



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 28216 on August 11, 2009 at 6:00 p.m.

PRC MINUTES
August 11, 2009

ATTENDANCE

Present: Brad Pearce – Chair
Owen Furuseth – Vice Chair
John Barry – Exec. Secretary
Rob Brisley
Jeff Tarte
Tim Morgan
David Morgan
Beverly Lawston (6:25 – 7:20)
Scott McClure
Paul Bailey
Charles McRee
Norman Mitchell
Jim Garges
Dot Law

Absent: Brenda McMoore

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 McClure.

Welcome and Introductions – Proclamations and Awards

a. Director Garges introduced new CPD III Park and Recreation Commissioner, Charles (Charlie) McRee. Commissioner McRee was appointed by the BOCC at the August 4, 2009 meeting to the PRC and most recently served on the Board of the Catawba Lands Conservancy.

Each of the PRC Commissioners introduced themselves and shared the park district which they represented. Park and Recreation staff present at the meeting also introduced themselves.

b. Director Garges presented a service award to Charles King. Charles recently retired after 15 years of service with the department as a Information Technology Manager.

c. Director Garges recognized the staff for the awards won from the National Association of County Governments - 2009: (**Note:** Details on these projects are included in the PRC Minute's Binder, Section 2b, housed in the Director's office.)

- Accessible Mountain Bike Trail
- MeckTeen Chefs
- Physical Education Teacher In-Service: Outdoor Recreation Alternatives
- Solar GEM
- SEALS
- Natural Enhancements Service/Learning Partnership
- Go Get Them and They Will Come

Public Appearance

Smokey Oats of Trinity Episcopal School gave a presentation on the school's participation/agreement in the Seigle Point Recreational Facilities/Alexander Street Park partnership between themselves, Park and Recreation and the Charlotte Housing Authority. The school will fund the building of 6 tennis courts, 21 parking spaces, a picnic shelter and a playground as well as a restroom facility. Park and Recreation will maintain the facilities and will be available for use by the public after 6 p.m. during the week and all day Saturdays and Sundays.

Commissioner Responses/Remarks:

Commissioner McClure: Pointed out that a greenway project runs through the middle of Alexander Street Park. Mr. Oats was asked to remain diligent regarding the shared use agreement. Commissioner McClure also invited Mr. Oats to be on the leadership team of the next bond campaign.

Commissioner Lawston: Asked about lighting. Mr. Oats responded that the tennis courts would be lit and the conduit will be put in place for possible future lighting of the athletic field. Commissioner Lawston asked for confirmation that the athletic field will strictly be a soccer field and that the playground equipment would be at Siegle Point. Mr. Oats confirmed. Commissioner Lawston asked about maintenance of the field. Mr. Oats said that the maintenance would be handled by Park and Recreation.

Commissioner Brisley: Asked about the field turf, artificial or natural? Mr. Oats said there had been some discussion about artificial turf, but that it would be natural.

Program Presentation – Specialize Park Services - Partnerships

Jeff Robinson, Division Director of Specialized Park Services gave a presentation on the overall responsibilities of the division with an emphasis on partnerships. The division is responsible for structural services, park repair, park and greenway operations, turf and irrigation, aquatic operations and NC Cooperative Extension Service. The division manages these areas with 65 full time employees and a budget of \$7,010,545. Partnerships with Athletic Associations results in an approximate annual maintenance savings of \$725,000. The Division also partners with surrounding towns, CMS, City of Charlotte, Real

Estate Services and County Storm Water on various projects. Volunteers equal approximately \$50,000 a year. A growing partnership with the community is community gardens. (**Note:** A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is included in the PRC Minute's binder housed in the Director's office.)

Appointments – Advisory Councils – Applicants

Greenway: *Motion was made by Commissioner Tim Morgan to appoint Mark Loflin to an expired term on the Greenway Advisory Council, expiring 6/2012, which was seconded and approved unanimously.*

SWPD: *Motion was made by Commissioner Barry to appoint Rodger Nolden to an expired term on the SWPD Advisory Council, which was seconded and approved unanimously.*

Cultural Arts: *Motion was made by Commissioner Pearce to appoint John Probst, Nina Cartee and April Berry to full terms on the Cultural Arts Advisory Council, expiring 6/2012, which was seconded and approved unanimously*

Senior Citizens: *Motion was made by Commissioner Pearce to appoint Deborah Sparks and Bill Marchant to full terms on the Senior Citizens Advisory Council, expiring 6/2012, which was seconded and approved unanimously.*

Director's Report – Jim Garges

Beach Swimming Update: An update on a beach swimming recommendation and a request for the PRC Board to endorse the department's plan to go before the BOCC and request the ban on lake swimming be lifted and allow lake swimming in designated areas was presented to the PRC by Greg Jackson, Division Director of Park Operations and Athletic Services. After careful evaluation, the department has identified Ramsey Creek Park to be the location best suited for beach swimming. Following endorsement of the PRC the following steps would be required over a 2 – 3 year time span:

- BOCC approval to change the policy and allow swimming from park property
- Host community workshops
- Hire a consultant to design the beach
- Complete Duke Energy application to develop a beach
- Duke submits application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)
- Identify funding

(**Note:** The recommendation in its entirety is included in the PRC Minute's Binder, August, Section **8a.**)

Commissioner Lawston expressed concern over pursuing this new project, which was not identified in the Master Plan, while not having made full use of county owned pool facilities at West Charlotte High School and Providence High School.

Director Garges assured the board that this project would not be funded with bond money; however, he feels that this project would be good for the county to

help meet the aquatic needs identified in the Master Plan. The Department has recently resumed management of the pools at West Charlotte and Providence and will be made available to the public during non-school use times.

