

PARKS, RECREATION & BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

**City of Fort Lauderdale
100 North Andrews Avenue
8th Floor Conference Room
Wednesday, May 23, 2007 - 7:00 p.m.**

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	Cumulative 10/06-09/07	
		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Ed Angelbello	P	4	2
Curtiss Berry	A	5	2
Sean Fee	P	7	0
Mark Hartman, Chair	P	6	1
Robert Hoysgaard	A	4	3
James LaBate	P	5	2
Larry Mabson	P	2	1
JoAnne Medalie	P	5	0
Michael Natale, Vice Chair	P	7	0
Robert Payne	P	5	2
Betty Shelley	A	6	1
Shirley Small	P	4	3
Jay Verkey	A	4	1
Matthew Weiss	P	7	0

Staff

Terry Rynard, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director
Earnest Jones – Park Ranger Supervisor
Vince Gizzi – Special Facilities Superintendent
Whitney Kraft, Recreation Program Coordinator
Deborah Bylica, Recreation Programmer II
Stacey Daley, Administrative Assistant

Guests

Dr. Elizabeth Hays, Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. Roll call was taken and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of April 2007 Minutes

Dr. Hays noted that on page 3, in paragraph 8, after the colon, the sentence should read “*athletic college* scholarships available for golf.”

Motion made by Mr. Natale, seconded by Mr. LaBate, to approve the minutes of the April 2007 meeting as amended. Board unanimously approved.

Chair Hartman announced that Mr. Thornburg was not present this evening, and in the future Ms. Rynard would be the Board's liaison. Chair Hartman advised Board members they could contact Mr. Thornburg or Ms. Rynard whenever they wished.

1. Department Report

Terry Rynard

Ms. Rynard stated they had no idea how the possible tax reform would affect the department budget, but they were prepared to make whatever adjustments were necessary. They had submitted their budget request, but did not anticipate further input until after this issue was handled in Tallahassee.

Ms. Rynard said the tree Mr. Berry expressed concern about last month was FPL's responsibility and they had been contacted regarding it.

Regarding the question about the ordinance concerning tree placement, Ms. Rynard stated there was a tree abuse hotline available: 954-828-5200 for residents to report illegal tree trimming or removal to Dave Gennaro's office.

Ms. Rynard reported that the Air and Sea Show had been very successful this year; staff had done a terrific job on setup and cleanup.

Ms. Rynard informed the Board that after the Air and Sea Show, staff had spent the rest of the week remediating the effects of the storm that had blown so much sand onto the street.

The Big Truck event had been held on May 12, and Ms. Rynard reported staff had done a great job, and approximately 3,600 people had attended.

Ms. Rynard announced that the Better Meetings Academy would take place on June 6 at 5:45 in the eighth floor cafeteria/all purpose room.

Ms. Rynard said they were handling the Phase III water restrictions very well, and responding very quickly to reports of malfunctioning sprinkler heads. She noted that this was causing them to give more thought to what and where they planted. She reported that they still had work to do on East Broward Boulevard, SR 441, Riverland Road and A1A medians.

Ms. Rynard reported that they had put down dwarf paspalum sod around the parking lot at Las Olas and A1A, which could be watered with salt water, and it was holding up to foot traffic. They were also using more Bahia grass, which was holding up very well.

Ms. Rynard reminded the Board that July was Parks and Recreation month, and on June 19, the Commission would issue a proclamation declaring this. At the next meeting, Ms. Rynard hoped to provide the Board with information on scheduled events.

Ms. Medalie asked if items in the current budget year would be affected by any changes in the property tax situation. She was specifically concerned about the South Beach wall. Ms. Rynard said there was no indication they would be forced to pull back any money already budgeted.

Ms. Rynard informed Mr. Angelbello that the new budget was a “baseline” budget they had created based on the current level of service. In the future, they could perform an analysis based on what happened in Tallahassee, and what happened in other City departments with above-base needs.

Chair Hartman noted the great job City staff had done at the Air and Sea Show.

2. Recreation Program of the Month
Tennis Tournaments JETC/GETC

Vince Gizzi

Mr. Gizzi introduced Whitney Kraft, Recreation Program Coordinator, and Deborah Bylica, Recreation Programmer II, and announced that they were working together to produce three tennis tournaments this spring and summer. The first was the 81st National Public Park Championship, a very prestigious event.

Mr. Kraft thanked the Parks and Recreation employees who had encouraged them to pursue events such as this.

