

**PARKS, RECREATION & BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**  
**City of Fort Lauderdale**  
**100 North Andrews Avenue**  
**8th Floor Conference Room**  
**Wednesday, January 25, 2006 – 7:00 p.m.**

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<b><u>Board Members</u></b>	<b><u>Attendance</u></b>	<b>Cumulative 1/06 – 12/06</b>	
		<b><u>P</u></b>	<b><u>A</u></b>
Andrew DeGraffenreidt, Sr.	A	0	1
Mark Hartman	P	1	0
Elizabeth Hays	P	1	0
Robert Hoysgaard	P	1	0
Jim LaBate	P	1	0
David McNulty	A	0	1
Joann Medalie, Vice Chair	P	1	0
Timothy Nast	P	1	0
Michael Natale	P	1	0
Robert Payne	P	1	0
Ronald Perkins	P	1	0
Victoria Revier	P	1	0
John Rude, Chair	P	1	0
Joe Shover	P	1	0
Shirley Small	A	0	1

**City Staff**

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

**Guests**

Jim Duncan, Duncan Associates

**Call to Order**

Chair Rude called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Roll call was taken and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Hoysgaard pointed out that Chair Rude was not permitted to make motions, but he had moved to nominate Ms. Medalie as Vice Chair.

**Motion** made by Ms. Revier, seconded by Mr. Hoysgaard, to nominate Joann Medalie as Vice Chair. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Natale said he did not feel the minutes sufficiently conveyed his passion for the issue of finding funding for additional Park Rangers. Mr. Natale said he would address this item when it came up later this evening on their agenda.

**Motion** made by Mr. Hoysgaard, seconded by Ms. Revier, to approve the minutes of the November 2005 meeting as amended. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

### **1. Impact Fee Update**

**Phil Thornburg**

Mr. Thornburg introduced Jim Duncan from Duncan Associates, authors of the Impact Fee Study commissioned by the City. Mr. Thornburg explained that they had first gone to the Commission with the initial discussion, and they were now presenting it to this Board; next month they would present it to the DDA Board, and the Planning and Zoning Board presentation with the possible recommendation for an ordinance change would follow the next month. It would then return to the City Commission for two public hearings.

Mr. Jim Duncan, Duncan Associates, explained that in 1980, Fort Lauderdale had adopted a "park land dedication requirement", which was not an impact fee, but a "fee in lieu." He noted that they had not collected much money from it because it was collected at the platting process, and Fort Lauderdale was virtually "platted out." Another problem with it was that it was based on 25-year-old land cost data.

Mr. Duncan stated that an impact fee was designed to ensure that the level of service the community currently had would not be depreciated by growth. The first step in determining an impact fee was to establish a need. Mr. Duncan noted that it was not difficult to establish that need in Fort Lauderdale in recent years. Mr. Duncan noted that it was estimated the City population would increase by 120,000 over the next 20 years.

Mr. Duncan explained the method used to calculate total number of "service units" for Fort Lauderdale, which was approximately 77,000. Next he explained that his calculations were based on three acres per thousand service units. The value of existing park facilities land,

buildings and improvements was then divided by the total number of service units, for a value per service unit of \$6,188. This value per service unit was then adjusted for park bond debt and park grants for a net value per service unit of \$5,054.

Mr. Duncan then explained that the fees could be calculated based upon a "Unit-Type" option, "Single Fee" option, or a "Unit-Size" option. The Unit Type option divided living units into three categories: single-family, multifamily, or hotel/motel room; the Single Fee option divided living units in two categories: residential or hotel motel; the Unit Size option was based on square footage.

Mr. Duncan continued that the unit size option was more sensitive to the affordability of housing, since smaller dwellings paid a smaller fee and larger units paid a higher fee. Regardless of the method used, if the impact fee were charged at the maximum allowable rate, the return would be \$10-\$11 million per year for the parks capital improvement system.

