



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Sugaw Creek Recreation Center, 943 W. Sugar Creek Road, Charlotte, NC 28213 at 6 p.m.

**PRC MINUTES
May 10, 2011**

ATTENDANCE

PRC Present: Rob Brisley, Chair
Beverly Cotton Lawston, Vice Chair
Charlie McRee, Executive Secretary
Philip Carey
Ed Barnhart
Kendel Bryant
Elaine Powell
Joe Pata
Norman Mitchell
Jim Garges

PRC Absent: Jeff Tarte
Doug Burnett
Brenda McMoore
Paul Bailey

Guest Present: Michael DeVaul - YMCA

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. Each Commissioner introduced themselves and their area of representation.

Welcome and Introductions: Sugaw Creek Recreation Center Staff

Heidi Kitterman, Facility Manager II, welcomed the Commission to Sugaw Creek Recreation Center and shared some of the information about the programs and activities going on at the center, including: baseball, tennis, disc golf, after school programs and summer camps in partnership with the YWCA, and senior citizen programs. Director Garges pointed out that the Sugaw Creek Recreation Center was slated in the \$250 million bond package for renovation. Heidi recognized/introduced the following staff:

- Nick Roberts, FMI
- Cynthia Smith-Perkins, RS
- Marvin Hicks, RS

- Carl Izzard, RA
- Moses Harper, RA
- April Drakeford, RA

Proclamations and Awards - None

Public Appearance –YMCA Michael DeVaul

Michael DeVaul from the YMCA presented the proposed plan to construct a joint use facility between the YMCA and Park and Recreation at Park Road Park. Through his presentation, Mr. DeVaul explained that having a facility in an underserved area would make it possible to conduct afterschool programs and provide activities and academic support services to children with a goal of reducing their idle time and improving their academic outcomes. Park and Recreation would gain a facility at a park that was slated for an indoor shelter in the bond issue and have a new facility for weekend rentals.

Conversation and discussion followed and some of those points are as follows:

- Were there similar afterschool/academic plans for the Beatties Ford Road corridor? (Mr. DeVaul mentioned Project Lift)
- Building site will not require cutting trees
- The building will not be LEED certified
- Maintenance cost will be 80 (YMCA)/20(MCPRD)
- Concern from the public meeting regarding the dynamic of turning a park facility into an academic facility
- Concern from the public on the condition of the tennis courts at Park Road and plans for repair
- How will children get to this facility? (the Y provides transportation)
- All schools are included but the focus will be on title one schools.

The following motion was made and discussion included Commissioner Powell's suggestion that affordable LEED strategies be incorporated into the design as much as possible and that the YMCA consider planning outdoor stewardship programs into the academic program. Commissioner Carey expressed concern of programs that appear to cut out segments of population and advised that we should be careful that our partners in joint projects such as this are providing access to all or most of the community.

Motion was made by Commissioner Pata to endorse the proposed plan to enter into a contractual agreement with the YMCA to build a joint use shelter facility at Park Road Park and support the concept going forward, which was seconded by Commissioner McRee, and approved unanimously.

(NOTE: The PowerPoint presentation in its entirety as presented by Mr. DeVaul is included in the May, 2011 PRC Minute's Binder, **Section 3**, housed in the Director's office.)

Program Presentation – Nature Preserves and Natural Resources:

Nature Explorer Zone – Year in Review: Michael Kirschman, Division Director of Nature Preserves and Natural Resources, and Pepe Chavez, Nature Center Manager at Reedy Creek Nature Center, presented a year in review of the Nature Explorer Zone at Reedy Creek. This unique "natural playground" is designed to encourage outdoor play and exploration and promote imaginary play, enhance creativity and provide a valuable

link between child and nature. In addition, Michael said these types of playgrounds are one of many ways to help address “Nature Deficit disorder”, as described by Richard Louv in Last Child in the Woods. The presentation shared information on this play area from its inception to present including:

- The idea
- Workshops
- Fund Raising
- Location
- Design
- The WOW factor by Daniels Woodlands Inc
- Benefits
- Play elements of the playground
- Grand Opening
- Statics of Nature Center visitation since the building of the playground – 32% increase
- Challenges
- Future plans

(NOTE: The PowerPoint presentation in its entirety can be found in the May, 2011 PRC Minute’s Binder, **Section 4**, housed in the Director’s office.)

