



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Phillip O. Berry Recreation Center at 440 Tuckaseegee Road, Charlotte, NC 28208 on March 10, 2009 at 6 p.m.

**PRC Minutes
March 10, 2009**

ATTENDANCE

- Present:** Brad Pearce – Chair
Owen Furueth – Vice Chair
John Barry – Exec. Secretary
Rob Brisley
Scott McClure
Jeff Tarte
Kirk Otey
Tim Morgan
David Morgan
Norman Mitchell
Jim Garges
Dot Law
- Absent:** Brenda McMoore (Business Conflict)
Beverly Lawston (Meeting Conflict)
- Visitor:** Commissioner Vilma Leake

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. by Vice-Chair Owen Furueth, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

- (1) **Welcome and Introductions**
- a. Each Commissioner introduced themselves and also welcomed two new commissioners:
Norman Mitchell – At Large
David Morgan – Northern Towns
 - b. Craig Louallen, Facility Manager I at Phillip O. Berry Recreation Center, welcomed everyone and introduced the Center staff: Blanche Penn, Ingrid Autrey, Jacklyn McCollough and Linda Williams. Craig shared information on the Center and invited everyone to take a tour at the end of the meeting.

Lola Massad, Division Director of Community and Recreation Center Services said that Phillip O. Berry was the first CMS joint use facility and paved the way for all other CMS joint use projects

(2) **Proclamations and Awards**
None

(3) **Public Appearance – Presentation of Conceptual Master Plan for Sycamore at Ray’s Splash Planet**

Vincent James and John Arciero of Sycamore II LLC; Bob Lauer of ADW Architects and Dennis Lacaria of CMS were all present to participate in a PowerPoint presentation of the proposed Sycamore at Gateway project and its interface with Ray’s Splash Planet (RSP). The Sycamore project, a mixed-use project, would include office space, retail, apartments and a parking garage. The presentation covered the key features and amenities of the project which included improved facilities for Ray’s Splash Planet. The presenters considered the following to be benefits for Ray’s as a result of the project:

- Greater visibility and brand recognition for RSP
- Secure parking deck for RSP patrons
- Enhanced open space
- New membership dollars by inclusion in residential rental agreements
- New retail opportunities for RSP patrons
- New green courtyard and media center

The presentation concluded following questions from the Commissioners. (**Note:** This PowerPoint presentation is included in the PRC Minute’s binder housed in the Director’s office)

(4) **Program Presentations:**
None

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

Appointments to the Therapeutic Advisory Council were deferred by Chair Brad Pearce to the April PRC meeting pending the assignment of a commissioner to the council.

(6) **Public Hearings**
None

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

(8) **Director’s Report – Jim Garges**

Budget Update: Director Garges gave a budget update which included the following points:

- There is a predicted \$70 M shortfall in next fiscal year’s budget. Each department has been instructed by the county manager to prepare budget reduction scenarios at the 5, 10, 15 and 20% level. At the 20% level, the department would go from a \$40.5 M net budget to \$32.4 M and would include the loss of 68 full time employees and 161 part time employees. This will result in the loss of quality employees, loss of service and will

impact the citizens that we serve. (**Note:** The spreadsheet dated 3/23/09 at 2:28 p.m. showing the reductions at each level, broken down by object codes, is included in the PRC minute's binder housed in the Director's office.)

- A 20% across the board cut is not expected; rather it will probably be based on department priorities set by the BOCC; mandated services ranking highest.
- The County Manager and the budget executive team will look at the scenarios and present some of that information to the BOCC public policy committee. The Manager may also be discussing enterprise reductions such as salary freeze, pay cuts, no or less contribution to 401K, greater employee contribution to health care, freeze all vacancies and other similar options to reduce the \$70 M budget gap.
- A reduction percentage may be assigned to departments late Thursday, March 12. That number is subject to change based on changes in the economy/sales tax revenue.
- Each of the reduction scenarios put together by Park and Recreation reflected a reduction in services across the board in order to continue all services but at a lower level. At 20%, Park and Recreation will see a marked difference in service levels; less maintenance, less security, reduced hours at recreation centers and or possible closings.