Mr. Duncan said there were four factors that must be addressed: the fee schedule; the effective date; the benefit area, and affordability. Defining benefit areas ensured that the people paying the impact fee would be the ones to benefit from them. Mr. Duncan felt Fort Lauderdale could probably benefit from creating two to three benefit areas. Mr. Duncan noted that there had been a large increase in school impact fees over the past year, which has resulted in the establishment of task force which ultimately recommended delaying impact fee collection for 90 days after adopting it.

Mr. Duncan reported that Miami had recently conducted a study and calculated a park impact fee of \$6,818 per dwelling unit.

Mr. Hartman felt the parks were worth considerably more than Mr. Duncan's calculations had indicated. Mr. Duncan agreed but noted that being conservative, coupled with phasing in the fees, would help avoid litigation and would have the least disruptive effect on the real estate market. Ms. Connor added that the land value might seem low, but that was because once land has been dedicated for park use it could not be used for development.

Dr. Hays confirmed that the impact fee was assessed only once, when the unit was built. She asked what would happen when an existing dwelling unit was remodeled or replaced with a larger one. Mr. Duncan explained that an equal replacement would not incur a new fee. If a single-family dwelling was replaced with a multifamily dwelling, it was possible to calculate the difference and assess it. Dr. Hays felt that phasing the fee in over a two or three year period beginning at perhaps 33% of the maximum would be more palatable to builders. Mr. Thornburg reminded the Board that this money would not be used for improvements and maintenance; the impact fee funds would be used to acquire new property and build brand new facilities to serve the needs of the additional population.

Mr. Natale asked Mr. Duncan to discuss the exempt targeted areas. Mr. Duncan explained that this was used to distinguish benefit areas. Areas where lower fees were collected would be entitled to a lower disbursement of the funds. Ms. Connor pointed out that this was a “double edged sword” since lower income areas may have fees adjusted to be more affordable, but this would result in less money being available to the areas that might need it most. Mr. Duncan reported that some communities had impact fee grants that could be used to pay a portion of the impact fee in affordable housing areas.

**Motion** made by Dr. Hays, seconded by Mr. LaBate, to recommend that the Unit-Size option be used to calculate the fee. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Perkins was concerned that every dollar that was laid on development was passed right through to the consumer, and affordable housing was a very big issue in the Fort Lauderdale right now. Mr. Perkins said he was very uncomfortable that after just reading this report, the Board was going to make a recommendation on the record in favor of an impact fee. Mr. LaBate agreed that affordable housing was an issue, but he also felt that they had a serious lack of park space and they must consider ways to address that issue as well.

Dr. Hays remarked that they needed to find new ways to pay for future parks, as the parks bond issue was gone. Ms. Revier was concerned that lower assessed areas would be paying the same as properties on the Galt Ocean Mile. She felt this might result in less development in lower-income areas, because it would be more difficult to recoup impact fees. Mr. LaBate felt the City would still have the ability to exempt certain projects or areas from the fee. Mr. Duncan noted that there could be waivers and exemptions for affordable housing in the future.

**Motion** made by Mr. Shover, seconded by Mr. Hoysgaard, to recommend that the fee be phased in over a three-year period, with the first year at 50%, the second year at 75%, and the third year at 100%. In a voice vote, the motion passed 10 – 2 with Ms. Revier and Mr. Perkins opposed.

Ms. Revier noted the enormous difference in the fees’ percentage of development costs for a \$75,000 home versus a \$5 million home. Mr. Thornburg felt the Board could recommend some sort of grant system for those lower income areas. Mr. LaBate felt the City needed to go through more study regarding these details. Dr. Hays reminded the Board that when this study was presented to the City Commission, she had specifically asked why their Board was not apprised of the study. The Commission had then brought it back for the PRBAB’s input. She felt they should therefore give the Commission their opinion

Chair Rude asked if the creation of service areas was already addressed in the dual rational nexus. Mr. Duncan confirmed that it was, and noted that the creation of several service areas could actually result in the inability to accomplish very much in each area and restrict their ability to be flexible with their spending. Chair Rude felt they could begin with one service

area, and this could always be adjusted later on.

