

**PARKS, RECREATION, & BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2009 – 7:00 P.M.**

October 2008- September 2009

| Board Members | Attendance | Present | Absent |
|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Mark Hartman, Chair | P | 3 | 0 |
| Sean Fee, Vice Chair | P | 3 | 0 |
| Curtiss Berry (dep. 8:55) | P | 3 | 0 |
| Betty Shelley | P | 2 | 1 |
| John Verkey | P | 1 | 2 |
| Matthew Weiss | P | 2 | 1 |
| Robert Payne (arr. 7:03) | P | 3 | 0 |
| Ed Angelbello (arr. 7:03) | P | 2 | 1 |
| Larry Mabson | P | 2 | 1 |
| Donna Guthrie | A | 1 | 2 |
| Roger Bond (arr. 7:03) | P | 2 | 0 |
| Mark McCormick | P | 2 | 1 |
| Jeffrey Cannon | P | 3 | 0 |
| Kenny Nail | P | 3 | 0 |
| Marilyn Markus* | A | 1 | 1 |

Staff

Terry Rynard, Assistant Director, Parks & Recreation
Stacey Daley, Administrative Assistant
Marie Rock, Program Coordinator
Earnest Jones, Park Ranger Supervisor
Ron Gallo, Park Ranger II
Hilda Testa, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. Roll was called and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Hartman welcomed the Board members, City Staff, and guests to the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Payne, Mr. Angelbello, and Mr. Bond joined the meeting at this time (7:03 p.m.).

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Verkey, to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2008 meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

1. Department Report – Assistant Director Rynard

Assistant Director Rynard welcomed new member Roger Bond to the Board.

She offered her apologies regarding Memo Item #5, noting that it should read Stanford K. Smoker instead of Smith.

Assistant Director Rynard informed the Board that Parks & Recreation is working with the Riverwalk area to schedule more programming; she noted that Riverwalk Trust Executive Director Patsy Mennuti is a guest of the Board this evening, and pointed out that the Trust has put resources toward helping the Department bring more activities to the Riverwalk. The first such attempt is a yoga program, which will be held outside the Esplanade on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 9:00 a.m. and on Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. The instructor came highly recommended to the Department, she added.

The next planned program will begin in February 2009, and is the Women's Outdoor Workout, or WOW. This will take place in Huizenga on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 5:15 p.m.

She continued that some Board members may have received calls or emails regarding a policy that affects Holiday Park baseball. Groups that have a memorandum of understanding with the Department are granted the same priority status and receive their field assignments on a first come, first served basis. Assistant Director Rynard noted that a scheduling conflict has arisen at Holiday Park and the Department is attempting to resolve this situation within the next few days.

She described the order of priority as follows: City leagues first; youth sponsored groups with memoranda of understanding next; then adults, nonprofits, and occasionally for-profit groups. It was noted that all groups wishing to use Holiday Park's fields do not have permits yet. The point was also raised that the City was in need of more field space for youth sports leagues.

2. Employee Highlight: Ron Gallo – Assistant Director Rynard

Assistant Director Rynard asked Earnest Jones, Park Ranger Supervisor, to join her in presenting a plaque to Ron Gallo, Ranger II.

Supervisor Jones stated that Park Rangers feel that they are part of the community, and recognized that Ranger Gallo stands out in this capacity. He has worked on different committees, dealing with customer service and volunteering with various programs. He pointed out that Ranger Gallo volunteers to assist with fishing programs on his own time, at Mills Pond Park and at Snyder Park, for roughly 16 years, and noted that through these programs he teaches children lifelong skills from a recreational standpoint.

He added that Ranger Gallo is an asset to the Department and the City.

Ranger Gallo thanked Supervisor Jones and Assistant Director Rynard on behalf of Staff as well as for himself.

3. Program of the Month: “Senior Games” – Marie Rock

Ms. Rock informed the Board that in less than an hour, the South Florida Senior Games will begin. This event is an Olympiad for individuals 50 and older, an age group which includes one in three people in Broward County. 2009 will be the 19th anniversary of the South Florida Senior Games, which is a sanctioned event for the Florida Senior Games, held in Cape Coral in December.

She directed the Board’s attention to the sample registration packet, pointing out that there are over 50 different activities in which seniors may participate, including racewalking, swimming, tennis, artistic events, and others.

Registration is slightly down compared to 2008, she noted, but roughly 600 persons have signed up to participate, and people may register at Parks & Recreation during the Games themselves.

