

**PARKS, RECREATION, & BEACHES BOARD MINUTES  
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE  
CITY HALL, 8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2011 – 6:30 P.M.**

**Cumulative Attendance**

<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Oct 2010- Sept 2011</b>	
		<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Matthew Weiss, Chair	P	4	0
Sean Fee, Vice Chair	P	3	1
Joseph Bellavance	P	4	0
Curtiss Berry	P	4	0
Cindy Bucher	P	3	1
Tommy Knapp	P	4	0
R. L. Landers	A	2	2
Larry Mabson	P	4	0
Marilyn Markus	A	1	3
Robert Payne	P	4	0
Bruce Quailey	P	4	0
Betty Shelley	A	2	2
Richard Zaden	P	2	1

Currently there are 13 appointed members to the Board, which means 7 would constitute a quorum.

**Staff**

Stacey Daley, Administrative Assistant  
Terry Rynard, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation Department  
Barbara Barber, Community Program Supervisor  
Sue McAllister, Community Program Supervisor  
Marie Rock, Recreation Coordinator  
Brigitte Chiappetta, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

**Communications to City Commission**

**Motion** made by Vice Chair Fee, seconded by Mr. Berry, to advise the City Commission to extend short-term leases to Traffic Sports USA, Inc. and the School Board on the Federal Aviation Administration property at Lockhart Stadium and Fort Lauderdale Stadium. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed 9-0. Mr. Knapp abstained. A memorandum of voting conflict is attached to these minutes.

**Roll Call**

Chair Weiss called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. Roll was called and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Approval of Minutes**

**Motion** made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Mabson, to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2011 meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

#### **1. Department Report – Assistant Director Rynard**

Assistant Director Rynard advised that the Department is responsible for median and right-of-way tree maintenance in the City. This maintenance consists of picking up trash in these areas and is currently underway. Rather than using a single contractor for mowing, the maintenance was divided into separate areas last year, which saved the Department roughly \$120,000.

The grant agreement with regard to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has been finalized will go before the City Commission on March 1, 2011. If the agreement is accepted and the money is allocated, the City has two years to finish construction. Assistant Director Rynard thanked Mr. Bellavance for writing a letter that helped facilitate the agreement.

Southside School is on the City Commission Agenda for March 1 as well. Assistant Director Rynard said Director Phil Thornburg is negotiating this project with the Friends of Southside School, Nova Southeastern University, and the Department. She said hopefully there will be an agreement that works well for all parties involved.

The St. Patrick's Day Parade is scheduled for March 12 at noon. Assistant Director Rynard encouraged the Board members to attend, and added that some time remains if they wish to fill out an application to participate in the parade. The Sistrunk Parade and Festival will begin Saturday, February 26 at 9 a.m. on Sistrunk Boulevard.

Sunday, March 27 is the City's Centennial and the date of the City birthday party. The Department is also working to put on a beach event for the night of Saturday, March 26, which will feature a small fireworks display.

Assistant Director Rynard concluded that Snyder Park is undergoing a renovation to clear invasive species from the park with the help of grant money from the County and the State. The project is roughly 60% complete. She encouraged the members to visit the park. The Kids' Ecology Corps is helping to plant native species in the park and holds nature and ecology programs there as well.

Assistant Director Rynard introduced Melvin "Chico" Rivas, President and Chief Operator of Contenders Boxing Club. The Club facilitates a Boxing Center at Carter Park, which provides free boxing instruction for young people at the back of the gym.

Mr. Rivas thanked Mr. Payne and others for helping put together the program at Carter Park. The facility has been in place for nearly seven years and includes a 20x20 boxing ring and heavy bags. Volunteer coaches are working with young people in after-school programs. He invited the Board members to attend the Club's amateur shows in Carter Park. The Center is open from 5-7:30 p.m.

Mr. Knapp asked how many young people participate in the program. Mr. Rivas estimated there are 20-25 members, who participate at no charge after a one-time fee of \$70 to cover the required insurance. He said the main goal is "to get kids off the street" and encourage them to become good citizens as well as to participate in the boxing program.

Chair Weiss asked what age ranges participate in the program. Mr. Rivas said they do not turn anyone away and do not force any participants to compete.

Assistant Director Rynard explained she will highlight a few parks and programs that the members may not be aware of each month. She advised that Dolphin Isles Park, a very small parcel acquired from the County, has acquired artificial turf and playground equipment. She also distributed pictures of Tarpon Cove Park, located on Tarpon Canal.

Mr. Quailey requested information on volunteers from New York coming to work in Carter Park. Assistant Director Rynard said the Department has submitted its proposal, and so far it seems that the volunteer group plans to select Carter Park. She explained that the volunteer work would be a team-building exercise for a civic-minded group including police officers, firefighters, and businesspeople.

Mr. Berry asked for an update on the seawall at Bill Keith Preserve. Assistant Director Rynard said this project is still awaiting permits from the Civil Corps of Engineers. The intent is to "take back about 20 ft." of the preserve, which contains archaeological artifacts.

