



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Administrative Office Building located at 5841 Brookshire Blvd., Charlotte, NC at 6 p.m.

PRC Minutes
April 14, 2009

ATTENDANCE

Present: Brad Pearce – Chair (Left at 6:45)
Owen Furuseth – Vice Chair
John Barry – Exec. Secretary
Rob Brisley
Scott McClure
Jeff Tarte
Tim Morgan
David Morgan
Norman Mitchell
Brenda McMoore
Beverly Lawston
Paul Bailey
Jim Garges

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Brad Pearce, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Commissioner Mitchell.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

(1) Welcome and Introductions

- a. Chair Pearce and Director Garges welcomed Paul Bailey, new Park and Recreation Commissioner for Southern Towns. Commissioner Bailey shared background on himself and said he was looking forward to working on the commission.
- b. Director Garges introduced department intern, Trenet Mumhart, from Indianapolis and is currently getting her masters in parks and recreation.

(2) Proclamations and Awards

- a. **Partners for Parks Award:** Director Garges announced that at the 2nd Annual Partners for Parks Awards Banquet, Park and Recreation received an award recognizing Race Playce as project of the year. The award was presented to Karla Gray, Sr. Therapeutic Recreation Manager, whose staff was instrumental in bringing the Race Playce project to completion. Karla

invited everyone to visit Race Playce at Nevin Park; the first totally accessible, community designed and stick built park of its kind in Mecklenburg County.

- b. **Green Guardian Award:** Michael Kirschman, Division Director of Nature Preserves and Natural Resources, introduced Heidi Pruess, Environmental Policy Administrator. Heidi recognized and presented the green guardian of the month award to Gary Marshall. Following are a few, among many, of Gary's daily efforts to be environmentally sensitive:

- Vegetable oil engine in his car
- Repair and reuse of equipment and scrap metal
- Secured funding to convert a county car to solar
- Coordination of goose relocation project
- Uses his own coffee cup when buying coffee out
- Uses cloth bags at the grocery store
- Switched to green cleaning products

(Note: A copy of the Outlook article is included in the PRC minute's binder housed in the Director's office.)

(3) **Public Appearance – Gang Prevention Coalition Presentation**

As an extension of his previous gang presentation, Isaac Applewhite, Community Services, Coordinator/Supervisor, made arrangements for a presentation by the Gang Prevention Coalition (GPC).

Willie Ratchford, Community Relations Committee shared that the presentation represented a comprehensive community strategy to address the issues of gangs in Charlotte Mecklenburg. A number of community organizations have been working for over a year to come up with a community strategy to address gangs and are called the Gang Prevention Coalition. Fran Cook, CMPD/Gang of One, shared what constitutes a gang and what a gang might look like in Charlotte Mecklenburg. Grace Crocket of Area Mental Health and Chair of GPC, shared information about the work, goals and strategies to address gangs in the community as well as information about a request for proposal to engage the community.

(Note: The PowerPoint presentation is included in the PRC Minute's binder housed in the Director's office.)

(4) **Program Presentations: Nature Preserves and Natural Resources – Reedy Creek CPCC Partnerships**

Bridget Strong, Park and Recreation Manager, shared information on The Natural Enhancements Service Learning Partnerships, an ongoing partnership with CPCC students to provide opportunities for the students to gain real-world learning experiences through service projects at Reedy Creek Nature Preserve. The Department, through this program, has reaped the benefit of graphic design, welding and horticulture skills equaling 900 service hours and an estimated service value of \$50,000. (Note: The PowerPoint presentation is included in the PRC Minute's binder housed in the Director's office.)

