

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

Board Members	Attendance	Cumulative Attendance October 2007- September 2008	
		Present	Absent
Mark Hartman, Chair	P	6	0
Michael Natale, Vice Chair	P	3	2
Curtiss Berry	P	5	0
Betty Shelley	P	4	1
John Verkey (left 7:45)	P	4	1
Matthew Weiss (arrived 7:06)	P	4	1
Sean Fee (arrived 7:05)	P	4	1
Robert Payne (arrived 7:06)	P	4	1
James LaBate (arrived 7:05)	P	2	3
Joann Medalie	P	4	1
Ed Angelbello (arrived 7:05)	P	4	1
Robert Hoysgaard	P	4	1
Larry Mabson	P	4	1
Kevin May, Jr.	P	3	2
Donna Guthrie	P	1	2

Staff and Guests

Phil Thornburg, Parks and Recreation Director
Eric Silva, Planning and Zoning
Earnest Jones, Park Ranger Supervisor
Stacey Daley, Administrative Assistant
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 March 26 2008 Minutes

Mr. Thornburg clarified the fourth paragraph of page 3 to read, "Ms. McCaffrey advised the Hall of Fame would remain at the complex. The estimated cost of construction had not yet been determined; however, would likely be funded by public and private funds." He noted that this statement was not to be interpreted that the City would be funding the Hall of Fame, only the complex itself.

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Hoysgaard, to approve the minutes of the March 2008 meeting as amended. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

1. Department Report

Phil Thornburg

- The Master Plan is close to being finalized and a draft of that plan will be submitted within the next week. After a review of the draft and any comments from the City, the final Master Plan is scheduled to be completed by June 2008 and then submitted to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for review.
- Summer camp registrations are now being accepted; Croissant Park is already full.
- Stranahan Park is hosting the Green Living Expo on April 26, 2008 from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. arranged by the City of Fort Lauderdale along with the Utility Advisory Committee.

Mr. Berry asked Mr. Thornburg to investigate the restroom situation at Croissant Park. On the weekends, the restrooms are locked and not available for use by the park patrons creating a sanitary issue. Mr. Thornburg advised if the building is not being utilized for a specific program, public restrooms are not available; however, he will look into the issue.

2. Board Comments

Mark Hartman

Chair Hartman reported the following:

- April is Drowning Prevention Month. The Fort Lauderdale Aquatics Complex hosted an event called April Pool's Day featuring drowning prevention from Swim Central, the local Fire Rescue organization, and others.
- The Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Complex will also be hosting Family Fun Day on April 26, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and is free of charge. The program will have information regarding swimming lessons, summer programs, camps, dive team and lessons, face painting, cotton candy and other activities.

- The City of Fort Lauderdale will be providing the venue for the annual AIDS Walk which will be held at Huizenga Park on Sunday, April 27, 2008.
- Mr. Weiss commented that the parking at Holiday Park during events is an issue as the baseball field parking being used by guests of the War Memorial Auditorium during events. There is a \$5 charge for event parking; however, the parking at the baseball fields is free. This presents a problem when there are baseball games scheduled and families with children are forced to park elsewhere. The patrons of War Memorial not only fill up the parking lots at the baseball fields and grassy areas through out the area, but drive too fast for the conditions, putting the children at the baseball fields in danger.

The Board discussed options for controlling the parking utilizing parking attendants, barricades, or signs. Mr. Jones stated several options were also discussed at the monthly meetings held with the staff of Holiday Park. The gymnasium parking lot is available for parking; efforts are being made for the parking staff at War Memorial to direct patrons to that area. These parking challenges are also being addressed with the possible use of shuttles from the Sears and Parker Playhouse parking lots, as well as the lot by the old Community Service building.

Mr. Weiss stated if the \$5 parking fee was eliminated, the parking issue would resolve itself as the patrons are trying to avoid the parking fee and using the free lots designed for other uses.

Mr. Thornburg advised the Parks and Recreation Department would meet with the staff at Holiday Park and work out the traffic plan to come up with a solution for the parking problem. Mr. Thornburg stated he would report the results from the meeting to the PRAB at a future date.

- Chair Hartman wanted to follow up on last month's discussion regarding the Aquatic Complex and the issue of parking. During a visit to the area for April Pool's Day, Mr. Hartman felt that the parking at the South Beach parking lot and other over-flow parking areas around the Hall of Fame Complex was adequate.
- National and international recognition of the proposed project was illustrated in the April 2008 issue of *Aquatics International*.
- Chair Hartman also reported that in today's *Sun-Sentinel* newspaper, it was reported that the Bonnet House had agreed to drop their lawsuit against the neighboring hotel and will receive a settlement in the amount of \$425,000 towards the installation of landscaping to block the view of the new hotel.

