

## MINUTES

### PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING OF MAY 2, 2007

7:30 a.m. — Reverend Samuel Delevoe Park — Fort Lauderdale

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Terry Danger  
Dianne Johnson  
Sharon Kent  
Marc Kiar  
Quentin Morgan, Chair  
Ed Portner  
Hazelle Rogers  
Guy Roper  
Sheila Rose  
Steven Sampier  
Bill Spute  
Jack Talabisco  
Milette Thurston

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Steve Person  
Gerald Knight  
Alanna Mersinger

#### **OTHERS PRESENT:**

Bob Harbin, Parks & Rec.  
Jaime Plana, Parks & Rec.  
Mike Harlan, Parks & Rec.  
Gayle Preston, Parks & Rec.  
Chester Pruitt, Parks & Rec.  
Rich Laudia, Parks & Rec.  
Lou Metz, Parks & Rec.  
Linda Howell, Parks & Rec.  
Meoshi Jackson, Parks & Rec.

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The meeting was called to order by Quentin Morgan at 7:40 a.m., after which all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Page two of the minutes of the meeting of April 4, 2007, were revised to show that the Selection Committee meeting to discuss Everglades Holiday Park will be held on May 24, 2007, not August 24, 2007. Mr. Morgan asked for a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Dianne Johnson made the motion, which was seconded by Sharon Kent and passed unanimously.

#### **Employee of the Month for May 2007**

Linda Howell was congratulated as Employee of the Month for May. She was applauded for her accomplishments and work ethics and was awarded a framed certificate of appreciation and a gift certificate for an area restaurant.

#### **Park Manager's Report**

Rich Laudia, Parks & Recreation Manager III, welcomed the Board and gave them an update on Reverend Samuel Delevoe Park. The park was originally known as Riverbend Park until its name change in 1979. There is a multipurpose room and a meeting room that are both available for rental to the public. The park also has amenities such as a shelter, a covered playground, a partially covered basketball court, a ten-acre fishing lake, a half mile track around the lake, and a fitness course. The park offers after school and youth programs, senior groups, aerobics, and a tutoring program. Delevoe Park holds 12-13 special events each year that are anchored by the Sistrunk Historical Festival which is held in February. Delevoe also has a cooperative program with the African-American Research Library & Cultural Center, which is adjacent to the park.

### **Parks and Recreation Division (Parks) Update**

Bob Harbin informed the Board that the proposed Naming Rights and Advertising programs for public parks will go before the Commission for approval on May 8, 2007, at a public hearing.

The County is in the midst of budget reduction exercises. Mr. Harbin reminded the Board that 75% of the budget is comprised of salaries and that there are vacancies available for those County employees who could possibly be laid off. Decisions made by the state legislature will determine the severity of these budget reductions.

Sheila Rose asked that the Board take an active role in educating the public on the current property tax situation. If a property tax initiative is placed on the ballot by the legislature, the public needs to be made aware of the implications involved. Ms. Kent agreed and said that the public needs to see the severity of the services being eliminated once their vote is made. Ms. Rose felt that the inequity in the property tax system needs to be communicated to the governor and the state representatives so that it is not placed on the ballot. She felt that the Board should request that the governor encourage the tax commission to repair the property tax system from a holistic perspective, as opposed to drastically cutting services at an enormous cost to local government.

After much discussion, Ms. Kent asked that the Board be informed of budget public hearing dates so that members could possibly attend to voice their concerns and support the Parks and Recreation Division. Mr. Harbin reminded the Board that there will be two budget public hearings in September.

### **Bond Construction Update**

Jaime Plana informed the Board that, in an effort to save money, windows that can be opened are being installed in park buildings. Impact windows and strong buildings that can weather a storm are also being implemented. This could extend the depreciation period.

Roosevelt Gardens Park, a new 4-acre neighborhood park, should be completed by the end of the year. Within the same area, the Central Broward Regional Park (CBRP), which is about 110 acres, should also be completed by the end of the year.

The Commission awarded prototypes for corporate shelters, basketball covers, and maintenance facilities. These prototypes will be utilized throughout the County.

There are other projects that are moving forward such as design builds for Quiet Waters Park and Tradewinds North, and renovations to the Carpenter House at Hollywood North Beach Park.

### **Old Business**

#### **Meeting Time – Letter from Commissioner Ritter**

Jack Talabisco spoke with Commissioner Ritter regarding her concerns about the current meeting time. The Commissioner was more concerned that the early morning meeting time inhibits public attendance, not appointees to the Board, and suggested meeting midday. Mr. Talabisco explained to the Commissioner that the Board discussed holding one or two evening meetings. Commissioner Ritter will plan to attend one of these meetings to see what kind of community representation is at hand.

Mr. Talabisco made a motion to hold a Parks Advisory Board meeting in September 2007, at 6:00 p.m., with a public forum to be held at 7:00 p.m. The location will be determined at a later date. Steven Sampier seconded the motion. Hazelle Rogers suggested that a public comment section be placed on the 6:00 p.m. Advisory Board meeting agenda.

### **New Business**

Mr. Morgan thanked Guy Roper for making a donation toward Employee of the Month certificates.

### **Letter from Will Vargas – Park Rangers**

Dan Reynolds, President of the Federation of Public Employees, and various park rangers were present and gave the Board an update on the state of the rangers. Mr. Reynolds stated that, as part of budget recommendations that were approved by the County Commission, a decision was made to eliminate the park ranger positions in an effort to save money. Parks will be patrolled by security guards from the Wackenhut Corporation instead. Mr. Reynolds felt that the decision was more of a prioritization and that the park rangers are long term, dedicated employees that have multiple years of experience. He stated that the Union will ask the Commission to reconsider the decision. Mr. Reynolds and the park rangers then asked that the Advisory Board to consider encouraging the same.

Mr. Harbin explained that park rangers have been phased out through a process that has been ongoing for approximately five years. There is currently a mixture of park rangers and Wackenhut security guards functioning throughout the park system to date. It has not brought about a negative experience. Staff has also been encouraged to seek alternative employment within County government.

The Board members asked questions, had much discussion, and offered varied opinions on the subject. Mr. Morgan felt that the extent of authority of this Board, which is purely advisory, is to support the management and safety of parks. He did not feel that it is for the Board to decide whether that could be accomplished with the help of the park rangers or Wackenhut personnel. Guy Roper reminded the members that, as individuals, they could express their opinions to the Commissioners if they chose to.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on June 6, 2007, at the Anne Kolb Nature Center.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:14 a.m.