

PARKS, RECREATION & BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

**City of Fort Lauderdale
100 North Andrews Avenue
8th Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, May 25, 2005 – 7:00 p.m.**

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	Cumulative from 10/04	
		<u>P</u>	<u>A</u>
Agnes Burrows	A	1	5
Andrew DeGraffenreidt, Sr.	P	4	2
Mark Hartman	P	4	0
Elizabeth Hays	P	6	0
Robert Hoysgaard	P	4	2
Jim LaBate	A	3	3
David McNulty	A	1	3
Joann Medalie, Vice Chair	P	6	0
Timothy Nast	P	4	2
Michael Natale	P	6	0
Ronald Perkins	P	1	0
Victoria Revier	P	2	4
John Rude, Chair	P	4	2
Joe Shover	P	6	0
Shirley Small	P	4	2

Staff Present

Phil Thornburg, Parks & Recreation Director
Terry Rynart, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director
Vince Gizzi, Special Facilities Superintendent
Earnest Jones, Park Ranger Supervisor
Marie Rock, Recreation Program Coordinator
Debbie Gasperic, Recreation Programmer
Maybeth Irizarry-Binon, Administrative Assistant
Jamie Oppерlee, Recording Clerk

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.

Chair Rude introduced new member Ron Perkins to the Board. Mr. Perkins stated that he had lived here for three years and now resided in Rio Vista. His company, American Document Management, helped corporations manage documents electronically and performed litigation

support for law firms and general counsel offices.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Hays stated that on page 4, the last sentence should read “It is now an important responsibility of Parks and Rec to make up for some of this loss of physical activities in the schools.”

On page 5, paragraph 4, the sentence referring to Don Burgess should state that Joan Sheridan informed Southwest Coalition members that the property had been removed (Dr. Hays had not spoken to Don Burgess about this).

Motion made by Dr. Hays, seconded by Mr. Shover, to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2005 meeting as amended. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

1. Recreation Program of the Month (Jazz Brunch)

Marie Rock and Debbie Gasperic

Ms. Rock stated that the Jazz Brunch program began in 1991 when the Himarshee district was not yet a “destination point.” The Broward Center for the Performing Arts was not yet open and the Discovery Center was in the New River Inn. The goal of special events is to attract people to the downtown area on the weekend. Ms. Rock distributed a brochure that was a blue print for the Jazz Brunch.

Ms. Rock explained that the mission of the Community Events Section was to:

- Inspire a sense of hometown pride
- Increase cultural understanding
- Provide a venue to build relationships

Ms. Gasperic stated that attendance averaged 4,000 – 10,000 each month. A variety of music and food were available. Ms. Gasperic showed photos of several of the Riverwalk stages: The Esplanade, Peck Courtyard, and Connie Hoffman Gazebo.

Ms. Gasperic said that SunTrust Bank was the title sponsor for all 15 years, contributing \$34,000 annually. Media sponsors were Love 94 and News Radio 610, providing on-air, web site and newsletter advertising. They also provided a radio personality each month to introduce acts on stage. Ms. Gasperic then described a few of the sponsors and the forms of sponsorship provided. She pointed out that each month, a different non-profit group was featured at the event.

Ms. Rock said that area eateries reported an increase in business during the Jazz Brunch of between 15% and 30%. The event positively affects sales in the area on a consistent basis.

Mr. Hoysgaard noted that while Mr. Silva was acting City Manager, there was talk of discontinuing the Jazz Brunch event. Mr. Thornburg stated that the original staff, which

formerly put on this event, are no longer employed by the City and noted that Ms. Rock and Ms. Gasperic had stepped up to continue this event along with their other duties within the department.

Mr. Natale asked if there was dock space available for boaters to attend the event. Ms. Gasperic replied that there was space in front of the River House. Chair Rude added that there was a floating dock, which technically was not supposed to be used; the Marine Advisory Board was looking into installing floating docks.