- Mr. Verkey commented he appreciated that the entire Board was present for tonight's PRAB meeting. The Board welcomed new member, Donna Guthrie.
- Ms. Shelley complimented the Parks Department for the work with the trees donated to the residents by the nursery owned by Mr. Gary Starkweather. Ms. Shelley noted that many neighborhoods took advantage of the Adopt-A-Tree program giving away foxtail palms and coconut palms.
- Mr. Payne asked if the Park and Recreation Department had a plan to make shade covers on the playground equipment in the City's parks a priority as the exposure to the Florida sun may present a health hazard.

Mr. Thornburg advised the issue is funding for the shade structures for the 78 playground within the City. Chair Hartman suggested the Department prepare an assessment of the needs and priorities to determine the next step. The one park that currently has shade structures was obtained through donations from the neighborhood park services.

Dr. Hayes asked the Board to consider a recommendation to the City to develop a 10-15 year staggered plan to install shade structures, as funding all of the parks at one time would present serious funding challenges.

- Mr. Angelbello stated the mandate of the PRAB is to provide feedback to the City Commissioners regarding the infrastructure of the City parks and prioritize projects by having a master plan for the parks.
- Chair Hartman would like to discuss ways to protect the parks and programs in light of the expected budget cuts at next month's PARB meeting.
- Vice Chair Natale asked if the City Attorney has reported back yet regarding the property of the existing Station 46 being turned into green-space. Mr. Thornburg advised he had not received any information and advised the Planning and Zoning Board will be discussing that issue at their next meeting.
- Mr. Payne inquired about the property across the street from Mills Pond Park with regard to purchasing other parcels of land instead of using existing park property. Vice Chair Natale responded that at a prior presentation regarding Station 46, there was some discussion regarding the search for other properties; however, there are no budgeted dollars for any purchases.

Chair Hartman raised the question to the Board as to what happens next, and felt the parks and green spaces need protection in the form of laws.

3. Beach Master Plan

Phil Thornburg

Mr. Thornburg introduced Mr. Silva from the Planning and Zoning Department to discuss the Beach Master Plan and deliver a power point presentation to illustrate the improvements discussed, for the benefit of the Board.

Mr. Silva commented that although there had already been a couple of public meetings, there is opportunity for additional input before the plan is finalized. Mr. Silva then updated the Board as to the process for finalization.

Scope of Work

- Phase 1 – Gathering Information and reviewing existing studies and plans.
- Phase 2 – Draft concepts for the various parcels in the Las Olas area.
- Phase 3 – Implementation strategies and the final master plan.

Mr. Silva advised Phase 1 is completed, and Phase 2 will be completed shortly. Various studies, including parking, urban revitalization, economic analysis, and zoning have been conducted in the last 20 years. Many changes to the area have taken place such as roadway improvements to Sea Breeze Boulevard and A1A, the beach wall, and pedestrian area improvements at the north end of the study area.

In addition to the public improvements, the beach has undergone a significant amount of private development. The study area runs from Sunrise Boulevard at the north end to just south of Harbor Drive at the south and is called the “Central Beach Activity Center.”

The City conducted interviews with private stakeholders in the beach area and noted their comments relating to parking, public areas, green space, pedestrian-friendly environments instead of a vehicular environment, etc.

Conceptual Framework for the Public Realm:

- Aquatics Complex
- Intra-Coastal Promenade – Bahia Mar to the Birch/Las Olas lot.
- Oceanside Plaza
- Almond Street – pedestrian environment to connect to the Oceanside Plaza.
- DC Alexander Park – connection between the Aquatics Complex and the ocean.
- Alhambra – surface parking and pedestrian enhancements
- Water Taxi Service – expansion
- Birch Road Enhancements
- Neighborhood Street Improvements

- Breakers Avenue – pedestrian/retail street to connect to the Bonnet House
- Bonnet House rear entry
- A1A west side – more pedestrian friendly areas
- Overall Way-Finding System – for beach access, attractions and parking.

Mr. Silva advised improvements to the public parcels in the Central Beach Area would include:

- Las Olas Gateway – currently cannot see the ocean from bridge, changes to enhance the view and make the ocean a focal point or landmark, maintain parking.
- Oceanside Plaza – Iconic fountain, palm grove, outdoor market, outdoor events.
- Channel Square – Water Taxi, Café, Boardwalk, Restaurant

Additional areas of focus:

- South Beach Marina and Hotel
- A1A Beach Front Area
- North Beach – Street Scape
- Sunrise Lane Area

Mr. Silva stated the project would also include a review of the six different categories of the zoning code. Three of those categories relate to promoting development and three are to encourage preservation, and for maintenance and revitalization.

