

**PARKS, RECREATION & BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**  
**City of Fort Lauderdale**  
**100 North Andrews Avenue**  
**8th Floor Conference Room**  
**Wednesday, November 30, 2005 – 7:00 p.m.**

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<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Cumulative 1/05 – 12/05</u>	
		<u>P</u>	<u>A</u>
Andrew DeGraffenreidt, Sr.	A	6	1
Mark Hartman	P	7	0
Elizabeth Hays	P	7	0
Robert Hoysgaard	A	4	3
Jim LaBate	P	4	3
David McNulty	P	3	4
Joann Medalie, Vice Chair	P	6	1
Timothy Nast	P	5	2
Michael Natale	P	7	0
Robert Payne	P	1	0
Ronald Perkins	A	3	1
Victoria Revier	P	3	4
John Rude, Chair	P	6	1
Joe Shover	A	6	1
Shirley Small	A	6	1

**Staff Present**

Phil Thornburg, Parks and Recreation Director  
Vince Gizzi, Special Facilities Superintendent  
Kathy Connor, Parks Supervisor  
Earnest Jones, Park Ranger Supervisor  
Mark Almy, City Horticulturist  
Maybeth Irizarry-Binon, Administrative Assistant  
Jamie Opperlee, Recording Secretary

**Guests Present**

Patsy Menudi, Executive Director of Riverwalk Trust

## **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. Hartman, seconded by Mr. Natale, to approve the minutes of the July 2005 meeting. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

### **1. Election of Officers**

**John Rude**

**Motion** made by Mr. Natale, seconded by Ms. Medalie, to nominate John Rude as Chair. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**Motion** made by Chair Rude, seconded by Dr. Hays, to nominate Joann Medalie as Vice Chair. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

### **2. Recreation Program of the Month** **(USTA National Public Park Championships)**

**Vince Gizzi**

Mr. Gizzi introduced Whitney Kraft, Director of Tennis, to discuss the USTA National Public Park Championships. Mr. Gizzi announced that Mr. Kraft was selected as the Florida Professional of the Year for 2005 by the U.S. Professional Tennis Association in June and named Employee of the Month in the Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation Department in July.

Mr. Kraft said they had recently outbid San Diego and Hawaii for the 2007 National Public Park Tennis Championships. Mr. Kraft described the history of the event and noted it was the equivalent of the U.S. Open for those who play in public parks. He anticipated over 600 players will attend between July 28 and August 3, 2007. He felt the event would be a "logistics challenge."

Mr. Kraft informed the Board that the City was holding their second national workshop this Friday in "Cardio Tennis." Sixty professionals would attend the workshop to learn how to deliver the training. They would announce their hosting of the 2007 National Public Park Tennis Championships at this event.

Mr. Kraft explained the First Serve program at Carter Park that taught kids life skills. The pilot program was held at Riverside last year and Mr. Kraft said that those who attended the graduation ceremony had been "most impressed by the change these youngsters went through

in a six-week program.” He agreed to keep the Board apprised of First Serve activities and to invite them to any future fund raising events.

Mr. Kraft informed the Board that the project at George English Park was on or ahead of schedule and should be completed by May 1. They intended to make improvements to the seven tennis courts as well.

Mr. McNulty thanked Mr. Kraft for his work to bring national and world events to Fort Lauderdale. He felt the Board must support the tennis facilities’ maintenance and expansion in order to continue attracting similar events in the future.

Ms. Medalie wondered why the non-resident fee to use the tennis courts was only one dollar more than the resident fee. Mr. Kraft noted that “non-residents” included Wilton Manors, Lauderdale-By-The-Sea, and Oakland Park and their charge was comparable to surrounding communities. Keeping the non-resident fees lower also reduced the tendency of users to state false addresses.

### **3. Wayfinding in the Public Realm**

**Vince Gizzi**

Mr. Gizzi introduced Kathy Connor, Recreation Parks Supervisor, to discuss the design concepts.

Ms. Connor introduced Patsy Menudi, Executive Director of the Riverwalk Trust, noting that the Riverwalk Trust had been instrumental in this project. The project’s goal was to make it easier for people to find their way downtown. They had obtained a \$10,000 project design grant from the Broward County Cultural Arts Council and that the urban design team of Margi Nothard and Aaron Temkin created the concept.

Ms. Connor explained that they wanted to create a linkage between park amenities and public amenities. The DDA and FDOT were already working on a “zone” concept to link the various areas of the City and tied with this project. The zones include: Arts and Entertainment, Education and Finance, The Las Olas area, Flagler Village and the Courthouse.

The design team had created a curve-walled monolith-like structure, resembling a stylized “P” when viewed from above. These structures would be installed in spots visible to pedestrians and motorists. Those intended for motorists’ viewing would be larger and would be visually coded to indicate specific City areas. Those intended for pedestrians’ viewing would also be visually coded, and would include printed information. The “shrink wrap” material used for busses could provide the printed information to cover the structures.

Ms. Connor noted that the shape could be utilized for site furniture, the graphics could indicate the type of activity taking place, and the interior curve could include safety features, even an emergency telephone.

Ms. Connor said the next step was to find funding to hire an engineer to create specifics for materials, construction and installation.

**Motion** made by Mr. LaBate, seconded by Ms. Medalie, to support the wayfinding concept presented by Ms. Connor. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

#### **4. Oswald Park Update**

**Phil Thornburg**

Mr. Thornburg informed the Board that Rock Island had been annexed in September, but issues between the City and County regarding Oswald Park had taken time to resolve. The City would officially take control of the park on December 18.

Mr. Thornburg described the park and explained that within the next three to five years, the County would tailor a portion of the park for a new library.

