

**PARKS, RECREATION, & BEACHES BOARD MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
CITY HALL, 8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22, 2011 – 6:30 P.M.**

Cumulative Attendance

Board Members	Attendance	Oct 2010- Sept 2011	
		Present	Absent
Matthew Weiss, Chair	P	8	0
Sean Fee, Vice Chair	P	6	2
Joseph Bellavance	P	8	0
Curtiss Berry	P	7	1
Cindy Bucher	P	7	1
Tommy Knapp	A	5	3
R. L. Landers	P	6	2
Larry Mabson	A	7	1
Robert Payne	P	7	1
Bruce Quailey	P	8	0
Betty Shelley	P	5	3
Richard Zaden	P	5	2

Currently there are 12 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
Gerry Roberts, Park Ranger Supervisor
Brigitte Chiappetta, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communications to City Commission

None.

Roll Call

Chair Weiss called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Roll was called and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Dennis Ulmer, guest, noted a correction on p. 6: he stated he did not approach Commissioner Moore regarding the name change to the park.

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Landers, to approve the May 25, 2011 minutes as corrected. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

1. Department Report

Assistant Director Rynard informed the Board that summer camp began this week and has more participants than last year. The only camp that did not reach its minimum attendance goal was Lauderdale Manors Park; a drop-in program is still held at this park in lieu of a camp.

Air conditioners have been stolen from Mills Park and Lauderdale Manors Park. Security has been upgraded at both locations and alarms are now placed on units. The investigation is ongoing.

The new City Manager has been in place for roughly a week and a half. Assistant Director Rynard said she was very impressed with his knowledge and dedication. The new City Manager has hired one of two Assistant City Managers. Former Parks and Recreation Director Phil Thornburg, who has served as Acting Assistant City Manager, will return to the Parks and Recreation Department soon.

The accreditation process is now in the visitation phase, in which three people review the Department's materials and make their recommendations to CAPRA, which will determine if accreditation standards are met. A meet-and-greet for the accreditation team will be held on Tuesday, July 12, 2011, at the New River Inn at 5:30 p.m. Assistant Director Rynard encouraged the Board members to attend if they could. Chair Weiss requested that reminders be sent to the Board.

The Great American Beach Party was a great success, with between 12,000 and 15,000 attendees.

The 4th of July will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the City's wade-ins, beginning with a ceremony at the Eula Johnson house at 9 a.m. and followed by an event at the beach at Las Olas and A1A at 11 a.m. A historical marker will be placed at this location and the wade-in will be reenacted. Additional 4th of July activities will follow, including bands and fireworks. A1A will be closed from Las Olas to Valencia.

July is Parks and Recreation Month in Fort Lauderdale. Assistant Director Rynard noted that Staff has put together a list of family-oriented activities for every day of the month, including Starlight Musicals, Let's Move Day, and Rock Your Park.

Assistant Director Rynard moved on to park snapshots, stating there is a middle school camp at Holiday Park for 6th through 8th graders. There is also a

successful counselor-in-training program at Bass Park. She showed a photograph of Riverland Woods Park, which is a waterfront park with a boat ramp and a playground. Manatees can often be seen at this park.

The Department has been working with City Commissioners to try and make funds available to purchase shade structures for some parks, including Dottie Mancini Park and Carter Park. Hott Park and Peter Feldman Park will receive shade structures as part of a grant.

The grand opening of the Bill Keith Preserve will be held in early fall. Beach restoration for this park is still underway.

3. Youth Sports Groups – Memorandum of Understanding

Assistant Director Rynard said the Department has met with all football leagues and has sent letters to coaches to inform them that there is a zero tolerance policy for illegal activity, primarily gambling. The teams have been very receptive to this communication. Police representatives also attended the meeting to make it clear that they would address any issues that might arise.

Chair Weiss asked that Assistant Director Rynard expand on what is being done on-site to ensure there are no problems. Assistant Director Rynard said not only will the police be on-site in uniform, but undercover officers will participate as well. Signage will be placed to inform teams from other cities of Fort Lauderdale's zero tolerance policy, and anonymous hotline numbers are available as well. Penalties for gambling would include a misdemeanor for individuals; the addition of zero tolerance language to the memorandum of understanding (MOU) would enable the Department to pull a league's permit and/or shut down a game if necessary. Coaches who are aware or should have been aware of illegal activity would be held accountable.

