

APPROVED

**PARKS, RECREATION & BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2008 – 7:00 P.M.**

Cumulative Attendance

Board Members	Attendance	October 2008- September 2009	
		Present	Absent
Mark Hartman, Chair	P	1	0
Curtiss Berry	P	1	0
Betty Shelley	P	1	0
John Verkey	A	0	1
Matthew Weiss	A	0	1
Sean Fee	P	1	0
Robert Payne (arr. 7:04)	P	1	0
Ed Angelbello	A	0	1
Larry Mabson	P	1	0
Donna Guthrie	P	1	0
Andrew Pickens	P	1	0
Mark McCormick	P	1	0
Jeffrey Cannon	P	1	0
Kenny Nail	P	1	0
Marilyn Markus*			

*Will attend beginning in November 2008.

Staff Present

Terry Rynard, Assistant Director, Parks & Recreation

Stacey Daley, Administrative Assistant

John Herbst, City Auditor

Dr. Elizabeth Hays, Fort Lauderdale Council of Civic Associations

Hilda Testa, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Call to Order

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

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Ms. Shelley, to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2008 meeting, as amended. In a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

The amended item for the minutes was as follows:

- Page 5, paragraph 6: replace “‘most used’ parks in the County” with “...in the City.”

Before continuing with the agenda, Chair Hartman asked that the new members of the Board introduce themselves briefly.

Andrew Pickens, appointee of District 1, is Director of Administration for Southern Auto Finance Company. He has served on the Homeowners’ Board and the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations.

Mark McCormick, appointed by Mayor Jim Naugle, is President of Goldstream Capital Holdings.

Jeff Cannon, appointed by Vice Mayor Charlotte Rodstrom, is employed by the City Plantation & Parks Department.

Kenny Nail, appointed by Cindy Hutchinson, is a lifelong resident of Fort Lauderdale.

Chair Hartman stated that the Board’s charge is to help the Parks & Recreation Department better serve the Fort Lauderdale community, and provide a fun and safe environment for the City’s children. He stated that he would discuss the Board’s function in greater depth over the course of the meeting.

1. Charter Amendments – November 4, 2008, Ballot: John Herbst

John Herbst, City Auditor, thanked the Board for its time and attention, and introduced an item that will appear on the City ballot for the November 4, 2008 election.

This Amendment affects the manner in which the City Clerk and City Auditor’s positions are structured within Fort Lauderdale’s City Charter. Mr. Herbst explained that a section of the Charter specifies four Charter Offices within the City: City Manager, City Auditor, City Attorney, and City Clerk. Guidelines by which personnel and civil service employees are managed are included in a separate section of the Charter.

As City Auditor and City Clerk are the two most recent additions to the Charter, the section governing personnel was not amended to state clearly that these two Offices may directly supervise members of their staffs. Mr. Herbst cited this as an oversight. The Amendment, he stated, will clarify the Charter’s language and

eliminate what appears to be a conflict between these two sections of the Charter.

Mr. Herbst advised that this will not affect any current employees, who will be grandfathered into the Charter and will retain their present civil service protections. Nor does the Amendment reflect any animosity between the two Charter Offices in question and the City Manager's office, which currently has authority over personnel decisions.

He affirmed that the Amendment will perform two functions: it will protect and preserve the independence of the City Clerk and City Auditor, and will eliminate a perceived discrepancy between sections of the Charter.

Mr. Herbst offered to answer any questions the Board members might have.

Mr. Berry asked if the discrepancy meant the City Auditor could hire an individual but did not have the right to fire him if it became necessary. Mr. Herbst explained that if the Amendment passes, his office will have both hiring and dismissal rights and the employees of that office will be "at-will employees," save those grandfathered in under the Amendment.

Mr. Nail requested clarification on what a "yes" or "no" vote on the Amendment would mean. Mr. Herbst stated a "yes" vote will give the City Clerk and City Auditor the authority to supervise their own employees, while a vote of "no" will ensure that authority is held by another office.

Mr. Herbst added that the issue is largely one of independence for the Charter Offices. The City Clerk is the official custodian of the City's records, he said, and the integrity of her office depends on her independence from the oversight of the City Manager's office. He reiterated that personnel decisions have not been an issue between the City Manager's office and the two Charter Offices in question, but the Amendment is simply an attempt to clarify the Charter's language regarding the offices' independence.

Mr. Fee asked how long the Charter's current language has been in use. Mr. Herbst replied that the City Clerk became a Charter Office in the late 1990s, while the City Auditor had been added to the Charter in 2004.

Mr. Herbst thanked the Board once again for its time.

