeen advised there are funds currently available in the Foundation's account; he will provide detailed information to the Board for further discussion at the next meeting.

7. Status of the Fort Lauderdale Stadium

Mr. Gizzi provided a brief financial history of the stadium and efforts to obtain private management.

Mr. Gizzi stated that there is a bill in the legislature, which could provide \$15 million towards stadium renovation, and these funds matched by the Orioles organization. He stated that the Orioles are willing to negotiate their existing contract to 2006 with an option through 2007. Mr. Gizzi hopes they will be able to make long term plans if the funds are received from the State. The Orioles are also discussing bringing in their minor league team from Sarasota.

8. South Beach Issues

Mr. Thornburg stated that he has yet to receive the research provided by the Parking Division on other municipal parking lots and he will follow up.

There was brief discussion regarding abuse of the ADA parking with a determination made that enforcement is a police issue.

Vice Chair Melnicoff mentioned the \$80,000 the City will be putting toward the Air & Sea Show. Mr. Burkeen pointed out that if the police increase their presence, it would cost more, although the City is preparing another agreement with the promoter to address additional issues. Vice Chair Melnicoff suggested that the hotels “pony up” to help with the show.

Dr. Hays asked that placement of plaques in the Civic Peoples Park be put on their next agenda for discussion.

Handouts:

1. Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Complex materials.
2. 3/22/04 memo re: Charter Revision Advisory Board.