

**PARKS, RECREATION & BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2008 - 7:00 P.M.**

Board Members	Attendance	Cumulative Attendance October 2007- September 2008	
		Present	Absent
Mark Hartman, Chair	P	2	0
Michael Natale, Vice Chair	P	2	0
Curtiss Berry	P	2	0
Betty Shelley	P	2	0
John "Jay" Verkey (arrived 7:09)	P	2	0
Matthew Weiss	A	1	1
Sean Fee	A	1	1
Robert Payne	A	1	1
James LaBate	A	1	1
JoAnne Medalie	P	1	1
Ed Angelbello	P	1	1
Robert Hoysgaard (left 9:05)	P	1	1
Larry Mabson (arrived 7:15)	P	1	1
Kevin May, Jr.	A	1	1

Staff and Guests

Phil Thornburg, Parks and Recreation Director
Terry Rynard, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director
Frank Snedaker, Chief Architect
Jeff Justinak, Assistant Fire Chief
Earnest Jones, Park Ranger Supervisor
Stacey Daley, Administrative Assistant
Mary Graham, Fire-Rescue Facilities Bond Issue Blue Ribbon Committee
Dr. Elizabeth Hays, Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations
Hilda Testa, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Call to Order

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

Approval of November 2007 Minutes

Ms. Shelley noted a correction to page five, paragraph five of the November 2007 minutes; "Imperial Park" should read "Imperial Point."

Motion made by Mr. Natale, seconded by Ms. Shelley, to approve the minutes of the November 2007 meeting with the requested correction. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Hartman noted for the record that the City website shows the Board cancelled the October 2007 meeting when, in fact, the Board did meet for in-service training in October 2007.

1. Department Report

Terry Rynard

Ms. Rynard announced the resignation of Shirley Small from the Board due to health issues.

Ms. Rynard provided an update on the tree inventory, stating the inventory is under way by the City and will continue over the next six months. The inventory is being done through a state grant, and would allow for the creation of a preventive maintenance program with exact GPS locations of the trees.

Ms. Rynard noted there had been a severe beachfront storm in October, causing erosion issues between the 15th and 16th Courts. The City obtained an emergency permit to hire a consultant, and the consultant's recommendations are being evaluated to secure the beach area and protect the State road.

Ms. Rynard stated the City was pleased with the turnout for the New Year's Eve Countdown event, and estimated 20,000 to 30,000 people in attendance, with over 1,000 people attending the family event earlier in the evening

Ms. Rynard announced the City is in Phase III water restrictions, and provided a fact sheet showing variances to the restrictions.

2. Board Comments

Chair Hartman

Chair Hartman restated the following issues from the November meeting, as that meeting had not been televised.

- The City was recognized by the State for the "Commit to Be Fit" walking program. Chair Hartman congratulated Marie Rock for her work with the program.

- Chair Hartman thanked the people involved in the Jazz Brunch held the beginning of January, and noted the next brunch will be held the first weekend in February.
- Beach parking permits are available for \$5.00 for residents. Required documentation includes car registration, proof of residency, and driver's license. Chair Hartman stated he had been using the pass, and it had definitely paid for itself in parking fees.

Chair Hartman announced the Florida Renaissance Festival at Quiet Waters Park begins February 9th, and runs for five weekends.

Chair Hartman outlined the upcoming Tax Amendment to be voted on January 29, 2008. Chair Hartman emphasized the importance of this vote to the Parks and Recreation Department, as the cuts would directly impact the Department's budget.

Mr. Berry asked about where parking is allowed with the parking permits. Chair Hartman stated the permit comes with instructions and a list of where the pass can be used. The permit allows for parking along A1A at North Beach, along Las Olas, and at South Beach.

Mr. Natale asked for an update on the off-shore fueling issue discussed at a previous meeting. Chair Hartman suggested the issue be placed on a future agenda.

Ms. Rynard announced the Air and Sea Show for this year was cancelled by the promoter.

Ms. Shelley thanked the Parks Department for the great job done on the field used by the rugby team. Ms. Shelley noted there are no recycling bins available; Ms. Rynard stated bins would be placed at the rugby field.

Dr. Hays requested further details on the contract with the promoter for the Air and Sea Show. Ms. Rynard stated the contract is null and void, and the promoter would have to come back next year and go through the process again from the beginning next year. The contract would also be open to other interested promoters.

Mr. Berry asked if the trees from the swale would be replaced in front of the Fireman's Hall. Ms. Rynard stated the adjacent land owners are responsible for the swale maintenance. The City has an adopt-a-tree program, which allows citizens to obtain trees from the City; however, their maintenance is the responsibility of the citizens. Ms. Rynard noted there are right-of-way areas where the City takes responsibility for the

trees, and she would check to see if the Fireman's Hall location was a candidate for that program.