Mr. Thornburg informed the Board that the Commission had previously stated the City would not annex anything that was revenue negative. The annexation of Rock Island without the park would have been revenue positive or neutral, but with the park would have been revenue negative. This problem was resolved by the County's agreement to give the City \$2 million over the next 4 years for the park's operation. The property should break even in year five.

#### **5. Hurricane Katrina/ Wilma Damage Update**

**Phil Thornburg**

Mr. Thornburg explained that Holiday Park was used after Katrina as a debris site; after Wilma, FEMA had used it as a distribution site. The City had used Carter Park for a distribution site after Wilma, and department employees had driven to areas hardest hit to deliver supplies. Floyd Hull Stadium and Mills Pond Park had been used for debris sites after Wilma as well. Floyd Hull was clear and should be ready for the baseball season to open in February. Mills Pond Park was being cleared and Mr. Thornburg felt it would take two more weeks to complete.

Mr. Thornburg explained that they were also in the process of checking all of the damaged lights prior to getting the fields operational again. He noted that the streetlights were the City's first priority. Mr. Thornburg introduced Mark Almy, City Horticulturist, to describe specific damage.

Mr. Almy explained that there was a 20-25% loss of treescape; Gene Dempsey had told him he felt that 16-17% of the canopy had been lost. He noted that Ficus, Black Olive, and Yellow Tabebuia trees had been particularly hard hit, while Live Oaks and Gumbo Limbo had fared much better. The only trees to come through unscathed were Sabal Palms. Mr. Almy said his department was conducting a “standing wounded” survey of damaged trees and would assess what measures must be taken on individual trees. Mr. Almy explained the order in which they cleared damaged tree debris.

Mr. Almy informed the Board that the Adopt a Tree Program was set for January and explained that 4 – 5 foot tall trees would be distributed. He felt this would help the situation tremendously.

Dr. Hays asked how they could convince the public to maintain their own trees. Mr. Almy felt this required education and local leadership. He agreed with Dr. Hays that the Parks and Recreation Department could offer children’s programs in Horticulture as well.

Mr. Almy agreed to return to a future meeting to update the Board on improvements and how the reforestation was going.

Mr. Hartman was amazed that the Riverland Park grand opening had occurred in the wake of the hurricane cleanup.

Mr. Natale asked about the lifeguard stands. Mr. Thornburg reminded the Board that the lifeguards were now under the Fire Rescue Department. Mr. Thornburg thought two stands were a total loss; the others could be repaired.

## **6. “How Cities Use Parks for Arts and Cultural Programs”**

**Phil Thornburg**

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

### **Other Items of Interest**

Dr. Hays distributed an article titled “The Power of Patrol” from the Parks and Recreation Magazine discussing the ways volunteers could help to prevent crime and ensure safety in parks. She expressed concern about some of the gatherings occurring in Riverland Park and Holiday Park. She asked the Board to read the article and then consider creative ways to make the parks safer, since the budget had not allowed for additional Park Rangers.

Dr. Hays asked if the City Commission had responded to the Board’s recommendation at a previous meeting that additional funding be allocated for more Park Rangers. Mr. Thornburg reminded the Board that their recommendations were conveyed to the Commission via the

meeting minutes. Dr. Hays was concerned that some issues conveyed through the minutes alone did not get the needed attention of the Commission. She felt the Board must use other means to get the Commission's attention on these issues.

Mr. Natale wondered if they should send a separate memo to the Commission. Dr. Hays said some Boards made presentations at Commission Conference sessions to get the Commission's response.

Dr. Hays noted that the Crime Committee suspected that recent crime statistics reflect what is happening in the parks, not the communities, and asked that the statistics be broken down to determine exactly where crimes were occurring.

Mr. Natale admitted he felt he had let the Park Rangers down by not petitioning the Commission for more funds specifically for additional Park Rangers. He felt the Board should do this for next year's budget. Chair Rude felt the Park Rangers could be given more power as well. Mr. Hartman felt the Board needed to have a strategy to keep this issue on their agenda and make it a priority. Mr. Nast noted that the City of Fort Lauderdale Parks increase in value each day because of increased growth, yet there are less Park Rangers patrolling these parks to keep them safe.

Mr. Natale wondered if they should petition the City Commission now to allocate additional money out of the General Fund for more Park Rangers. Dr. Hays asked that this issue be put on the January agenda for discussion. They could then go to the February Commission Conference meeting with a report.

Mr. Nast wanted to add another item to their January agenda. He wanted to make sure that the parks were not used again for dumping grounds for hurricane debris and that alternative sites were identified, particularly county land. The Board agreed that many lessons were learned after Wilma and situations in the future could be handled differently.

Dr. Hays referred to previous minutes indicating the Board wanted to compare their per capita park spending to other cities. She recognized that in other municipalities, different departments sometimes were responsible for park maintenance and this made a comparison difficult. Mr. Thornburg said because of the very different community priorities and department responsibilities, it would be extremely difficult to get an accurate comparison. It was a lot of work to do for a questionable outcome. Mr. Hartman felt it was a constant struggle to educate politicians, City staff and the public about the value of parks.

Mr. Natale thanked Ms Irizarry-Binon and Mr. Gizzi for expediting the plaque for Jack Washburn. Dr. Hays thanked Mr. Gizzi for his effort, dedication and patience in getting Riverland Park to fruition.

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

### **Handouts**

1. Homeowners and Trees pamphlet
2. Guide to Fort Lauderdale parks, recreation facilities, community events and programs
3. Take a Break and Recreate pamphlet
4. Memo to Board from Whitney Kraft regarding USTA National Public Park Championships
5. Memo to Board from Kathy Connor regarding Wayfinding Project
6. Copies of landscape problem reports
7. Article, "How cities use parks for... Arts and Culture Programs"
8. Article, "The power of patrol" from Parks and Recreation Magazine September 2004