2. Staff Introduction: Terry Rynard

Assistant Director Rynard informed the Board that the Department has hired a new Park Operations Superintendent, Brian Hopper. She added that Mr. Hopper plans to attend the Board's next scheduled meeting.

She explained that at one time the Department had employed two Recreation Superintendents, one of whom had been herself; she had simultaneously served as Assistant Director as well. Currently the Department's structure is more in line with other City Departments, with a Director, an Assistant Director, and two Recreation Superintendents. The Assistant Director also oversees planning, land acquisition, and park development.

As Park Operations Superintendent, Mr. Hopper will oversee all maintenance staff and operations. He holds a Master's Degree in Forestry and is a certified arborist, and worked for the city of Oakland Park for three years.

Assistant Director Rynard noted that at the next scheduled meeting, Staff and Board members will go over the Department's handbook for an overview. A chart of the Department's hierarchy is included in the handbook, she said.

3. Department Report: Terry Rynard

Assistant Director Rynard welcomed the new and returning Board members, and reminded the Board that the November and December meetings are usually combined due to the seasonal holidays. The next PRBAB meeting will be held on December 3, 2008, she said, and reiterated that the Board will go over the Department handbook.

She added that two guests will attend the next meeting as well to discuss the Long-Range Strategic Plan.

The Department sent two individuals to the National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) Conference in Baltimore recently. One is David Miller, Recreational Superintendent, who also serves on the National Programming Committee. At the Baltimore event, Mr. Miller was elected to the Minority Society Board as well. Assistant Director Rynard described both these committees as prestigious professional groups.

Another attendee was Grant Administrator Gina Rivera, who will assist the Department in its national accreditation process. Assistant Director Rynard stated this is a rigorous self-evaluation that judges the Department's documentation, alignment of duties and responsibilities, and other considerations.

Accreditation began some 15 years ago, Assistant Director Rynard said, and there are currently only 8-10 cities in the State of Florida who are accredited. She said the process will be a lengthy one.

She praised Mr. Miller and Ms. Rivera for representing the Department and the City with distinction at the NRPA Conference.

Chair Hartman added that it was important for Fort Lauderdale to be represented at the NRPA Conference, noting that Mr. Miller and Ms. Rivera had also brought useful information back to share with the Department at large.

He recalled that the Florida Recreation & Parks Association (FRPA) had held its annual conference on September 8, 2008 in Orlando, and noted that citizen participation is allowed and encouraged at this state conference. He cited the NRPA website, www.NRPA.org, and the FRPA website, www.FRPA.org, as excellent resources for those interested in further information about those organizations.

4. Program of the Month: “Trick or Treat on 2nd Street” – Suzanne Broucek

Ms. Broucek distributed flyers describing this seasonal event to Board members. She introduced herself as Community Program Supervisor of the Parks & Recreation Department, adding that one of her primary areas of responsibility is development of community events.

“Trick or Treat on 2nd Street” is a new cooperative event in conjunction with the Fort Lauderdale Museum of Discovery and Science, the Historical Society, and the River House. It will take place on Halloween from 3:00-7:00 p.m. on 2nd Street. She explained that the afternoon event is intended to attract many younger children in the community.

Evening activities on 2nd Street will be aimed at older children, she said.

Children may begin the event at any of the four participating sites with a “passport,” which will be stamped at each site. When they have visited each site, the passport is entered into a container for prize drawings.

The Department’s site will be on the Esplanade, where they plan to set up a fall carnival with various activities, including bounce houses, toss games, pumpkin coloring, and apple hanging. Ms. Broucek added that Parks & Recreation employees have been very helpful in creating the children’s games.

There will also be a carnival booth with games, a DJ, and “Ghoul Golf.” Candy and small prizes will be given out at all stations; for very young children, separate prizes that do not present choking or other hazards will be available.

The street will be closed off for the event, Ms. Broucek said. She invited any interested Board members to volunteer with the program, noting that approximately 20 people would be needed to run the games and booths. She added that the event would count toward community service hours for any high school students who would like to assist.

The volunteer coordinator for the event is Tim McGovern, she said. He may be reached at 954-828-4340.

Other Halloween activities in conjunction with the City's parks include:

- Mizell Park will hold a Haunted House on Halloween night, primarily aimed at teens rather than younger children;
- Bass Park: will hold a "Spooky Halloween Dance" from 6:30-8:30 p.m.;
- Croissant Park plans an annual cooperative event with its local neighborhood association on Saturday, October 25, 2008 from 3:00-5:00 p.m.;
- Riverland Park will host a Trick or Treat Party and a Splash Party (at the pool) on Saturday, October 25, 2008, from 6:00-8:00 p.m.;
- Carter Park will hold a costume party on Halloween night from 7:00-9:30 p.m. for 5- to 18-year-olds;
- Warfield Park will host a Halloween Blast on Halloween night.