Mr. Kraft presented the poster for the 81st Public Championship and informed the Board that this was being posted in most public parks around south Florida. Mr. Kraft described the origin and past locations for the event, and said it typically attracted over a thousand participants in sixty-five divisions of play.

Mr. Kraft informed the Board that the National Open USTA event had been going on for the past week. In July, they would run the USTA Boys’ Nationals for the eighth year. Mr. Kraft noted the hotels and restaurants appreciated the economic activity these events brought in during the off-season.

Mr. Kraft explained that this year was the fiftieth anniversary of tennis at Holiday Park. He explained that Jimmy Evert began his tennis career at Hardy Park in 1954 and moved to the newly constructed Holiday Park courts in 1957.

Mr. Kraft said at one of the events at the War Memorial, they would present the Eugene Scott Lifetime Achievement Award to Chris Evert and another award to Jimmy Evert to honor his public park tennis efforts.

Mr. Kraft stated George English Park would host the wheelchair and junior events.

Mr. Kraft said they would offer additional innovative tennis programming to keep participants busy and entertained, such as: Cardio Tennis, Beach Tennis, a One-on-One Doubles and Blues Concert.

Ms. Bylica distributed a sponsorship packet to the Board, which included information on the event, the latest edition of Tennis Magazine, and the FRPA Journal.

Ms. Bylica described the scheduled events:

- July 27th Welcome Party, tied into the Starlight Musicals
- July 31st Awards Gala at War Memorial Auditorium
 - Tropical-themed buffet
 - Past and present tennis attire themed fashion show
 - Music
 - Awards
- August 3rd Closing luncheon/award ceremony event at Holiday Park Social Center

Ms. Bylica reported they had done well securing sponsorship for the tournament. They had also partnered with five hotels, their local concessionaire and Match Point to provide rebates on rooms, concessions and equipment. This additional revenue would help offset the cost of the activities. Hotel partners were: Embassy Suites on the 17th Street Causeway, Galleria I Doubletree Suites on Sunrise, The Hampton Inn off of SR 84, the Sheraton off of Griffin Road and I-95 and the Travel Lodge on Sunrise across from Holiday Park. Sun Trolley would provide transportation between some parks, hotels and events.

Ms. Bylica listed their business partners: Dominos, Einstein, Bucky's Grill, L.A. Fitness, Dillard's, Prince and the CBB with gift bag items. Ped and Penn would provide forty cases of tennis balls valued at \$2,000.

Ms. Bylica reported that this was the first time this event would be hosted in Florida.

Ms. Bylica reminded the Board that the Starlight Musicals began on June 15th. She noted they had expanded it to eight weeks due to Bank of America's additional \$5,000 in sponsorship money.

Ms. Bylica announced that George English Park was the recipient of Gold Coast Magazine's "Best Place to Shoot Hoops" award.

Mr. LaBate asked for an explanation of Beach Tennis. Mr. Kraft explained that it was much like sand volley ball, but the net was at 6'7.75". Tennis rackets were used, but a softer, slower ball was used. Mr. Kraft stated Fort Lauderdale had recently hosted the second of two national tour events at the Yankee Clipper.

Mr. Fee said people had asked about turning the lawn bowling courts in Hardy Park into grass tennis courts. Mr. Kraft said they were considering this; Mr. Gizzi said this idea was still in development at staff level.

Mr. Kraft explained to Mr. Weiss that participants would contribute a \$50 entry fee and an additional \$20 for second and third events. This included the parties and the gift pack.

Dr. Hays asked if these events would generate income for the City. Ms. Bylica anticipated they would make approximately \$5,000.

Mr. Angelbello asked how the homeless were dealt with at George English Park. Ranger Supervisor Jones said the homeless tended to relocate away from events in the parks. He noted they had also been working with the Homeless Outreach Center and other agencies to provide assistance. Mr. Angelbello said the homeless issue at Holiday Park was "totally horrendous" and he had called the Police on several occasions.

Ms. Bylica said there was minimal homeless activity at George English. Mr. Kraft said the fencing and controlled access at the tennis center were an advantage.

Ms. Rynard asked Supervisor Jones to work with Parks and Recreation and the Police to devote their attention to curtailing any illegal activity in the parks. Supervisor Jones stated this was an ongoing challenge on which they were always working.

