



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 on Tuesday, August 9, 2011 at 6 p.m.

**PRC MINUTES**  
**August 9, 2011**

**ATTENDANCE**

**PRC Present:** Rob Brisley, Chair  
Kendel Bryant, Vice-Chair  
Elaine Powell, Executive Secretary  
Charlie McRee,  
Ed Barnhart  
Joe Pata  
Norman Mitchell  
Phil Carey  
Beverly Lawston  
Doug Burnett  
Brenda McMoore  
Jim Garges

**PRC Absent:** Jeff Tarte

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Chair Rob Brisley, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance and introductions of each commissioner.

**Proclamations and Awards**

**Neil Carroll- Retirement:** Director Garges announced the upcoming retirement of Neil Carroll, Park Superintendent and dedicated Park and Recreation employee of 33 years, and presented Neil with a crystal recognition award. Jim shared that Neil was one of the Department's first Park Rangers and over the years has worked in a variety of positions; most recently as a Park Superintendent. In this position Neil has been instrumental in bringing together the reorganization of our park districts into the current three park regions. Neil said "I think everybody knows when you're doing something that you really like doing and you enjoy it so much, it's not like work, it's like coming to a family house instead of going to a work house".

**Mike Palo, Texas Land and Cattle:** James Alsop, Division Director of Enterprise Services, shared some background on the annual military golf outing and introduced

Brian Gott from the County Manager's Office to recognize Mike Palo of Texas Land and Cattle. Brian said he was with the Public Service and Information Department and that one of his jobs is to get corporate and media sponsorship for County events. He said that Robert Anderson contacted him 5 years ago to help with the Veterans/Reservist Golf Classic and ultimately made a connection with Texas Land and Cattle and Mike Palo who generously agreed to support the golf tournament by providing lunch. They have catered this event for the last 3 years. Brian presented Mr. Palo with a plaque of appreciation.

Mr. Palo thanked everyone for the recognition and said they really loved being able to support the community and felt it was a privilege to honor our veterans by supporting this tournament each year.

Director Garges also presented a plaque to Brian Gott and Robert Anderson in appreciation for all they do each year to make this event special and successful.

### **Public Appearance**

**Bill Gupton, Chair of the Central Piedmont Sierra Club:** Mr. Gupton came before the PRC and shared that the Central Piedmont Sierra Club was made up of approximately 2300 individuals from a 10 county area. He said the mission of the club is to Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet and felt their mission overlapped with Park and Recreation's mission and priorities. Mr. Gupton said that he came to the meeting as a result of and in response to his having heard important Park and Recreation information recently. One, having heard the recent presentation by Michael Kirschman at the Natural Resources Commission meeting on Children in Nature, Mr. Gupton wanted to report to the PRC that as a result, one of the County Commissioners asked "why did we not hear this before the budget?" Two, as a result of Park and Recreation Commissioner, Charlie McRee, attending one of their meetings on a mission of advocacy, their members rallied to contact County Commissioners in support of an increased budget for Park and Recreation. Mr. Gupton said that it was his hope that their efforts played a part in the Department's budget increase for the next fiscal year. After meeting with Director Garges, Mr. Gupton said they hoped to be able to support the Department in the following ways:

- Support the Department on land acquisition
- Increase dialogue with the business community to bring understanding of the value that Park and Recreation brings to quality of life and jobs and the economic benefit for their employees
- Would like to see and support Park and Recreation on becoming a zero waste model for the community
- Partnering with the Department for arranging member outings and education programs
- Partnering on service projects in order to give back to the community
- Advocate politically

### **Program Presentation - 2011 Aquatic Update**

James Alsop, said that during a time with some communities were having to close pools, the Aquatics Division of Park and Recreation had an outstanding year. James then introduced, Genni Reel, Aquatics Manager, to present a 2011 update on aquatics. He shared that Genni has been with the Department for 12 years, 10 of which have been in aquatics and most recently as the Aquatics Manager. He said that Genni's customer

service ratings are outstanding at 97% in FY11 as well as an increase in the number of program participants at all Department pools.

