



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Mecklenburg County Aquatic Center located at 800 E. MLK Jr. Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28202 on February 10, 2015 at 6 p.m.

PRC MINUTES
February 10, 2015

ATTENDANCE

PRC Present: Elaine Powell, Chair
 Kendel Bryant, Vice-Chair
 Tristan McMannis, Executive Secretary
 Joe Pata
 Sheryl Smith
 Jude Harding
 Doug Burnett
 Brenda McMoore
 Charlie McRee
 Ed Barnhart
 Norman Mitchell
 Rob Brisley
 Aubin Guinness
 Jim Garges
 Michael Kirschman

PRC Absent: None

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Chair Elaine Powell, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Welcome and Introductions:

Chair Powell invited each of the Commissioners to introduce themselves and share a little about themselves and what inspired them to become a part of the Park and Recreation Commission.

James Alsop, Division Director of Enterprise Services welcomed the Commission to the Mecklenburg County Aquatic Center and introduced Genni Reel, Aquatics Manager. Genni provided a 30 day snap shot of the facilities activities which included:

- 12 Swim Meets
- 2900 Athletes
- 10,000+ Spectators
- 1,800 Member Scans

- 579 Programs Conducted
- 1,100 Program Participants
- 600 General Admissions
- 21,400 Total Visitations

The entire facility, events and programs are managed by the Aquatic Center staff who were introduced by Genni:

- Stephanie Whittington, Recreation Coordinator
- Rodney Sellars, Recreation Coordinator
- Matt Jakubowski, Recreation Coordinator
- Priscilla McDaniel, Administrative Support
- Ventress Carpenter, Administrative Support

Recognition Award – Commissioner Rob Brisley

Director Jim Garges expressed great appreciation for the entire board and all they do to support the Department's efforts, making so much of what the Department does possible. In special recognition of Commissioner Rob Brisley, who will be stepping off the board to pursue full time employment with the County, Jim Garges presented; on behalf of the staff and the PRC, a crystal recognition award. Commissioner Brisley will seek to continue his involvement through participation on the South Advisory Council.

Presentations:

Garinger Vietnam Memorial –Larry Walker

Jeff Robinson, Division Director of Park Operations, introduced Larry Walker, distinguished veteran of the Vietnam War and chair of the Vietnam Memorial Committee for the Garinger Education Foundation, to present and seek endorsement from the Park and Recreation Commission, a proposal to relocate the existing Vietnam Memorial at Garinger High School to Freedom Park in the event Garinger High School should ever be closed.

Mr. Walker shared that this Memorial was funded through the contributions of the Garinger Class of 1963 and 1964 to the Garinger Education Foundation and was erected in memory of 15 men from Garinger High School who fought and died in the Vietnam War. In addition to this \$5,000 monument, the Garinger Education Foundation also provided 15 \$2,000 scholarships to students of Garinger, one in the name of each of these soldiers. The foundation currently seeks to again award approximately \$75,000 in scholarships to 15 Garinger students. Because CMS has held discussions about closing Garinger High School in the past, Mr. Walker asked that the Park and Recreation Commission endorse the proposal that Freedom Park be the approved backup home of this monument in the event Garinger High School is closed in the future. Freedom Park is the preferred location based on the high number of park patrons and is also the current home of the China Burma India WWII Memorial and the Marine Corp Memorial.

The following concerns were expressed and discussed:

Commissioner McRee: In response to a recent request at a Central Park Region Advisory Council meeting, to erect a WWII memorial as an Eagle Scout project, Central advisory council members and staff felt that Veterans Park would be a more appropriate location for the Eagle Scout project. This request raised discussion regarding future request for placement of memorials as not all can

go in Freedom Park. Director Garges responded that the reason staff felt that Freedom Park would be an appropriate backup home for the Garinger Memorial is because of its similar size and style to the memorials currently at Freedom Park.

Commissioner Burnett: Planning needs to be in place for future request for memorial approval and placement. Director Garges agreed that we must have a philosophy regarding not just war memorials but any memorial. The Department has and always will have memorials in the parks, such as trees, bricks and benches in addition to special request such as this, but not all requests are approved. Staff considers these requests carefully and brings before the PRC those they feel are appropriate.

Jeff Robinson shared his opinion that he felt it would be an honor for the Department to provide a home for this memorial at Freedom Park should it ever need one and that to force it to another location that Mr. Walker and his brothers in arms don't have the same passion for would be a shame.

Commissioner McMoore asked if a location would be set aside for this memorial. Jeff responded that the discussion has been to place it in the same location as the China Burma Memorial.

