



SOUTH AREA PARKS AND RECREATION
Palm Bay Regional Park Citizens Advisory Committee

REGULAR MEETING
September 22, 2005

A regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department, Palm Bay Regional Park Citizens Advisory Committee, was conducted on Thursday, September 22, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. at the Palm Bay Community Center, 1502 Port Malabar Boulevard NE, Palm Bay, Florida.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ted Whitlock, Chairman
Everett Morris, Member
Jerry Sandy, Member
Shawnta Price, Designee for Steve Riser, CPB
Referendum Rep.
Barry Morin, BARC Referendum Rep.
Clifford Barber, Member

MEMBERS ABSENT

Bruce Wecshler, Member
Keiron Jackman, Member
Dudley Anderson, Member
Vacant, Member, SAAB Rep.
Vacant, PAL Referendum Rep.

STAFF PRESENT

Jeff Whitehead, South Area Parks Operations Manager
Jerry Gust, South Area Maintenance Superintendent
Rick Schuh, Park Supervisor, Palm Bay Regional Park
Lisa Nicholas, South Area Administrative Secretary

PUBLIC

Chad Shoultz, City of Palm Bay Public Works Department
Lawrence McCalla, Brevard Caribbean American Sports and Cultural Association (BCASCA)
Wayne Savage, BCASCA
Washburn Brown, BCASCA
George Tennant, BCASCA
Kathleen Morris

MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Whitlock called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Ms. Nicholas called the roll, and Mr. Whitlock noted that a quorum was present and the meeting would be conducted.

Mr. Whitehead introduced Mr. Gust and Mr. Schuh from the Parks and Recreation Department, and Mr. Whitlock acknowledged the presence of several guests and visitors.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Members were provided with a copy of the minutes from the August 25, 2005, meeting. After review, Mr. Morris made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes, and Mr. Sandy seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Whitehead reported to the Committee that Mr. Chuck Nelson had been reassigned from his position as Director of Parks and Recreation to Special Assistant to the Assistant County Manager but would remain a valuable asset and resource within the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Whitehead further noted that Mr. Don Lusk would be serving as Interim Director of Parks and Recreation and that a search would be conducted for a permanent director within 30 to 45 days. Mr. Whitehead encouraged members of the Committee to contact Mr. Nelson and extend best wishes.

Mr. Schuh informed the Committee that the maintenance building at Palm Bay Regional Park was approximately 95% completed and that the soffits still had to be placed around the structure. Mr. Schuh further noted that the restrooms had to be tiled but that paving was complete, as was the Police Athletic League (PAL) area. Mr. Schuh reported that the slab for the restrooms in the camping area was to be poured the following week. Mr. Schuh concluded by stating that all of the lakes had been dug, and, in general, things were progressing nicely and completion was anticipated to occur in the next four to six months.

Mr. Morin inquired as to whether there would be a pond within the dog park area, and Mr. Schuh responded that there would not be a pond included within the dog park because of occasional problems with alligators. Mr. Schuh did indicate, however, that there would be some type of water source available, and Mr. Gust noted that whatever type of water source was installed could be adapted for multiuse purposes. Mr. Schuh also stated that staff was still waiting for irrigation pumps so that sprigging could be commenced. Mr. Morin stated that Ms. Fran Gorecki had spoken with former South Area Operations Manager Karen Palus concerning the acreage of the dog park and that there was a discrepancy between the originally proposed 3 to 5 acres and the current 1.3 acres and further noted that Mr. Masson was aware of this discussion. Mr. Whitehead informed the Committee that Ms. Palus was now serving in the City of Tampa and that current plans were to incorporate a 230 feet-by-230 feet fenced compound for the dog park area. Mr. Morin inquired as to whether there would be a separate area for smaller dogs, and Mr. Whitehead responded that, as of this time, there would not be but did indicate that the dog park would eventually need to be expanded in order to let the grass rejuvenate. Mr. Whitehead referenced problems with the dog park at Wickham Park and stated that not leaving enough space for expansion and rejuvenation was an oversight and should not happen again. Mr. Morin stated that he and his wife had traveled to dog parks in Sanford, Florida, and Connecticut that offered 18- to 20-acre fenced-in areas and that 1.2 acres was not the answer for Palm Bay Regional Park. Mr. Morin also noted that the dog park at Satellite Beach charged \$2 per dog on the weekends but that the park quickly became too congested and the dogs were not having fun. It was mentioned that there were sporadic problems with some dogs becoming aggressive at Wickham Park but that the incidents did not occur in the dog park but rather in the parking lot when the dogs were leashed.

Mr. Morin inquired as to whether the park would have well or city water, and Mr. Schuh replied that it would be city water and further noted that is how so many homes can be constructed in the vicinity.

Mr. Sandy asked how close the park is to the St. John's River, and Mr. Schuh indicated that, currently, it is a couple of miles but would eventually be about one mile after Three Forks.

Mr. Whitlock noted that there is much development occurring on all sides of the park, and that the park itself, the parkway, and city water and sewer are all attracting more residents.

Mr. Gust complimented the efforts and accomplishments of Mr. Schuh and his staff and noted the professional job that they have done. Mr. Whitlock concurred and stated that the previous month's tour really opened a lot of eyes.

Mr. Morin asked what the total acreage was, and Mr. Whitehead replied that it was right at 200 acres.

