



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 10, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.

PRC MINUTES
August 10, 2010

ATTENDANCE

Present: Rob Brisley , Chair
Charlie McRee, Executive Secretary
Beverly Lawston , Vice Chair
Paul Bailey
Norman Mitchell
Joe Pata
Philip Carey
Brenda McMoore
Ed Barnhart

Jim Garges
Dot Law

Absent Jeff Tarte

Vacant Positions: North 1, North 3 and South 1

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Rob Brisley, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Welcome and Introductions:

- a. **Joe Pata** – Director Garges introduced and welcomed newly appointed PRC member, Joe Pata. Commissioner Pata was appointed by the BOCC at the August 3, 2010 BOCC meeting for the At Large position to a 3 year term expiring June 2013. Joe has served on the PRC in the past.
- b. **Phil Carey** – Director Garges introduced and welcomed newly appointed PRC member, Philip Carey. Commissioner Carey was appointed by the BOCC at the August 3, 2010 BOCC meeting for the Northern Towns position to a 3 year term expiring June 2013. Phil has served on the Town of Huntersville Park Commission.

Proclamations and Awards

Public Appearance

Program Presentations:

- a. **Park and Recreation Volunteer Services** – Director Garges recognized Lori Saylor, Volunteer Coordinator and Louise Bhavnani, Volunteer Assistant. Jim commended them for stepping up our volunteer program and getting the message out to the community about how to help Parks and Recreation.

Lori introduced Louis Bhavani, Volunteer Assistant. Louise was the director of volunteer services at the Carolina Raptor Center for almost 3 years and is currently working with Park and Recreation part-time while working on her masters at UNC Charlotte in Public Administration.

Lori shared the mission, program description, qualifications and time commitment for each of the new volunteer programs and initiatives currently being offered by the Department. The County Public Service and Information Department put together a video highlighting the Departments volunteer services and programs and can be viewed at <ftp://ftp1.co.mecklenburg.nc.us/psi/PRvolunteers> .

New Programs include:

Rec Buddies is a program for volunteers to provide staff support with the implementation of a broad range of activities.

VIP – Volunteers in Parks is a program for volunteers to support staff with the implementation of a broad range of beautification and maintenance projects in our parks and on our greenways.

Park Ambassadors is a higher level of volunteering. Volunteers in this position will act as the Department’s ambassador to park and greenway patrons and support staff maintenance and programming needs.

Discussion followed the presentation and Lori addressed questions from the Commissioners regarding the process for volunteering, how assignments are made, the communication process for making volunteer opportunities known to the public, how the Department works with students who are fulfilling community service requirements and the background checking process.

NOTE: Details on all of these volunteer programs are included in the August 10, 2010 PRC Minute’s Binder, **Section 4a**, housed in the Director’s office.

- b. **McClintock School Partnership** – Michael Kirschman, Director of Nature Preserves and Natural Resources, introduced Anthony Shaheen, Environmental Educator at McDowell Nature Center, to report on the McClintock Outdoors Club, a partnership between Park and Recreation and CMS McClintock Middle School to provide an outdoor program for at-risk youth.

Michael also shared that Anthony was selected and attended the National Outdoor Youth Summit in New York City, a summit to launch a youth movement

advocating for the outdoors. Anthony's experience at this summit was reported in the August Parks and Recreation magazine. (**Note:** This article is included in the PRC Minute's Binder, August 10, 2010, **Section 4b-1**, housed in the Director's office.)

Anthony presented a PowerPoint on the McClintock Outdoor Club which included information on the following: (**Note:** This presentation is included in the PRC Minute's Binder, August 10, 2010, **Section 4b**, housed in the Director's office.)