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

- a. **EPD:** *Motion was made by Commissioner Brisley to appoint Michelle McDonald to an unexpired term on the East Park District Advisory*

- Council, expiring 6/2011, which was seconded by Commissioner Tim Morgan and approved unanimously*
- b. GOLF:** *Motion was made by Commissioner Lawston to appoint Samuel Lomax and Robert Mobley each to an unexpired term on the GOLF Advisory Council, expiring 6/2011, which was seconded by Commissioner McClure and approved unanimously*
 - c. NRPD:** *In the absence of the Chair of the Northwest Park District, action was deferred at the meeting for appointments to the NRPD. Action was later taken by voice vote on April 28: Motion was made by Chair Pearce to appoint Theresa York to an unexpired term on the Northwest Park District Advisory Council, which passed unanimously.*
 - d. Therapeutic:** *In the absence of Chair Pearce, action was deferred at the meeting for appointments to the Therapeutic Advisory Council. Action was later taken by voice vote on April 28: Motion was made by Chair Pearce to appoint Andy Arnette to an expired term on the Therapeutic Advisory council, expiring 6/2012, which passed unanimously.*

Commissioner McClure asked if we were abiding by the Consolidate Golf Bylaws, which states that the advisory council will consist of two members representing each of the five golf courses? Commissioner Lawston affirmed that the council was adhering to this bylaw.

(6) Public Hearings
None

(7) Advisory Council – Committee Reports
Stephanie Frisbee, Manager – Senior Citizen and Cultural Arts, came before the board to ask for their endorsement of the creation of two new Advisory Councils; a Senior Citizen Advisory Council and a Cultural Arts Advisory Council. Senior Adult Services and Performing Arts and Fine Arts are recognized as core programs in the Master Plan. The creation of these councils would support these programs. *Motion was made by Commissioner Barry to endorse the creation of a Senior Citizen Advisory Council and a Cultural Arts Advisory Council, which was seconded by Commissioner Brisley, and approved unanimously.* Stephanie will bring the details to the Board as they are developed.

(8) Director’s Report – Jim Garges
Director Garges reported on the following:

Budget: Director Garges shared that the manager’s proposed budget did not hit Park and Recreation as hard as it could have at just under a 10% reduction. This equates to \$3 million and includes 16 full time positions and 9 vacancies at this point. Due to the economic slow down and the County’s ‘debt diet’, there are also reductions in the bond funded Capital and Greenway Planning Divisions and Greenway Maintenance that are not included in the \$3 million. Employees included in the reduction were advised in individual meetings, given a day off if needed and provided with HR assistance information. Feedback indicates that the employees felt the process was handled fairly and professionally.

County wide, there are 89 full time employees and 400 vacancies affected. Additional measures taken include the freezing of salaries in the next fiscal year and requiring employees to contribute more towards medical coverage.

After all Department reductions, the County still has a \$38 million budget gap. The County Manger is looking at closing this gap with reductions in funding to outside agencies, including CMS, CPCC and WTVI.

Quarterly Operating Budget Update: Mario Chang, Sr. Fiscal Administrator gave a quarterly operating budget update which included an update on the FY09 annual operating budge ending March 31, 2009, a breakdown of FY10 budget reductions by division as well as schedule of budget events and dates. The Commission was also given an impact statements document, which gave a breakdown of reduction percentage by department division and the anticipated impact of those reductions. (**Note:** A copy of the PowerPoint presentation and the impact statement are included in the PRC Minute's Binder housed in the Director's office.)

Flat Branch: Director Garges gave an update on the soccer field lighting at Flat Branch. At the recent advisory council meeting, citizens from the neighborhood were given the opportunity to express their concerns and disapproval of the lighting of the soccer field and tournament programming. Even though the Department followed proper procedures of Master Planning and Public Workshops, it was clear that they were still unhappy. The Soccer Association has been asked to attend the next meeting to do a presentation on what will occur on these fields. The Commission was advised that they may get calls and letters regarding this issue.

Commissioner Tim Morgan added that the citizens were given two and a half hours at the advisory council meeting to vent their concerns. Since the main concern among the neighbors was the lights, and the lights have not yet been turned on, Commissioner Morgan felt that once they saw the lights on, they would see that it was not nearly as bad as they had anticipated. It was also noted that there was between 150 feet and 200 feet of buffer, well exceeding the city's requirement of 50 feet. There are also plans to increase the tree requirements by 25 to 30 percent. Another concern, traffic issues associated with the School are not within the Department's responsibility, however in the spirit of cooperation arrangements have been made to have someone for CDOT at the next meeting to address the community's concerns with traffic. (**Note:** Details of the March South Park District Advisory Council meeting are contained in their minutes included in the April PRC packet.)

Commissioner Tim Morgan commended staff for providing all information requested by the community.

