

PARKS, RECREATION & BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
City of Fort Lauderdale
100 North Andrews Avenue
8th Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, September 22, 2004

<u>BOARD MEMBERS</u>	<u>ABSENT/PRESENT</u>	Cumulative from 10/02/03	
		<u>P</u>	<u>A</u>
John Rude, Chair	P	9	0
John Melnicoff, Vice Chair	P	8	1
Julie Cameron	P	6	3
Elizabeth Hays	P	8	1
Robert Hoysgaard	P	7	2
Jim LaBate	P	2	0
Joann Medalie	P	8	1
Robert Missal	A	3	6
Timothy Nast	A	5	4
Michael Natale	P	7	2
Victoria Pristo-Revier	P	4	5
Joe Shover	P	9	0
Shirley Small	P	6	3
Andrew DeGraffenreidt, Sr.	P	6	1

Staff Present

Phil Thornburg, Acting Parks & Recreation Director
Steve Person, Recreation Superintendent
Vince Gizzi, Special Facilities Superintendent
Earnest Jones, Park Ranger Supervisor
Gladys Penttila, Recreation Programmer II
Julius Delisio, Administrative Assistant II
Lori Demeolo, Administrative Assistant
Laura Marsh, Secretary I
Jamie Opperlee, Recording Clerk

Guests

Jerry McLaughlin, Fort Lauderdale Downtown Rotary Club

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

Dr. Hays stated that on page 6 of the July 28 minutes, at the start of paragraph 3, she felt it should read “Dr. Hays noted that many people from the Police and Fire Departments...” instead of: “Dr. Hays noted that everyone from the Police and Fire Departments....”

Motion made by Mr. Natale, seconded by Mr. LaBate, to approve the minutes of the July 28, 2004 meeting as amended. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

1. Recreation Program of the Month: Youth Basketball – Gladys Penttila

Mr. Person introduced Gladys Penttila to give her presentation regarding the Youth Basketball program she supervises.

Ms. Penttila explained that the Youth Basketball Program is comprised of Peewee Hoops and the Youth Basketball League. Peewee Hoops for 4 and 5-year olds centered on socialization, skill development, and having fun. The coed Youth Basketball League was divided into four groups by age. Enrollment in Youth Basketball had increased in 2004, while enrollment in Peewee hoops decreased slightly. The 2004 season was the first time the program was held at the new air-conditioned facility in Holiday Park.

Ms. Penttila indicated that learning and skill development were stressed in both programs. Competition was de-emphasized and each child was given the chance to play in at least half of all games. All participants received trophies at the end of the season.

Dr. Hays asked how many paid employees were involved in the program. Ms. Penttila replied that the City employed her and six part-time game officials. There were several volunteer coaches who were not paid. Dr. Hays asked how the costs compared to last year and Ms. Penttila advised there used to be one full-time supervisor with part-time staff, but this year the staff was reduced by half. Officials used to rotate and alternate games, whereas now they worked several games in a row.

2. Holiday Park Airplane Dedication and Parade – Vince Gizzi

Mr. Gizzi announced that the F-86 Saberjet had returned to Holiday Park in May. The dedication would take place on November 11, Veterans Day. He introduced Julius Delisio, coordinator of the Veterans Day parade.

Mr. Delisio explained that the annual Memorial Day event had grown from 100 participants 5 years ago to over 600 participants this year. In 2003, former City Manager Floyd Johnson had promised the veterans that there would be a Veterans Day parade but because of budget constraints, the parade had not yet taken place.

Mr. Delisio said a group of veterans got together and created a committee called Veterans United to promote a Veterans Day parade. The parade will begin at Holiday Park after the dedication of the F-86 and conclude at Riverfront. There were 26 confirmed parade participants, including John Ghee from Operation Brave Kids and Danny McKnight, the Lieutenant Colonel portrayed in the film Blackhawk Down. There would also be an F-16 flyover at noon. The budget was \$20,000; so far they had raised \$5,000 and the County had promised to contribute.

Ms. Cameron wondered if some police officers that were veterans could be asked to volunteer to work the parade. Mr. Thornburg was not sure if police officers could be in uniform and armed while volunteering. Mr. Delisio thought it would cut costs considerably if they could be paid detail rate instead of time and a half.

3. Rotary Gazebo – Stranahan Park – Phil Thornburg

Mr. Thornburg introduced Jerry McLaughlin to describe the plans for the Rotary Club's Gazebo for Stranahan Park. Mr. Thornburg stressed the importance of holding entertainment programs in the downtown area.

Mr. McLaughlin explained the design plan he had created for the gazebo and invited the Board's input. He stressed that the Rotary Club would be responsible from start to finish, from the project design to construction and continued maintenance. He noted that this park is currently under utilized.

Mr. Shover agreed that this area is currently under utilized open green space. Dr. Hays asked who would provide the proposed entertainment and which costs would the City cover. Mr. Thornburg noted that the space would be available to rent for weddings and other events. He also thought the space could be used for brown bag lunches that could be sponsored by local businesses.