- Statistics on Gang Activity
- Growing Trends in Health
- Programs at Park and Recreation Nature Centers
- McClintock Outdoor Program, Demographics. Achievements
- McClintock Outdoor Program Outcomes – CMS and Park and Recreation
- McClintock Outdoor Program Expansion for 2010-2011

Following the presentation, Anthony and Michael answered questions from the Board regarding:

- How participants are selected
- Programs for younger children
- Expansion of program and staff limitations
- Coordination with Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts
- Benefits of outdoor education
- Continued advocacy for outdoor programming
- Sharing information on department programming/advisory councils

c. Park Operations Division - Partnerships

Director Garges recognized Jeff Robinson, Division Director of Park Operations for a program presentation on partnerships. Jeff shared that Park Operations and Athletic Services and the Specialized Park Services Division merged following the budget reduction into a single division. Jeff said that even with the reduction in budget and staff, the mission remains the same; to provide the citizens of Mecklenburg County with safe and functional parks and to continue to grow the park system to meet the ever increasing demands for recreation and leisure services. With no money to grow the parks, Jeff said he, along with Peter Cook, Park Superintendent; Mario Chang, Sr. Fiscal Administrator, and Risk Management has looking at ways to get more leverage out of our current and future partnerships. Jeff recognized Peter Cook to share with the board the potential revenue ideas that he and Mario have come up with to help achieve the division's mission.

Peter Cook shared that they have been looking at ways to enhance and improve the agreements with current partners which will hopefully help with future partners by reviewing the agreements and contracts and renegotiating them to place more of the maintenance and structural services cost on the partners that are benefiting from the use of the fields and facilities. Areas of opportunity are:

- Structural , HVAC and electrical
- Field lighting
- Maintenance of irrigation systems

- Increase athletic association partnerships and raise the cost savings for the department on field maintenance and construction to \$1 million next year
- Modify current liability release form to allow for training volunteers to use small mechanized equipment in our parks; increasing the scope of work that can be accomplished with volunteers
- Continue to work with local government partners
- Continue to seek private partnerships
- Combine and increase the size of eagle scout projects

(**Note:** A copy of the PowerPoint presentation can be found in the PRC Minute's Binder, **August, 2010, Section 4c** house in the Director's office.)

Commissioner McRee asked about the function of **Partners for Parks**. Director Garges explained that they were a 501c3 whose mission is to raise money and receive funds as a place holder for Park and Recreation and other town park departments and to be advocates for parks and recreation. People can make restricted and unrestricted use donations to Partners for Parks for the Department. Jim added that they are looking for new board members and to contact Steadman Sugg, president of Partners for Parks, if they knew of anyone interested in serving on that board. Jim also said that it would be a good idea to arrange a meet and greet with Partners for Parks.

Appointments -Advisory Councils - Applicants

- Northern Region: Motion was made** by Commissioner McMoore to reappoint **Silas Davis** to a 2nd full term, expiring 6/2013, which was seconded by Commissioner Pata and approved unanimously.
- Southern Region: Motion was made** by Commissioner Barnhart to reappoint **Hermes Goudes** to a 1st full term, expiring 6/2013, which was seconded by Commissioner McRee and approved unanimously.

Director's Report - Jim Garges

Director Garges reported on the following topics:

- LSC Greenway Metropolitan Section Opening Celebration:** Director Garges thanked the commissioners who attended the opening celebration and especially for the nice job that Commissioner Rob Brisley did chairing the event. Jim reported that while this section was not completely finished it was well enough along for a successful celebration. Completion of the Metro Section and Metro Park is expected by the end of November. Greenway users can currently use the LSC Greenway from Freedom Park to the Metropolitan Section.

At a recent meeting with Pappas Properties and Colonial Partners, the primary owner of the Metropolitan Project, Colonial Partners said they will recommend a cash donation to Partners for Parks each year for the next 5 years to help offset maintenance cost.

- New Fiscal Year Budget:** Jim said we are one month into the new fiscal year budget and the "new norm". Staff in all divisions have really stepped up and gotten us through all the summer camps and programs as advertised. A lot of

time has been spent in the field checking on how staff is doing and the parks are looking great. As we move through the upcoming season, we will begin to see more of the impacts from the budget reduction such as a decrease in programs and the amount of service with fewer programs and activities offered; however, those that are offered will be done right. The goal will be to make things seem seamless and continue to provide the best level of public service possible with the funds available. Jim reminded the board that the best focus for the PRC is advocacy for what Park and Recreation does. He said, therefore, it is very important they know and understand all that we do in order to tell people the importance of what we do and to advocate for resources so we can do more. The board members can contact Jim, Dot or any of the Division Directors for information on any of our programs.