Information for these events is also available online.

Chair Hartman stated he was "very impressed," particularly with the scope of events and target age groups. He felt the Department was providing "everything under the sun" for Halloween, and praised their efforts in putting together a comprehensive scope of activities located all over town.

All the events are free, he pointed out.

He thanked Ms. Broucek for her time and hard work.

Motion made by Chair Hartman, seconded by Mr. Nail, to take Item 6, Election of New Officers, out of order on the agenda.

6. Election of New Officers: Terry Rynard

Assistant Director Rynard explained that a Chair and Vice Chair are elected annually. The Chair sets the agenda for and oversees Board meetings, while the Vice Chair takes over these responsibilities if the Chair cannot be present.

She opened the floor to nominations at this time.

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Payne, to elect Chair Hartman to a third year in this position. In a voice vote, Chair Hartman was unanimously reelected.

Motion made by Chair Hartman to nominate Mr. Weiss for Vice Chair. As Mr. Weiss was not present, it was decided that his nomination would not be seconded in his absence.

Motion made by Mr. Payne to nominate Mr. Mabson as Vice Chair. Mr. Mabson declined to accept the nomination.

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Nail, to nominate Mr. Fee as Vice Chair. In a voice vote, Mr. Fee was unanimously elected as Vice Chair.

5. 2009 FRPA Legislative Platform: Chair Mark Hartman

Chair Hartman reminded the Board that the 2009 platform, or legislative priorities, were included in the members' information packets. He read the following statement from this flier:

"Florida's public Parks and Recreation Agencies, such as Fort Lauderdale, provide services, programs, and open spaces that add value to their communities. The value can be measured in the achievement of our most precious natural resources: our youth, the cohesiveness of our communities, the ability to conserve open space, the economic development provided through tournaments, concerts, and festivals, the physical health of our residents, the protection and communication of those places and spaces that preserve the heritage of our state, the protection of the natural environment that provides our outdoor classroom space for all to learn and appreciate the outdoors, and most of all, our ability to do this to ensure Florida's future."

He explained that FRPA is asking Florida's citizens to support these issues and vocalize this support to the State Legislature. FRPA has contracted with a lobbyist to support its issues in Tallahassee as well.

Chair Hartman continued that he would like to elaborate on some of the items included in the list of legislative priorities:

1. Funding for land acquisition and development: support funding of the Florida Recreation and Development Assistance Program (FRDAP) in its entirety. This program is assigned a numerical value, typically \$30 million, by the State Legislature. Despite the budget shortfalls of recent years, funding of this program has remained a priority for the Legislature. There are three current FRDAP grants in Fort Lauderdale: Flagler Heights, Oswald Park, and Ann Herman Park. A city may have a maximum of three FRDAP grants at any given time, Assistant Director Rynard noted.
2. Funding local governments: local governments should have the ability to respond to local needs through passage of local funding issues without legislative involvement. Chair Hartman explained this means the funds

may come from the State Legislature, but the City retains the independence to support these issues locally as well, as through the passage of bonds, for example.

3. Healthy lifestyles: encourage and fund healthy lifestyle programs for children, youth, and families.
4. Protection of staff, volunteers, and participants: Chair Hartman pointed out that this protects the privacy of children who sign up for public activities from having their information made public under the Sunshine Law.
5. Access to public facilities: support legislation that promotes joint use of schools, parks, and open space and encourages physical activity and healthy living. Chair Hartman stated that this means public and school facilities, such as parks and gyms, are reciprocally used.

Ms. Shelley noted that item #5 has been a “problem area” in the past, and Mr. Pickens requested a copy of the documentation for a reciprocal use agreement with the schools, adding that there is often “underutilization” of School Board property.

Chair Hartman felt it is important to pursue all possible opportunities for use of space, as parks are often overwhelmed by the volume of available programming.

Dr. Hays advised that often the regulations governing what equipment may be used for particular activities lead to an inconsistency/liability issue, which makes cooperation between parks and schools more difficult at times. She stated that at times, allowing any member of the public to use park equipment has been at odds with the safety and security of the schoolchildren who also use it. Dr. Hays concluded this is “not an easy task,” although she felt there is a good deal of cooperation and cross-use, even with limitations.

Chair Hartman summed up by stating these are the State goals that FRPA felt are important. He brought them to the Board’s attention, he said, so its members could help educate the City Commission and Mayor on the importance of these issues, which show the value of Parks & Recreation in the community.