The Games are a collaborative effort, she continued, with several partners participating along with Fort Lauderdale, including Broward County, Hollywood, Sunrise, and others. These partners’ staffs work with the Department up to eight months in advance to plan the Games, Ms. Rock stated, although Fort Lauderdale’s Department has a somewhat more labor-intensive role in registering, purchasing, and handling finances. Two members of the Department are on the Games’ Steering Committee, she added.

Ms. Rock advised that Fort Lauderdale hosts the Games’ swimming events at the Aquatics Complex, singles tennis events at the Jimmy Evert Tennis Center, and closing ceremonies at the War Memorial Auditorium. Corporate support comes from FP&L, Humana, United Healthcare, and the Florida Medical Center, to name a few.

She informed the Board that the Games are part of the Parks & Recreation Department’s mission to provide a progressive presence in the City. The

Department's core values play a role in their choice to support community endeavors such as the Senior Games. These values include wellness, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles, environmental awareness, and socialization through community parks.

Ms. Rock continued that the Senior Games participants are individuals who are bucking dangerous trends, such as obesity and senior isolation. Some 20% of Americans are thought to be obese, with the greatest tendency toward obesity occurring in the south. She read from the Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health, which specifically encourages communities to plan activities that provide the opportunity for older adults to be physically active.

In closing, she affirmed that the Parks and Recreation Department does a great deal to enhance life in Fort Lauderdale.

In response to a question from Mr. Weiss, Ms. Rock informed the Board that the average age of Senior Games participants is 69.

4. LWCF Grant Application: Snyder Park – Assistant Director Rynard

Assistant Director Rynard recalled that the Department had applied for a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant for the Bill Keith Preserve, for which they had ranked first in the State for their proposal. The Department had also been awarded the grant. They are now applying again for a LWCF Grant for Snyder Park.

She described Snyder Park as a "very natural, native" 93-acre park located off 4th Avenue. There were opportunities for educational and interpretive signage, she noted, adding that the Park fills a void in nature programming in the City. She also reminded the Board that the Long-Range Strategic Plan identified a need in natural area programming that could be met by the Park.

The LWCF Grant is a \$200,000 grant with a \$200,000 match requirement, which the Department has requested in the CIP. The Park includes two boardwalks, one of which would be renovated using grant funds, should the application be successful. Old boardwalks in the woods would be demolished. Boat ramps and recreational freshwater fishing programming would be added.

The application deadline is February 27, 2009, and the Department would have three years to complete the grant requirements. Assistant Director Rynard added that the grant proposal must also come before the City Commission for permission to apply before the application is submitted. The date on which it will be heard by the City Commission is February 17, 2009.

Ms. Daley clarified that the \$200,000 matching funds have already been approved as part of the CIP budget.

Vice Chair Fee requested an estimate of the attendance at Snyder Park. Assistant Director Rynard estimated that on the weekends, attendance ranged between 800-1000, although it was considerably less during the week. With the inclusion of Bark Park, she felt weekly attendance was 100-200 visitors daily.

Mr. McCormick asked if park utilization statistics for Snyder Park were available. Assistant Director Rynard explained that a gate fee is not collected through the week at the park, although such a fee is collected on the weekends. She added that rough estimates of how many people participated in programs held at specific parks were available, although these figures only reflected paid participation and not "pickup" activities.

Chair Hartman encouraged Board members to attend one of the Saturday morning Park Tour with Supervisor Jones or one of the other Rangers. He also reported that the Long-Range Strategic Plan, which is available online, contains a great deal of information about current usage of parks.

Assistant Director Rynard offered to bring a Park Inventory List to the next Board meeting, advising that this contains a listing of the City's parks, including total acreage, facilities and amenities, and other detailed information.

5. Naming of Smoker Park – Assistant Director Rynard

Assistant Director Rynard introduced Patsy Mennuti, Executive Director of the Riverwalk Trust, who shared information with the Board regarding the naming of Smoker Park.

Ms. Mennuti described Smoker Park as a parcel of land on the South side of the New River, adjacent to Riverwalk Park and Rio Vista. The Riverwalk Trust has asked Broward County to agree to naming this land Smoker Park, in honor of the Smoker family; they are now requesting the same of the Board. A dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony are planned for April 16, 2009.

Mr. Nail asked for some detail of the significance of the Smoker family. Ms. Mennuti explained that this family had owned the 2.24 acres of land on which the park will be located, as well as some land on the opposite side of the river. Many of the oak trees located on the property were relocated to other areas, such as Riverwalk and New River Landing. The family has been very involved in the community, she noted.