Dr. Hays asked if anyone had attended the Cajun Festival in Deerfield Beach. Mr. Hoysgaard stated that he had attended. He felt they should have asked City Manager Gretsas about the loss of festivals when he visited the Board. Mr. Hoysgaard said that Cajun Zydeco attendees received half the experience in Deerfield compared to the event when it was held in Fort Lauderdale. Mr. Hoysgaard felt that Mr. Silva and the Commission had forgotten the reason the City hosted events. He referred to Ms. Rock's mission statement for Community Events.

Dr. Hays felt they had lost a good festival. She doubted they should blame Mr. Silva entirely as the head of Parks and Rec had a role to play in areas where cuts might be necessary.

Dr. Hays asked Mr. Thornburg for a report on the Air and Sea Show. Mr. Thornburg said that attendance was down on both days. Saturday was slightly less than average and the weather forecast for Sunday probably accounted for the considerably lower attendance. Mr. Thornburg said that the estimated cost to the City was \$30,000 but actual numbers were not available yet.

Dr. Hays felt the City had been hurt to some extent by the loss of special events; she hoped that as things turned around, Parks and Recreation could look forward to some additional new events to get it back to the way it was. Mr. Thornburg mentioned that the City Commission would have a budget workshop during their second meeting in June. Dr. Hays noted that no one showed up at the Commission budget meetings to promote Parks and Recreation and she felt members of their Board should be there to "put our two cents in and let them hear that Parks and Recreation is important."

2. Dogs in the Parks

Earnest Jones

Supervisor Jones referred to the set of Park rules and regulations that had been given to Board members and noted that on page 2, it stated that pets were not allowed in City parks. The next page listed exceptions to the rule and the three locations where dogs were specifically allowed: Riverwalk, Snyder Park Bark Park, and a limited section of the beach. He noted that there was a City ordinance that could be enforced in regard to pets as well. Park Rangers tried to educate people about the rules and ask them to remove their pets.

In response to Mr. Hoysgaard's question, Supervisor Jones explained that once they informed someone that pets were not permitted in the park, if the person did not leave with their pet, the

Ranger would explain that they were in violation of City ordinance and then had the discretion to call the police, who could arrest the person for trespassing.

Mr. Hoysgaard had visited South Beach recently and he was disturbed by the fact that there was not police or park ranger supervision in that area during the day. Once the lifeguards left for the day, there was not anyone “watching what was going on.” He had seen someone bring his two pit bulls onto the beach that evening undisturbed. When Mr. Hoysgaard left the beach at 7 p.m., he noted 4 police cars parked at the intersection of A1A and Las Olas, 3 of which were on the beach side of the street.

The Board was unanimous in its concern about parks being used for dog walking, especially with the increasing density downtown. Chair Rude pointed out that it was a matter of enforcement; a park rule and an ordinance existed, but the rangers were short-handed and the police had other priorities. Mr. Thornburg, Mr. Hartman and Mr. Natale felt one idea was to expand existing dog park areas and/or create new ones. Mr. Thornburg agreed to meet with Supervisor Jones and consider some ways to address the problem more effectively.

3. Southside School Update

Vince Gizzi

Mr. Gizzi explained that Southside was the oldest standing school in Fort Lauderdale, built in 1922 and used as a school until 1967. The site had been designated historic in 1996 and the City purchased it for \$3.8 million in 2004 using funds from the County 2000 Parks bond, the Florida Community Trust and the City of Fort Lauderdale. An archeological study in 2005 had shown the site had no archeological significance and three buildings had subsequently been demolished. Interior demolition and asbestos removal were now taking place. Mr. Gizzi then introduced Mary Fertig from the Friends of Southside School to discuss the plans for the project.

