

PARKS, RECREATION & BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
City of Fort Lauderdale
100 North Andrews Avenue
8th Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, January 26, 2005

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	Cumulative from 10/04	
		<u>P</u>	<u>A</u>
John Rude, Chair	P	2	1
Joann Medalie, Vice Chair	P	3	0
Agnes Burrows	A	1	2
Mark Hartman	P	1	0
Elizabeth Hays	P	3	0
Robert Hoysgaard	P	2	1
Jim LaBate	P	2	1
David McNulty	A	0	1
Timothy Nast	A	1	2
Michael Natale	P	3	0
Victoria Pristo-Revier	P	2	1
Joe Shover	P	3	0
Shirley Small	P	1	2
Andrew DeGraffenreidt, Sr.	P	1	2

Staff Present

George Gretsas, City Manager
Phil Thornburg, Parks & Recreation Director
Vince Gizzi, Special Facilities Superintendent
Steve Person, Recreation Superintendent
Suzanne Broucek, Recreation Program Supervisor
Gladys Penttila, Recreation Programmer
Phil Petersen, Recreation Programmer
Tim McGovern, Recreation Programmer
Maybeth Irizarry-Binon, Administrative Assistant
Jamie Opperlee, Recording Clerk

Guests

Michael Moran

Call to Order

Chair 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 Dr. Hays, to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2004 meeting. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Hoysgaard felt it should be made clearer in the December minutes that a quorum was never present and he suggested it be added in the call to order. Dr. Hayes noted that the Block family name was not capitalized on page 6.

Corrections to October's minutes had already been noted at the December meeting.

Motion made by Dr. Hays, seconded by Mr. Natale, to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2004 meeting as amended. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

1. Welcome New Board Member

John Rude

Chair Rude welcomed Mr. Mark Hartman to the Board.

Mr. Hartman stated that he was from Nashville Tennessee and had degrees in Philosophy and Public Administration. He was the Vice President of the Middle River Terrace Neighborhood Association and an employee of the City of Plantation.

2. City Manager

George Gretsas

Chair Rude introduced Mr. George Gretsas, Fort Lauderdale City Manager, and thanked him for attending the meeting.

Mr. Gretsas explained that he had just started seeing some of the fruits of his labor in White Plains, when he found an ad in the New York Times for Fort Lauderdale's City Manager position. In his first six months as Fort Lauderdale City Manager, he had been re-organizing and encouraging employees to be more responsive, accountable and focused. Mr. Gretsas met with Department heads each Monday to discuss goals and objectives.

Mr. Gretsas felt that the Parks and Recreation Department was crucial to the quality of life in the City. Development in Fort Lauderdale was happening at a very similar pace to that which White Plains had experienced when Mr. Gretsas was there. While development is taking place, parks must be created, the streets must be maintained and kept safe.

Mr. Gretsas noted that usually, people in an organization were resistant to change. His experience in Fort Lauderdale so far was that people were embracing change. He felt there was nothing that they could not achieve as a city if everyone worked together.

Mr. Hoysgaard asked about the Coral Ridge Country Club property that had been transferred; residents wanted very much to acquire some of that property for a park. Mr. Hoysgaard felt the window of opportunity was now open and the City must act quickly. Mr. Thornburg explained that this was the Coral Ridge golf course and the American Golf Club property. Mr. Gretsas agreed to speak with Mr. Thornburg about this tomorrow.

Dr. Hays hoped that the Parks and Recreation Department would have some of its funding restored, specifically for park summer programs for kids and park rangers. She also felt they must be sure that money was budgeted to maintain existing parks.

3. Naming of the Herman Property

Phil Thornburg

Motion made by Dr. Hays, seconded by Ms. Medalie, to recommend the naming of the Herman family property for Ann Herman. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Natale explained for newer members that the property was in Chula Vista Isles. The Herman family had been very involved with their community. The house had been torn down and property had been vacant for some time and the family approached the county about purchasing the property. The problems had been worked out and the closing should take place soon. The family wanted the property named after their mother, but the County would not include this stipulation in the contract. Because of this, the Parks and Recreation Board wanted to recommend to the County that the property be named for Ann Herman. Once the County purchases the property, it would be turned over to the City to develop into a park.

4. Recreation Program of the Month - Youth Soccer Program

Steve Person

Mr. Steve Person, Recreation Superintendent, introduced Ms. Suzanne Broucek, Recreation Program Supervisor, who introduced Recreation Programmers Gladys Penttila, Phil Petersen, and Tim McGovern, to discuss the Youth Soccer Program.

