

## MINUTES

**PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Meeting and Public Forum of September 5, 2007**  
**6:00 p.m. — Reverend Samuel Delevoe Park — Fort Lauderdale**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Terry Danger  
Dianne Johnson  
Sharon Kent  
Marc Kiar  
Alanna Mersinger  
Quentin Morgan, Chair  
Guy Roper  
Steven Sampier  
Jack Talabisco  
Milette Thurston

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Gerald Knight  
Ed Portner  
Hazelle Rogers  
Sheila Rose  
Bill Spute

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Bob Harbin, Parks & Rec.  
Mike Harlan, Parks & Rec.  
Jim Davis, Parks & Rec.  
Jim Federici, Parks & Rec.  
John Fiore, Parks & Rec.  
Meoshi Jackson, Parks & Rec.  
Rich Laudia, Parks & Rec.  
Dick Martorelli, Parks & Rec.  
Lou Metz, Parks & Rec.  
Carol Morgenstern, Parks & Rec.  
Jackie Munnings, Parks & Rec.  
Sue Olson, Commission District 2  
Laurel Person, Parks & Rec.  
Gretel Porcaro, Parks & Rec.  
Chester Pruitt, Parks & Rec.  
Barbara Reinking, Parks & Rec.  
Commissioner Stacy Ritter, Commission District 3  
Charlotte Southard, Parks & Rec.  
Valeria Wolberg, Parks & Rec.

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The meeting was called to order by Quentin Morgan at 6:00 p.m., after which all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Quentin Morgan recognized Commissioner Ritter and Sue Olson from Commissioner Jacobs' office as attendees.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Morgan asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 6, 2007. Alanna Mersinger made the motion, which was seconded by Guy Roper and passed unanimously.

**Employee of the Month for August and September 2007**

Charlotte Southard was congratulated as Employee of the Month for August. Jackie Munnings was congratulated as Employee of the Month for September. Both employees were applauded for their accomplishments and work ethics and were awarded framed certificates of appreciation and gift certificates for area restaurants.

**Park Manager's Report**

Rich Laudia, Parks & Recreation Manager III, introduced Valeria Wolberg, Parks & Recreation Manager I. Ms. Wolberg welcomed the Board back to Reverend Samuel Delevoe Park and gave them an update. The park offers a summer recreation program that offers field trips, sports, and games. The program has a daily attendance of approximately 150 children, ranging

from ages 6-17. The children also participate in Broward Star Time, a countywide talent showcase; as well as the SWIM Central water safety education program. The park offers an after school program, free tutoring, dance classes, arts and crafts, youth sports development, karate classes, senior computer classes, etc. Additionally, various meetings are held at the community center, and numerous special events take place within the park.

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

Bob Harbin informed the Board that the opening of the Highland Scrub Natural Area will take place October 5; the Central Broward Regional Park opening will be held on November 9; and the Roosevelt Gardens Community Center will open on November 28. The opening of the Long Key Nature Center and the completion of \$8.5 million improvements to T.Y. Park are also anticipated. Mr. Harbin invited the Board to attend any of these openings.

### **Bond Construction Update**

Jaime Plana was attending a Davie Town Hall meeting regarding the development review plans for Vista View Park. In his stead, Jim Federici, Project Manager IV for Planning and Design, passed around up-to-date photos of renovations and construction taking place at various locations such as Central Broward Regional Park, the Highland Scrub Natural Area, the aquatics center for T.Y. Park, the Roosevelt Gardens Community Center, and the Long Key Nature Center. Other bond projects are currently in progress, such as the replacement of the baseball fields and Sunview Park, and the installation of a new sewer system in Tree Tops Park. There are three design build projects at Brian Piccolo, C.B. Smith, and Markham Parks that are currently under construction. Most of them are for campground renovations which should be completed in the spring. Prototypes have been designed for new maintenance facilities at Tradewinds and Tree Tops; for corporate pavilions at C.B. Smith, T.Y. Park, Tradewinds, and Markham; and basketball courts at North Broward, Osswald, and Franklin Park.

### **New Business**

#### **Parks and Recreation Division's Proposed FY08 Fee Schedule**

Mr. Harbin, Mike Harlan, Assistant Director, and Dick Martorelli, Administrative Manager II, advised the Board on the status of the proposed fee schedule. The Parks and Recreation Division is generating approximately \$10 million or 26% of its operating budget. The proposed fee increase amounts to \$3 million, generating approximately 32% of the budget. It will have saved approximately 70 employees from being laid off. Additionally, there were another 23 employees scheduled for layoffs. All but two of those employees were placed. The primary reason is there were vacant County positions for them to transition into. Out of the 12 park rangers that were to be displaced, seven have been placed.

Mr. Morgan asked if there has been any cause for concern for the level of service being offered from Wackenhut Security (as opposed to the Park Rangers). Mr. Harbin responded that there was not, but that there are measures being taken within the Division to ensure the safety of park patrons.

Mr. Harlan explained where the changes in revenue would take place within the fees schedule. These proposed revisions include increasing the fees for special events, booths for food/drink vendors, aquatic areas, facility rentals, camping, riding stables, tennis and racquetball courts, the Brian Piccolo Skate Park, and park admission which has not increased since 1994.

Steven Sampier made a motion to approve the Parks and Recreation Division's Proposed FY08 Fee Schedule, which was seconded by Sharon Kent and passed unanimously.

### **Presentation and Approval of the Modified Herman and Dorothy Shooster Preserve Master Plan**

#### **Carol Morgenstern, Environmental Administrator**

Gretel Porcaro, Natural Resource Specialist, and Ms. Morgenstern presented the Board with the modified master plan and answered questions. The original master plan was approved at the Advisory Board meeting of April 4, 2007. The revisions now include a rerouted entrance to the preserve and the addition of a new parking lot. This will allow improved access for the surrounding neighborhood.

