



## **SOUTH AREA PARKS AND RECREATION South Area Advisory Board**

### **Special Meeting September 21, 2009**

A special meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department, South Area Advisory Board, was conducted on Monday, September 21, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in the Parks and Recreation Conference Room, 1515 Sarno Road, Building B-2, Melbourne, Florida.

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ted Whitlock  
J. Keith Farquharson, Vice Chairman  
Mary Goelz  
Ben Clark  
Damian Wilson

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Jerry Jagrowski  
Frank Bevack  
Richard Contreras

#### **STAFF PRESENT**

Greg Minor, South Area Parks Operations Manager  
Mechelle Cook, Administrative Secretary

#### **PUBLIC**

None

#### **MEETING CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Whitlock called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m. Mrs. Cook called the roll and Mr. Minor introduced the county staff members to the board members.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

None.

#### **STAFF REPORTS**

Mr. Minor advised the committee about how the numbers were reached for the fee schedule. Mr. Minor said that fees went up on the recreation side of the house approximately 5-10 percent, and that rentals had went up much more than that, but we believe that the fees were

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justified. Mr. Wilson asked Mr. Minor if we could go thru each of them and he replied that yes we could. Mr. Minor said he was only going to concentrate on the South area, Mr. Whitlock asked if we had done any comparisons, and if we were in line with neighboring counties, Mr. Minor stated that yes, and we had compared fees to Orange and Volusia counties, and that our fees were still lower than other facilities that were like size. Mr. Minor stated that Mr. Lusk's direction was not to price ourselves out of the market. Mr. Whitlock stated that Palm Bay had already done that. Mr. Minor said that the athletic leagues out of Palm Bay had come over to the county due to the fees. Mr. Feldman and Mr. Steve Riser of the City of Palm Bay were in the process of re-doing their fee schedule, and they vote on their new fee schedule this Thursday.

Mr. Minor stated that we are going out to bid on next Tuesday for a 2000 square foot community center at Canova Park, with the same footprint as POW-MIA Park. At POW-MIA we have a fair amount of rentals there, \$30.00 per hour, with a 3-hour minimum, safety/clean up deposits required. Max Rodes stays the same; Ted Whitlock is a new community center that we have recently brought on-line for rentals. For an example, the school board when they rent the gymnasium it is \$80.00 per hour, for comparison our rate is \$50.00 per hour. Mr. Minor stated that 9 times out of 10 we give the deposits back; there are very few instances where we don't. Invitations went out this week for the ribbon cutting at South Beach Community Park, and it will be on-line for rentals. Wickham Park Community Center (also known as Wickham Park Senior Center) remains the same. Mr. Wilson asked why the Wickham Park Pavilion daily fee was doubling, Mr. Minor stated that we did some comparisons, and the majority of the people renting the larger pavilions was for Oktoberfest, Indiafest, Strawberry Fest Holmes Regional Park Employee Picnic (500 + employees), and we felt that it was justified. Mr. Minor said that the Eau Gallie Auditorium and Melbourne Civic Auditorium which has a capacity for over 300 people, they get 800 bucks per day. Mr. Minor stated that these groups make thousands of dollars using our facilities.

Mr. Clark asked if we rent the facilities and make extra money, what do we do with the extra money, do we lower the tax base or do we buy more capital? Mr. Minor stated that we could bring that issue to the commissioners for consideration, and that in the south area we have a very conservative approach to the budget. Mr. Minor stated that we are funded in several different ways, general fund, ad valorem, and referendum. Mr. Minor stated to give you an idea on the ad valorem taxes which is based on the tax base the south area lost over \$700,000.00 and on the general fund, over \$800,000.00 reduction. Mr. Minor stated that he firmly believes in putting money away in a rainy day fund, gained revenue does not equate to spent revenue. Mr. Clark asked if the demand justified an increase in fees, Mr. Minor stated for the Wickham Park Pavilion the peak time was typically October through December, typically renting it one weekend a month. Mr. Minor stated that BCC actually owns the pavilion and the county is responsible for the O&M and utility bills.

Mr. Wilson expressed his concerns over the groups that could not afford the fee increase for the large pavilions. Mr. Minor stated that we have other facilities that are available and that the large pavilions were more geared to extremely large groups which reap large profits for their events.

