

**PARKS, RECREATION, & BEACHES BOARD MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
CITY HALL, 8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2011 – 6:30 P.M.**

Cumulative Attendance

Board Members	Attendance	Oct 2010- Sept 2011	
		Present	Absent
Matthew Weiss, Chair	P	10	0
Sean Fee, Vice Chair	P	8	2
Joseph Bellavance	P	10	0
Curtiss Berry	P	9	1
Cindy Bucher	P	9	1
Tommy Knapp	P	7	3
R. L. Landers	P	7	3
Larry Mabson	A	8	2
Robert Payne	P	9	1
Bruce Quailey	P	10	0
Betty Shelley	P	7	3
Richard Zaden	P	6	3

Currently there are 12 appointed members to the Board, which means 7 would constitute a quorum.

Staff

Stacey Daley, Administrative Assistant
Phil Thornburg, Director, Parks and Recreation
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

Ms. Bucher noted a correction on p.7: the correct vote on the motion should be 9-1 (Ms. Bucher dissenting). She stated that she did not second the motion on p.8.

Ms. Bucher also stated that, in reference to a statement on p.7, paragraph 3, she had come forward to object to the renaming of the park within 10 days of the change.

It was noted that the Assistant City Manager in attendance at the August 24 meeting was Susanne Torriente. Chair Weiss added that on p.3, Operations should instead be Office of Professional Standards.

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Vice Chair Fee, to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2011 meeting as corrected. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

1. Department Report

Director Thornburg explained that Assistant Director Terry Rynard has served as Board liaison for several years; however, he will assume the task of liaison during the reorganization of the Department.

He distributed photographs of a park bench dedicated in honor of Ms. Shelley, stating that the Mayor and City Commissioner Roberts were on hand for the dedication.

Director Thornburg distributed copies of a Legal Bulletin regarding service animals in public parks. He explained that the Police Department had provided him with the document, which outlines what constitutes a service animal and what Officers or City employees can and cannot ask individuals accompanied by service animals. The Bulletin cautions that asking an individual to identify his or her disability could subject the City and the Officer or employee to civil liability. Director Thornburg advised that Park Rangers are subject to the same restrictions as Police Officers.

Chair Weiss asked if the individual can be asked to pick up waste left by his or her service animal. Director Thornburg replied that if this violation is directly witnessed by an Officer, the Officer can ask the individual to pick up the waste or the individual may be subject to a ticket.

Mr. Zaden asked if there was an ongoing problem with individuals claiming their dogs are service animals. Director Thornburg said some individuals may falsely make this claim; however, the Americans with Disabilities Act is federal law and there are restrictions on what an Officer can ask these individuals.

2. Update of City Code of Ordinance

Director Thornburg recalled that during the summer, he had reviewed the Ordinances dealing with Parks and Recreation. He pointed out that some of the Ordinances had been on the books for several years and no longer made sense as regulations. He provided a list of the proposed changes, advising that they would go before the City Commission as a Conference Agenda Item.

He noted that one such Ordinance states the City Commission approves all special events in the City. Director Thornburg stated that there are several events on each City Commission Agenda for approval,. He recalled that at a recent Commission meeting, all events had been condensed into a single Item for approval. The proposed change would allow Director Thornburg or the City Manager to approve events and send a memo to the City Commission stating what was approved or denied.

Director Thornburg continued that another Ordinance had dictated that events serving alcohol must be located on the south end of the beach, near the basketball courts. The proposed change would allow events serving alcohol to do so on other parts of the beach, with Staff approval.

He continued that another proposed amendment called for promoters to provide a cashier's check for security on event costs over \$3000. In some instances, Director Thornburg recalled, promoters have not paid what they owe to the City. The check would be returned to the promoter once they provided payment.

Director Thornburg moved on to the section dealing with boat docks, beaches, and waterways, noting that concession agreements would be changed from three years to five. This deals primarily with beach concessions such as chairs and cabanas. He noted that a new section on recreational programs and services would clarify that individuals wanting to hold services or programs on the beach must get a permit from Parks and Recreation. He added that this does not apply to personal events such as weddings.

He returned to the section on outdoor events, noting that some facilities, such as the former Swimming Hall of Fame Olympic Pool Complex, now have different names, such as the Fort Lauderdale Aquatics Complex. The section is intended to clarify the titles of these facilities.

Director Thornburg noted that there were previously zoning districts in which special events could or could not be held. This is no longer the case. There are also no longer exemptions for insurance depending upon the size of events. Director Thornburg and the City's Risk Manager would again have discretion regarding which events must have insurance.

Other new prospective Ordinances include:

- Authority to donate City-owned facilities: in most cases, the City is unable to waive the fee for using buildings and community centers. In cases where governmental organizations are holding informational meetings, there is still the possibility of a fee waiver; however, in most cases nonprofit organizations are usually asked to pay the fee. Homeowners' associations may hold one meeting per month in City buildings at no charge.
- Boards do not have the authority to hire or fire Staff, or establish fees. Fees are set by the City Manager.
- The section governing restrictions on animals would include the phrase "except service animals."

Director Thornburg requested that the Board take action on this Item, as he would like to move it forward to the City Commission.

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Quailey, to approve the changes and revisions made by Staff.

In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

3. Update of Park Rules and Regulations

Director Thornburg advised that because rules and regulations are reviewed by the Board and the City Commission on a more regular basis, there are fewer changes to discuss. He noted that one major change involves supervised groups of campers at Snyder Park, who are authorized to have ground fires subject to strict guidelines. Other parks do not allow ground fires.

