



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

REGULAR MEETING
October 27, 2005

A regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department, Palm Bay Regional Park Citizens Advisory Committee, was conducted on Thursday, October 27, 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
Clifford Barber
Jerry Sandy
Shawnta Price, Designee for Steve Riser
Barry Morin
Bruce Wechsler

MEMBERS ABSENT

Keiron Jackman
Dudley Anderson
Everett Morris
Vacant, SAAB Rep.
Vacant, PAL Referendum Rep.

STAFF PRESENT

Bill Porzio, Construction Coordinator
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

Keith Wassmer, Palm Bay Youth Soccer (PBYS)
Wendi Kunkel, PBYS
Paul Garzon, PBYS
Fran Gorecki, Brevard Animal Recreation Club (BARC)
Frank Gorecki, BARC

MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Whitlock called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Ms. Nicholas called the roll, and Mr. Whitlock noted that a quorum was present and that 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 guests and visitors.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Members were provided with a copy of the minutes from the September 22, 2005, meeting. After review, Mr. Barber made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes as written, and Mr. Sandy seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Schuh reported that Palm Bay Regional Park had sustained minimal damage from Hurricane Wilma, with the major incidents of damage being scattered debris and downed palm fronds. One of the soccer poles was reported to be leaning, but there was no damage to the new construction area. Mr. Schuh also noted that a couple of weeks prior to the meeting, there had been some minor vandalism to the park. Individuals had entered the park and took the contractor's equipment on a joyride. The police found the perpetrators and trespassed them from the park.

Mr. Schuh informed the Committee that the sprigging was completed on the soccer fields. Mr. Gust noted that the fields may perhaps be playable prior to April with winter Rye but that Bermuda will go dormant.

Mr. Whitehead reported on an accident that transpired at Flutie Athletic Complex in which an employee of Dixon Electric had been severely injured while making repairs to ballfield lights. As a result, Dixon would no longer be doing repairs to ballfield lights, and this would have an impact on numerous municipalities in Brevard County, and would also be detrimental to Space Coast Stadium.

Mr. Whitehead indicated that Palm Bay Regional Park was not quite where it needed to be with regard to drainage. The poor drainage would have an adverse impact on soccer tournaments, and staff needed to investigate alternative methods for addressing the problem. Mr. Porzio noted that some of the original fields have enclosed pipes, and that system is working well. It was the lighted fields that were not draining properly, and many leaks were coming in.

There is a sprinkler system on the lighted fields, and the whole park is irrigated. There is also a swale system. The soil at the park is difficult to deal with; there is a lot of clay, and that particular material does not percolate at a good rate. A trunk-line system may be implemented, which would provide for 30-inch to 32-inch pipe, which would help to get the water away. Mr. Gust noted that there would be a good chance of success with the trunk line. Mr. Whitlock inquired as to whether the cricket field had similar drainage problems, and Mr. Porzio responded that it did but that the area has swales and two pipes to drain the water.

Mr. Porzio reported that, in order to get the light poles up, the contractor utilized ten yards of concrete to backfill the holes. The poles had been placed in sections. Mr. Wecshler inquired as to who was taking care of the problem and who would be paying any additional costs incurred. Mr. Porzio replied that additional referendum dollars are being spent on the fields.

There was a question as to whether the two fields that were not being constructed with referendum dollars were finished, and it was noted that the consultant was putting together a plan and attempts would be made to piggyback onto the referendum. Mr. Wecshler asked what funds were used to pay for the lighting that is currently at the field, and Mr. Schuh responded that the fields were built in 1992 but lighted in 1996 by moneys from the General Fund.

Mr. Porzio noted that paved areas are now acceptable for parking but there are still issues with drainage. Soil borings have been taken, and, the first three to five feet were acceptable, but below that, the soil was not desirable. Mr. Porzio indicated that 600 holes needed to be drilled in order to attain a true profile. The cricket and soccer areas had to be re-done because the right mix of soil could not be acquired. Mr. Porzio stated that there was just not enough good soil available and that 1,880 yards of white sand material had to be used for the septic system in the park. It was not the fault of the contractor or anyone else; everyone was doing the best they could with what they had.

Mr. Wecshler indicated that any excess costs should be absorbed by the engineer, especially if mistakes were made. Mr. Porzio noted that the engineering firm may take responsibility but a firm understanding of that was not yet available. Mr. Gust added that Palm Bay Regional Park is not a typical site.

Mr. Whitlock inquired as to the progress of the construction of the buildings, and Mr. Schuh noted that the construction was coming along. Mr. Whitlock asked for an estimated date of completion, and Mr. Porzio responded that January 20, 2006, was the original estimated date but that it would probably go beyond because of lost time due to inclement weather.