Ms. Fertig displayed a floor plan and described locations and proposed uses of several rooms. Ms. Fertig explained that the plan was to restore the building as nearly as possible to its original 1922 state. Commitments had been made to the neighborhood that certain community programs would be made available and to the School Board that it would be maintained as an educational facility. She described several funding sources they were utilizing in the project.

The building would offer art, cooking, horticulture, dance, exercise, technology and other classes and rooms would also be available for individual public and private events. A public art project was planned for December involving a mosaic created from memorabilia collected from Southside Alumni and the community at large.

4. Greenspace Master Plan

John Rude

Chair Rude was concerned about the patch of green space on Sunrise Boulevard where a water tower had been abandoned and a nearby business had begun using for overflow parking. He was worried that eventually the business owner could argue that the City abandoned the land as well

and gain legal possession of it. He wanted the City to start finding small parcels in similar situations and begin reclaiming them. Mr. Thornburg stated that Kathy Connor was working on a Greenspace Master plan for the City. He would invite Ms. Connor to attend the July or September Board meeting to discuss it.

Mr. Shover described a project that his neighborhood had completed several years ago on Southwest 3rd Avenue between 13th Street and 12th Court with a lot that was used as a local dumping ground. The neighborhood had adopted the parcel, planted \$1,800 worth of trees on it, named the site, and put up a sign.

Mr. Nast wondered if the site of the One Stop Shop across from City Hall would be used for development or Greenspace. Mr. Thornburg told him the site was City-owned and Mr. Nast suggested they tell the City Commission that it should be utilized for park space. Dr. Hays remarked that the City would soon need a site for a new City Hall and this spot might be a good one to consider.

Motion made by Mr. Nast, seconded by Mr. Shover, to recommend to the City commission that the site of the One Stop Shop be utilized for City park space. In a voice vote, the motion passed 11 – 1 with Dr. Hays dissenting.

5. “How Cities Use Parks to Improve Public Health”

Phil Thornburg

Mr. Thornburg distributed copies of the article to all Board members.

Other Items of Interest

Mr. Shover informed Supervisor Jones that he was still receiving calls about the lights being left on in southwest area parks, including those at the Croissant Park pool. Supervisor Jones stated that these were probably security lights that were meant to be left on. Mr. Thornburg advised Mr. Shover to direct any future calls regarding the lights to him.

Dr. Hays wanted to try to get the site of the old Peele Dixie water treatment plant reserved for park land after the new plant was completed.

Dr. Hays noted that at Commissioner Moore’s last District 3 meeting, problems at Riverland Park had been discussed. Some of the fencing was down and kids were climbing over it to gain access to the park. Mr. Thornburg and Mr. Gizzi explained that construction fencing was up around the pool and would stay until the pool was completed. Ornamental fencing would surround the pool once it was completed. Mr. Gizzi hoped the project would be completed by July or early August. Mr. Thornburg stated there would be summer activities available for kids on a walk-in basis in Riverland Park, but no formal summer programs.

Mr. Natale thanked staff for working so quickly on the plaque for Jack Washburn and the Herman property cleanup. Mr. Natale asked Supervisor Jones if Park rule 7.4 H included digging holes and erecting tents. Supervisor Jones responded that canopies and fencing prohibitions were added to 7.4 H.

Dr. Hays commended staff for the work they had done on the CVC mulching project on the beach.

Mr. Thornburg thanked Dr. Hays and other participants in the Neighborhood Services Day on May 10.

Mr. Thornburg announced that Parks and Recreation was holding a City Employee Golf Tournament on Saturday, June 18 at Palm Air and invited Board members to attend.

Mr. Nast announced that on June 18 at Floyd Hull Stadium, the Wood Bat League was hosting a throwback night in tribute to the Negro Baseball Leagues of the 1930's and 1940's.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Handouts

1. Jazz Brunch pamphlet
2. Memo and copies of Park Regulations from Supervisor Jones
3. Memo from Mr. Gizzi regarding the Southside School project
4. Copy of article, "How cities use parks to... improve public health"