Chair Brisley as who was the Public Relations specialist for the Department? Jim answered that inquires should go through Danny Diehl or Leo Caplanides

PRC Chair Report

PRC Applications: Discussion was held regarding the applications before the BOCC to fill the current PRC vacancies. The following recommendations were made:

- **North 3 Vacancy:** ***Motion was made** by Commissioner McRee to recommend to the BOCC the appointment of **Kendel A. Bryant** to the North 3 vacancy at the September 8 BOCC meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved unanimously.*
- **Central 1 Vacancy:** ***Motion was made** by Commissioner Mitchell to recommend to the BOCC the reappoint of **Beverly Cotton Lawston** to a second full term, expiring 6/2013, for Central 1 at the September 8 BOCC meeting, which was seconded Commissioner McRee and approved unanimously.*
- **South 1 Vacancy:** ***Motion was made** by Commissioner Pata to recommend to the BOCC the appointment of **Douglas M. Burnett** to the South 1 vacancy at the September 8 BOCC meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Barnhart and approved unanimously*
- **North 1 Vacancy:** It was decided to defer a recommendation to the BOCC until the applications could be reviewed by Commissioner Tarte. (**NOTE:** Before the September 8 BOCC meeting, it was decided that the PRC would recommend that the BOCC appoint Elaine Powell to the North 1 vacancy.)

Advisory Council Assignments: Chair Brisley made the following assignments and asked that preference be made none to him as soon as possible for the remaining advisory council PRC liaison vacancies.

Charlie McRee – Therapeutic Advisory Council

Joe Pata – Soccer Advisory Council

Commissioner Pata recommended that the department move forward on changing the soccer advisory council to an athletic advisory council in order to represent all field athletics.

Consent Items:

***Motion was made** by Commissioner Norman Mitchell to approve all consent items, including the June 9, 2010 PRC Minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Charlie McRee and approved unanimously.*

Staff Reports and Requests

(13) Quarterly Capital Project Update: Lee Jones, Division Director of Capital Planning, shared that the Capital Planning Division had merged with the Greenway Planning Division and will simply be Capital Planning. Gwen Cook, Greenway Planner, is now part of this Division. Lee said they are working closely with Real Estate Services and other partners throughout the City of Charlotte, and Mecklenburg County to get projects complete.

Lee gave an update on greenway projects currently under construction, including stimulus projects and sportsplex projects. Completed sportsplex projects include Eastway, Elon, Mallard Creek, Bradford, Shuffletown and Revolution Parks Sports Academy.

The floor was opened for questions which centered around:

- Huntersville, Friendship and Matthews Sportsplexes
 - Projects are on hold until approval from the budget office that 04 bond dollars will be available
- Romare Bearden Park
 - Funds have been granted from the National Endowment for the Arts for additional art for this project. A movement is underway to move this project forward by the Romare Bearden Foundation and Jerald Melberg Gallery. A month long celebration is being planned in conjunction with the Mint Museum and the Gantt Center to celebrate the 100th birthday of Romare Bearden in September, 2011. The Department will work to have the site greened up for the events associated with the celebration if we are not able to move forward with construction.
- Miracle Field Progress
 - Working with Site Solutions to develop two possible locations for the field at Marion Diehl Park. Once a decision is made on the field location, Bill Allen can move forward with fund raising. The concept plan will be brought before the PRC.
- Additional Stimulus Funding Opportunities
 - Funds may be available as the announcement comes forward from the government. Criteria would determine eligibility.

(NOTE: The capital project status report is contained in the PRC Minute's Binder for August 2010, **Section 13**, housed in the Director's office.)

Park Commissioners Reports and Requests

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.