



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

PRC MINUTES
April 9, 2013

ATTENDANCE

PRC Present:

Rob Brisley, Chair
Kendel Bryant, Vice-Chair
Elaine Powell, Executive Secretary
Jim Garges, Park and Recreation Director
Ed Barnhart
Doug Burnett
Travis Dancy
Jude Harding
Tristan McMannis
Brenda McMoore
Charlie McRee
Norman Mitchell
Joe Pata
Sheryl Smith

PRC Absent:

All Present

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Chair Rob Brisley, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance and introductions of each commissioner.

Welcome and Introductions:

- a) Deputy Director **Michael Kirschman**, introduced **Lorraine Bias**, Fiscal Administrator. Lorraine joins the Park and Recreation Budget Administration and Accounting Department, filling the vacancy left by JC Morales.
- b) Chairman **Rob Brisley**, introduced **Athletics Advisor Council Chair – Commissioner Joe Pata**. Citizens present representing the Athletics Advisory Council were: ***Mike Anderson*** (Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority), ***Larry McAfee*** (Cross-County), ***Tom Deming*** (USA Track and Field), ***Stew Mallard*** (Mallard Creek Optimist Club), ***Christian Crute*** (Sportslink Athletics).

Commissioner Pata recognized **Mike Anderson** who provided an **update** on the **Athletic Advisory Council**. Among items shared were an update on the **2013 Powerade State Games** and an update on the positive relationship between Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation and the **Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority (CRVA)**. 30% of all Powerade State Games are taking place in Park and Recreation facilities and there are 20 sports taking place including baseball, softball, tennis, disc golf and many others.

Chairman Rob Brisley requested more **information on the CRVA** and where they are located. **Commissioner Pata** requested at the same time elaboration on the number events that take place a year. **Mike Anderson** responded that the CRVA is responsible for managing all the City-owned public facilities, some of which are the NASCAR Hall of Fame, the Charlotte Convention Center, Bojangles Coliseum, Ovens Auditorium, the “back of the house” operations and Time Warner Arena. The marketing side of the operation falls under Visit Charlotte, which is also the location of Mike Anderson’s office. Visit Charlotte is responsible for marketing the destination of Charlotte, NC and Mecklenburg County. Specifically, Mike Anderson’s role is with sports marketing, which is responsible for bringing in sporting events.

Shared as “quick numbers” relating to Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation facilities:

- A little over 130 events for the past calendar year, most over a two day period of time,
- A little over 80 million dollars in economic impact (derived purely from “direct delegate spending”).

Shared as areas of improvement, to increase attracting events:

- Increasing number of indoor facilities (example cited, lack of indoor basketball facilities).

Director Garges commented on **Mike Anderson and his staff** that they have really done a great job and have always been very positive and kept Park and Recreation updated, all of which has proved to be a great partnership.

Proclamations and Awards:

None

Public Appearance

- 1) A Public Appearance was made by members of the Athletics Advisory Council in advocacy or Athletic relating recreation.
 - a. **Larry McAfee** appeared **in opposition of suggested paving of the course area at McAlpine Park**. He additionally advocates for more Cross-Country courses. Requests more planning be provided toward creating a course at Harrisburg Road Park. A transcript of the appearance is available upon request.
 - b. Parent and Citizen **Pender Murphy** appeared **in opposition of the suggested paving of the course area at McAlpine Park**. A transcript of the appearance is available upon request.

Program Presentation -: **Athletics Advisory Council**

Chairman Rob Brisley recognized James Alsop, Enterprise Services Division Director and Athletics Advisory Council Staff Liaison. James advised the Athletic Advisory Council would not present but provided regards to all Department Staff who work closely with the Athletics Advisory Council and thanked them for their continued support.

Capital Planning

Chairman Brisley recognized Lee Jones, Capital Planning Division Director. As personnel updates Lee shared that in addition to regular employee Kevin Brickman, Capital Planning would be bringing on an additional planner, Veronica Westindorf, a licensed landscape architect with 15+ years of experience as a PT planner and are very excited to be doing so.