## **2. Alternative Programming – Barbara Barber, Sue McAllister, Marie Rock**

Assistant Director Rynard introduced Community Program Supervisors Barbara Barber and Sue McAllister and Recreation Coordinator Marie Rock. She recalled that members had requested this Item be placed on an Agenda, and said the question was how to expand programming on a limited budget.

Ms. Barber said the Supervisors are currently in the process of summer planning, and are working on alternative methods for providing services at a lower cost. She noted that there are programming gaps in the weeks before and after the City's summer camp begins; because this had left some parents without child care for those weeks, the Department has reached out to community organizations to provide small one-week camps during that time. Four new programs will be coming into the City's facilities during this time, including a low-cost football camp, a cheer stunt camp, a soccer camp, and a baseball camp.

Each camp will cost less than \$50, will provide lunch, and will use City facilities. The groups will be able to use these facilities free of charge. Ms. Barber explained that the programs require a fee in order to pay staff, offer lunch to participants, and cover costs.

Mr. Knapp said the Florida Strikers, who play at Fort Lauderdale Stadium, have considered starting a Soccer for Success program to reach out to underprivileged children. The stadium facilities are very large and could accommodate "hundreds of kids." Ms. Barber said they are open to suggestions for further partnerships.

Ms. Bucher asked if activities other than the four programs described earlier are available, such as gymnastics or musical programs. Ms. Barber said there is "a full range of programming" at the City's parks throughout the year, including after-school dance and cooking classes, fitness classes, and additional sports programs. She advised that they reach out to several different groups, and the City allows "exchanges" rather than charging these groups a fee, as the partnerships are mutually beneficial.

Mr. Mabson asked how the Department reaches out to the community to inform them that these activities exist. Ms. Barber said this remains a challenge, but noted that they use the City's website as a tool. Assistant Director Rynard added that the Public Information Office also helps the Department with marketing; information is included in City water bills and homeowners' association newsletters. Ms. McAllister said blast emails have been very effective for outreach.

Ms. Rock said a new program at Snyder Park will be a nature camp, which will be held in partnership with the Kids Ecology Corps. Children at this camp will learn about environmental stewardship and science. The Department also has a partnership with Broward Health, which will also help provide fitness classes at the Riverside Park community center "on a percentage basis" so there is no cost to the City for these classes.

Assistant Director Rynard said the Department's mentality has shifted due to budget constraints; they are trying to work more closely with the communities to

provide services without spending City dollars. She cited the Riverside Park partnership as an example, as the community building had often stood empty before the partnership and fitness classes began. Another challenge has been for Staff to program “unprogrammed hours” for park facilities.

Ms. Rock said there are also programs geared toward the City’s senior population; the Association of American Retired Persons (AARP) offers driver safety classes at the Beach Community Center, and the Veterans’ Association has a bingo program at this location as well.

Mr. Mabson said he is involved with a free community martial arts event, which brings in roughly 1000-1500 attendees; he said he was told he could increase these attendance numbers if there was more time to prepare for the event. He explained that a partnership with the City would attract more sponsors to the event. Assistant Director Rynard advised him to speak further with Ms. Barber, and encouraged the other members to help bring together more partnerships between the Department and the community as well.

### **3. Parks Ambassadors – Chair Weiss**

Chair Weiss stated he would like each of the members to visit a couple of parks each month, learn what is going on in them, and report back to the Board. He explained that this could help Staff, particularly if the members noted something that required Staff attention.

He noted that there are some City parks he has never visited, and felt it would be helpful if all the members “know our parks,” especially some of the smaller parks. Chair Weiss said at the next month’s meeting, he would bring a list of parks and each member would take one or two of the lesser-known parks to visit.

Assistant Director Rynard said a bus tour of the City parks could be arranged, but cautioned that the Board is subject to the Sunshine Law and would not be able to discuss Board business during the tour. She advised that there are 76 parks in the City, and suggested that the tour could be broken up into quadrants. She also emphasized the need to become familiar with the smaller or lesser-known parks.

Mr. Berry suggested that a list of parks could be distributed to each of the members, who could then visit some of the parks and report back to the Board at a meeting. Assistant Director Rynard said this could be one way to find which parks people would like to visit and develop the proposed tour.

Mr. Knapp said he felt it would be very valuable for the Board members to learn about the parks’ history from Assistant Director Rynard during the tour. Assistant Director Rynard said she would send out a list of parks and a survey to

determine the specifications of the proposed tour. She estimated that she could send out the survey toward the end of March.

#### **4. Fort Lauderdale Stadium – Assistant Director Rynard**

Assistant Director Rynard noted that Mr. Knapp works for an organization that has an agreement with the City with regard to the stadium. She advised that this meant he would not be able to vote on this Item or address the issue as a member of the Board.

She explained that a professional soccer team, the Fort Lauderdale Strikers, has an agreement with Fort Lauderdale Stadium through Traffic Sports. The Department also has an agreement with the Broward County School Board which allows them the use of Lockhart Stadium. Both agreements currently expire as of June 30, 2011. The FAA is the actual owner of the property, and dictates that the City must meet all their guidelines for its use.