The Consultants are tasked with reviewing the development over the last twenty years to determine if the zoning codes are fulfilling their purposes and conduct an assessment with regard to preservation. Their findings will be presented at the next public Commission Meeting in June. The draft Master Plan is scheduled to be presented at the July Commission Meeting. These presentations will be available on the City's website under the Planning and Zoning Department and can be accessed under "Planning Projects."

Ms. Guthrie asked if there would be some type of a shuttle service to connect the various beach areas. Mr. Silva advised there is currently a free trolley service for the beach area and the proposed way-finding system will assist pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

4. Broward County Parks Bond Update Phil Thornburg

Broward County had passed a \$400 million Parks Bond Program, half of which was allocated for the regional park and the other half for the purchase of new park lands within the County.

The City had identified several sites for purchase with the bond dollars. Mr. Thornburg distributed a memorandum with the sites currently being considered by the County for purchase within the City of Fort Lauderdale, including:

- Gore Nursery Site (1611 SW 9th Avenue) – Contract approved by City Commission; County Staff to take to County Commission in May.
- Middle River Terrace Park Addition (132 NE 7th Avenue – Approved by City Commission; new appraisals are in and being reviewed by County Staff.
- Tarpon River (630 SW 9th Avenue) - New appraisals are in and being reviewed by County Staff.
- Hottt School (1700 SW 14th Court) – New appraisals are in and being reviewed by City and County Staff.

The funds for the four sites identified above have currently been earmarked and encumbered. After the new appraisals have been reviewed, renegotiations with the seller may or may not be in order.

Mr. Berry inquired about the selling price of the Gore Nursery site and the contribution from the City to purchase the property. Mr. Silva advised the Gore Nursery site is just less than two acres and the purchase price is \$3.1 million; the County would provide a maximum of \$2 million per site. The City's contribution would be \$1.1 million.

Dr. Hays asked if the four sites listed above were included in the City's count for total acreage of sites currently owned by the City to determine if there would be mitigation possibilities for the loss of land at the Mills Pond site. Mr. Thornburg was unsure if the sites above were included in the City inventory of parks and advised he would have the information for the next Board Meeting.

Additional site for purchase with bond dollars:

- Harbor Beach (1835 S. Ocean Drive) – Appraisal in, negotiating with seller.
- Victoria Park (440 NE 13th Avenue; 1301 NE 5th Street) – Appraisals ordered, one has been received and waiting on second.
- Sistrunk Park Addition (115 NW 6th Street) - Appraisal in, property in probate.
- Lincoln Park Addition (1715 NW 6th Street) – Appraisal ordered.

The last four sites identified have only become active within the last month. The City is currently in the process of performing their due diligence. Mr. Thornburg advised there is approximately \$400,000 dollars left in the fund; any renegotiations will augment the amount still available as well as any properties in other cities unable to close.

Mr. Thornburg advised the South Side School was purchased with bond dollars and the City is in the process of restoring the building to its original condition. Currently the windows are being replaced, followed by interior renovations, and should be completed within 18 months. The building will then be used as a community center. The Boundless Playground is also scheduled for construction within the next six months.

Vice Chair Natale asked if Mr. Thornburg would provide an update on the funding of the Ann Herman Park improvements. The County requires development of the parks purchased with bond dollars within the first five years after the purchase. Mr. Thornburg advised the City plans to develop the parks in the order of purchase and will continue to work their way down the list.

Funding for the development of these parks is paid from the impact fees from new construction within the City. The challenge is completing the development of the parks at a time when new construction and development has slowed. Grants are being utilized to assist with the development several of these parks; many sites will be cleared and sodded to create green space until development can be initiated.

5. “3 Ways to Pay”

Phil Thornburg

After the money bag was lost at Snyder Park, an audit was conducted to review the City’s cash handling operations. Several recommendations from the audit are now being implemented.

The use of credit cards is being encouraged and is working well. Registration without the use of credit cards is available; after the registration form is received by the Parks Department, payment by check or cash must be received within seven days. Extended hours at various remote sites is now available with proper staffing for payment in person. In addition, payments are being accepted at the main office.

Patrons can also set up household accounts and prepay for events and/or classes. A debit type card is issued to the patron for this purpose.

6. Adjournment

Mark Hartman

- The Big Truck and Bull Dozer Extravaganza hosted by the Parks and Recreation Department will be held at George English Park during the last weekend in May.

- A Citywide garage sale will be held on May 3rd, from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the City Hall parking garage sponsored by the Fort Lauderdale Council Civic Association. Sellers and buyers are needed.
- Dr. Hays commented that Floyd Hull Stadium's fields are immaculate; however, the buildings and fencing are in need of attention and/or painting.
- The national memorial for fallen police officers is being observed at the Place Memorial on Friday, May 2nd at 2:00 p.m.

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by H. Testa, Prototype, Inc.]