Commissioner Brisley suggested preparing a FAQ sheet on the Flat Branch issue.

Central Region Advisory Councils: Director Garges asked the Commission to think about joining the Central District Advisory Councils together and have one Central Region meeting. Commissioner McMoore said that her council members were confused as to their area of responsibility since the district reorganization. Jim felt it would be a good idea to combine

the central councils into one since the close proximity makes it important to know what is going on next door. Jim did not suggest fewer members. The idea was left for consideration and a later decision.

PRC Nominating Committee: Commissioner McClure reminded the board that it was time for the executive team to put together a PRC nominating committee and bring a slate of officers before the Commission for a vote in June. A slate of officers should be presented at the May meeting.

PRC Chair Report

None

(10-12) Consent Items

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

Staff Reports and Requests

(13) Quarterly Operating Budget Update: Presented under the Director's Report.

(14) Quarterly Capital Project Update: Julie Clark, Division Director of Greenway Planning and Development gave an update on the 04 bond park and greenway projects. Updates on parks included: the opening of Bradford Park in April, a scheduled fall opening for Shuffletown, an anticipated April opening for Revolution, Eastway is on target for opening in the fall and the restroom facility at Colonel Francis Beatty is near completion. Greenway updates included status of projects in partnership with Storm Water Services, LSC GW progress and efforts for funding from the stimulus package. **(Note:** The 2004 Bond Project Update document contains the details on all the bond projects and is contained in the PRC Minute's Binder housed in the Director's office.)

Land Acquisition/Bond Sales: Director Garges said that the Department has about 11 million dollars worth of land acquisitions they would like to move ahead on and is working with Finance to try and free up some money for that. Real Estate Services plans to move forward with discussions on prospective land purchases to hopefully be in agreement with money becomes available. As a reminder, there is \$35 million for land in the 07 bond and \$60 million in the 08 bond. The County may do a bond sale in June or July of 2010.

Commission Lawston asked about the project priority list should there be a bond sale. Jim answered that 04 projects would be completed first and, depending on the amount of money made available, followed by land acquisition, Romare Bearden, LSC, Friendship, etc.

(15) Seigle Point Recreational Facilities: Greg Jackson, Division Director of Park Operations and Athletic Services gave an update to the Commission and asked for their endorsement on a 2 year project called the Seigle Point Recreational Facilities. This project is a partnership between Park and Recreation, Trinity Episcopal School (TES) and the Charlotte Housing

Authority (CHA) to develop recreational amenities at the Seigle Point apartment development and is located across Little Sugar Creek from the Alexander Street Park. This following are included in the agreements:

- CHA will lease the land to Mecklenburg County
- TES will fund and build 6 tennis courts, 21 parking spaces, a picnic shelter and a playground. All will be built to the Departments standards.
- TES will build a permanent restroom facility to support the amenities
- CHA will build two basketball courts
- Park and Recreation will manage and maintain the tennis courts, shelter and playground and CHA basketball courts
- CHA and TES will have first right of reservation on the tennis courts Monday through Friday until 6 p.m.
- The tennis courts will be open to the public as part of the Mecklenburg County park facilities after 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and all day on Saturday and Sunday.

Motion was made by Commissioner Brisley to endorse the [proposals](#) associated with the Seigle Point Recreational Facilities project with the added condition there is no capital allocated to this park from the county and that the Department move forward with presenting to the BOCC, which was seconded by Commissioner Tarte and approved unanimously.

Park Commissioners Reports and Requests

Commissioner Tarte reminded the Commission that he would like a presentation by Partners for Parks at a future meeting,

Commissioner Lawston shared that there was a First Tee of Charlotte program at Sunset Golf Course during Spring Break attended by 321 children. Also reminded of the First Tee ribbon cutting at Revolution scheduled for April 28 at 10 a.m. (Notices to this event will go out to the Commission on April 15.)

Commissioner McClure encouraged the Commissioners to attend the annual Greenway Bike Tour scheduled for Saturday, May 16. Arrangements for attendance and a bike can be made with Julie Clark. Electronic invites will be sent to the Commission.

Adjournment

Having no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Note: The PRC meeting agenda packet is archived on disk in the Director's Office.