Dr. Hays noted that in the Rules of the Parks, it stated an habitual offender could be barred from parks for six months. She asked how many people had been barred, and she wondered what would happen if someone was barred and returned. Dr. Hays felt this was a case of the rules not being enforced.

Mr. Weiss felt it all boiled down to the inadequate number of park rangers, and the City should consider adding more rangers. Chair Hartman agreed they were seriously understaffed, and noted that rangers provided preventive maintenance.

3. Plaque Honoring Sara Horn
Civic People's Park

Terry Rynard

Ms. Rynard said there had been a request from Genia Ellis, president of the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations, for this plaque. Ms. Ellis had written of Ms. Horn's work in the Tarpon River neighborhood and the community at large, having served on Code Enforcement and other City boards.

Motion made by Mr. Natale, seconded by Mr. LaBate, approve the plaque honoring Sara Horn in Civic People's Park. Board unanimously approved.

Mr. Natale pointed out that they must consider how the monuments should be placed in the park, to avoid the "tombstone look." He thought they might consider groupings around trees.

Mr. Fee recommended that when a person was nominated for a plaque, someone should attend their meeting to tell the Board about the person. Chair Hartman thought this was a good idea.

Dr. Hays said as the Board's liaison to the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations, she could speak on their behalf when the recommendations were made by the Council.

4. Resolution Recognizing Joseph C. Carter

Mark Hartman

Chair Hartman distributed copies of a newspaper article regarding Mr. Carter dated May 9, 2007 and noted he was a force in the City and County.

Ms. Rynard explained that they wanted the proclamation to express the Board's sympathy at Mr. Carter's passing, and to recognize his long service and dedication to Parks and Recreation. Chair Hartman distributed copies of the City Commission's proclamation regarding Mr. Carter. He then read the Parks and Recreation proclamation.

5. Park Rules and Regulations

Terry Rynard

Chair Hartman felt there was room for discussion on the changes to the rules and regulations. He wanted Board members to read through the proposed changes and discuss them. He acknowledged that their discussion would result in questions and further discussion of policy issues.

Chair Hartman wanted Board members to read the changes and make very concise discussion notes for the Board's next meeting.

Mr. LaBate asked if the Board's input was time sensitive. Ms. Rynard felt there was nothing overtly time sensitive. Ms. Rynard invited Board members to phone her or Mr. Thornburg with any questions they might have.

Motion made by Mr. Weiss, seconded by Mr. Mabson to defer this item to next month, and to devote the bulk of next month's agenda to this item. Board unanimously approved.

Chair Hartman advised Board members again to keep their remarks very concise.

Mr. Natale said he must miss next month's meeting, and Chair Hartman advised him to send his suggestions to Ms. Rynard or Mr. Thornburg.

Ms. Rynard invited Board members to email their suggestions to her prior to their next meeting and she would compile them into one document.

Dr. Hays suggested that an email be sent to absent Board members regarding this.

6. Board Comments

Mark Hartman

Chair Hartman reminded the Board that the FRPA Conference would be August 27 through 31 in Orlando. The NRPA Congress would be September 25 through 29 in Indianapolis.

Chair Hartman distributed copies of a newspaper article regarding the Broward Trust for Historic Preservation's plan to move the Annie Beck House from off of Las Olas to Middle River Terrace Park, and the need for funds to accomplish this.

Chair Hartman requested volunteers for all City Parks programs and provided a phone number for the public to call: 954-828-PARK.

Mr. Natale said there was interest in reviving the Fort Lauderdale River Raft Race. He had been approached by the Vice Commodore of the Lauderdale Yacht and Tennis Club about hosting this. He asked Ms. Rynard to determine what would be involved, and asked her to consider co-sponsorship with the yacht club. Ms. Rynard said they could investigate this and discuss it with the yacht club.

Mr. Natale asked if anyone knew what had become of the Cajun Zydeco Crawdad fest; he had not seen any advertisements regarding this event in Deerfield Beach this year. Mr. Gizzi thought Deerfield Beach was no longer hosting the festival. He stated this was both a money-maker and a risk for the City. Mr. Natale strongly suggested that the Board support bringing this event back to the City. Mr. Gizzi said he would contact the promoter to determine the reason(s) it was being dropped.

Mr. Gizzi noted that the cost for that event had been \$200,000 to \$250,000. It was a gated event with a full bar, and there were questions about whether the City should be making money from alcohol sales [a significant portion of the event revenue]. Given the significant costs for production, security, lighting, staging, and entertainment, Mr. Gizzi said they must do some homework to determine if they could bring an event of that magnitude back into the City.