Chair Hartman referred to Memo Item #5, which provided some detail on the role Stanford Smoker had played in the Fort Lauderdale community.

Assistant Director Rynard explained that the County owns the property, although the Department holds a “lifetime lease” on the property and maintains it. This was why the Riverwalk Trust had first appealed to the County regarding naming rights, she pointed out.

Motion made by Mr. Weiss, seconded by Mr. McCormick, to name the 2.24 acres of land Smoker Park. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

6. Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations Upcoming Candidates Forum – Assistant Director Rynard

As Ms. Shelley will chair this upcoming event, Assistant Director Rynard and Chair Hartman deferred to her on this item.

Ms. Shelley explained that this Council event will feature the 18 candidates for City Commission and Mayor, all of whom will be interviewed. It begins at 7:00 p.m. sharp; due to the number of candidates, she advised that timing will be strictly maintained.

The Forum will begin with candidates from District 1, and will proceed through the Districts, concluding with interviews of the Mayoral candidates. It will be held in the City Commission Chambers of City Hall.

Chair Hartman confirmed that the primary election is scheduled for February 10, 2009; a second candidates’ forum will be held on February 26, and the general election will be held on March 10, 2009.

He reminded the Board that at the December 2008 meeting, he had requested that a question related to parks and recreation be added to the list of questions the candidates will be asked. He continued that since that time, he has put a great deal of consideration into what this question might be. The question he suggested is as follows: “Are you a friend of parks, and what is your experience advocating for the parks in this city?”

Ms. Shelley advised that all questions have been prepared and rehearsed for the January 29 forum, and recommended that Chair Hartman submit his question for the February 26 event.

She added that each candidate was asked to provide a brief biography, as well as a list of how they have participated in the City. These will be handed out to attendees at the forum.

Chair Hartman encouraged the Board members to attend the Candidates’ Forum, as it afforded them the opportunity to put the City’s parks “on the front burner” for

the incoming City Commission. He planned to submit his question to a contact person with whom he had discussed the forum, in the event that it might be added.

7. Board Comments – Chair Hartman

Chair Hartman informed the Board that Noon Tunes, a special event that takes place at Stranahan Park, will open its 2009 series on Thursday, February 4. The series runs for eight weeks, and rotates between various types of music. Further information is online, as well as in brochures.

A Jazz Brunch will be held on Sunday, February 1, at Riverwalk, he continued. Good weather is expected for the event.

He noted that the Long-Range Strategic Plan, which was discussed at the Board's December 2008 meeting, is available online.

Chair Hartman asserted that now is "an incredible time" to be involved with public open spaces, as new leadership is expected to mean many changes for environmental issues. Policy is being revisited for the country's national resources, he affirmed, and the Board has a responsibility to stay informed on these trends at the local, state, and national levels. He encouraged members to stay knowledgeable about these issues, at home and across the country.

He noted in particular some Presidential appointments that would more than likely have an effect on environmental issues:

- Carol Browner of the Audubon Society is a possible "energy czar," and Chair Hartman advised that she has been an advocate of Everglades restoration. She was a Florida state official and was the longest-serving administrator of the EPA.
- Ken Salazar, nominated for Secretary of the Interior, has pledged to respect scientific integrity when setting environmental policy. He has received a good deal of support from national conservation associations.

Chair Hartman also referred the Board to "Wildlife 2060: What's at Stake for Florida," a document available online. He urged the Board to download and view this presentation, which was produced by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

He also noted a petition from the National Wildlife Federation, available online, encouraging signers to "set the course for our children's future." The petition is related to environmental and energy policy.

Chair Hartman noted that Governor Charlie Crist has vetoed a cancellation of the Florida Forever budget. He explained that Florida Forever is a program that funds local environmental issues and green space.

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) has designated March 17-20, 2009, the National Legislative Forum on Parks and Recreation. This event will take place in front of the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. The organization encourages its citizen board members to be active in their communities as well as the nation.

Chair Hartman added that the NRPA should send each Board member its monthly journal, which should arrive monthly in the mail. The City maintains the Board's memberships, he explained. There is also the *Journal of the Florida Recreation and Park Association*, which is a quarterly periodical available online or via email. He also referred interested members to *Athletic Business* and *Recreation Management*, two other periodicals of potential interest.