Genni Reel introduced herself and shared a PowerPoint on the accomplishments of the Aquatics Division, which includes the Mecklenburg County Aquatic Center, Ray's Splash Planet, Marion Diehl Center and Double Oaks and Cordelia Outdoor Pools. Genni said one of the things they are most proud of is the FY11 96% cost recovery at the Aquatic Center. Genni went on to cover programming, special events and highlights at each of the facilities.

Director Garges praised Genni for her management and successes. He also invited everyone to come out to the Double Oaks Pool for the Double Oaks versus Cordelia Swim Meet to see all the children show off their swimming skills learned over the summer. Jim went on to point out that the 2008 Master Plan showed, that for a County of our size, we are way behind on the number of public pools. The 10-year plan includes replacing Double Oaks with a new facility and other spray grounds and pools.

Commissioner Lawston asked if the budget increase included funds to try again to make the West Charlotte High School pool available to the public. Jim answered, no, based on poor attendance. Commissioner Lawston said she would like for it to be looked at and did not want it to die based on the number of children in that corridor. James Alsop said they would look at it, but said the Department was also in the process of working on a mobile swim program to get children to various community pools for swim lessons.

Commissioner Brisley said the Department did a good job of communicating the closing of the Aquatic Center for maintenance repairs. He asked what facility was next for major overhaul/maintenance. Genni responded that RES had done audits and added several projects to those included as deferred maintenance in the Master Plan. Jim said, however, that the next biggest would be the replacement of Double Oaks.

(NOTE: The PowerPoint presentation is included in the August PRC Minute's Binder, Section 4, housed in the Director's office.)

### **Appointments –Advisory Councils – Applicants**

**Central Region:** *Motion was made by Commissioner Moore to reappoint **Diane English** to a 2<sup>nd</sup> term, expiring 6/2014, which was seconded by Commissioner McRee and approved unanimously.*

**North Region:** *Motion was made by Commissioner Bryant to reappoint **Walter Young and Aaron McKeithan** to a special 3<sup>rd</sup> term, expiring 6/2014, which was seconded by Commissioner Powell and approved unanimously.*

**Senior Citizens:** *Motion was made by Commissioner Mitchell to expand the membership of the Senior Citizens Advisory Council to 11 (10 voting and one non-voting PRC liaison) and to appoint **Chuck Bennett and Camelia Bittle** to each serve a first full term, expiring 6/2014, which was seconded by Commissioner Barnhart and approved unanimously.*

**Stewardship:** *Motion was made by Commissioner Powell to appoint Diane Willis to a 1<sup>st</sup> full term, expiring 6/2014, which was seconded by Commissioner Pata and approved unanimously.*

## **Director's Report – Jim Garges**

Director Garges reported on the following:

**Budget:** After the ranking process by the BOCC, the Department got \$25.2/\$25.6 million, placing us back in the capital business.

**Land Acquisition:** 5% of all future bond allocations will go to land and open space acquisition for Park and Recreation. The BOCC recently approved moving forward on negotiations to purchase the Abersham property in Davidson. This 243 acre site will be added to existing park land making 600 acres of continuous park. The Trust for Public Land was instrumental in this acquisition since, because of the debt diet; they began the negotiations on our behalf with the banks that had foreclosed on the property and got an option on the land, keeping this opportunity from slipping away from us. The Department continues to look at properties identified in the 2008 Master Plan and is grateful for the support of the County Manager and the BOCC for land acquisition.

**Summer :** We are coming to the close of another very successful Summer Camp season. All camps were full and all went very well. Jim also praised staff for the great job they have done dealing with the high heat and floods to keep our parks and greenways looking great.

**Advocacy:**

## **PRC Chair Report**

### **Consent Items:**

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Mitchell to approve all consent items, including the June 14, 2011 PRC Minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner McRee and approved unanimously.

## **Staff Reports and Requests**

(13)

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.