Presented for review with Commissioners was the Capital Projects list and corresponding maps inclusive of 32 projects, totaling 65 million dollars.

Lee Jones met on 4/8/13 with the Capital Projects team which included the County Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Finance, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, Central Piedmont Community College, Business Support Services – Asset & Facilities Managements and key representative from all major departments to talk about the list of projects and how the County will move forward on them. It appears the funding will be available right after July 1, 2013, the bond market present date looks good for Mecklenburg County and the hope is that we will receive those funds or that the funds will be made available shortly after July 1.

Partnership have allowed for some of park key projects to kick-start and by the time funding is received for construction, all of the design documents will be done or underway. Planning for fiscal years 15, 16 and 17 were also discussed at the meeting on 4/8 Capital Projects team meeting. Lee Jones briefly discussed the protocol, forms, ranking and scoring process and timeframes discussed. All discussed was land acquisition. Presently, through effective lobbying from Director Garges, Park and Recreation receives approximately 5% of the budget for land acquisition for open space, this year we will get approximately 6.5 million dollars. There are other key areas of interest such as Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) to receive funding for land acquisition and that is under discussion. Conveyed as the difference between their requests and ours, is their requests are specifically related to projects. Our requests for land are to preserve open space and the tree canopy in addition to some minor portion of that going towards capital projects. It was suggested during the meeting that CMS and CPCC look into going back and putting in the specific land that they want, for the specific projects that they will be submitting for FYs 15, 16 and 17. Another key component for the submissions for each of these three fiscal years is each entity will have the opportunity to submit a request for up to 300 million dollars, for those three years. This is not guaranteed but would be funded by the current bonding capacity and an anticipated tax revenue growth, that could be a possibility. We are presently in the 240 million dollar range to complete what we have started and build out what is presently in the master plan and some of the projects that we've already started.

Lee Jones requested questions on the 33 projects entailed in the handouts.

Questions & Answers followed by Commissioners.

Commissioner Barnhart inquired regarding the bond funding and the projects remaining to be completed in the "240 million dollar range" mentioned during Lee's program presentation. Per Lee Jones, that number is based on projects that we have previously submitted; Park and

Recreation had submitted and, in addition to our request for FY14, was asked if additional funding were available, what projects would the Department want to submit. Working with Jim Garges, Capital Planning and the remainder of the SLT, Park and Recreation submitted a list of all the projects that were listed in the 2008 master plan, which was based on the 250 million dollar bond referendum and other opportunities that have come forward. The need to resubmit is based on the forms having changed for the next 3-year cycle (FYs 15, 16, 17), which includes changes to some of the ranking factors, and other items.

Director Garges **requested** Lee make known the total amount of county funding for FY15, 16 & 17 for all entities. Per Lee Jones, it is up to 300 million dollars per entity.

Director Garges **requested** clarity on whether than meant 300 million for CPCC, CMS, Park and Rec and another 300 million for other county projects. Per Lee Jones, there are five different entities, however you would not take 300 million and multiply it by 5 entities. The financing budget, based on what's been submitted previously and what's been shared by the citizens Capital Advisory Committee, indicates all five entities do not have 300 million dollars worth of projects.

Director Garges **requested** further clarity on the amount of bonds that would be sold in FY15. Per Lee Jones, \$300 million would in fact be the anticipated capacity. Director Garges added that the positive in that presently on an annual basis the county is allocating \$130 Million; although the amount of projects "in the bucket" increases, the chances of Park and Recreation projects "rolling up" in the a three year period would be pretty good. The allocation Park and Recreation will receive in FY14 is the last year, of the first three year cycle and most of our money is in last year and most of our (Park and Recreation) money is in the last year. The Department is hopeful that all our projects will not roll-up in FY18, but that perhaps some of them will now roll-up earlier.

Commissioner Barnhart **inquired** whether the Department anticipates another Bond Referendum. Per Director Garges, we would not put another bond referendum on for Park and Recreation until all 2008 projects are complete (or about to be complete) or funded. Finance is trying to accomplish a balance between bonding and cash, so they can keep the tax rate relatively low. A line is drawn based on what they believe they can fund, based on a ranked static list.