**Motion** made by Mr. Shover, seconded by Dr. Hays, to recommend that the entire City be considered one benefit area. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

## **2. Park Ranger Program Update**

**Earnest Jones**

Ranger Supervisor Jones distributed copies of the Park Security Model, a map showing Park Ranger zones and a map showing Fort Lauderdale's parks to Board members. Supervisor Jones explained that park staff, Rangers and the Police all had roles in the park security process.

Supervisor Jones then explained the Ranger program, their responsibilities, objectives and training. Supervisor Jones informed the board that Rangers worked in two shifts, with two to four Rangers on in the daytime, and four to six on in the evening, 365 days a year. Supervisor Jones stated that there were a total of nine full-time Rangers, and five part-time Rangers, and they had just received approval for an additional Ranger.

Supervisor Jones said that when Rangers were patrolling, they were concerned with safety and security situations. Supervisor Jones said that they had recently created 27 reports detailing maintenance and safety issues in the parks. He then detailed some of the activities of the Rangers, including monitoring safety equipment and situations, facilities use and security, special event oversight, and incident report procedures.

Supervisor Jones then related the following statistics for December:

- ❖ 357 total reports by Rangers
- ❖ 13 Formal citizen complaints requiring response
- ❖ 18 reports involving the Police
- ❖ 573 ejections from parks

Supervisor Jones noted that ejections were usually for alcohol consumption, sleeping near buildings, and bringing dogs into dog-restricted parks. Supervisor Jones stated that during last year, Rangers were involved in 20 arrests in the parks.

Supervisor Jones informed the Board that when Ranger positions were cut, they had started working only one shift. They had then adjusted by limiting the patrol areas. Mr. Thornburg noted that when the number of Rangers was reduced the number of incident reports had decreased because the Rangers were no longer there to witness and report them.

Supervisor Jones then explained the Park Rangers zone map he had distributed. He pointed out that they would concentrate on areas with particular activities and concerns. One Ranger was dedicated to the Riverwalk area because of the amount of funding and effort the City had put into that area.

Mr. Natale clarified that there were an average of four Rangers patrolling all of the parks in two shifts every day. Supervisor Jones confirmed that starting salary for a Ranger was approximately \$27,000 a year. Mr. Natale figured that with benefits and support, the cost was approximately \$45 - \$50,000 per additional Ranger. Supervisor Jones confirmed that they had made a Request for Personnel for additional Rangers, but had been unsuccessful. Mr. Natale said he could not justify "how our City Manager can come up with \$360,000 to add a couple of people to his staff, and we can't find an extra \$100,000, \$150,000 to support something we have already." Mr. Natale insisted that they must find ways to get more money for more Rangers, noting the City had a major investment in the parks. Mr. Natale felt the City Commission was not listening. Ms. Medalie felt they must do something to secure the parks.

Mr. Hartman asked if statistics from other towns were available that would prove how comparatively inadequate their Ranger force was. Mr. Thornburg said he was unaware of any, noting that it was difficult to compare because of varied funding structures.

Dr. Hays informed the Board that the Council Crime Committee had been working to determine where, within neighborhoods, crimes were occurring: were they residential, business or in the parks? They intended to select a couple of parks and reference crime report addresses to determine how much crime was occurring in the parks. They intended to analyze Holiday Park, and possibly Carter Park. Mr. LaBate suggested they consider Francis Abreu Park.

Mr. Thornburg remarked that when the budget cuts had occurred, they were based solely on dollars, not the impact those cuts might have. The City had believed that the Police Department would make up for the lack of Rangers. Mr. Thornburg noted that police usually handled a problem once it already occurred, whereas Rangers worked to prevent problems.

Mr. Nast felt that as the population increased, parks became more and more valuable and should be protected. Mr. Perkins noted that Ms. Rynard had told the Board that park staff supported the City's budget when it was presented to the Board. Mr. Thornburg stated that when the budget was developed as a whole, they all felt it was the best that could be accomplished for the City; each department had its own issues, and they all assumed that they had done the best they could.

Chair Rude asked Supervisor Jones what sort of citations the Rangers could issue. Supervisor Jones confirmed that they could only issue parking citations.

