



**MINUTES**  
**Mecklenburg County Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners**

**February 13, 2007**

**North Carolina**  
**Mecklenburg County**

The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in the Administrative Office Building Conference Room B at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 13, 2007.

**ATTENDANCE**

**Present:** Chairman Robert Patterson and Commissioners:  
John Barry  
William Chandler  
Owen Furuseth  
Larry Huelsman  
Scott McClure, Vice Chairman  
Brad Pearce, Executive Secretary  
Teresa Sharp  
Mary Wilson

**Absent:** Laura McClettie  
Bill Brawley  
James Brown

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chair Patterson, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, after which, the following matters were addressed:

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

**(1) Introductions**

- The Commissioners introduced themselves individually and referenced the main neighborhoods and parks in their districts. They told which neighborhood they each lived in and gave an update of the current events, programs, and points of interest.
- Chair Patterson gave a brief update on applicants for the North Park District PRC vacancy before the BOCC. He reported that Jeff Tarte is currently the Chair of the Cornelius Park and Recreation Commission and John Probst is a member of the North Park District Advisory Council. The appointment by the BOCC will be

made at the March 7, 2007 meeting.

**(2) Proclamations and Awards**

- Jeff Robinson introduced and recognized Jim Monroe, County Director Cooperative Extension Services for receiving the North Carolina Turfgrass Council "Outstanding Service and Contribution" award. Jim is a leading expert on growing many kinds of grasses and is a frequent presenter at conferences and seminars.

**(3) Public Appearance**

None

**(4) Appointments – Advisory Councils – Applicants**

- **Central Park District I:** Commissioner Chandler deferred appointing Shannon McKnight since her community already has representation on the CPD I Advisory Council.
- **East Park District:** In the absence of Commissioner Brown nominations for the EPD were deferred to the March 13, 2007 PRC meeting.
- **Equestrian:** *Motion was made by Commissioner McClure to appoint Pat Hunter to an unexpired term, expiring 6/2009 which was seconded by Commissioner Pearce and approved unanimously.*
- **South Park District:** *Motion was made by Commissioner Huelsman to appoint Christina Moeller to an unexpired term, expiring 6/2009 which was seconded by Commissioner Pearce and approved unanimously.*
- **Therapeutic:** *Motion was made by Commissioner Sharp to appoint Patrick Sheehan to an unexpired term, expiring 6/2009 which was seconded by Commissioner Pearce and approved unanimously.*

**PRC RETREAT REPORT:** Chair Patterson reported on a very successful PRC Retreat held at Freedom Park January 26<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> saying that it was especially good in content and attendance. Harry Jones, County Manager; Bobbie Shields, General Manager; Commissioner Chair, Jennifer Roberts and Jim Garges, new Director of Park and Recreation, were all in attendance. Chair Patterson thanked everyone for their involvement and participation.

Commissioner Huelsman shared that the PRC members had received a letter from Board of County Commissioner Chair, Jennifer Roberts, thanking the PRC Board members for the jobs they did and expressing her appreciation and congratulations. Commissioner Huelsman also felt the time of this year's retreat was a good time as it was before the BOCC Retreat.

Commissioner Wilson shared that she enjoyed the retreat and felt it was a good learning experience as a new commissioner. She also felt it would have been helpful to have been provided background information on some of the issues addressed in advance of the retreat.

Jim Garges said he found the retreat to be interesting and educational, especially for new PRC members and was please with the attendance. He commended the staff on the wonderful job.

**P4P FUND RAISER:** Chair Patterson reminded the Board of the Partners for Parks fund raiser on March 1<sup>st</sup> and encouraged everyone to attend. Tickets are \$150.00.

Commissioner Chandler stated that he understood that Partners for Parks collected 25 cents from each round of golf and asked what was the status and purpose of those funds. James Alsop answered that the funds were restricted to the golf course where collected and must be used for Jr. Golf. Grant applications for these funds can be found on the Partners for Parks website. Commissioner Chandler suggested that staff have a presentation on the process and requirements to qualifying for and obtain these funds.

**(5) Public Hearings**  
None

**(6) Advisory Council – Committee Reports**  
None

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**(7) Director's Report**

Chair Patterson recognized Jim Garges, new Director of Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation. Jim introduced himself and said that since his arrival, he continues to be impressed with the outstanding staff of the department and the support he has received and is looking forward to working together with other departments to get the job done. Jim continued and shared the following priorities and processes:

- To improve communication with the PRC, Director Garges referenced the "Friday Letter"; the first of which was sent on February 9, 2007. This letter will highlight the Department's projects, progress and events of the week and is intended to keep the PRC, Park and Recreation Staff and the County Manager and his Executive Team in the loop and well informed.
- The first several months will be spent meeting staff members of the various County Departments and members of the community.
- The 1989 Master Plan will be updated and will include two parallel plans: parks and facilities and programming. Dot Law will take the lead role in this process along with staff. Plans are to move as quickly as possible, particularly with respect to land acquisition.
- He will be addressing the Strategic Planning Process for the Department.

Chair Patterson asked about the time frame for completion of the Master Plan. Director Garges answered that he would be better able to talk about the time frame once a consultant has been hired. He said that we have the resources and money to do these plans but that it will be important to collect input from the community.

Commissioner Pearce asked when the PRC could expect to become involved. Director Garges answered that the Department will keep the PRC involved throughout the process

noting that tonight was the first step; making them aware.