7. Board Comments: Chair Mark Hartman

Chair Hartman provided the Board with some handouts and articles explaining some of the items he planned to cover in this section.

He began by informing the Board that a music event previously presented to the Board, planned for Memorial Day 2009, has been approved by the City Commission. He noted that the City Commission plans to reserve the option of a veto by the City Manager regarding the kind of music that will be performed.

He noted that this is an effort to bring large-scale musical events back to the City, of which the Board has been very supportive.

Chair Hartman moved on to address potential changes to the City Charter, one of which deals with parks preservation. Question #6 on the November 4, 2008 ballot would prohibit the County from selling, transferring, or changing the use of public parks without a 60% vote of approval from the electorate.

The article citing the Charter Amendment goes on to say that the high threshold specified by this proposal might dissuade future efforts to designate park or green space land because of "inflexibility." In short, Chair Hartman said, the Amendment would make it harder for the City to get rid of park property. He asked the Board to consider this item carefully, noting that acquisition of park lands could be difficult, and perhaps the same should hold true for sale or transfer of these properties.

On October 14, 2008, Chair Hartman continued, the County Commission approved the addition of ½ acre to the Middle River Terrace Park, under the Broward County Safe Parks and Land Preservation Bond Program. This was a two-year process, he said, that had been "complex and difficult," as adding acreage to the City's park land is never easily accomplished. He added that he had worked in conjunction with Vice Mayor Rodstrom and Parks & Recreation Director Phil Thornburg to move this acquisition forward.

This led to brief discussion of the proposed new Fire Station #46, which would require, if construction is approved, losing a piece of land at Mills Pond Park. Chair Hartman noted that the PRBAB and the Planning & Zoning Board have both voted against this proposal, although the City Commission voted in its favor. The situation is now before the County Commission, he said.

Dr. Hays praised Chair Hartman's efforts in securing the ½ acre of new park land, commending him for being a major force behind the efforts to obtain the property.

Chair Hartman moved on to recognize that the City website has redesigned its Parks & Recreation page, and urged the Board members to visit the site and see the new look. Assistant Director Rynard noted that this redesign had been among Director Thornburg's stated goals and objectives for 2008.

Recalling that safety and security had been one of the FRPA's stated goals, he distributed an article describing the practice of ensuring that volunteer coaches are given mandatory background checks.

Mr. Nail asked if the grant money that had previously covered the cost of these background checks would be supplied by the City in the future, or if these safety procedures would be funded another way.

Assistant Director Rynard explained that most youth sports leagues require background checks, and the cost was already absorbed by the leagues themselves or by the individual volunteer coaching applicants. The Department itself handles the actual background checks, with a system that uses a national database and fingerprinting and is linked to the FBI. The cost of a background check is approximately \$22-\$25, she said.

Mr. McCormick felt these procedures are a good idea, but noted that most coaches are already known by neighborhood parents. He felt it is a much greater risk to children when public parks are used as convention centers and strangers "from all over the state" share public space with youth teams and other children.

Chair Hartman pointed out that the article he had distributed was entitled "Background Checks: Do They Really Get the Job Done?" and is featured in *Parks & Rec Business* magazine. The gist of the article is that while background checks are necessary, they are only the beginning, as more issues should be taken into account, such as the concerns Mr. McCormick had raised.

He mentioned that *Parks & Rec Business* is a free magazine, if any Board members were interested in receiving it. Other periodicals of a similar nature, he said, were *Aquatics International*, *Recreation Management*, and *Athletic Business*, which are also free publications. Board members receive the *FRPA Journal* in print or online, he added.

Chair Hartman asked the Board members for additional comments.

Ms. Shelley stated the Imperial Point Association held its Fall Harvest Picnic the previous Saturday in Imperial Point Park, and she wanted to mention the outstanding job the Parks & Recreation Department did in preparing the park for the event.

Ms. Shelley also informed the Board that the Fort Lauderdale Council of Civic Associations would hold a Candidates' Forum on January 29, 2009, at 7:00 in the City Commission Chambers. This is before the February primary, she noted. Another such Forum will be held on February 26, 2009, also at 7:00 in the Chambers.

If any Board members would like specific questions posed to City candidates, Ms. Shelley continued, they may pass them along to her by the next meeting. All questions submitted will be placed in a pool and may be asked of the candidates, she said.

The actual election will be on March 11, 2009, it was noted. The Candidates' Forum will be televised.

Mr. Nail informed Assistant Director Rynard that he had received an email stating the lines had been put down early at the football stadium, as there was a strong chance of rain forecast for the day this task is usually done. He praised the "forward-thinking" of the individuals who had made this decision.