Mr. Verkey informed the Board that the organization A Child is Missing (ACIM) had filmed a short documentary with the Fort Lauderdale Jaguars. A viewing is scheduled for January 29, 2009, at 11:00. Some members of the State legislature are expected to attend the screening, which is open to the public at the Cinema Paradiso.

Mr. Cannon asked for an update on how the "split" of proceeds with Riverwalk vendors is progressing. Assistant Director Rynard explained that there are two options when working with an outside vendor: the Department may rent them the space, or there can be an 80%-20% split, in which the Department keeps 20% of the proceeds. Although there had been some discussion of discontinuing the 80%-20% program, Assistant Director Rynard affirmed that this system is now working more efficiently and will continue going forward.

The Riverwalk Trust had approached the Department and requested programming, she continued, and has contributed resources toward programming, including hiring a consultant to help the Department recruit providers and market events.

It was noted that while the Beach area business owners have a business-based organization, and the Central Beach Alliance is an advocate for the Beach area where regulatory bodies are concerned, the Board is actually the entity that would develop programming for the Beach. Currently there is only one individual interested in this venture, a "boot camp" fitness program, and the Department is attempting to negotiate an agreement with this provider.

Mr. Berry asked for information on the Southside School park dedication. Assistant Director Rynard stated that this event was held on January 10 at Hardy

Park, the new boundless playground, and the facility has been very busy since its opening. A boundless playground, she explained, is for children of all abilities, and is 100% accessible. Funds toward the facility were received from the County, Children's Services, and Boundless Playgrounds; CVS is also a sponsor. The facility is the City's first with artificial turf. Another boundless playground is under construction for Mills Pond Park, she added, and will hopefully be opened in early May 2009.

Mr. Berry also asked for information about the Gore Nursery demolition. Assistant Director Rynard stated that this is planned for February 2, 2009, at 9:00 a.m. Following the demolition, the park will be sodded, wood fences will be built, and the Department will work with the surrounding neighborhood to develop a plan for the park.

The airplane at Holiday Park will have a new pedestal, although the plane is not yet prepared to be placed upon it. The Department of Public Services is attempting to find funding for this project.

Mr. Berry expressed concern with the state of the old railroad bridge downtown, which he felt had become an eyesore as it has rusted. He suggested that perhaps the Riverwalk Trust might plan its improvement as a project.

Mr. Nail reminded the Board of its previous discussions regarding lightning predictors for City parks. Assistant Director Rynard informed him that these devices are in the CIP proposal for 2010, to be placed in 14 parks. She noted that the CIP generally goes to the City Commission for approval at the same time as the budget, often in July. She noted that the CIP is not yet online, as the Department has not prioritized or met with other Departments at this time.

Mr. Nail inquired if St. Thomas Aquinas High School, which has won the national high school football championship, would be recognized by the City Commission. Assistant Director Rynard stated that a recognition is planned for February; she would need to confirm which meeting date in February, she added.

Mr. Nail continued that there had been discussion in October 2007 regarding a concession stand at Floyd Hall Stadium, for which FEMA funds had been allocated. He recalled seeing two prospective designs for this stand, a single building or two smaller buildings. He believed the intent had been to erect the stand in 2008, and requested information on why no work had been started on this project. He stressed that there is a need for this building in the Stadium.

Assistant Director Rynard stated that while the FEMA money was still available for the project, it did not provide sufficient funds to cover the total cost of the engineer's estimate. There were other "unfinished" issues, she noted, including ADA concerns that had yet to be addressed. She added that as FEMA funds

were insufficient for this project, CIP or other funds would be sought to close the funding gap.

Mr. Nail recalled that the Al Morton Center has been previously discussed by the Board, and asked Assistant Director Rynard to fill them in on recent City action. Assistant Director Rynard stated that the Department had met with baseball representatives, adding that the Department had taken over the Center in November 2008 “for reservation purposes.” The Center will be entirely under Department control beginning January 29, 2009, and locks on the building will be changed. She noted that baseball representatives had been very cooperative regarding this change. The Center will be rented through the Department in the future.

Mr. Nail stated the Center had been built by the community without use of City funds, and he agreed that it should be used “as a third party” to bring rent revenue into the City. When it was not in use, however, he recommended that the two youth sports organizations that have regularly used the facility in the past be allowed to use it for fundraising or other appropriate activities. He emphasized that when the City has rented out the facility, this would of course take precedence.