Motion was made by Commissioner Norman Mitchell to endorse the proposal that Freedom Park be the approved backup home of the Garinger Vietnam Memorial monument in the event Garinger High School is closed in the future, which was seconded by Commissioner Charlie McRee and approved unanimously.

Naming Request: Rozzelle's Ferry Nature Preserve

Chris Matthews, Division Director of Nature Preserves and Natural Resources, brought before the Park and Recreation Commission a naming request to officially name, what is currently called Rozzelle's Ferry Lake Shore Nature Preserve; Rozzelle's Ferry Nature Preserve. This small piece of property, once a trailer park, is located off of Highway 16 and was purchased by the County and brought into the Nature Preserve System, primarily for water quality protection. The naming request was submitted by Rusty Rozzelle and has been presented and approved at two previous public meetings; the Stewardship Advisory Council Meeting and the North Advisory Council Meeting. Chris shared a PowerPoint presentation on the location, purchase, history and future plans for the property. Discussion and questions resulted in the following information:

- Access to the property is off Highway 16 via Mountain Island Brook Lane.
- Connection with the Historical Landmarks Commission. The Department has been in contact with them regarding the historic home which once stood on the property and the Department will preserve the old stone foundation.
- This property purchase included grants dollars for the acquisition and a small land swap with Cornelius.
- Capital improvements to the property will not begin until 2018.
- The future planned history kiosk will also explain the water quality component surrounding the land purchase.
- The ultimate goal would be to purchase the remaining property between Rozzelle's Ferry Nature Preserve and the Haymarket Nature Preserve and create one large preserve.

(NOTE: A copy of the presentation is included in the February 10, 2015 PRC agenda manual, **item 3b**, housed in the Director's office.

Motion was made by Commissioner Judy Harding to endorse the official naming of Rozzelle's Ferry Lake Shore Nature Preserve to **Rozzelle's Ferry Nature Preserve**, which was seconded by Commissioner Rob Brisley and approved unanimously.

The naming request will move forward to the BOCC for approval in March, 2015.

Department Program Presentation – Aquatics

Aquatics Program Presentation – Genni Reel

Genni Reel, Aquatics Manager, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Aquatics Division of Enterprise Services. This presentation covered the following:

- Renovations to the Mecklenburg County Aquatic Center, including acquisition and connection to the Second Ward High School Gymnasium
- Relocation and new construction of Double Oaks Outdoor Pool as a family aquatic center.
- An update on the Ramsey Creek Swim Beach project
- Master Plan updates for future aquatic needs in Mecklenburg County, including:
 - Indoor Pool Space
 - Outdoor Pool Space
 - Strategies from the Mecklenburg County Livable Communities Plan regarding aquatics; more water and more lessons
- Every Child Can Swim program

Discussion and questions resulted in the following information:

- The new location of the Double Oaks pool will be approximately 3 blocks south of its current location next to the new senior high rise.
- The depth of the new Double Oaks pool will be between 3.5 feet and 4.5 feet. This depth also allows for increased swim lessons and provides an outdoor opportunity for senior water activities.
- As an outdoor family aquatic center, the Double Oaks pool will not include a high dive due to space and infrastructure constraints.
- Ramsey Creek Swim Beach will have life guards and also be fenced for security when the beach is closed.
- The free swim lessons and water safety classes will continue and grow. The hope is to eventually have water safety as part of the CMS elementary curriculum. The Department has done over 6,000 free swim lessons since May of 2014.
- The time line for completion of renovations to the Mecklenburg Aquatic Center is one year; July 2016. The Department plans to bring in a construction manager at risk to facilitate the construction time line.
- As reported by Chair Powell, a participant in the Mecklenburg County Livable Communities Plan, the need for more water, pools and safety training was unanimous among the stakeholder groups.

Advisory Council Appointments:

Central Advisory Council Appointment: **Motion was made** by Commissioner Brenda McMoore to appoint **Darryl Gaston** to an unexpired term on the Central Advisory Council, expiring June, 2015, which was seconded by Commissioner Kendel Bryant and approved unanimously.

Director's Report

Mecklenburg County Livable Communities Plan: County Manager Dena Diorio is using the Mecklenburg County Livable Communities plan as a foundation for her strategic planning, which will ultimately replace the balance scorecard as the strategic planning tool. (The Park and Recreation Commission was provided a copy of the Mecklenburg County Livable Communities Plan.)