Assistant Director Rynard said Schlitterbahn has now stated they would like to put a water park on the property, and has made a presentation to this effect to the City Commission. The City Commission has said they would be interested if there was “enough City benefit” and the FAA has no objection to this use. They required Schlitterbahn to conduct more research on this possibility. The current challenge is that the FAA says fair market value must be paid for the lease of the space. A caveat states if there is a community use, fair market value is not required; however, community use is a very strict category.

There has now been interest expressed by both Traffic Sports and Broward County Schools to get another short-term agreement, as any deal with Schlitterbahn would come a long time in the future. Assistant Director Rynard said the City would probably communicate their situation to the FAA in early March, and request to extend the agreements for a short time.

She explained that the FAA “holds the purse strings” for the property, including grants for airport improvement. If the City does not comply, they have the option of taking the airport back and taking grant funding away from the City. The City currently pays for part of the stadium’s maintenance and Traffic Sports and the School Board pay a portion of maintenance as well. She noted that all three parties, including Schlitterbahn, feel they can coexist on the site.

Mr. Qualey asked the size of the overall parcel. Assistant Director Rynard estimated this was 65 acres.

Chair Weiss requested clarification of the FAA’s role. Assistant Director Rynard said the entire parcel is “tied together,” and all uses of the property must be according to the FAA’s guidelines and regulations. If this is not done, they have

the option of stopping all grant funding, which is responsible for most of the improvements on the site, or could take the property back from the City.

Chair Weiss asked if there were problems on the airport side of the parcel that could affect the City side. Assistant Director Rynard said different developers lease the space and develop “something for aviation purpose[s]” on it. The Master Plan for the airport does not indicate that the stadium area would ever have to be used for any specific aviation purposes. She clarified that the FAA purchased the land for the City’s use, and the land is maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department, although it actually falls under Business Enterprises due to the airport use. The Executive Airport is operated under the City government through an independent fund to which the City does not contribute.

Chair Weiss asked why issues have now developed after the site has been used for over 40 years. Assistant Director Rynard said the property was not originally zoned correctly, and must go through not only City procedures to change this but a County Land Use change as well. This process takes approximately two years.

Mr. Quailey asked if statistics are available that show “acre per population of parks” as compared to the green space requirements for newer communities throughout the country. He explained he would be interested to learn how Fort Lauderdale is ranked according to this. Assistant Director Rynard said she would bring this information to next month’s meeting, and said the City is within the median range on this spectrum at roughly four acres per 1000 people.

Mr. Quailey explained that he had asked because there is a great need for more sports fields and parks in the area. He said the parcel in question is “an absolute gem” due to location and access, and felt it should be an active park in some way. He added that he had concerns regarding the long-term financial viability of a water park at the location, and asked if the water park use would eliminate the uses that are currently ongoing.

Assistant Director Rynard said the latest proposal she had seen from Schlitterbahn said “a minimum of eight soccer fields” and Lockhart Stadium would remain intact. The stadium would continue to be used for football and soccer. Both Traffic Sports and the School Board have expressed interest in this proposal and are talking to Schlitterbahn about this use. She concluded that the issue would be before the City Commission at some point in the next few months.

She clarified that the agreements between Traffic Sports and the School Board are with the City, but the City cannot sign a new agreement without the approval of the FAA.

**Motion** made by Vice Chair Fee, seconded by Mr. Berry, to advise the City Commission to extend short-term leases to Traffic Sports USA, Inc. and the School Board on the Federal Aviation Administration property at Lockhart Stadium and Fort Lauderdale Stadium.

Mr. Quailey asked if Schlitterbahn has been asked to provide feasibility studies for their proposal. Assistant Director Rynard said they have been asked for this information, and discussions continue about community use and fair market value as well, as the parties involved do not agree on these.

In a voice vote, the **motion** passed 9-0. Mr. Knapp abstained. A memorandum of voting conflict is attached to these minutes.

## **6. Communications to City Commission**

It was determined that the above **motion** would be sent as a communication to the City Commission.

## **7. Board Comments**

Mr. Mabson asked if the Board will continue to meet at 6:30 instead of 7. Assistant Director Rynard said the Board had voted to meet at 6:30 for a trial period of two months; at the March meeting, they could decide whether to keep the time at 6:30 or go back to 7.

Assistant Director Rynard encouraged the members to attend the opening of Dolphin Isles Park on March 5 at 9 a.m.

Parks and Recreation Director Phil Thornburg has been appointed as Acting Assistant City Manager and will work at City Hall during this indefinite time period.

Vice Chair Fee noted that Hardy Park has waited a very long time for improvements to its tennis and shuffleboard courts and its bathrooms. He noted that this park is located in the heart of the City and could be an integral part of the Downtown area when improvements are made. He felt the money should be found to make these improvements, as this is a very popular park.

Assistant Director Rynard said the Neighborhood Heroes program seeks donations of volunteer time and/or money for the parks, and the Department has an agreement with Jan Beth Idelman, Inc., to seek corporate sponsorships, although this is primarily aimed at events.

Mr. Berry said restrooms should be built at the park if nothing else. Assistant Director Rynard said they were included in the next phase of development.

## **7. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

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