Mr. Whitehead offered to bring a PowerPoint presentation to the next meeting, and Mr. Whitlock noted that it might be a good idea to conduct every second or third meeting at the park site. Mr. Gust remarked that, by the time the next meeting is held in late October, a lot of daylight will be lost, especially with the approach of Daylight Savings Time.

Mr. Whitehead noted that the community center went out to bid the previous Thursday (September 15). Mr. Whitlock indicated that it had been 16 years, so the community was certainly ready. Mr. Whitlock then complimented the efforts of Rick Schuh, and Mr. Schuh in turn praised his own staff.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Whitehead introduced Chad Shoultz of the City of Palm Bay's Public Works Department for the purpose of presenting information on the proposed pedestrian bridge to be located at the northwest area of the park.

Mr. Shoultz noted that the City of Palm Bay had applied for Transportation Enhancement Funds, which were awarded to the City for use in 2006. The Palm Bay Recreation Advisory Board voted on and approved three projects, one of which is the pedestrian bridge at Palm Bay Regional Park. Mr. Shoultz presented two large poster boards for the Committee to view and referenced the area of Malabar Road and Krassner Drive. Mr. Shoultz stated that the pedestrian bridge would give individuals in Palm Bay an alternate way to get in to and out of the park.

It was noted that Post, Buckley, Schuh & Jernigan, Inc., were the consultants on the project. The bridge itself would be constructed of fabricated steel or poured-in-place concrete. Because the City is concerned with lighting and safety features being incorporated into the project, Palm Bay instructed the consultants to limit the traffic through the placement of bollards on the bridge and also asked the consultants to research lighting the sides of the bridge.

Mr. Whitlock inquired as to whether the bridge would be closed down when the park was not open, particularly in the hopes of preventing motorcycles and scooters from utilizing the bridge. Mr. Shoultz responded that the City was looking into closing the bridge after a certain time or having some sort of gate that could be closed. Mr. Gust mentioned that a maze effect could be implemented at certain points on the bridge to limit the type of traffic that would be able to utilize it. Mr. Schuh raised a concern, stating that, once the community center would be opened, the park would be open longer hours and questioned whether someone could get "locked-in". Mr. Whitlock noted that, generally, the park does close at 10:00 p.m., but if cricket or little league tournaments were being held, park operations could last longer. Mr. Morin asked if there were gates at the entrance where the Committee convened in August, and Mr. Schuh indicated that there were swing gates and a barbed-wire fence.

Mr. Whitlock inquired as to whether the City or the County was responsible for the development on the west side of the park. Mr. Shoultz indicated that he was not certain and further remarked that numerous annexations of property were occurring. Mr. Whitlock stated that it should be a conditional responsibility

for whoever is developing that property to erect a fence. Mr. Whitehead mentioned that a spring-loaded gate could be utilized, and Mr. Schuh noted that an electronic device could also be implemented. Mr. Whitlock summarized by stating that some thought must be put into controlling the traffic in and out of the park.

Mr. Morris inquired further into the maze structures mentioned by Mr. Gust, and Mr. Gust responded that such a system could be placed at both ends of the bridge to control traffic. Mr. Barber asked whether that type of structure would be wide enough for a wheelchair, and it was thought that it would be. Mr. Sandy mentioned that dirtbikes could fit into such spaces also, and Mr. Whitlock replied that dirtbikes do not need a bridge, as they can come from any direction on any terrain. Mr. Shoultz remarked that the bridge would be 8-foot wide and that strategically placing even one bollard would break up the area and still be in compliance with ADA. Mr. Morin asked if there would be stairs at either end, and Mr. Shoultz indicated there would not be stairs, as that would not be ADA compliant.

Mr. Whitlock thanked Mr. Shoultz for his presentation and invited him to again appear before the Committee as progress on the bridge advanced. Mr. Shoultz thanked Mr. Whitlock for the opportunity to present information and indicated that a good time to revisit the Committee would perhaps be when the project goes out to bid.

Mr. Whitlock requested that Mr. Whitehead follow-up with Chris Norton of the City of Palm Bay's Economic Development Department with regard to the legalities of the project.

In light of all the safety concerns that were raised, Mr. Sandy inquired as to whether a bridge was really necessary and if the situation has really been evaluated. Mr. Whitlock noted that the project was being funded by the state with the intention of making traveling easier for residents of the community.

There was no other new business to discuss.

PUBLIC INPUT

Washburn Brown of the BCASCA asked about what type of drainage was going to be used at the cricket fields, and Mr. Schuh responded that a swell was being dug around the new parking lot but that the fields were not going to be raised. A question was posed about the pavilion at the cricket complex, and Mr. Whitehead replied that the pavilion was slated for the next phase. Mr. Whitehead indicated that he would attempt to ascertain additional information and follow up with the individuals at the BCASCA.

ADJOURNMENT

Just prior to adjournment, there was discussion regarding the correct starting time of the meetings. Some individuals were under the impression that the meetings were supposed to begin at 6:30 p.m., while others thought that the correct starting time was 7:00 p.m. There was consensus among the members that 7:00 p.m. would be a more suitable starting time. Mr. Morris then made a **MOTION** to adjourn, and Mr. Morin seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.** Mr. Whitlock adjourned the meeting of the Palm Bay Regional Park Citizens Advisory Committee at 7:50 p.m. and noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, October 27, 2005, 7:00 p.m., at the Palm Bay Community Center.