Mr. Clark stated that he agreed with Mr. Minor and inquired about a split fee schedule and Mr. Minor stated that there is and advised Mr. Clark to get with Troy Cox to get the recreation partner agreement information, and that was the intent of entering into the Recreation Partner Agreement. Mr. Minor stated that Viera-Suntree Youth Football League is already a Rec Partner with Brevard County.

Mr. Minor stated that he had just met with Viera Football League folks and was scheduled to meet with Glatting Jackson to develop the 7 ½ acres north of Viera Regional Park as football fields. Mr. Clark said that will save them about two grand a year.

Mr. Whitlock stated that some of the parks were completely self-sufficient, such as Long Point Park. Mr. Minor stated that we are getting ready to do a massive upgrade of the campgrounds, adding approximately 26 more sites available for rental.

Mr. Wilson asked about the negotiated fee on page one, Mr. Minor responded that this was for commercial groups and that currently we did not allow commercial groups. Mr. Minor stated that we have been approached by commercial groups in the area to use the facilities for such purposes as car shows, car dealership sales events, boat shows, and that our research showed that Osceola County had brought in over \$19,000.00 last year by allowing commercial car dealerships to host sales events 2 or 3 times a year at the parks. Mr. Minor stated that this was currently uncharted territory for Parks and Recreation, Mr. Wilson inquired about cleaning up the fields and costs and Mr. Minor stated that we would not allow them on the fields or green spaces.

Mr. Clark discussed his concerns with the youth football leagues, the overhead costs to play, and no fields to play on, Mr. Whitlock advised Mr. Clark to pursue the same paths used by the soccer leagues to gain field space. Mr. Whitlock stated that the soccer groups attended each meeting and provided representation at each meeting concerning their needs for practice and playing fields. Mr. Minor asked Mr. Clark to give him a chance to see what he could do this year for the football groups and that he would know more after meeting with Glatting Jackson.

Discussion ensued about the rising costs for renting facilities, upkeep and maintenance costs on the facilities, how local municipalities have stopped waiving fees, and the general state of the local economy. Mr. Wilson stated that he felt a fee increase of any type was in effect a tax increase. Mr. Clark stated that he could not afford to rent facilities for his team due to the fees, but still had to pay the taxes for the facilities. Mr. Whitlock asked if EEL's was a part of the Parks and Recreation budget, Mr. Minor responded that yes they were, but that they were not required to present or come before the South Area Advisory Board for any issues.

Mr. Farquharson stated that he did not feel he could support the fee increase as it stood. More review of the fee schedule continued. Mr. Whitlock asked if the committee had any other questions, and would entertain a **MOTION** to accept or reject the fee schedule. Mrs. Goelz made a **MOTION** to accept the fee schedule as presented by Parks and Recreation, Mr. Clark **SECONDED**, and Mr. Whitlock asked if there was any discussion. Mr. Wilson stated he did not support the increases and did not feel it was appropriate in these economic times.

Mr. Farquharson stated that he felt some of the listed fees were too steep. Mr. Clark stated that in the economically challenged areas such as Joe Lee Smith Park, the fees were being adjusted accordingly for the area. Mr. Whitlock stated that if we did not get funds from somewhere, there would eventually be no Parks and Recreation Department and that the parks and facilities would be closed. Mr. Whitlock stated that he hated to raise fees, but that he understood that it was needed and that he was in 100% support of the request for the fee increases and he felt it was a tough choice, but a needed choice. Mr. Wilson said he agreed with Mr. Whitlock but that he was concerned about people's pocketbooks. Mr. Clark stated that he felt all the members were sensitive to the economic times and the impact it was causing to our families. Mr. Whitlock asked if there was any further discussion of the **MOTION**. Discussion continued between the members on the fee increases presented. Mr. Whitlock then stated we have a **MOTION** and a **SECOND**, and asked for a vote. The **MOTION** passed with a 3-2 vote.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

### **PUBLIC INPUT**

None.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Seeing no further business, Mr. Farquharson made a **MOTION** to adjourn, Mrs. Goelz **SECONDED, UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**. The South Area Advisory Board Special meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.