Capital Budget: Director Garges shared information regarding the capital budget as follows:

- Approximately 1 year ago things began to slow down in the County as the County's indebtedness reached a point where it was becoming difficult to begin new projects and meet current obligations and keep a triple A bond rating. Closely following was a slow down in the economy resulting in less revenue.
- In response, the County reviewed their current construction projects to confirm that there would be enough funds to continue making payments on those construction contracts as well as continue planning some projects. Park and Recreation will continue the planning process on some projects such as LSC and Romare Bearden but with no promise of going to construction.

Reduction in Force (RIF): The Department has put together a RIF policy, approved by Human Resources, which will take into account seniority and performance. When the reduction level is assigned (5, 10 15 or 20%), the number of affected employees will go through the RIF. Employees determined to be in the reduction will be notified as quickly as possible and with as much compassion as possible.

Commissioner Otey asked if a scoring process will be used to determine cuts in programs and services as opposed to an across the board cut. Director Garges answered that programs and services would be slowed down or lowered that have the least impact to people. At a 20% or more reduction, you might see all adult athletic services completely farmed out.

Commissioner Otey asked about recreation center closings. Director Garges said the department would not do an across the board closing, like every Tuesday, but rather Lola and her staff would determine how each center would meet the reduction.

Commissioner David Morgan asked about the duration of the reduction. Director Garges said he did not expect to see the Park and Recreation of

today again anytime in the near future after the reductions. The reductions will possibly go through fiscal year 2010/2011.

Accreditation: Director Garges shared that the Department had completed the accreditation process this week. The Accreditation Visitor Team determined that out of 158 standards, we only failed to meet 3. One of those standards will be met and the other two cannot be met due to County policy. Final accreditation approval will be given at the National meeting in Salt Lake City. Kudos went out to Dot Law who took the Department through the accreditation process and to the staff for all the team effort to complete the process.

Partners for Parks Race Playce Award: The Department received an award at the Partners for Parks fund raising dinner for Race Playce. Partners for Parks cleared approximately \$20,000, a huge success in the current financial climate.

Commissioner Leake: Board of County Commissioner, Vilma Leake, was in attendance. She greeted the PRC and staff and expressed her appreciation for all that the Department does for the county and offered her continued support. Commissioner Leake expressed her support of the communities request to rename Phillip O. Berry. She also welcomed the new Park and Recreation Commissioners, Norman Mitchell and David Morgan.

PRC Chair Report None

(10-12) Consent Items

***Motion was made** by Commissioner McClure to approve all consent items, including the February 10, 2009 PRC minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Brisley and approved unanimously.*

Staff Reports and Requests

Park Commissioners Reports and Requests

Fees and Charges Report: Commissioner Barry reported that the Fees and Charges committee endorsed the Department's recommendation for changes to the current fees and charges. The main changes were to increase the rates for St. Mary's Historic Chapel and include a cancellation policy/fee, increase rental fees for Mahlon Adams and to standardize the rates and options between recreation centers and aquatic facilities. (**Note:** The revised policy and fee schedule is included in the PRC minute's binder housed in the Director's office.)

***A motion was made** by Commissioner Barry for the Park and Recreation Commission to adopt the revised fees and charges as submitted by staff, which was seconded by Commissioner Furuset and approved unanimously.*

Chair Brad Pearce asked for a show of hands of those who had visited a park over the last week. Parks visited included Jetton Park, Renaissance Golf

Course, Reedy Creek Park, Freedom Park, McDowell Nature Preserve, Elon Park, 4-Mile Creek Greenway, Torrence Greenway, Ramsey Creek Dog Park and Idlewild Park.

Commissioner Tarte requested that Partners for Parks attend a future meeting to give an annual update of priorities, achievements and financial status.

Adjournment

Having no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.