Mr. Verkey requested information on the boat parade, and asked if the City had made any money through the renting out of the park areas. Mr. Thornburg stated there was a fairly large group in attendance, but due to a variety of logistical issues, visibility was limited. Mr. Thornburg stated the City would probably not do the same thing again, and next year the parks would probably be kept open to the public.

3. Mills Pond Park – Fire Station

Frank Snedaker
Jeff Justinak

Mr. Frank Snedaker, Chief Architect for the City, provided a brief presentation regarding the fire station proposal. Mr. Jeff Justinak, Assistant Fire Chief, provided a handout to the Board and pointed out the significance of the relocation of the station. Mr. Justinak stated the relocation of the fire station is "absolutely critical" to the fire/rescue team in improving response times and providing for the public safety.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Justinak explained the response profiles for the first medic on the scene is estimated at eight minutes or less. A map provided to the Board showed locations where the response time exceeds ten minutes, and reflects data over a one year period of time.

Mr. Natale requested data showing the number of calls received from each of the areas depicted on the map, which Mr. Justinak agreed to provide. Chair Hartman asked how many calls were from Wilton Manors residents. Mr. Justinak did not have that information available, but agreed to provide those numbers to the Board.

Mr. Hoysgaard asked about the current location as compared to the proposed location. Mr. Justinak explained the current location is on Powerline Road, just north of Sunrise. Mr. Snedaker explained the new location would be at the very south end of Mills Pond Park, on 15th Street.

Mr. Angelbello requested information on the plans for the existing building. Mr. Justinak stated the City's Legal Department was currently reviewing options for the existing building.

Mr. Snedaker explained the current plan would place the fire station on the far south end of Mills Pond Park. The Fire Department would shift the current ball fields to the north and rebuild the maintenance and restroom buildings. Mr. Snedaker pointed out the following advantages to the City:

- Fire presence at the south end of the park, with 24 hour security
- New ball fields
- New maintenance and restroom buildings would be built in a more convenient location
- Wetlands would not be involved
- No usable space would be lost
- Better lighting and security at night

Chair Hartman asked about Fire Department access to the park. Mr. Justinak stated all entrances and exits for emergency calls would be on 19th Street, and a gate would lead into the park to be used if needed.

Mr. Natale opposed giving up park space for any use other than park services. Mr. Natale asked how long the ball fields would be unavailable for use during construction. Mr. Snedaker stated the construction would begin in June 2008 in the north field, leaving the two south fields in place. Lighting and irrigation would be added, and construction would be completed prior to the start of the football season.

Mr. Natale asked where the money would come from for the proposed plan. Mr. Snedaker stated a Community Development Block Grant would pay, which is predominantly federal funds. Any additional money needed would come from CIP. The money for construction of the fire station building would come from the restructured fire bond funding.

Mr. Natale asked if the communities to the east of the proposed site had been contacted. Mr. Justinak stated there had been two Homeowner's Association meetings in May and June, and the Homeowner's Associations were agreeable to the proposal. Mr. Natale requested minutes from those meetings. Mr. Snedaker agreed to provide minutes, and stated if no minutes were available the Homeowner's Association leadership would come to confirm to the Board there were no outstanding issues.

Chair Hartman asked about the existing land at Fire Station 46, and requested clarification on the land use issue. Mr. Justinak stated the land is to remain a fire station, and is being evaluated by Legal for possible options. Mr. Justinak was unable to speculate on the deed restrictions and whether the land could be used for a community park. Mr. Justinak stated the deed is currently restricted for fire station use,

and recommended a condition be added requiring the City to pursue options and report back to the Board on the legal negotiations.

Chair Hartman asked about other alternatives, other sites, and comparison costs requested in an earlier meeting. Mr. Snedaker stated other non-City owned property had not been looked at, because the purchase of new property had not been budgeted in the fire bond. Annexation had prompted the move, and Mr. Snedaker pointed out the annexation had also provided an additional 30 acres available for park land.

Mr. Snedaker stated the cost of a temporary relocation of the fire station, as well as the construction costs to build a two-story structure to replace the current station would be about \$600,000. Mr. Snedaker also stated the park improvements would not be a part of the deal if the proposed site was not approved.

Ms. Medalie asked about the difference in size between the two stations. Mr. Snedaker stated the present station on Powerline is approximately 3,500 square feet, which is half the size of the proposed station. The necessary land would be about the same as the current site.