Mr. Petersen described the soccer program at three parks: Croissant Park, Holiday Park, and Mills Pond Park as follows:

Croissant Park:

- Ages 4 – 11
- 182 Participants
- Age Divisions: 4 – 5, 6 – 7, 8 – 9, 10 – 11
- 4 teams per division
- 32 Volunteer coaches
- 576 Volunteer coaching hours

Holiday Park:

- Ages 4 – 11
- 1388 Participants
- Age Divisions:

- 4 – 5, coed, 25 teams
- 6 – 7 (Boys / Girls) 27 teams
- 8 – 9 (Boys / Girls) 21 teams
- 10 – 11 (Boys / Girls) 19 teams
- 181 Volunteer coaches
- 5,500 Volunteer Coaching hours

Mills Pond Park

- Ages 12 – 14
- Boys / Girls
- 182 Participants
- 6 girls teams and 6 boys teams
- 24 Volunteer coaches
- 360 Volunteer coaching hours

Mr. McGovern described the goals of the program for the participants:

- Learn to participate in a sport with a safe and caring environment
- Promote teamwork
- Train kids to reach their athletic potential
- Encourage parent and child interaction
- Become more physically fit
- Enhance the possibility of playing high school sports
- Meet new friends
- Learn to compete with good sportsmanship
- Work toward a common goal

Dr. Hays inquired if all volunteers were thoroughly screened. Mr. McGovern confirmed that they all had complete police background checks.

Dr. Hays asked how this program worked to handle potentially overzealous parents. Mr. McGovern said that the chairs provided at the events were there to encourage the parents to remain seated. In addition, the coaches are trained that the program is about the kids.

Mr. Gretsas asked how diverse the participants were. Mr. McGovern stated that the Croissant Park program was very diverse – the kids and the coaches. However, he sees a need to improve African American enrollment though. He felt they needed to start getting more kids interested in soccer at an early age.

Mr. Gretsas said he had noticed that Caucasian children tend to enroll in baseball programs, African American children in basketball programs and Hispanic children in soccer programs. He wanted to be sure they encouraged diversity in all the sports teams. Mr. Person noted that it is difficult to get parents to transport kids across town for these programs. Mr. Gretsas noted that having a diverse coaching staff was important to encourage a diverse group of kids to join up.

Chair Rude asked if parents were reminded of where they should not be parking during games. Ms. Penttila stated they pass out flyers almost every weekend to the parents and Park Rangers direct traffic when possible.

5. Eliminate/Reduce Cigarette Butt Litter

Michael Moran

Mr. Thornburg noted that the City Commission made time during the first meeting of each month for citizens to present issues they were concerned about. Mr. Moran had addressed the City Commission in December and they had suggested he appear at the Parks and Recreation Board meeting.

Mr. Moran explained that this was not a smoking issue but a litter issue. He asked if anyone present thought that existing litter ordinances included cigarette butts. He pointed out that there had not been citations issued for cigarette butt litter. Mr. Moran had consulted the City Attorney who confirmed that the ordinance did, indeed, pertain to cigarette butts.

Mr. Natale asked what Mr. Moran's motivation was and Mr. Moran stated it was a quality of life issue; the second hand smoke issue had come into play for some cities dealing with the problem as well. Mr. Thornburg confirmed that the beach cleaning equipment could not pick up debris as tiny as a cigarette butt; there were people who hand cleaned the smaller debris from the beach.

Mr. Hartman remembered that during drought times, people were advised not to carelessly discard cigarette butts because of the fire hazard. Mr. Hoysgaard felt there was a general problem of litter at the beach. He felt enforcement of existing ordinances was needed; perhaps the ordinance should be rewritten to specifically name cigarette butts.

Mr. Natale asked if Mr. Moran's ultimate objective was to ban smoking. Mr. Moran stated his goal was to reduce cigarette butt litter.

Mr. Shover stated he was no advocate of "big brother" and was not in favor of any additional resources being spent on enforcement until they worked on education.

Mr. Moran reiterated the current ordinance did not specifically include cigarette butts in its language. Ms. Pristo-Revier asked Mr. Moran to compile information on other municipalities' ordinances and some language that could be added to the Fort Lauderdale ordinance to specifically refer to cigarette butt litter.

Mr. Thornburg agreed to provide the Board with a copy of the existing Fort Lauderdale ordinance for the next meeting.

6. Cancer Survivor Plaza Update

Vince Gizzi

Mr. Gizzi explained that the plaza was originally financed by Mr. Richard Block, co-founder of H & R Block as a tribute to those who had survived cancer. There were three components: a series of bronze plaques with inspirational and instructional messages, a sculpture featuring eight life-sized figures, and a healthy lifestyles exhibit. The Block foundation provided up to \$750 thousand in funding for the parks and \$100 thousand for perpetual maintenance.