The following concerns were also discussed:

- Noise
- Traffic on Nance Road
- Suggest identifying beach swimming areas on Wylie, Norman and Mt. Island lakes
- Hay Market purchased with Clean Water Management Trust funds for watershed protections therefore not an option for a beach
- Consider purchasing property specifically for beach swimming (Huey's Bubble-up)
- Entrance fees to beach swimming
- Swimming area roped, lifeguards on duty, swimmer capacities
- Suggest retaining a local firm for beach design
- Suggest getting River Keeper and Marine Commission on board with beach swimming project progress

Motion was made by Commissioner McClure, in order to allow Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation to explore public swimming on the lakes in Mecklenburg County, the Park and Recreation Commission endorses the Department going before the BOCC to request lifting the ban on lake swimming in designated areas, which was seconded by Commissioner Tarte and approved unanimously.

First Ward Park: Director Garges gave an update on First Ward Park and covered the following points. (**Note:** The entire presentation made to the Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners by Real Estate Services on August 4, 2009 is included in the PRC Minute's Binder, August, Section **8c.**)

- Plans are to go back through a mini public workshop process to look at the impact of Dixie's "in and out" and the farmer's market concept as well as to make sure that the park will be as functional as anticipated. The redesign will be brought before the PRC and BOCC.
- The park area will interface with private property: Dixie's Tavern, Levine Parking Deck and UNCC 's Urban Campus
- Exploring option of having the developer build the park and be paid back with a tax increment grant.
- Daniel Levine will build based on the new park design so that the entire park will blend at completion.
- The PRC members were invited and encouraged to attend the public workshops for the redesign.

NRPA Conference: Charlotte is under consideration as a location for the 2014 or 2016 National Park and Recreation Association (NPRA) convention. NRPA representatives were recently in town for a tour, led by Mike Anderson of Visit Charlotte, of hotels, the convention center and a city walking tour. The delegates were impressed and will be back for another visit soon. The PRC were invited to present to them at this larger meeting.

Public Art: With regard to the recent controversy over the public art piece placed in the Shuffletown Park, Director Garges, shared that he attended the

unveiling at which the artist was present, the media and several neighbors. The artist did an excellent job of explaining the piece and what it meant. Jim felt if others could have heard him, controversy could have been avoided. Jim felt that a good change to the public art process would be to have the park design and the art design addressed in the same public workshops. The ASC is open to this suggestion.

Various concerns and comments from the Commissioners regarding the ASC Public Art Process were discussed at a later point in the meeting and included the following points, opinions and suggestions:

- For the money allotted to the ASC for public art, they do not embrace opinions regarding art from a diverse group of citizens.
- It was suggested that the ASC committee that selects and approves art work be structured differently, perhaps to include citizens from the area in which the art will be placed, Park and Recreation employees and Partners for Parks members. (This could be addressed at the BOCC level)
- It was suggested that the artist be brought in at the beginning of a park project rather than at the end.

(Note: The presentation by the ASC to the BOCC on August 4, 2009, which covers the Mecklenburg County FY10 Public Art Work Plan, is included in the PRC Minute's Binder, August 2009, Section **8e**)

Memorial Stadium: James Alsop, Division Director of Enterprise Services, gave an update on repairs to the tunnel collapse at Memorial Stadium underneath the horseshoe seating area. CST Environment was hired to make the necessary repairs and all events through February 28, 2010 have been moved. **(Note:** Specific information regarding the stadium and tunnel as well as projected cost and a projected timeline for repairs are all included in the PRC Minute's Binder, August, 2009, Section **8f**.)

Bond Sales: Director Garges informed the Board that the Finance Department may be making a recommendation in October about the upcoming funding for the next year and how that funding would be divided. It will be important to pay close attention to this as Park and Recreation will want to get an appropriate allotment.

Freedom Park Noise Ordinance: Director Garges updated the board on the current concerns of some of the neighbors surrounding Freedom Park regarding the noise level and number of events in the Park. The Department will be addressing those concerns and reviewing the current Department policy to determine if any changes are in order.

Staff Reports and Requests

Quarterly Operating Budget Update: Mario Chang, Sr. Fiscal Administrator, gave an update on the FY2009 Department Operating Budget. The Department came in under budget by \$2.5 million. The primary contributors were increased revenue of approximately \$750,000 and a reduction of expenses by \$1.8 million. Mario also covered the FY2010 Operating Budget. Some noted areas of challenge in FY2010 are:

- Revenue goals in 2010 are about \$1M less than 2009

- Contract Services incurred a budget cut of \$800,000 and is primarily in areas such as mowing and off-duty security
- Commodities incurred a cut of \$365,000 which includes non capitalized assets such as small motored items.
- Uniforms took a substantial cut of \$47,000
- No money budgeted for Capital Cost

Director Garges noted that these reductions were recommended internally so that the general public would not be affected by cuts to services, programs and activities and facilities would remain open

(**Note:** This presentation is included in the PRC Minute's Binder, August 2009, Section 13.)

Quarterly Capital Project Update: Lee Jones, Division Director of Capital Planning and Alliance Development gave an update on the Park and Recreation 2004 bond referendum greenway and park projects and a greenway status report for current projects. (**Note:** Complete details are included in the PRC Minute's Binder, August 2009, Section 14 and 14a.)

PRC Chair Report

None

Consent Items:

***Motion was made** by Commissioner Tim Morgan to approve all consent items, including the June 9, 2009 PRC minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner David Morgan and approved unanimously*

Park Commissioners Reports and Requests

***Motion was made** by Commissioner McClure for a closed session meeting following the regular meeting, including Director Garges and Administrative Assistant Patsy Houston, which was seconded by Commissioner Tarte and approved unanimously.*

Having no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m. followed by a closed session which concluded at 9:40 p.m.