Ms. Kent made a motion to approve the revised master plan for the Herman and Dorothy Shooster Preserve, which was seconded by Jack Talabisco. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Get Green! Go Everglades Presentation**

#### **Jay Brenner, President, Friends of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge**

Mr. Brenner gave the Board an informational presentation of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, which will be located in Palm Beach County and extends to Broward County. It is a natural wetland and a refuge for animals that also offers an educational program to teach Florida's natural history. The Get Green! Go Everglades campaign helps to raise money for the refuge and the exhibit hall.

### **Resurrection of Coconut Island**

#### **John Fiore, Associate Planner**

Mr. Fiore presented the Board with three conceptual master plans for Coconut Island, which is located at the confluence of the New River and the Intracoastal Waterway. Mr. Fiore explained that there are 51,000 registered boats in Broward County, and 80% of those are 26 feet and under. The concept for Coconut Island includes planting environment-friendly mangroves around the island. It is anticipated that it will also improve aspects such as fishing, the aesthetics on the Intracoastal, boating safety, and provide another place for recreational boaters to stop. Fifty percent of the design, engineering, and permitting costs could be funded by the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND). Developers who are required to do saltwater wetland mitigation would plant the mangroves for free and maintain them for a certain amount of time.

The project is supported by the Parks and Recreation Division, the Biological Resources Division, the Broward County Marine Advisory Committee, the Fort Lauderdale Marine Advisory Board, and the Broward Urban River Trails.

Mr. Roper made a motion to approve the concept of the Resurrection of Coconut Island, which was seconded by Terry Danger. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Mersinger stated that she went to a public meeting held regarding Everglades Holiday Park and that there were at least 200 people in attendance. She commented that it was an amazing meeting. However, she felt that the presentation could have offered more of a history of the County's involvement in the park. Jack Talabisco commented that he was also there and felt

that the crowd, which were probably residents of the area surrounding the park, would have been determined in their course to be left alone no matter what information was presented.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on October 3, 2007, at Franklin Park.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

### **Public Forum**

The following are comments, suggestions, and questions raised by the public.

Speaker: James Gurgess

- Mr. Gurgess was thankful that the Parks and Recreation Division has disc golf courses at Easterlin and Tradewinds. However, he would like to see more courses within the park system.
- He would like to see an increase in youth involvement in disc golf, including schools.
- The tee signs at Tradewinds Park are in poor shape and cannot be read.
- Mr. Gurgess suggested the installation of four-seater benches or picnic tables, which would be helpful during disc golf tournaments.
- He asked that trash cans be made available at every hole.
- He also asked if it would be possible to have cold water drinking fountains.
- Mr. Gurgess said that he heard a rumor that the park hours would be reduced; he said that he would like to see them stay the same.
- He would also like to see the Park Rangers remain in the parks. Mr. Harbin responded that the decision was made in September 2006, and that seven of the 12 have been placed in alternate County positions.

Speaker: Chris Brennan

- Mr. Brennan said that he is a park ranger that has previously come before the Advisory Board to update them on the termination of the Park Ranger positions. He handed out flyers that he has been generating to the public on the issue. Mr. Brennan said he wanted to make the Board aware that some of his fellow park rangers were threatened with immediate termination if they continued to speak out to the public or the press. Mr. Harbin responded that he was unaware of that and asked that Mr. Brennan let him know who made the threats and to send him copies of documentation of such.

Speaker: Chris Priester

- Mr. Priester mentioned that a lot of the schools in the Delevoe Park area are low graded schools. For this reason, he would like to see the parks in the area use more educational resources. He commented that parks in other neighborhoods seem to have better programs, resources, and amenities. He then gave an example of having after school programs geared toward enhancing FCAT skills. Although Delevoe Park has computers, he felt that it would just need educated professionals that can help administer the assistance.

He offered to spear head any effort(s) to find qualified teachers that could come and help the children in the neighborhood.

Ms. Kent commented to Mr. Harbin that the City of Plantation uses Community Block Grant fund to purchase computers, tutorial software, and pay teachers to offer assistance to children.

Ms. Mersinger suggested partnering with the School Board or Broward Community College for students who may be working toward the education field. This could bring assistance to the program at a lower rate.

Speaker: Matt Modist

- Mr. Modist said that although the decision to eliminate park rangers was made in September 2006, communication on the subject did not seem to reach the people it affected until January 2007. He said he did not feel that Wackenhut Security cares about parks the way the park rangers do. Mr. Modist also commented that since security guards can unionize, the Parks and Recreation Division will have to pay them if they ask for more money or go without security in parks. He also felt that \$180,000 is not much in the scheme of the County's budget, especially considering the potential negative repercussions.
- Mr. Modist also mentioned that the regular monthly meeting time is not a convenient time for patrons that have to work to attend.

Speaker: Eligha Lewis

- Mr. Lewis, who came to the meeting with Mr. Priester, wanted to voice some of the same concerns about having School Board staff come out to parks to help children in the area.
- Mr. Lewis said that he felt like the community center that will be built in his neighborhood (Roosevelt Gardens) will not be big enough. He also said that the County seems to take on an attitude that certain neighborhoods should just be happy with whatever the County has given them.
- Mr. Lewis said that the same resources should be afforded to all neighborhoods and that the County provides certain areas with less resources and amenities than others.
- He also said that structured programs should be implemented that will benefit children so that they do not become second class citizens.

Ms. Mersinger made a motion to close the Public Forum, which was seconded by Dianne Johnson and passed unanimously. The Public Forum ended at 8:08 p.m.