Beach regulations now place the minimum depth for SCUBA diving at 150 yards, and from 200 yards to 150 yards for non-motorized watercraft. He explained that the Beach Patrol considers the 150 yd. buoys the demarcation point at which they are responsible or not responsible for all types of activities. If a snorkeler or skin diver goes out beyond 150 ft., they are treated the same as a SCUBA diver. Director Thornburg explained that the Beach Patrol is responsible for swimmers and waders rather than divers, and would like divers to go farther out into the water. He advised that most divers already go beyond this distance.

Mr. Quailey asked if skin divers would be required to use a buoyancy compensator or a flag. Director Thornburg said they would not, and noted that he would clarify this applies specifically to SCUBA divers.

Mr. Payne asked to know the ratio of lifeguards working at City pools. Director Thornburg explained this ratio follows State requirements, and said this information could be provided at the next meeting. He pointed out that ratios are required for many park programs, not only for water programs.

Mr. Zaden asked if swimmers using masks and fins must comply with a rule stating they must remain within 50 yards. Director Thornburg advised that lifeguards try to keep swimmers within this distance; swimmers going out past 50 yards with equipment should go all the way out to 150 yards.

Mr. Zaden noted a regulation stating that spear guns must be transported from the beach to a minimum distance of 150 yards offshore, and suggested that the regulation state this equipment is prohibited on the beach except when being transported to the water. Director Thornburg said this wording would be amended for clarification.

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Ms. Shelley, to approve Item #3 as amended. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

4. Ping Pong Tables – Fort Lauderdale Beach Park

Director Thornburg explained that the idea of additional amenities on the beach was recently presented to the City Commission and has been sent to the Board for further input. The proposed ping pong tables would be added at the south end of Fort Lauderdale Beach Park. The tables shown are concrete and would cost approximately \$6000 each. He explained that the intent was to provide more family-friendly activities for this Park. Parks and Recreation would partner with Bahia Mar and other beach hotels to provide paddles and balls for guests.

Mr. Berry noted that it would be difficult to prevent individuals from sitting, sleeping, or eating on the tables. Director Thornburg advised that Staff would be present when possible, but agreed it could be difficult to monitor the use of the tables. He noted that the plan was to purchase two tables. Mr. Berry suggested that one table could be purchased until it is determined that more are needed.

Mr. Quailey commented that he had trouble imagining individuals walking all the way down the beach to play ping pong. He felt the tables would primarily be used by guests of Bahia Mar and other nearby hotels. Director Thornburg noted that individuals on the beach could also bring their own paddles and balls.

Ms. Shelley commented that these tables are widely used on beaches and in parks in other areas. Director Thornburg pointed out that other amenities in Fort Lauderdale Beach Park, including basketball and volleyball courts and the playground, are heavily used. He added that a former Board member had suggested the addition of ping pong tables.

Mr. Knapp asked if beach soccer had been considered, stating that this could accommodate multiple players at a time while ping pong tables would only allow

two to four users at once. Director Thornburg agreed that this could be considered. Other suggestions included tetherball and bocce.

Chair Weiss remarked that \$12,000 was a great deal of money, and was not sure the tables would be used appropriately due to the breezy conditions on the beach. Mr. Qualey advised that Lago Mar is a comparable location, and pointed out that the tables are heavily used there.

Director Thornburg said an overall master plan could be presented for the Park, including the other proposed additions as well as ping pong. The members discussed other activities that might be added to the Fort Lauderdale Beach Park in order to make it a destination for beachgoers.

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Landers, that Item 4 be tabled and then the Board would vote on a master plan. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

5. Update of Naming of City Parks, Recreation Areas & Facilities Policy

Director Thornburg recalled that at the August meeting, it was decided that a proposed revision of this policy would be brought before the Board. He provided copies of the revised procedure, explaining that the proposed name would be submitted to him and he would bring the submission to the Board. The presidents of surrounding neighborhood organizations would be notified of the proposed renaming, which would be posted on the Board's Agenda as well as at the park site itself. The Board would discuss the name or names, and would then make a recommendation to the City Commission, which would have the final vote.

Chair Weiss expressed concern that a name might have been discussed at prior meetings of which the current Board might have been unaware. He suggested that any backup materials, such as previous Board discussions of renaming, be included in the members' materials. Director Thornburg agreed that information on any past Board or City Commission action regarding a renaming would be added to the proposed procedure.

Ms. Bucher suggested that if a facility was to be renamed after an individual, a waiting period of at least one year could be invoked. Chair Weiss commented that people often want to honor an individual right away after that person's death. Ms. Bucher explained that a waiting period could provide greater clarity, as individuals are still grieving immediately following a death.

Mr. Bellavance pointed out that there are no criteria for naming a park after an individual, such as that person's contribution to the City or community. Director Thornburg advised that it would be very difficult to establish what made an

individual worthy of having a facility named after him or her, as this was highly subjective.

Chair Weiss asked if the City Commission would be able to override a waiting period for renaming a park after an individual. Director Thornburg said this could already be done if the Commission wanted.

Ms. Bucher asked if individuals outside the surrounding neighborhoods could propose the renaming of a park. Director Thornburg confirmed there was no geographical restriction on proposals.

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Zaden, to accept Item 5 as amended. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

6. Park Ambassadors

Vice Chair Fee reported that the City's playing fields are in immaculate condition, and commended Parks and Recreation Staff on keeping them in excellent shape. He suggested that the hockey rink at Holiday Park might be kept in cleaner condition. It was noted that this facility was seldom used for hockey.

7. Board Comments

Mr. Payne asked if the water park at Oswald Park was complete. Director Thornburg confirmed this.

Mr. Landers asked when more work would be done at Southside Park. Director Thornburg explained that there are guidelines on how work can continue at this time.

Mr. Berry asked what work was being done at Floyd Hull Stadium. Director Thornburg advised that the bathroom and concession buildings on the east and west sides are being replaced.

8. Communications to the Commission

None.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.