Commissioner Barnhart **inquired**, based on the list of projects in hand, what portion of the 2008 bond funding remained. Per Director Garges, that particular math has been done, however an off-hand number was not available to provide at that meeting. There is a fair amount remaining. Of the \$250 million bond referendum, \$60 million was taken out for land and the balance was capital projects. Per Lee Jones, that was about \$190 million. This year, we have \$65 million for projects.

Commissioner Barnhart continued that his question above was how much money is left for land acquisition, since at the beginning of the conversation it was \$6.5 million per year (which is the allocation based upon the percentage of the bonds that will be sold, per Lee Jones), Commissioner Barnhart inquired what percentage was that; Director Garges clarified that it was the 5% that is allocated for land acquisition. What Park and Recreation did in the bond issue was allocate \$60 million for land acquisition plus we passed a land bond issue in 2007, so about a year and half ago we had about \$90 million available for land acquisition and the way this all worked is when we came out the recession, Park and Recreation advocated for a ranking system that did not rank land acquisition against a school project or a park project as there are wholly different things. The Board of County Commissioners recognized that and took the 5%, so when that money gets allocated to

Park and Rec that comes off our balance sheet for land. There are presently no confines to the extent that if Park and Recreation spends all its money for land, they won't continue to give us cash for land. Director Garges advocacy is and has been to keep land as a high priority understanding the schools and CPCC will have needs as well that will need to be worked through. Park and Recreation can buy land jointly with the other four entities.

Commissioner Pata **requests** a chart that shows an expected date of completion for the projects presented on the list. Director Garges indicated we will provide that information as requested.

Commissioner Pata **inquired** on when the next time bonds for Park and Recreation will come up again. Director Garges indicated his thoughts have always been to try and present Park bonds during general elections, which in essence presents four year windows. 2016 would be the next target date. That would be in relation to how the finance department approaches it, in relation to school and CPCC needs and how much bonding authority they have left. Presently, we don't have those numbers yet.

Commissioner Barnhart **inquired** whether the slated land acquisitions had any prioritization by geographical location or use/development type. Director Garges provided an brief summarization of how Park and Recreation came up with the list and how we approach it. The Department will update the "Greenprinting" process as part of the update to the master plan. "**Greenprint**" is a proprietary term that the **Trust for Public Land (TPL)** came up with, which is a computer based model, that helps you decide where to buy land for specific purposes. During the 2008 masterplan process, we brought TPL in, bought the software from them with methodology and models for specific for Park and Recreation in Mecklenburg County and we looked at every vacant parcel in the entire county, against a set of criteria in different buckets (examples: active recreation, greenways, quality natural areas that we want to preserve, etc.). Every parcel of land was ranked and put into one these "buckets"; ranked based on two tiers - highest quality sites (that we want to go after) and not so important sites. When the recession came in, opportunities came up. The original approach to deciding what buckets to leverage was to go across every bucket and try and buy land in every bucket as things were a little more predictable before the recession. As the recession progressed, developers began to go into default. An example cited was Abersham, which during the Greenprinting process had been purchased for development but due to default became available, and we were able to get it. Park and Recreation also engages land owners in buckets by sending letters of interest. The County has approved every land acquisition proposal we have put before them in the last 7 years.

Chairman Rob Brisley **inquired** regarding staffing levels prior to the reduction and after the reduction. Per Lee Jones, before the reduction there were 10 staff, now there are 3.

Chairman Rob Brisley **inquired** as it relates to the capital projects list, are any presently on the list indoor facilities. Per Lee Jones, yes. Cited were Mecklenburg County Aquatic Center, West Charlotte Recreation Center, and several indoor shelters such as Veterans, Matthews Sportsplex Phase II, Park Road Park will gain an indoor facility as a partnership with the YMCA, Hornets Nest Park shelter will be an indoor shelter, and various others mentioned. Chairman Rob Brisley further inquired whether there are there any more opportunities for indoor facilities relating to volleyball or basketball facilities. Per Director Garges, not in this list. Everything for FY14 is committed. The only indoor facility of any size that's left to be ranked out of the \$250 million is a Recreation Center in the North.