Chair Weiss said he did not feel participating children should be penalized for actions taken by adults, and suggested the bleachers could instead be stripped of fans. Assistant Director Rynard explained that the issue would arise if coaches become aware of illegal activity and do not inform the authorities. Chair Weiss felt the administrators of the program should be penalized for failure to report activity. Assistant Director Rynard advised the point of the policy is to prevent participating children from being endangered by illegal activity.

3. Holiday Park – Racquetball Courts

Assistant Director Rynard introduced James Santiago, who presented a concept for racquetball courts at Holiday Park.

Mr. Santiago said there are roughly 70 players involved in racquetball four days per week each week, and racquetball tournaments are held at the park. The four courts are located behind War Memorial Auditorium. He explained that outdoor racquetball has become more popular over the past 15 years. Players currently have to wait one to two hours per game to use the courts at Holiday Park.

Major tournaments cannot be held at Holiday Park, as a minimum of six courts are required to hold a tournament. Mr. Santiago advised that he is a landscape architect, and has designed a proposed 10-court facility for the park. He pointed out that both hockey rinks at the park are “empty all the time.” He showed the Board his drawing of the courts, which would allow more players to be accommodated.

Mr. Santiago stated that players come to Fort Lauderdale from several surrounding areas to play racquetball. Most tournaments are currently held in Boca Raton. He estimated there are 300 players per tournament, which could bring a great deal of revenue to Fort Lauderdale. He urged the Board to look at the proposal for a facility as an improvement for the community.

Chair Weiss observed that the racquetball players at Holiday Park do a good job managing the courts and determining who plays next. He asked what the estimated price of the new facility would be. Mr. Santiago said the cost would be between \$600,000-\$700,000. This would include demolishing the existing courts and putting in new concrete. The facility would include seating under a canopy. He pointed out that outdoor racquetball courts are different at every location; the proposed dimensions are 23x40 ft. with a walk placed 22 ft. back.

Mr. Quailey asked if time slots for the existing courts are booked throughout the day or only during specific hours. Mr. Santiago estimated there are often 10 players by 3:30 p.m. and 30 to 40 players by 7 p.m.

Mr. Quailey asked if the existing hockey rink is used for roller hockey. Assistant Director Rynard said organized permits are required to use this facility for different activities. She agreed the facility is underused.

Mr. Landers asked if a City employee is present on the courts. Mr. Santiago said the players are self-policed and keep track of who is next in line to use the courts. Most players have known each other for some time.

Mr. Santiago said he has spoken to City and County Commissioners about the proposal, and plans to speak to State legislators as well, regarding how to find funding for the facility.

Chair Weiss asked if the proposal was something the City would consider. Assistant Director Rynard said policy and budget decisions are made by the City

Commission; the Department makes \$5-\$6 million worth of requests each year for capital improvements, of which roughly \$520,000 were funded in the current budget. She advised that the Board could send a communication to the City Commission stating they were not opposed to the proposed facility, but asked that the members keep existing budget issues in mind.

Chair Weiss suggested that they could advise the Commission that while there is no money for the concept, it is still a good idea. Assistant Director Rynard said the Department has already added this proposal to their "wish list." Chair Weiss said it might be a good idea for interested parties to raise donations toward the facility due to budget issues.

Mr. Santiago said he is applying for State and County grants. He concluded that he would like the Board's endorsement of placing the project in the space he had proposed, as there are already parking lots nearby.

Chair Weiss said if the Department has no issues with the proposed location at Holiday Park, perhaps the Board could hold a vote in favor of the concept and location, although funding is not available. Mr. Santiago said his goal is to "put [the proposal] in front of everybody," including the Board for discussion and perhaps support.

Mr. Bellavance asked if any of the national racquetball organizations might be willing to contribute funding toward the proposed courts. Mr. Santiago said he had looked into this but it was not a possibility. Chair Fee suggested that there could be a fee for use of the existing courts and funds could go toward the proposed facility. Mr. Santiago pointed out that the Department would then have to pay a Staff member to be present and collect these funds.