Appointments –Advisory Councils – Applicants

Motion was made by Commissioner Pata to “sunset” the current Soccer Advisory Council, which was seconded by Commissioner McRee and approved unanimously.

Motion was made by Commissioner Pata to create an Athletic Advisory Council, which was seconded by Commissioner Powell and approved unanimously.

Motion was made by Commissioner Pata to appoint the following citizens to the Athletic Advisory Council each serving a full term (5/2011 – 6/2014):

***Jeffrey Hood
Michael Desmond
Mike Anderson
Christian Crute
Oscar Del Pino
Mike England
Miki Osherow
Chris Clouden
John Koslick
Stewart Mallard
Kris Gresham
Frank Jonas***

which was seconded by Commissioner McRee, and approved unanimously.

This new council will recognize and represent all field sports. Chair Rob Brisley assigned Commissioner Pata as Chair to this new council and Commissioner Carey as Vice-Chair.

Director's Report – Jim Garges

Director Garges shared information on the following topics:

Gold Medal: Director Garges shared that Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation has been named as a finalist for the NRPA Gold Medal Award for the second straight year. The award is presented each year to honor excellence in management and planning of parks and recreation agencies. Recreation professionals consider the Gold Medal Award as the top national recognition of excellence in their profession. (**Note:** Additional information can be found in the May, 2011 PRC Minute's binder, **Section 11d**, housed in the Director's office.)

Hats Off for Parks Luncheon: The first annual Hat's Off to Parks luncheon was held on May 5 at Freedom Park and was a great success. Money from the fund raiser will go towards building a neighborhood park in Lincoln Heights.

Budget: Director Garges said that County Manger Harry Jones will be sharing his budget proposal with the Department Heads on Tuesday, May 17. That evening the proposal will go before the BOCC. Jim said that the Department hopes at a bare minimum that we hold on to what we have, however, there is a good chance that we can get some of our money back. The Department will be asking for 1.7 – 1.8 MM for Must Fund items; including maintenance for Little Sugar Creek Greenway, operating dollars for Revolution Park Sports Academy, maintenance staff, and supplies and materials.

The PRC were reminded that it is very important for them to advocate for the Department during the budget process. Some opportunities are for the executive team to schedule individual meetings with the BOCC and for members of the PRC and Advisory Councils to sign up to speak at the Public Hearing on May 19. Sign up can be done on line at:

<http://charmec.org/mecklenburg/county/CountyManagersOffice/BusinessManagement/Pages/RegisterToSpeak.aspx>

CRVA Observer Article: Jim mention the article in the Charlotte Observer regarding times that the CRVA has given tickets to people as a way to say thank you. Jim stated that no matter how well intentioned these gifts are, it is best that staff not accept them.

PRC Chair Report

Nominations for Executive Committee: A slate of nominees will be presented at the next PRC meeting for voting on FY2011 PRC Executive Team.

Advisory Council By-Law Template Revision: The PRC reviewed the changes made to the by-laws from the April PRC meeting and some minor changes were suggested. Those changes will be incorporated and a vote to accept them will be made at the June PRC meeting.

Consent Items:

***Motion was made** by Commissioner McRee to accept all consent items as presented including the April 12, 2011 PRC minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Pata and approved unanimously.*

Staff Reports and Requests

Park Commissioners Reports and Requests:

Commissioner Lawston: Thank you to James Alsop, Bob Reardon and the many other Park and Recreation Staff for their work on the renaming celebration of the Revolution Golf Course to the Dr. Charles Sifford Golf Course at Revolution Park.

Commissioner Powell: Great job at Bark in the Park and the Hat's Off to Parks fund raising event.

Commissioner Carey: Great Asian Festival event at Ramsey Creek

Commissioner Barnhart: Thanks to Gwen Cook for a great celebration for the naming of the Ruth Shaw Trail on Toby Creek Greenway.

Commissioner Pata: Thanks to James Alsop for his work on seeking out applicants to serve on the new Athletics Advisory Council.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.