Motion made by Mr. Shover, seconded by Ms. Medalie, to approve the concept of the Rotary gazebo for Stranahan Park. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Hurricane Updates – Phil Thornburg

Mr. Thornburg said that the Parks and Recreation Department helped clean up neighborhood hurricane debris first and is currently cleaning up the parks. He explained that the enormous amount of debris piled up at Holiday Park is being used as a cleanup staging area after the storms.

Dr. Hays asked about beach erosion. Mr. Thornburg had contacted Steve Higgins, who advised him that there might be some FEMA money available for beach renourishment. He hoped to have an assessment of the erosion by next week.

The beach wall north of Sunrise Boulevard is owned by the State and suffered damage. Mr. Thornburg had notified the State that repairs are needed. Mr. Thornburg was not sure of the wind rating for the lifeguard stations, but none had been damaged. He pointed out that moving the lifeguard stations to avoid a storm might do more harm than the storm itself.

Mr. Thornburg stated that Fort Lauderdale's Emergency Operations Center was at the police station and department heads stayed there during the storm. Since there was generator power at the police station and park administration building, Parks and Sanitation crews remained in order to begin cleanup and repair work as soon as the storm had passed.

Chair Rude thanked Yoly Colarusso for the prompt cleanup at Holiday Park. Mr. Thornburg added that the entire City had done an excellent job.

5. City Reorganization – Phil Thornburg

Mr. Thornburg explained an organizational chart depicting the new structure of City management. Four areas of Parks and Recreation were now going to be handled by the Business Enterprise Department as of October 1: Cemeteries, the Aquatic Center, the Stadium, and War Memorial Auditorium. He confirmed that the budget would be adjusted as required and fifteen employees would move to the Business Enterprise Department.

Chair Rude asked if the real estate would stay with Parks and Recreation; he was specifically concerned with the stadium property. He feared that someone would decide the property could be more profitable if used for as condos, an office building, or airplane hangars. Mr. Thornburg was not sure, but noted that they should stay involved with any decisions made regarding that property.

Mr. Gizzi explained that the agreement with the Orioles specified that if legislative money were received from the state for a "mega" spring training complex, it was clearly in the contract to keep baseball in Ft. Lauderdale. He cautioned that the stadium was airport property and could revert to the airport if Ft. Lauderdale no longer used it for baseball.

6. Department Budget Update – Phil Thornburg

Mr. Thornburg stated that the only change affecting Parks and Recreation was that the Park Planner position and approximately \$120,000 had been removed from their budget. They had managed to retain the Bike Coordinator position. They would also reestablish four of the approximately twenty positions they had lost last year. Two more Park Ranger positions would be lost during the course of the year as well. In addition, they were asked to increase revenues by approximately 17.5 % or \$500,000. This would be accomplished through an increase in user fees.

Ms. Medalie wondered how lower income families could afford the kids' sports programs. Mr. Thornburg advised that children on the State's free or reduced lunch program were eligible for reduced program fees. Dr. Hays asked how the loss of the manager at Snyder Park would affect the function of the park. Mr. Thornburg stated that currently there are two management employees who would remain for the time being. He assured Dr. Hays that neither hours nor services at the park would be cut.

Mr. Hoysgaard noted that half of the citizens' comments made at the last City Commission meeting concerned the park manager issue. Despite this, the Commissioners and Mayor had not addressed this issue. Mr. Hoysgaard felt this was "completely out of order, relative to the interests of the citizenry." He stated that the citizens were talking and the Commission was not listening.

Dr. Hays pointed out that the budget shortfalls would not disappear after this year. She was not sure if everyone in the City realized how important Parks and Recreation services were to the welfare of the community. She wondered if the Board should schedule an in-person report every six months to keep the Commission apprised of the Board's concerns and recommendations. She felt these should be part of the City Commission's record. The Board discussed the logistics and Sunshine requirements affecting any reports to or meetings with the City Commission. Chair Rude noted that they communicated with the City Commission through Mr. Thornburg, the meeting minutes and motions.

7. How Cities Use parks for...Economic Development – Phil Thornburg

Mr. Thornburg distributed a copy of the American Planning Association article, "How cities use parks for...economic development." The article pointed out the benefits of Parks and Recreation departments.

Other Items of Interest

Mr. Natale announced that the contractor for Riverland Woods Park had left and a grant had subsequently been lost. Chair Rude felt that the project would be completed, it would just require additional time.

Chair Rude announced that this was Mr. Melnikoff and Ms. Cameron's last meeting. He thanked them for their service and asked that they stay involved with the community.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Handouts

- Copy of American Planning Association article, "How cities use parks for...economic development"

- Design plan for Rotary Club's proposed gazebo at Stranahan Park
- Printed copy of 2004 Summer Youth Basketball Program Power Point presentation
- Copy of September 16, 2004 memo regarding Ms. Penttila's Youth Basketball Program presentation
- Letter and supporting documents regarding the Ft. Lauderdale Veteran's Day parade
- Copy of the September 15, 2004 memo regarding the Rotary Club's proposed Gazebo in Stranahan Park