Ms. Medalie requested further information about response time requirements, and how many fire stations were not meeting those requirements. Mr. Justinak stated Rio Vista and the Mills Pond areas are the two falling below the requirements. Rio Vista would also be building a new southeast station as a part of the bond project.

Mr. Verkey asked about the timeline for funding decisions. Mr. Snedaker stated the people in charge of funding would like the spending to be completed by June. Mr. Verkey asked about the fencing around the fields and was advised by Mr. Snedaker that there would be fencing between the fire station and the fields.

Mr. Snedaker stated there is a small community room in the fire building, which would be available for community meetings.

Mr. Mabson asked if there had been any consideration given to contacting local owners regarding acquiring the old, unsightly properties across the street to be used instead of the park property. Mr. Snedaker stated that option had not been discussed.

Ms. Medalie asked if the federal grant money would cover all the construction, including the restroom and maintenance buildings. Mr. Snedaker confirmed the federal money would cover all the promised services.

Mr. Hoysgaard expressed concern about giving up park property, but felt the fire station usage would still be considered "City service," as opposed to building for-profit

operations. Mr. Hoysgaard felt the need in the Sunrise area for fire protection would justify giving up the under-utilized area being requested.

Dr. Hays asked for clarification on the cost for the renovations and construction. Mr. Snedaker explained the construction is two projects with separate funding. The fire station construction is estimated at \$3 million, and approximately \$600,000 for the park improvements. The funding for the fire station portion would all come from the fire bond. The funding for the park improvements would come from grants. Mr. Snedaker confirmed none of the costs would come from the Parks and Recreation budget.

Chair Hartman summarized the questions remaining unanswered from the September 2007 meeting:

- What would be done with the current fire station site?
- What other alternatives are possible?
- Concerns expressed over the architect chosen for the project.
- What is the rationale of not putting in a two-story building to save half an acre of park land?
- Could the existing site be traded for some park land?

Mr. Thornburg expressed his concern over giving up park land, but felt the fire station relocation was the right thing to do for both the Parks Department and for the Fire Department. Mr. Thornburg recommended the Board request an amendment to look old space usage and funding, and to make that part of the Board's recommendation to the City.

Mr. Natale re-emphasized his concerns over giving up park land, and requested the specific funding plan be provided to the Board to ensure the funds would cover the improvements.

Chair Hartman stated he had visited both sites and the adjacent neighborhoods, and expressed reservations with the project. Chair Hartman expressed concern over taking park land for development, even with the City calling the space "unusable," pointing out that one of the goals of the Board is the protection of green space.

Chair Hartman expressed concern with the fire station being built adjacent to Wilton Manors, and whether the City of Wilton Manors will be receiving improved response times from the City of Fort Lauderdale Fire Department. Chair Hartman emphasized his

understanding of the public safety needs for Wilton Manors, but did not feel Fort Lauderdale should be building a fire station to serve another city.

Chair Hartman noted the Broward County Parks Advisory Board has made a recommendation to the County to not allow green space to be used for any purpose, and has even asked that requests for public land use go to a public vote. Chair Hartman felt the Board should not approve the proposal, and should recommend Fort Lauderdale not give up park land without a Citywide vote.

Chair Hartman provided the following quote from the President of the Florida League of Cities, "We must protect the environment for our future, and for the future of Florida's citizens. As President of Florida League of Cities, I am committed to helping our cities stand on the front lines to protect Florida's green space." Chair Hartman continued by citing a quote from a State document on parks in the twentieth century: "The need is for conservation, recreation, and environmental needs." Chair Hartman emphasized the goal of the Parks Board is not to advocate for public safety.

Ms. Medalie commended Chair Hartman for the homework done on this issue. She expressed concern if the Board does not make a stand on the issue of green space in the parks.

Chair Hartman felt the parks were seen as a "cash cow" by the City to be sold off in bits and pieces for quick cash. Chair Hartman asserted the Board would be setting a precedent which could not be reversed in the future.

Mr. Natale agreed setting a precedent could be very dangerous. Ms. Rynard felt the reference to the land being unusable had been taken slightly out of context. Ms. Rynard stated the proposal simply stated the land was currently not being used, not that the land was truly "unusable."

Mr. Snedaker explained there would be no impact difference due to the location being near Wilton Manors. The service area would remain the same, and there would be no impact or change to the response profile.

Mr. Verkey agreed with the preservation of green space, but felt that public safety concerns should be a priority. Mr. Verkey stated the area is not being used, and felt even though the Fire Department would get the land for free, in return the park would have new fields, concessions, and bathrooms.

Mr. Mabson suggested the existing properties on the south side of the street be considered, and felt the abandoned properties might fit within the budget described.