Mr. Natale said when they had met with the city manager two years ago he asked them to bring ideas to him.

Mr. Natale thanked Ms. Rynard, Mr. Romeo and Mr. Dempsey for the recent tree giveaway at the yacht club.

Mr. Natale said the idea to ban smoking at the beach had come up at the City Commission again. He believed it was wrong to ban smoking at the beach. Mr. Natale remembered a speaker who had addressed the Board with this idea some time ago, and that the Board had not supported this idea. He feared the City Commission was leaning in this direction. Mr. Natale believed education must be used to discourage all forms of littering on the beach.

Ms. Rynard said they had tried the "butt bags" on the beach, and the results were initially not very good, but had recently greatly improved. They would continue putting the bags out for the public to use.

Dr. Hays said when the Commission recently discussed this, the opinion was that the butt bags were not very successful. She said there was also confusion because they were discussing banning smoking not only at the beach, but outdoors in the entire City, instead of adding cigarette butts to the litter ordinance. Dr. Hays noted that the problem with this was enforcement.

Mr. Weiss requested an update on the background checks they had discussed some time ago. He also asked what had happened with the idea for a lightning-detection system.

Ms. Rynard said they would implement the background checks in July for the football season. Any volunteers on staff had started the process as well. She said most staff had already gone through the process.

Ms. Rynard said they had some portable lightning-detection units at the pools now. They would see how successful these were and phase them in at other locations and for large events. Ms. Rynard said she would have staff report to the Board on these issues in July.

Mr. Fee asked if staff could visit Holiday Park prior to the All Star Tournaments and weed the flower beds. He noted that hundreds of families from all over south Florida came for these tournaments, and he wanted the City to look good.

Ms. Medalie asked if the Police could provide a presence at the upcoming tennis and all Star Tournament.

Mr. Fee thanked the staff for giving them input into the parks rule changes; he felt this allowed the Board to actively help improve the parks. Chair Hartman reminded Board members that the Board's function was to communicate with the Commission. He noted that aside from the Commission reading the Board's meeting minutes, individual Board members could contact commissioners personally.

Mr. LaBate asked staff to let the Board know about ongoing issues the Board could help bring up with the City Commission. Chair Hartman reminded the Board that the staff was bound by the chain of command.

Mr. LaBate suggested the Board have one meeting dedicated to some broader problems of which they were all aware to discuss possible solutions.

Mr. Payne asked Ms. Rynard the status on the umbrellas for the playgrounds. Ms. Rynard said they were aware this was a priority, especially at the rubberized areas, but these had not been funded at this time.

Mr. Mabson said he would like to have a discussion about the budget for park rangers. He also wanted to discuss alternative ways to recognize people in Civic People's Park.

Chair Hartman agreed that the ranger issue was critical and they should persist in bringing it to the forefront of discussion. Chair Hartman said they must set an agenda stating the City must have more park rangers in the future. He noted that the lack of rangers had a domino effect on many issues, such as customer service, the homeless issues and vandalism. Mr. Mabson thought Board members should individually contact commissioners regarding this.

Mr. Weiss pointed out that the last time the Board had recommended additional rangers, the City Commission had suggested outsourcing this responsibility and getting rid of the rangers. He agreed they must get this issue in front of the Commission again. Chair Hartman felt they must develop a strategic plan to accomplish this. He noted the recent increase in park acreage with no increase in rangers, which served to exacerbate the problem.

Mr. LaBate suggested a strategic planning workshop for the Board to define the issues on which they would concentrate and act upon.

Chair Hartman suggested that in June, he could bring a plan of how to address the issue of developing more substantive items. They could work on this at their July meeting.

Dr. Hays suggested that the park cleanup Mr. Fee brought up would be a great CVC project.

Dr. Hays informed the Board that every recognized civic association had scholarships for attending the Neighborhood Conference in Sarasota, and the County provided bus service. She noted that parks and recreation issues were included in these conferences, and advised interested Board members to visit the CFLCA.org website for information.

Dr. Hays said the Education Advisory Board had been discussing contamination problems at Sunland Park Elementary School. She said they had been informed that the park was clean. Ms. Rynard confirmed that the park wells had been tested when they learned of the high readings at the school, and both the City's internal tests and the third-party tests had come back clean.

Dr. Hays requested an update on the airplane.

7. Adjournment

Mark Hartman

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.