Mr. Gizzi noted that the plaza had not been welcomed in front of the Swimming Hall of Fame or in George English Park, but had been welcomed by the Victoria Park Homeowners Association at the main entrance to Holiday Park on Federal Highway.

The first designer had created a plan within the \$750 thousand budget but Mr. Block did not approve it; he wanted more features. A new artist had been hired and created a design Mr. Block approved but the cost of the new design was \$1.5 to \$2 million.

Mr. Thornburg felt they were at a stalemate and unless things changed, he did not see the plaza happening in the near future. Mr. Shover felt they would have to forget about it until something changed to make the project more feasible.

7. Beach Re-nourishment and Turtle Ordinance Update

Phil Thornburg

Mr. Thornburg offered a copy of the November minutes from the Beach Redevelopment Advisory Board where the beach renourishment project and the impact of lighting on the beach and its affect on turtles had been discussed. He offered to find someone to brief the Board about these issues in more detail if they wished him to do so.

Chair Rude stated there had been an article in the Sun Sentinel today regarding the beach renourishment plans. Mr. Thornburg noted that Fort Lauderdale's beach would not be affected until 2007 at the earliest.

Mr. Thornburg announced that the new fiber optics on the beach wall were being installed right now and should be operational within the next few weeks.

Dr. Hays asked if there had been an increase in light on the beach due to recent development that was affecting the turtles. Mr. Thornburg said that new development was restrained by newer lighting ordinances; the main issue was older developments that were walls of glass and light. He said Code Enforcement is working to improve the situation in the older developments.

Other Items of Interest

Mr. Thornburg announced that new grills and tables had been ordered for the beach and should be installed soon. The old grills had rusted and deteriorated over time and the City had not had the funds to replace them.

Ms. Pristo-Revier referred to the Parks and Recreation Department Gift Catalog and asked Mr. Thornburg if recognition was available for gifts. Mr. Thornburg said the City would be happy to give recognition for gifts. Dr. Hays suggested the Gift Catalogs be given out at City Commission meetings.

Dr. Hays announced that the CVC project at Floyd Hull Park could use members of the Board to help out on February 19th from 8a.m. until noon. Mr. Thornburg remarked that this was a nice but aging facility that could really use some help in preparing for their season to start in March.

Mr. Shover said he had spoken to Marie Rock last night about a youth program at Croissant Park and she thought this CVC project at Floyd Hull might be something youth could do to get benefit points.

Mr. Hoysgaard asked if the search was on to find someone for the Assistant Director/Parks Superintendent position. Mr. Thornburg replied that he had interviewed someone whom he hoped would start in March. He noted that the set up of the department had yet to be determined.

Chair Rude thanked Mr. Hoysgaard for his communication to them about the NRPA conference in Reno.

Mr. Thornburg stated he had talked to the County regarding the Riverland Woods property off of Riverland and 441. It had been handed over to the bonding company and should be transferred to the City around May 1. Mr. Natale cautioned that there was a \$150 thousand grant that would expire if the park was not completed by March but someone from the County had promised that the County would put up that money if the deadline were missed. Mr. Thornburg said he had also been told this by Bob Wright at the County.

Mr. Thornburg distributed copies of the City of Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation Department Recreation Division Annual Report.

Mr. Thornburg noted that someone had an option to buy the corner property at Riverland and 441 for \$3 million. Dr. Hays wondered if this prospective buyer knew the limitations that may be put on the property; Mr. Thornburg did not know who the prospective buyer was or if this buyer was aware of the property's possible limitations.

Chair Rude was adamant that the parcel at the corner of Riverland and 441 is secured; the site was being considered for a Park & Ride and for transit bridges. Mr. Natale said he had brought this subject up at a County Commission meeting and Commissioner Rodstrom had said he would not allow that parcel to be used for a Park & Ride facility.

Mr. Thornburg announced a new program at Stranahan Park: Noon Tunes during Wednesday lunch hour.

Mr. Natale asked if the submitted budget had included the skate park. Mr. Gizzi said this was one of the proposals they had asked their lobbyists to pursue during the current legislative session to seek legislative funding.

Ms. Pristo-Revier announced that she would be donating \$500 for a new barbecue grill at the beach on behalf of the 2005 Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. She encouraged other members to match her donation towards a larger purchase of equipment.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Handouts

1. City of Fort Lauderdale Gift Catalog
2. City of Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation Department Recreation Division Annual Report
3. Printed version of the Youth Soccer Program Power Point presentation