

**PARKS, RECREATION, & BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
CITY HALL, 8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2010 – 7:00 P.M.**

Cumulative Attendance

Board Members	Attendance	Oct 2009- Sept 2010	
		Present	Absent
Mark Hartman, Chair	P	5	0
Sean Fee, Vice Chair	A	3	2
Curtiss Berry	P	5	0
Betty Shelley	A	4	1
John Verkey	P	4	1
Matthew Weiss	P	5	0
Robert Payne	P	4	1
Ed Angelbello	A	3	2
Larry Mabson	A	3	2
Mark McCormick (7:14)	P	2	3
Jeffrey Cannon	A	3	2
Marilyn Markus	A	3	2
Bruce Quailey	P	5	0
Cindy Bucher	A	3	1
Joe Bellavance	P	5	0
R.L. Landers	P	4	1

Currently there are 16 appointed members to the Board, which means 9 would constitute a quorum.

Staff

Stacey Daley, Administrative Assistant
Terry Rynard, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation Department
Gerry Roberts, Park Ranger Supervisor
Karim Rahmankhah, Engineering Design Manager
Brigitte Chiappetta, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communications to the City Commission

1. Mr. McCormick expressed concern that at this time the Fort Lauderdale Stadium Practice Fields are not being utilized at all; yet the fields are planted with Bermuda grass which cost the City \$1.5 Million, and which require regular maintenance in order to preserve this investment. Mr. McCormick then noted that there are not enough practice fields available for all the teams in the City that want to utilize them. It was felt that the stadium practice fields should be used for

this purpose, thereby making good use of the Bermuda grass and the City's investment and solving a problem of a lack of practice fields in the City.

Motion made by Mr. McCormick, seconded by Mr. Quailey, to recommend that the City Commission convert the Fort Lauderdale Stadium practice fields into a "youth sports facility" and to rename the facility "Centennial Park." In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously (9-0).

2. Mr. McCormick broached the subject of last year's department budget cuts and how these cuts affected the Parks and Recreation Department in comparison with other departments. It was explained by Staff that most, but not all, of the departments received budget cuts. Board members expressed that if there were to be budget cuts, that no department should be exempt from such cuts.

Motion made by Mr. McCormick, seconded by Mr. Payne, to recommend that the City Commission, in the event of future department budget cuts, such budget cuts should be made equitably to all departments. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried 8-1 (Mr. Berry dissenting).

Roll Call

Chair Hartman called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was not yet present.

The following Item was taken out of order on the Agenda.

1. Department Report – Assistant Director Rynard

Assistant Director Rynard reported that the St. Patrick's Day Parade & Festival was very successful, and thanked everyone who participated in the event. Attendance was estimated at 15,000, and there were 2000 participants in the parade itself.

She continued that the Better Meetings Academy, which provides training for City Board and Committee members, will be held on the following dates:

- April 27, 2010: 5:45 p.m.
- June 7, 2010: 5:45 p.m.

Both meetings will be held on the third floor of City Hall.

Assistant Director Rynard added that a presentation will be made to the Budget Advisory Committee in May. They are reviewing the four largest Departments in

2010. She stated this information would be brought before the Board at the April meeting.

Mr. Quailey asked if the Air & Sea Show is planned for 2011. Assistant Director Rynard replied the promoter plans to seek a sponsor for next year's show.

Mr. Bellavance noted that a veterans' group had received the biggest applause at the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Assistant Director Rynard advised this group had won a prize for best not-for-profit entry. Mr. Verkey added that the Fort Lauderdale Jaguars had featured a fundraising booth at the event, and extended their thanks to the City for this opportunity.

Mr. McCormick joined the meeting at this time (7:14 p.m.).

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Weiss, to move Item 6 to the beginning of the meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried.

6. Renaming of Holiday Park – Assistant Director Rynard

John Aurelius, representing the Centennial Celebration Committee, explained that this group has been appointed by the City Commission to hold a number of events throughout the Centennial year, which begins on March 27, 2011. Events will begin before this date and will run through the end of 2011.

Mr. Aurelius stated the Committee hopes to have something "lasting" once the events are over. It was suggested to the group that Holiday Park might be renamed Centennial Park. The Centennial Celebration Committee also proposes that the unimproved areas of the park be landscaped and "upgraded." He concluded that the Committee did not wish to approach the City Commission with these ideas until they had asked the Board for input.

The Committee has also discussed the addition of a fountain with an interactive water feature to this park, although this is unrelated to the proposed renaming and renovation.