Chairman Rob Brisley **inquired** regarding a mention of Harrisburg and a future greenway. Per Director Garges, this was discussed at a recent Advisory Council meeting. There are two things that Lee Jones would do, one of which is get with the Natural Resources staff and look at that site. Harrisburg was a very difficult site to put the athletic fields in. It appears to have probable potential for the suggested layout. The Department is also trying to do more of the natural surfaces with the greenways. In theory, if we cannot officially get all of our greenways open, at least we can open them as natural trails earlier. We are going through our entire inventory to look for trails like that, and those are relatively easy to open. It appears these other greenways don't fall into cross-country but Harrisburg does appear to have potential. A presently known conflict is a proposed widening of Harrisburg Road, undertaken by CDOT.

Lee Jones briefly highlighted a few Recreation Centers also slated for renovations.

Chairman Rob Brisley **inquired** regarding a timeline for scheduling meetings with appropriate Capital Planning advisory group. Commissioner Pata agreed that this is a good opportunity for the reenergizing the **SPLRF Advisory Council**. Director Garges also agrees and indicated meetings had not been called, because there had been no new business to discuss. Now there will be. There will also be anywhere from two to three public meetings for each project.

Commissioner Pata **requests** the project map be broken down in the regions. Per Michael Kirschman, such a maps exists from the 2008 bond by BOCC district. As mentioned by Lee Jones, a good geo-equity exists.

Reference Documents:

- 4a.** Park and Recreation FY14 Capital Projects List
- 4b.** Park and Recreation FY14 Capital Projects List – Map view

THE MEETING RECESSED FOR THE ANNUAL PHOTO

Appointments – Advisory Councils – Applicants

None

Public Hearings

None

Advisory Council – Committee Reports

- a) Fees and Charges Advisory Council
Greg Clemmer, Park Operations
Romare Bearden Park & Little Sugar Creek Greenway - Midtown

It is the recommendation of Park and Recreation Budget Administration, Park Operations and the Fees & Charges Sub-Committee of the Park and Recreation Commission to accept the proposed fee schedule for Romare Bearden Park and Little Sugar Creek Greenway - Midtown. The summation of this recommendation is contained in the presentation “New-Fees.ppt” (Fees and Charges for Romare Bearden and LSCGW – Midtown)

Commissioner Burnette **inquired** regarding the impact to the greenway users when events are taking place at stated areas on Little Sugar Creek Greenway – Midtown.

Greg Clemmer responded event organizers and event participants will be aware that use of the greenway by citizens will not cease during their event. Only the direct area rented will be cordoned off for use.

Commissioner Powell **inquired** are there rules for individuals who have events in these areas.

Greg Clemmer responded rentals in these specific areas are treated as special event rentals and go through the event contract process and abide within the special events perimeters.

Chairman Rob Brisely **requested** clarity on the additional charges and requested an example of a typical event from Greg Clemmer.

Greg Clemmer indicated additional charges could be along the lines of Off-Duty Police, waste removal, necessities such as portable restroom facilities and a host of other items.

Commissioner Smith **inquired** regarding a modified inclement weather policy for such large venues and events.

Greg Clemmer indicated all events are provided the standard Department Inclement Weather Policy, and in the event of rain or acts of God, coverage would be provided by the appropriate event insurance carried by the event organizers.

Deputy Director Michael Kirschman **inquired** regarding the final fee rate to rent the Entire park

Greg Clemmer responded that it should be viewed as a space only charge and that other charges and fees that are associated with large events were taken into account as well. Event totals will likely exceed the Entire Park fee, due to these requirements, and are another avenue for revenue.

Commissioner Ed Barnhart **inquired** as to how will non-profit groups be handled.

Greg Clemmer indicated the Director has discretion for fee adjustments and waivers, currently there is no special consideration given to Non-Profit Organizations. Director Garges briefly touched on instances where Director Discretion may be used.