Chair Patterson brought up the concern of “equity”. Director Garges said that through the process of the Master Plan, inventory would be taken of where and what we are short of and provide answers to concerns of balance based on demographics, location and accessibility. While everyone will not get what they want, where they want; there will be a process that has been gone through to make recommendations and will make it possible to professionally answer questions.

Commissioner Furuseth thanked Director Garges for the Friday Letter and expressed appreciation for this effort to keep the Board in the loop.

Commissioner Chandler expressed regret, based on the information shared by Director Garges on the direction and plans for the Department, that his term would be complete in June of 2007.

Commissioner Huelsman inquired about the space on the Park and Recreation Website asking for donations to help maintain Freedom Park when a recent donation of \$100,000 had been returned to the donor. Jeff Robinson answered that Partners for Parks has a dedicated account for the maintenance of Freedom Park, in particular for landscape. He said the intent of the website message is to encourage people to give money to Freedom Park in perpetuity to help maintain and improve the landscape. Jeff said he would look into this concern and take appropriate action.

Chair Patterson clarified that the opportunity to donate money to the specific up-keep of Freedom Park has been in place for a while at the request of the “park neighbors”. As their “backyard” they wanted a way to participate. The \$100,000 donation in question by Commissioner Huelsman was a sponsorship with stipulations.

Commissioner Wilson asked if any park could advertise on the website as needing money for maintenance. She also asked why Park and Recreation would “push” one park as needing contributions for maintenance and why maintenance needs are not handled through the normal budget process. If there is not enough money, how does the Department choose which park will be featured on the website? Director Garges responded that all parks need help and that the Department is always seeking partnerships with companies or individuals for all our parks who can help make them better over and above what the typical budget can provide. The question becomes, how do we do that? Jim said he would work with staff on a resolution.

Commissioner Furusteth pointed out that the fact that Freedom Park is featured on our website reinforces the equity issue among parks. He suggested rotating parks on the website.

Commissioner Wilson suggested a link to all parks.

Commissioner McClure said that the community needed to get its arms around what is tasteful

sponsorship.

### **CONSENT ITEMS**

- (8) **Minutes – PRC November 14, 2007:** *Motion was made by Commissioner Pearce to approve the amended minutes of the PRC November 14, 2007 meeting which was seconded by Commissioner Sharp and approved unanimously.*
- (9) **Minutes – PRC January 9, 2007:** *Motion was made by Commissioner Pearce to approve the minutes of the PRC January 9, 2007 meeting which was seconded by Commissioner McClure and approved unanimously.*
- (10) **Minutes – Advisory Councils:** *Motion was made by Commissioner Pearce to approve the submitted Advisory Council minutes which was seconded by Commissioner McClure and approved unanimously.*

### **STAFF REPORTS AND REQUESTS**

- (11) Greg Jackson introduced Akida Jordan, Recreation Coordinator/Supervisor. Akida was hired as the Youth Football Coordinator funded by a \$50,000 a year/3 year grant from the National Recreation and Parks Association. Akida presented information on the requirements the department must fulfill for the Youth Football Hub grant as well as the outcomes the department is trying to achieve. Following are the main goals Akida will be working towards:
  - Coach Development: A program to recruit, train and certify coaches
  - Officials Development: Ways to recruit, train and certify coaches
  - Health and Safety: Efforts to improve Fields and equipment
  - League Administration: Measures to better coordinate and administer league play

**Note:** A copy of Akida's presentation handout is included in the PRC meeting binder housed in the Director's office.

### **PARK COMMISSIONERS REPORTS AND REQUESTS**

- (12) Karla Gray, Sr. Therapeutic Recreation Manager introduced Commissioner Teresa Sharp to present a video on the Therapeutic Recreation Division and the Ray's 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Challenge. The Therapeutic Recreation Division, a division of Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation, provides recreation and leisure programs to people who have disabilities, youth who are exposed to peer pressures, youth and teens that are homeless, and children from the refugee community. The Community Challenge is a fund raising event that makes it possible to provide scholarships for summer day camps and other programs that occur throughout the year. At the conclusion of the video, Commissioner Sharp challenged everyone to participate and support this years Community Challenge,

**Note:** A copy of the power point presentation is included in the PRC meeting binder housed in the Director's office.

(13) a. The board agreed to fold the Aeromodelers Advisory Council into the Northwest Park District Advisory Council, the Aquatics Advisory Council into the Central Park District III Advisory Council and the Dowd House Advisory Council into the Central Park District I Advisory Council. It was also agreed that the Therapeutic Advisory Council would begin meeting on an every other month basis.

b. Clarification of the bylaws regarding Advisory Council member terms which states: Each council member shall be appointed by the Park and Recreation commission to serve one (1) three (3) year term and shall be eligible, with re-appointment to serve only one (1) additional, consecutive (3) year term. In the event a member is appointed to fill an unexpired term, he/she can still be appointed to serve one (1) additional (3) year term.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion was made by Commissioner McClure, seconded by Commissioner Barry and unanimously carried that there being no further business to come before the Board that the meeting be adjourned at 7:45 PM.*

## **Upcoming Meetings and Events**

PRC Monthly Meeting  
April 10, 2007  
6:00 PM Conference Room B  
Administrative Office Building

*Video archives of all meetings are on file in the Director's office.*