In response to questions by Mr. Hoysgaard, Mr. Justinak explained Wilton Manors does not have their own fire station; Fort Lauderdale has a contract with Wilton Manors to provide fire protection.

Ms. Mary Graham, a Planning and Zoning Board member, stated she had been on the Fire Bond Committee for four years and felt the Committee had been remiss in starting the process of the fire station relocation without understanding the ramifications of that decision as well as in not involving other interested parties. Ms. Graham made the following observations regarding the proposal:

- Why would the ball field construction would begin in June when the land use amendment would take twelve to eighteen months to complete?
- Variance could be obtained from Planning and Zoning to make the existing sites a feasible alternative to using park lands.
- The fire station does not need 1.3 acres and could request set-back relief to be able to use a smaller piece of land.
- When Osswald Park was annexed, there were questions about the maintenance of the park. Ms. Graham expressed concern over whether or not the City had actually agreed to maintain and fund Osswald Park.
- Does the \$3 million estimate cover only construction costs, or does it include the related soft costs such as sanitary connections and water? Ms. Graham questioned whether or not all the necessary costs could be covered under the \$3 million estimate.
- Although a site plan is not a specific requirement, it would certainly be helpful to see a site plan before approval.

Mr. Snedaker explained there is a site plan, and the 1.3 acres was necessary to comply with set-backs. The additional one-third acre is due to the existing driveway to be used by the fire trucks. Mr. Snedaker stated the necessary land would be slightly less than an acre if the construction were not in compliance with the set-back regulations.

In response to a question by Mr. Natale, Ms. Graham stated the item had been deferred at Planning and Zoning for 30 days, and no vote had been taken. The Fire Bond Committee had taken a vote in their last meeting concerning the relocation.

Ms. Graham explained the Mills Pond location had been discussed in early 2006 following the 2005 annexation. The Planning and Zoning Committee became involved

because of the requested land use amendment. The Fire Bond Committee voted unanimously to approve the location at Mills Pond Park.

Mr. Verkey asked if the proposed station would be able to support the growing community in the future, or if more construction would be necessary. Mr. Snedaker explained the facility is designed with three bays, which is the size of new construction throughout the City. The building plan takes future expansion into account.

Mr. Mabson asked if anyone has considered going across the street for land, and if there were logistical problems or other issues keeping the land outside the park out of consideration. Mr. Snedaker explained the Rio Vista plan had included a budget for property, and has been unable to acquire additional land within that budget. Mr. Mabson asked specifically about the northwest section of 19th Street, and Mr. Snedaker stated he was not aware of anyone looking into the acquisition of that property.

Chair Hartman acknowledged the Board does not have the final say in whether or not this construction moves forward, but wanted the Board to go on the record as being opposed to the usage of open green space for non-park activities.

Motion made by Chair Hartman, seconded by Mr. Hoysgaard, to recommend 1.3 acres of land in Mills Pond Park be granted a land use change, for the benefit of public safety, by way of the Fire Department having use of that land to move Station 46 into Mills Pond Park. In a roll call vote, the motion failed by a vote of 3-6. (Mr. Mabson, no; Mr. Hoysgaard, no; Mr. Angelbello, yes; Mr. Verkey, yes; Ms. Medalie, no; Ms. Shelley, no; Mr. Berry, yes; Mr. Natale, no; Chair Hartman, no)

Motion made by Mr. Mabson, and duly seconded, that the Board refuse to make a recommendation until the proponents of the project demonstrate that they cannot acquire any adjacent properties in that community. The motion was withdrawn without a second.

Chair Hartman stated the Board needed to come back to this issue to explore other options.

4. A1A Overpass at Bahia Mar

Terry Rynard

Terry Rynard provided a brief description of the project. Although there was no legal agreement to force the City to allow public access to the overpass from South Beach to the Bahia Mar properties, the overpass has been opened to the beach.

Chair Hartman suggested the issue be moved to a later date for discussion.

5. **Plaque Honoring Jennie Brooks - Civic
People's Park**

Terry Rynard

Terry Rynard stated there was a request to add a plaque honoring Jennie Brooks, a long time Fort Lauderdale resident, who recently passed away. A dedication has been scheduled for February 9, 2008.

Motion made by Mr. Natale, seconded by Ms. Shelley, to approve the addition of a plaque honoring Jennie Brooks. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Rynard stated there had been a suggestion made to build some type of memorial wall to replace the numerous ground plaques.

Mr. Jones announced a dedication scheduled for January 26, 2008 to rename the Jack Kay Park to the Jack and Harriet Kay Park. The dedication will be held at 10:30.

6. **Adjournment**

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by K. Bierbaum, Prototype, Inc.]