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Ms. Shelley, to accept the concept as presented to them. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

4. Dr. Elizabeth Hays Civic Park

Assistant Director Rynard advised that the Board members had been sent further information on this Item, which was discussed at the May meeting. It was noted that some members had not been able to review all the information.

Mr. Bellavance provided a brief overview, stating that a survey was mailed to residents of the Sunset Park community to determine what they would like to name the park. The result was that Bucher Park received 316 points, which was five times more than the second-place choice. A memorandum including this information was sent to the Mayor. Other information, however, stated that "a consensus within the community has not been reached" and the

recommendation was made that the park be named Civic People's Park, despite the evidence of the survey.

Chair Weiss suggested that the Item be deferred until all the Board members have had the opportunity to review the information provided.

Motion made by Mr. Landers, seconded by Mr. Quailey, to postpone or table the Item until the next meeting, where everyone can read [the information].

Chair Weiss explained they would simply bring the Item back next month for further discussion.

There being no further questions from the Board at this time, Chair Weiss opened the public hearing. As there were no members of the public present to speak on this Item, Chair Weiss closed the public hearing and brought the discussion back to the Board.

It was noted that the Board does not meet in July, so the Item would be brought back at the August 2011 meeting.

In a voice vote, the **motion** passed 8-2 (Mr. Bellavance and Mr. Berry dissenting).

Assistant Director Rynard distributed copies of the information to any members who had not received them.

5. Park Ambassadors

Mr. Bellavance stated he had visited Smoker Park, and noted there are mango trees bearing fruit in the park.

Mr. Zaden said he had visited Greenfield Park, which is a very small area behind the Galleria. He said it was pleasant green space, but noted that there were drainage issues with the park's water fountain, and two of its metal benches were broken.

Mr. Bellavance noted that some parks are very small, and asked if there are established criteria for the size of a greenway. Assistant Director Rynard said there was no set standard for this.

Mr. Zaden said he had also visited George English Park, which was very well maintained, and Jack and Harriet Kaye Park, which is a small area next to George English Park. He said there were no issues with either park.

Mr. Berry said he had visited Lewis Landing Park, which was beautiful.

Chair Weiss asked if the seawall at Annie Beck Park was being redone. Assistant Director Rynard said an area of the seawall that had fallen into disrepair was being repaired.

Mr. Bellavance stated that some residents have recommended the widening of sidewalks from 7 Street to 9 Street, and the addition of plants and lighting to make the sidewalks more attractive. These changes would tie in with the recommendations of the Andrews Avenue Master Plan and would improve the South Andrews Avenue area.

Assistant Director Rynard said she would attend the Tarpon River Neighborhood Association meeting scheduled for the following night to discuss this issue, and would be able to provide updates from the Engineering Department regarding the available options.

6. Board Comments

Ms. Shelley observed that she had spoken to some local rugby players, who had stated most teams enjoy coming to Fort Lauderdale to play. The rugby goalposts in the City are not temporary as they are in other locations.

Mr. Berry requested that the new City Manager be invited to a PRBB meeting so the Board could welcome him. Ms. Shelley said he had attended the recent Mayor's Walk to address members of the community on his first day at work.

Chair Weiss noted that the City was preparing to sell some of its properties, and asked if Parks and Recreation considered taking over some of these properties as green space. Assistant Director Rynard explained that while she could raise the issue to determine whether or not the Department is interested, it can be difficult to maintain the properties for which they are already responsible due to cutbacks in staff.

Mr. Payne returned to the issue of the Memorandum of Understanding for youth sports, asking if a Committee had decided on what would be done to teams or leagues in the event of wrongdoing. He said he did not feel it was appropriate for children to be affected by these actions. Assistant Director Rynard said there is an appeals process for any team that is banned from a park, and noted that no action has been necessary thus far. She reiterated that while she understood the concern, the goal was to protect young players rather than to punish them.

Mr. Quailey referred to the email sent regarding Item 4, and asked if the packet received in the mail was supposed to contain identical information. Assistant Director Rynard said the email was sent in lieu of including all the information in the packet. Chair Weiss suggested that paper copies not be sent to members

who have access to email in order to save both paper and postage where possible. Assistant Director Rynard requested that members who wished to receive information by electronic means only send her an email to confirm this.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

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