Commissioner Burnette **inquired** whether there was any discussion regarding a sliding scale for in season/off-season and weekday/weekend rates.

Both Greg Clemmer and Director Garges indicated there was not, that most events would be held during peak season due to the outdoor setting and that due to the constraints (inability of use) to citizens and users of the park during special events there, rates could not be relaxed.

Commissioner McMoore **noted** concern regarding whether the park would be accessible during large events.

Both Greg Clemmer and Director Garges indicated strategies will be leveraged to ensure the park is not in use weekend after weekend for large scale events that would render the park inaccessible to citizens. Large scale events that would limit the community, residents and citizens desiring to use the park will be sparse. Rentals of the Big Moon Green are likely the type of events that would cause an impact to users, if they event were extremely large and utilized the spaces entire capacity. Safety issues would be a concern for outflow into other areas of the park.

Commissioner Harding **inquired** regarding parking.

Director Garges noted existing garages and on street parking will have to be used.

McRee - motion to accept recommendation of the Fees & Charges Sub-Committee, Second Mitchell Chair - encourages Greg to build relationship with Charlotte film community.
All in favor

Reference Documents:

7.a New-Fees.ppt - Fees and Charges Romare Bearden and LSCGW-Midtown

Motion was made by Commissioner MCRee to accept the recommendation of Park and Recreation Budget Administration and Park Operations to adopt the proposed new fees for **Romare Bearden Park and Little Sugar Creek Greenway - Midtown**, and to accept the recommendation of support from the Fees & Charges Sub-Committee. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell.

The motion to accept the recommendation of Park and Recreation Budget Administration to adopt new fees for **Romare Bearden Park and Little Sugar Creek Greenway - Midtown** was carried with all in favor, no Commissioners absent from the vote.

Director's Report

a) Director Jim Garges reported to the Park and Recreation Commission that the Board of County Commissioners heard the first reading of the Gun Ordinance Proposal for Park and Recreation at the April 2, 2013 Commission meeting. The Ordinance failed to pass by vote and will be heard again at the May 7, 2013 BOCC meeting. Director Jim Garges requests the RFBA for the Gun Ordinance Proposal be resent to the Park and Recreation Commission.

Commissioner Powell **noted** County Commissioner Leake was concerned about school properties. Per Director Garges the County attorney will ensure all items such as this are addressed.

Commissioner Barnhart **requested** clarity on the State Law superseding the Local Law. Director Garges advised State Law allows provision for local governments to make modifications.

Commissioner McMoore **inquired** what will take place with the BOCC hears the matter again in May.

Director Garges advised the BOCC will hear three or four versions which have been requested of the County Attorney to draft.

Commissioner Burnett **inquired** are there presently any park facilities with metal detectors.

Director Garges advised there presently are not.

Chariman Rob Brisely **inquired** what local communities have as gun ordinances

Director Garges advised at the time, we do not have any information regarding the towns on this matter.

Chariman Rob Brisely **inquired** could there be an opportunity if needed for law enforcement to address the BOCC?

Director Garges advised we will advocate that they be at the May 9th meeting, in support of the Proposal as presented by Park and Recreation.

Reference Documents:

7.a BOCC Legislative Item 13-0887

PRC Chair Report/Commissioner Updates

Chairman Rob Brisley provided the following updates:

- 1) A reminder to attend Hats off to Parks

Consent Items:

- (10) ***Motion was made*** by Commissioner Mitchell to approve of the March 12, 2013 PRC Minutes. This motion was seconded by Commissioner McCree and approved unanimously.
- (11) ***Motion was made*** by Commissioner Burnett to acknowledge the Correspondence for the Park and Recreation Commission for April 9, 2013. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved unanimously.
- (12) ***Motion was made*** by Commissioner Mitchell to accept the Minutes of the Park and Recreation Commission Advisory Council(s) submitted for April 9, 2013. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Barnhart and approved unanimously.

Staff Reports and Requests

None

PRC Reports and Requests

None

Adjournment

Motion was made by Commissioner Mitchell to adjourn. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Pata.

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.