Mr. Berry agreed that it could be "time to change the name" of Holiday Park. However, Mr. Weiss disagreed, stating that Holiday Park is a focal point for the community as the City's largest park. He pointed out that there are many "Centennial Parks" around the country.

Mr. Verkey asked if the Centennial project is related to the war memorial. Mr. Aurelius explained the Committee hopes to bring some permanent Centennial attribute to the City, and there are no ties to the War Memorial Auditorium.

Mr. Landers and Mr. Quailey also stated they were also not in favor of renaming the park.

Mr. Aurelius concluded he would take the Board's comments back to the Centennial Celebration Committee.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Quailey noted a correction to the February 24, 2010 minutes: "La Squadron," under Item 4, should be changed to "Lost Squadron."

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Bellavance, to approve the February 24, 2010 minutes as corrected. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

2. Tarpon Bend Park Conceptual Master Plan – Assistant Director Rynard

Assistant Director Rynard advised that this park is located on Southwest 9th Avenue on the river, and was acquired through the County's Safe Parks Bond. The property includes an area dedicated to the Lewis family, who were the area's first documented settlers.

A boardwalk along the river, a small pavilion, greenscaping, and a path are proposed. The area is a significant archaeological site and any additions must be done above grade or with the presence of an archaeological monitor.

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Landers, to approve the Conceptual Master Plan as presented. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried.

3. Renaming – Tarpon Bend Park – Assistant Director Rynard

Assistant Director Rynard continued that the Tarpon River Homeowners' Civic Association has requested that this park be renamed Lewis Landing Park in honor of the Lewis family.

Mr. Bellavance explained that members of the Lewis family were the first documented settlers on the banks of the New River in the 1780s. Reid Morgan, President of the Tarpon River Homeowners' Civic Association, characterized the area as a "passive park" with no events or functions other than family gatherings. Mr. Morgan added that the Civic Association vote had been unanimous in favor of Lewis Landing Park.

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Quailey, to rename Tarpon Bend Park to Lewis Landing Park. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

4. Land and Water Conservation Program / Tarpon Bend Park – Assistant Director Rynard

Assistant Director Rynard stated that the Department is asking the Board's support in applying for an LWCF grant of up to \$200,000 for development of this park. The development would cost approximately \$400,000, mostly due to the walkway along the water.

Chair Hartman emphasized the importance of showing "strong support" for this state grant. Matching funds would come from either park impact fees or a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) designation. The total cost of the park was \$2,850,000 and was paid by the County.

Motion made by Mr. Landers, seconded by Mr. Berry, to approve the Land and Water Conservation Program grant application. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

5. 2010 Florida DEP Office of Greenways and Trails / Flagler Greenway Grant Application – Gina Rivera

Ms. Rivera explained the City is submitting a grant application to develop the Flagler Greenway. This application will go to the Department of Environmental Protection. She was present to solicit the Board's support for the project. The grant is in the amount of \$187,500, which will be matched with \$125,000 by the CRA.

The trail would be developed along Flagler Drive from Sunrise Boulevard to Andrews Avenue, and would allow use by bicyclists, pedestrians, and skaters. She introduced Karim Rahmankhah, project design manager, and Lou Aurigemma, project consultant from Keith & Schnars, who could answer questions from the Board.

Mr. Aurigemma clarified that the project reaches from Sunrise Boulevard to Andrews Avenue along Flagler Drive, and will use half of the roadway on the northwestern side. Businesses and parking on the opposite side will remain. The other two lanes will be removed and replaced with a curb and gutter; roughly half of the remaining 24 ft. will become trailway. The other half will be enhanced with landscaping and perhaps park benches. Mr. Aurigemma estimated the length of the project at $\frac{3}{4}$ mile.

Assistant Director Rynard added the project is consistent with recommendations of the Long-Range Strategic Plan.

Mr. Weiss asked if a fence will be erected once the walkway is complete. Mr. Aurigemma replied there is a vinyl-coated chain-link fence from Andrews Avenue to Sunrise Boulevard.

Mr. Rahmankhah noted that the Department of Transportation (DOT) had funded the design phase, as well as a portion of the project itself.

Mr. Qualey asked what kind of lighting will be provided along the trail. Mr. Aurigemma replied that "specialty lighting" will be installed to illuminate both the roadway and the pedestrian path. It is similar to the lighting used in the Downtown area. Mr. Rahmankhah clarified that the cost of the project does not include funding for the lighting.

