

**PARKS, RECREATION, & BEACHES BOARD MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
CITY HALL, 8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2012 – 6:30 P.M.**

Cumulative Attendance

Board Members	Attendance	Oct 2011- Sept 2012	
		Present	Absent
Matthew Weiss, Chair	P	3	1
Sean Fee, Vice Chair	P	2	2
Joseph Bellavance	P	4	0
Curtiss Berry	P	4	0
Cindy Bucher	P	2	2
Brad Hubert	P	4	0
Tommy Knapp	P	4	0
R. L. Landers	P	3	1
Larry Mabson	A	3	1
JoAnn Medalie (6:34)	P	4	0
Robert Payne	P	2	2
Bruce Quailey	P	4	0
Betty Shelley	P	2	2
Angela Ward	P	3	1
Richard Zaden	P	3	1

Currently there are 15 appointed members to the Board, which means 8 would constitute a quorum.

A quorum was present at the meeting.

Staff

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

Mr. Hubert requested clarification on p.5: the notice signs should be similar in size to those posted for Planning and Zoning Board meetings.

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Landers, to approve the January 25, 2012 minutes as corrected. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

1. Department Report

Director Thornburg advised that the dedication of Stranahan Landing will be held on Saturday, February 25, at 11:30 a.m.

The lights on the beach are now operational again. While there are presently some lane blockages as contractors complete the work, these are expected to be clear by the end of the week. Most of the remaining work will be done at night.

2. Acquisition of Rivermont Property Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant

Director Thornburg explained that the City is applying for a grant for this property, which is located on the river in the Sailboat Bend area. They hope to purchase the property, which includes a house, for slightly over \$1 million, and are seeking grant money toward this purchase. The parcel is currently bank-owned and includes 2.97 acres. The Trust for Public Land is negotiating the purchase with the bank.

Ms. Medalie arrived at 6:34 p.m.

Director Thornburg noted that the Trust for Public Land fronts the money for a purchase and allows the purchaser to enter into a repayment plan. It is a national not-for-profit group dedicated to saving green space.

Ms. Shelley asked if the house on the property is usable. Director Thornburg confirmed this, stating that would require some work to bring it up to Code. It would be home to an interpretive center or other park-related use.

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Bellavance, for the purchase of the Rivermont property. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

3. Beach Master Plan

Director Thornburg advised that a Master Plan would be developed for the open area on the southern end of Fort Lauderdale Beach Park, which currently

includes a basketball court and playground. He requested the Board's input on any other amenities they would like to see added in this area, noting that the park's bathrooms and fitness equipment will need to be updated. There have also been discussions regarding the addition of light concessions, such as drinks and ices. A handout was provided to the Board members including some suggested changes and their estimated costs.

Mr. Quailey asked what kinds of game boards or tables would be added to the park. Director Thornburg explained that these would be tables that included board game diagrams for chess or backgammon, for example.

He added that approximately \$500,000 is available in the capital improvement program to enhance this park once the Master Plan has been finalized. The restroom and concession improvements would be the most costly renovations. The Department is already in the process of replacing picnic tables, grills, and trash cans in the area.

Chair Weiss asked if the proposal to plant sea grapes and palms was intended to enhance what already exists in the park. Director Thornburg said these would be planted close to the wall in an attempt to prevent sand from blowing into the parking lot. As the existing Australian pines fail in this location, they will be replaced with native vegetation.

Ms. Medalie commented that the concession area could include umbrella rentals, as some families will want to be out of the sun, and non-motorized crafts. Director Thornburg noted that a paddleboarding concession may be added to the northern end of the beach; an RFP is also out for bid for a non-motorized concession across from the Oasis. The existing beach chair and umbrella vendor will be asked to consider providing this concession in the park area as well.

Mr. Payne asked if a bounce house for children might be added to the park. Director Thornburg said this could be considered. He noted that most concessions of this nature, however, would need to be removed from the beach every day in order to comply with turtle protection guidelines. Other potential concessions, including hovercrafts and parasailing, were briefly discussed.

Ms. Ward noted that there are currently several beach fitness programs in the area, and asked if this might be a possibility. Director Thornburg said this may soon go out as an RFP so prospective vendors may bid on areas and times where and when fitness programs could be provided.

He continued that another potential concession for the ramp near the Oasis Café would be kayak storage and rental. Racks are being fabricated for this purpose.

Ms. Bucher expressed concern that planting sea grapes near the wall might block the view of the ocean. Director Thornburg said the sea grapes would not be so thick as to obstruct the view. He added that when the Master Plan is further developed and brought back to the Board, a conceptual plan would be provided to show where the trees and sea grapes would be placed.

4. Park Ambassadors

Chair Weiss provided handouts to the members, explaining that the Park Ambassador program encourages members to take interest in some of the parks within their districts. They are asked to visit the site and report anything in need of improvement, enhancement, or repair to Director Thornburg. They are also asked to talk to other individuals who may be in the park to get their feedback.

He requested that each member choose three parks within their districts for this program. In addition, he called the members' attention to the Parks of the Month handout, asking that each member visit at least one park outside his or her district each month and discuss it, time permitting, at a meeting.

The members discussed and selected the parks they would visit as Park Ambassadors. Director Thornburg added if anyone wished to visit a park with a Park Ranger, Mr. Roberts could set up a time for them to do so. He also advised if anyone saw something they felt was not safe, they should email or call him prior to the next meeting and he would address the issue right away.

5. Board Comments

Mr. Bellavance noted that bricks appeared to be caving in under the 7th Avenue Bridge on its east side. He added that large holes have appeared in Lewis Landing.

Mr. Berry commented that the grass has turned brown at Floyd Hull Stadium. Director Thornburg stated he would follow up with the contractor assigned to water this location.

Mr. Bellavance expressed concern that homeless individuals are congregating in Stranahan Park. Director Thornburg said the City Commission is continuing to discuss this issue, and the City Attorney's Office is considering an ordinance to address panhandling in this and other parks.

He noted that the Women's Club has worked with a volunteer group from Parks and Recreation to re-plant some areas in Stranahan Park. They will continue with this project in March. The intent is to replace some sodded areas with plants. He noted that the size of this park means it requires additional attention to keep clean at times.

Mr. Landers asked if the trees recently cut down near the parking garage would be replaced. Director Thornburg confirmed this, explaining that the removed trees were black olives, which are very messy. They will be replaced with a different species of tree.

Mr. Bellavance asked if there was any discussion of rehabilitating two City-owned houses on the Riverwalk. Director Thornburg noted that one of these is the Charter House, which is currently vacant. There have been discussions with groups interested in using the houses, but no solution has been reached at this time.

Mr. Hubert asked if the Shippey House would take up parking spaces for a prospective tenant of the Charter House. Director Thornburg said it would definitely have an impact on parking; he noted that it has been difficult to maintain a restaurant in the Charter House building due to its layout.

6. Communications to the City Commission

None.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

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