Assistant Director Rynard advised that a notice had been sent to the Federal Little League informing them that the Al Morton Center, which is primarily used as a rental facility, is under the management authority of the City rather than the Little League. No response has been received yet, other than an exchange of information between the two sides' attorneys. The intent is that beginning November 3, 2008, the property will be managed by the City.

She added that the City has contributed approximately \$160,000 for ADA improvements as part of the consent decree mandating this, and some of these funds will be recouped by rental fees. They hope to continue to work with youth sports leagues, Assistant Director Rynard continued, noting that these groups would be given the opportunity to raise funds through which to keep the cost reasonable.

Mr. Nail requested a list of the fees that youth sports are charged, pointing out how difficult it is for these organizations to raise funds. He asked if these fees can be discussed at a subsequent meeting, noting that 100% of these funds are raised or provided by private sponsorships and the programs are often run by volunteers.

Assistant Director Rynard said this information could be provided and the pricing policy explained at a future meeting. She allowed that the policy could seem complex, as considerations such as seasonal sports and "elite" affected the pricing schedule in ways that might not be obvious.

She continued that the pricing pyramid begins with programs of "community benefit," such as swimming instruction, from which there is 0-25% cost recovery. The next level is "community/individual," such as youth sports, where there is a primary community benefit with an individual benefit as well. Above this is "individual/community," which may involve sports such as tennis. "Individual benefit" would perhaps cover private lessons for sports, and "highly individual" would target "elite sports," such as a specialized elite team or adult sports.

Mr. Fee recalled two issues raised at recent meetings, stating he had been at three public parks within the City, none of which had shade structures or lightning detectors. He added that he had also visited three parks outside the City, two of

which had shade structures and two of which had lightning detectors. He felt this meant perhaps it was time to pass concerns about these issues on to the City Commission for consideration.

Chair Hartman recommended that one means of communication with the City Commission is through the minutes of each meeting, once the Board has approved them. He cited this as an important but slow process. Other means of communication are by email, telephone, personal meeting, or appearance before the City Commission at a formal meeting, he said.

He stressed that the Board's discussions and remarks are not intended to be directed to the Parks & Recreation Department, but to the City Commission. He added that he has always found the City Commission to be "very open" to discussions.

Mr. Berry recalled that at the September meeting, it had been mentioned that these two safety issues were being investigated, and asked for an update.

Assistant Director Rynard replied that the Department has submitted some CIP requests for shade structures, and has requested that they be installed on new playgrounds as they are built. Regarding the lightning detection devices, they have been considered for several months now, but the Department has not chosen to make a recommendation on the kind of device (detector or predictor) as yet.

Mr. Nail hoped that within the next one or two meetings, the Board could learn more about where the Department stood on the issue of lightning predictors, as he felt the issue could be taken to the City Commission. He felt this would be most effective if it was possible to state to the City Commission what the Department's recommendation was on the matter.

Chair Hartman cautioned that the Board's function is to communicate with the City Commission independently of the Department. If they feel the lightning predictors should be in the parks and present the City Commission with this information, he said, the City Commission could direct the Department to act accordingly. If Mr. Nail wanted the matter to be on the Board's agenda again so it could be voted on, he said, that could be scheduled.

Assistant Director Rynard added that at times the Board and the Department may disagree on the best way to take action. She stressed that this causes no bad feelings between the two groups.

Chair Hartman requested that the issue of lightning predictors be placed on an upcoming meeting agenda, although he noted that it did not have to be the next scheduled meeting.

Mr. Fee asked what the Department's official position was regarding advertising inside a park, pointing out that shade structures provided an opportunity for this if it was approved.

Assistant Director Rynard explained that the policy specifies how advertising may be done, with restrictions on visibility from roads and other areas. She noted that signs are allowed on backstops on the sports fields.

Dr. Hays introduced herself to the Board's new members at this time, explaining that she has served on the PRBAB previously and is now liaison to the Board from the Fort Lauderdale Council of Civic Associations. She added that she is also Chair of the Education Advisory Board.

She continued that the Council currently has five committees that are working on various goals, one of which is the Parks Committee, chaired by Doug Sterner. She explained that she wished to officially thank Director Thornburg and Park Ranger Supervisor Earnest Jones, who had spoken to that Committee about the roles of park rangers.

Dr. Hays concluded that the next meeting of the Parks Committee is Thursday, October 23, 2008, at 6:00 in the City Hall Cafeteria. She extended an invitation to all who were interested.

8. Adjournment: Chair Hartman

There being no further business to bring before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

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