Town Partnerships: Jim reiterated the partnership philosophy of Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation with all of the Mecklenburg County towns. Many of the towns have their own small Park and Recreation Departments, but we are still their Park and Recreation Department; meaning, we work in total cooperation with each of the towns with regard to land acquisition, park and greenway projects and operational responsibilities. The Department keeps them informed through annual "state of the Department" presentations and Master Plan updates; allowing for opportunity to hear their needs and to continue in a spirit of cooperation. The desire to maintain a strong relationship with the Northern and Southern towns is supported by a representative from these two areas on the Park and Recreation Commission.

Advisory Council Meeting Attendance: Director Garges thanked the board and expressed appreciation for the many hours that each of them gave in support of Park and Recreation. In particular, Jim addressed the importance of the Citizen Advisory Councils and encouraged them to seek information and support at any time from their staff liaisons.

FY16 Budget Update: Director Garges provided an update on the FY16 budget. The County Manager is very supportive of addressing the Department's \$18.5 million in deferred maintenance. As the Master Plan community survey indicated, 89% of citizens want to see what we have maintained. Currently, we are hoping to get this over a 2 year period.

Commissioner Bryant inquired if maintenance of the Park Road pond is included in the deferred maintenance. Jim responded that work has been done on this pond. Chris Matthews shared that the Department has solicited a local pond management company to give a comprehensive review of our six major ponds and provide us with a quote for monthly review and maintenance of these ponds.

Chair Powell asked if Bryant Park was included in the deferred maintenance. Jim responded that every park will be included, however, Bryant Park is scheduled to be re-master planned and replaced. Many of the park projects that have master plans in place will be funded as a capital project.

Travel and Tourism Award: The Department received an award from Travel and Tourism for bringing the NRPA Conference to Charlotte.

PRC Chair Report

BOCC Assignments: The board was provided with their BOCC assignments and encouraged to let the Chair know if changes needed to be made. The expectation is to develop a relationship with their assigned County Commissioner in an advocacy role for the Department.

AC Assignments: The board was provided with updated Advisory Council assignments. While some were removed from required attendance, all were encouraged to attend meetings as possible.

PRC Meeting Expectations: The board was provided with updated meeting expectations for 2015. The BOCC policy is that board members must attend 75% of all assigned meetings in order to remain on the board. There are no excused absences. The PRC required meeting assignments will include their assigned Advisory Council meetings as well as the 10 scheduled PRC meetings.

Motion was made by Commissioner Jude Harding to accept that the required meetings for the Park and Recreation Commission will include the scheduled PRC meetings and the Advisory Council meetings as assigned and to meet the 75% attendance rate as required by the BOCC in order to remain on the board, which was seconded by Commissioner Norman Mitchell and approved unanimously.

Commissioner Rob Brisley: Chair Powell announced to Commissioner Rob Brisley that in appreciation for his service on the Board, a native tree of his choice would be planted in his honor in the park of his choice.

Consent Items

Motion was made by Commissioner Doug Burnett to approve the January 13 PRC minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Charlie McRee and approved unanimously.

Motion was made by Commissioner Charlie McRee to approve all correspondence consent items and Advisory Council meeting minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Joe Pata and approved unanimously.

PRC Reports and Requests

North Park Tour – Commissioner Kendel Bryant: Invited the board to join the North Advisory Council on a tour at 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 11, 2015. Please let Kendel know if you would like to attend. The tour will meet and depart from the Hornet’s Nest Park staff office.

Advisory Council T-Shirts – Commissioner Kendel Bryant: The executive committee asked for T-shirts for Citizen Advisory Council members which is being considered.

Grove Park Community – Commissioner Sheryl Smith: Commissioner Smith shared that there is a strong desire by the Grove Park Community to have a park and would like for Director Garges to attend one of their community meetings to discuss. Jim said the plan is to have a park within 6 blocks of every residence. If there is not a park in that area, the Department would need to see if land is available. Sheryl shared that land may be available. Jeff Robinson, Division Director of Park Operations, said a park is planned for this community, but will confirm and let her know.

Dr. Charles Sifford – Commissioner Norman Mitchell: Commissioner shared the news of the passing of Dr. Charles Sifford. A reception will be held at Revolution Park Sports Academy on Thursday, February 12, from 2 – 3:30.

Wall of Fame – Commissioner Joe Pata: Athletics will be joining the golf wall of fame at Revolution Sports Academy.

Advisory Council Attendance – Commissioner Kendel Bryant: Kendel asked how the attendance at Advisory Council meetings was. The consensus from the board members was that attendance was very good.

Resignation Announcement – Commissioner Joe Pata: Joe announced his official resignation from the PRC effective 2/11/2015.

Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m., which was seconded and approved unanimously.