Assistant Director Rynard reiterated that anyone wishing to use the facility contact the Department, who could work with them regarding rental costs for any activity. She added that while City funds had not gone into the construction of the Center, the City had contributed significantly to its expenses and repairs.

Mr. Payne recalled seeing a frame erected around Oswald Park’s outdoor basketball court, and wondered if this meant the facility would be made into a gym. The intent is to create an open-air court with a cover.

Vice Chair Fee requested confirmation that the Memorial Day Weekend beach concert is still scheduled. Assistant Director Rynard clarified that the concert is on, but dates have not yet been finalized.

He asked if there are currently lights at the playground in Hardy Park. Assistant Director Rynard responded that lights will not be installed at this facility, although benches will be added.

There being no further comments from the Board at this time, Chair Hartman opened the meeting to public comments.

Louis Sweetapple, private citizen, stated that he participates in Holiday Park Baseball. He hoped to address the points made earlier in the meeting regarding sharing facilities between youth leagues at this Park. He did not feel it was appropriate to classify some teams as “elite players,” as teams are made up of

players of varying abilities; he noted that there are, however, All-Star teams by the season's end.

He continued that the travel team, which does not participate in the rec league, should not be allowed to use rec league fields to an extent that affected the league teams' use times. He felt the manner in which the Department had handled this issue in the past was effective and fair. He concluded that the issue was one of field time, not a desire to keep another league from the field altogether.

Jill Hersh, Director of the Fort Lauderdale Holiday Park Youth Baseball/Softball Program, stated that she wished to clarify what the program has done in the past with regard to permits. The League for which she works is comprised of approximately 800 children, most of whom are City residents.

On November 6, 2008, the League applied for permits for the Spring 2009 season, providing dates and times rather than requesting a blanket permit to use the Park's fields. They requested more time than would be needed, which is their practice from previous years; they then release the unnecessary times for others' use.

Ms. Hersh continued that the League had been told, in the past, that its sports teams "come first" and would be given preference over a travel team. She clarified that she is not "against" travel teams and notes that the League has these teams as well.

She related that the previous week, she had been informed that "an elite, select travel baseball team" had requested three weekly time slots at Holiday Park, which coincided with the League's scheduled games. Games are regularly played on the same dates and times through the week, which helps with concession sales. Ms. Hersh stated that she was told this team would receive two of these slots at the Park. She received further information that this was done because other parks' facilities did not fulfill the necessary base requirement.

Ms. Hersh affirmed that other fields do indeed meet the requirements for the travel team's needs. She continued that she was then told the travel team had turned their field request in first, and were therefore considered first.

She felt the League has "a great working relationship" with other Leagues and plays inter-League ball with them, and described situations in which the League has allowed other teams to share their fields. She reiterated that a group of 12 children should not be allowed precedence over a group of 60. The League's size is comparable to the size of City soccer and football programs, she pointed out, and added that these programs would not allow a travel team to appropriate time or fields used by a City League team.

She did not feel the two Leagues should be considered the same, as one is a group selected by a manager while the City League allows all participants to play, regardless of their talent. She felt losing the use of the fields would have "long-term effects" by preventing children who might not otherwise be chosen for a team from playing local sports.

She noted that the League has asked for 792 hours on the field in question, while the travel team has requested 104 hours. She asked that the issue be reconsidered in order to help the League work effectively.

Responding to a question from Mr. Nail, Ms. Hersh stated that the City League has been in existence for 55-57 years. The travel team in question has incorporated itself into a league beginning this year.

Chair Hartman pointed out that the issues in discussion are operational ones, and not under the Board's purview. Instructing Staff in how to perform their duties was not an issue the Board could become involved in, he noted.

Mr. Angelbello pointed out that the problem in question was caused by policies, which was creating the operational issues.

Mr. McCormick noted that guidelines for other sports would prevent the problem from occurring in their Leagues, and that the City might meet with League personnel and find how the issues are handled elsewhere.

Assistant Director Rynard agreed with this assessment, and reiterated that the specific issue affecting the League and the travel team would hopefully be resolved in a matter of days. The larger issue at hand, she agreed, is policy, which will be examined to prevent these issues in the future.

Regarding how the Board could participate in the discussion, Assistant Director Rynard pointed out that the Board could make recommendations to the City Commission. The City Commission, however, does not approve this particular Department policy, which is at heart a permitting issue.

8. Adjournment

Chair Hartman thanked the Board members and Staff for their attendance, and announced that the next meeting is scheduled for February 25, 2009.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.