Motion made by Mr. Bellavance, seconded by Mr. Weiss, to support the grant process for Flagler Greenway. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

7. Board Comments / Communications to the Commission – Chair Hartman

Chair Hartman stated he has "homework" for the Board's upcoming April meeting. He explained that he is concerned it is too easy for the City to reassign, give away, or sell park land, noting that a different City Commission might not be unwilling to take these steps. He felt a structure should be in place that makes this action "difficult or impossible," and there is currently no such structure: it would theoretically be "too easy" for the City Commission to take this action with one vote, as no supermajority is required to reassign park land. This means it would only require three votes to do so.

He added it can be too easy for other advisory bodies to consider park lands "up for grabs" if they feel these lands can meet other needs.

Chair Hartman encouraged the Board members to encourage the City Commissioners, who are "park-friendly," to take action to require a supermajority or a public vote before reassigning park lands for other use.

Motion made by Mr. Berry that the City cannot sell property of any kind without a vote by the people.

The **motion** died for lack of second.

Mr. Bellavance noted that the City holds other lands that are not designated as park lands. Chair Hartman clarified that this is not his concern.

Mr. Qualey pointed out that there is both public and private park land within the City, and offered American Golf Course as an example of private park land. He

asked if Chair Hartman is referring to both kinds of land. Chair Hartman advised he felt it is more difficult for the City to deal with private park land. He continued that he would like Staff to add this as an Agenda Item in April, and asked that members help clarify these distinctions at that time.

Chair Hartman continued that the Florida AIDS Walk will be held Sunday, March 28, in Huizenga Park. There will also be a Water Conservation Workshop on Tuesday, April 13 at City Hall; there is no charge, but reservations are required. A People and Planet Fair and Earth Day 5-K Run/Walk will be held on Saturday, April 17, at Snyder Park from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

City Forester and Park Supervisor Gene Dempsey has produced a flier, "Five Ways to Look at a Tree." Chair Hartman made copies available to the Board at this time.

Volunteers are being sought for a Muscular Dystrophy Camp Program during the summer.

The Florida Recreation and Park Association (FRPA) has released its 2010 Legislative Platform, which lists their legislative priorities for the year. Chair Hartman advised that this will be "a critical budget year" in Tallahassee, and stressed the importance of keeping parks "in front of the legislature."

Mr. McCormick requested an update regarding the Fort Lauderdale Stadium. Assistant Director Rynard replied more information is being sought at this time before the issue is resolved. Mr. Weiss suggested this location would be a "perfect" Centennial Park. Mr. McCormick added this would add much-needed field space for sports programs.

Motion made by Mr. McCormick, seconded by Mr. Qualey, to recommend that the City Commission convert the Fort Lauderdale Stadium practice fields into a "used sports facility" and to rename the facility "Centennial Park."

Mr. Landers felt this effort was a "lost cause" due to efforts to bring in another professional sports team. Mr. Weiss pointed out that most other teams are moving away from this area, and travel expenses would be too great.

In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously (9-0).

Mr. McCormick asked what the Department's budget cut was for the previous year. Assistant Director Rynard estimated this was 12%; most other Departments took similar cuts, with the exception being some areas of public safety. Mr. McCormick felt the Board should "stand up for the parks" and ask that these cuts be made across the board, so other Departments are affected as well.

Motion made by Mr. McCormick, seconded by Mr. Payne, to recommend that the City Commission, in the event of future department budget cuts, such budget cuts should be made equitably to all departments.

Chair Hartman suggested that this **motion** be “highlighted” as a Communication to the City Commission.

Assistant Director Rynard clarified that Parks and Recreation is not the only Department to receive budget cuts the previous year, although some other Departments did not take the same percentage of cuts. Chair Hartman noted that the **motion** asks that budget cuts be the same across the board.

Mr. Quailey felt “a little... leeway” should be allowed for some Departments.

In a voice vote, the **motion** carried 8-1 (Mr. Berry dissenting).

It was determined that the **motions** regarding Fort Lauderdale Stadium and equitable budget cuts would be communications to the City Commission.

Mr. Quailey requested an update on the status of lightning predictors. Assistant Director Rynard responded that the bids on these were higher than expected, so predictors were eliminated at two sites. Installation at the remaining sites is expected to be complete at the end of May.

Dirt is being added to playing fields at Croissant Park in anticipation of the Bermuda turf. The goal is to have this site ready for flag football by the end of May.

A new contractor has been secured for Carter Park, and it is anticipated that work will be complete by June 1.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.