Mr. Natale said, "I strongly feel we need to take a proactive role in this and I think we need to all get together on it ... I think we need to go to the Commission as a Board, in force, and say we want more money for more Rangers." Chair Rude said he favored giving the Rangers more power before adding additional personnel. He wanted the Rangers to have the ability to issue citations "with teeth", that carried fines. Dr. Hays noted that these fines could be used to

support more Rangers. Supervisor Jones said he thought the City could grant them more power, but was unsure exactly what legal steps must be taken.

**Motion** made by Mr. Natale, seconded by Mr. Hoysgaard, to request a City Commission conference meeting agenda item asking the Commission to find ways to fund additional Park Rangers. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Hays felt it was their responsibility to raise people's awareness about safety and quality of life issues in the parks. She noted that hiring additional Rangers would be one way to address these issues, but that other methods should be discussed as well. Mr. Hartman wanted to be sure it was understood that their desire for more Rangers should not require a sacrifice somewhere else in the department; it should be in addition to the existing budget.

**Motion** made by Mr. Natale, seconded by Mr. Shover, to recommend that the Park Rangers be granted more enforcement powers, including the ability to issue warnings and citations. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

### **3. "How Cities Use Parks to Promote Tourism"**

**Phil Thornburg**

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

### **4. Other Items of Interest**

Dr. Hays asked Mr. Thornburg if they were considering reinstating some special events and festivals. Mr. Thornburg replied that in light of the success of their Fourth of July and New Year's celebrations, they were considering initiating more special events.

Mr. Thornburg announced that the Noon Tunes program would take place again from February 8 to March 15 each Wednesday in the park across the street.

Mr. Thornburg invited the Board to have a look at their web site, noting that Ms. Irizarry-Binon had done considerable work to improve their section of the City's web site.

Mr. Thornburg announced that Steve Person was preparing to retire. They were in the process of a national search for a new superintendent.

**Motion** made by Mr. Hartman, seconded by Mr. Hoysgaard, to commend Mr. Person for his service to the City and his dedication to the Board, and to congratulate him on his freedom. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Thornburg then distributed copies of "Florida Parks in the 21st Century", advising the Board that it related to promoting Parks and Recreation throughout the state.

Mr. Thornburg announced that they had held an annexation party for Twin Lakes North last weekend, and would have one for Rock Island this weekend. He then informed the Board that Snyder Park was almost completely finished; they would have Mills Pond Park ready for softball this spring; Floyd Hull Park would get sod this weekend, and would be ready for spring baseball.

Chair Rude suggested that discussion on the use of parks for hurricane cleanup/debris dumping be added to a future agenda.

Mr. Hoysgaard announced that Laura Ward, a long-time City employee, had died recently and there was a memorial service on Friday from 4 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Hoysgaard noted that he had e-mailed several people regarding the South Beach parking issue. The Board had already recommended charging \$20 instead of the current \$6 to park at the beach all day. Mr. Hoysgaard said the Board had made that recommendation, had obtained the support of the parking division, and then nothing had happened and he wanted to move the issue along.

Mr. Hoysgaard felt Fort Lauderdale needed a skate park; Mr. Thornburg said they were in favor of having one but the problem was where to put it.

Mr. Hoysgaard had brought along the September edition of Focus newsletter. He noted that a former employee, Lourdes Rodriguez, used to create the magazine, but one of the administrators had decided it wasn't timely enough and had created his own version after Ms. Rodriguez had left. Mr. Hoysgaard noted that the September issue had been the last issue, and noted that in order to be timely, it should be published more than once every four months.

Mr. Natale said the dedication for Jack Washburn's plaque would occur sometime in February, and he would let everyone know the exact date.

Mr. Natale announced that the Dog Walk in Esplanade would take place in March.

Ms. Revier announced that the Coral Ridge Dog Show would take place at Jack Kaye Park on February 5.

Mr. Payne wanted to include community pool operations on a future agenda.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m.



**Handouts**

1. Copy of Duncan and Associates Park impact fee study
2. Map of Fort Lauderdale Park Ranger zones
3. Map showing Fort Lauderdale parks
4. Copy of article, "How Cities use Parks to Promote Tourism"
5. Florida Parks in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century publication