Mr. Porzio further noted that the community center, concrete area for the cricket area and the restrooms had gone to bid and that there may be a contractor on board as early as January 2006 to start on those projects. The community center would be hardened to 170 miles per hour and would contain restroom facilities, but it would only be a temporary shelter; it would not be suitable for living. Mr. Whitlock asked if the community center was a "cookie-cutter" design, and Mr. Porzio responded that it was indeed a carbon copy of a couple of other community centers in the County. The center would contain a fully equipped kitchen, meeting rooms, a basketball court and two volleyball courts and would be comparable to South Mainland Community Center. Mr. Wecshler inquired as to when the decision was made to harden the center to withstand hurricane-force winds, and Mr. Porzio indicated that it was sometime in January or February of 2005. Mr. Wecshler further stated that he did not recall plans to go forward with hardening.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Whitehead broached the subject of the dog park, and indicated that the issue of staffing could be problematic because the positions had been eliminated from the budget. The dog park would be in need of volunteers, and Mr. Whitehead inquired as to whether the Indian River Dog Training Club (IRDTC) had been approached with regard to supplying volunteers. Members of the public representing the Brevard Animal Recreation Club (BARC) indicated that members of BARC had expressed interest in volunteering.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

PUBLIC INPUT

Fran Gorecki of the Brevard Animal Recreation Club (BARC) indicated that she was pleased to hear about three acres for the dog park and that she had been exchanging e-mail with Ms. Cathie Schanz, Operations Manager for Central Area Parks and Recreation. Ms. Gorecki inquired as to why the County needed to staff the dog park and indicated that the majority of dog parks do not supply staff. Mr. Whitehead responded that the purpose of having staff present is to restore order after an incident and to have the animals, as well as their owners, removed that are involved in altercations. Mr. Whitehead further stated that there had been numerous incidents at Wickham Park.

Ms. Gorecki inquired as to what purpose an attendant would serve, when animal services or 911 could be contacted in the event of an incident. Mr. Whitehead replied that staff is necessary to keep records and to verify that the dogs have had shots and so forth. Ms. Gorecki countered that many other dog parks do not have staff, and Mr. Whitehead noted that staff was looking into the possibility of having the dog park unattended. Mr. Morin indicated that he had been in dog parks where the patron shows proof of inoculation, and the information is written in a book by a staff person. It was noted that not having an

attendant may result in a liability issue, and that the County could be sued if there were an incident and no staff was present.

Ms. Gorecki then inquired as to whether skate parks were staffed, and Mr. Whitehead indicated that skate parks in Brevard County were attended. Mr. Wecshler stated that an individual cannot sue unless gross negligence by the County can be proved. Mr. Gust noted that the issue would have to go through the County Attorney's office and the Risk Management Department for further clarification.

Mr. Whitehead noted that Ms. Schanz was working on a report on dog parks that would provide statistics from Long Point Campground, Wickham Park, and Manatee Hammock. Dogs can be walked all around those parks as long as they are leashed. The dog park is the only area in which the dogs can be off of their leashes.

Mr. Whitlock noted that showing proof of inoculation is a great idea, and Mr. Morin responded that showing such information is not worth anything without the dog's owner signing an agreement and stated that, at other parks, the owners are responsible for the most part.

Mr. Whitlock requested that Ms. Gorecki put her thoughts in writing and work with staff. Mr. Gust stressed the importance of finding out what the state laws really set forth with regard to liability. Mr. Schuh noted that, for his staff, the biggest concern would be having people bringing dogs into the main park to get to the dog park and having them potentially get into other recreational areas, which could be difficult to control. Mr. Whitlock indicated his willingness to work with staff in order to find a solution.

Mr. Sandy noted that there are some owners out there that do not know how to deal with their dogs and that, because bad situations can arise, the dog park should be staffed in order to control who comes in and out. Mr. Schuh indicated that there would be separate areas for large and small dogs. Ms. Gorecki also noted that there are many dogs that have not been properly socialized and therefore do not know how to act when they come into contact with other dogs. Mr. Porzio concurred with Mr. Whitlock that staff would work on acquiring an acceptable solution.

Mr. Keith Wassmer of Palm Bay Youth Soccer stated that he came to the meeting in order to hear about the drainage on the soccer fields and expressed thanks to Parks and Recreation staff for their efforts for keeping the fields well maintained. Mr. Wassmer inquired as to when the drainage issue may be resolved because individuals were being kicked off the soccer fields. Mr. Schuh noted that the individuals may have been asked to vacate the fields because of lightning or thunder and further stated that it is not the County's policy to remove individuals just because of rain. Mr. Gust mentioned that Palm Bay Youth Soccer may wish to invest in lightning detectors, which can cost from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars. Mr. Schuh noted that this was the first year for so many weather-related problems and mentioned that, when rain comes down at the rate of two inches per hour, even if the field was draining perfectly, it would not be able to be utilized. Mr. Gust noted that the smaller fields were draining well and that perhaps staff would attempt to implement a similar drainage system.

Mr. Wassmer asked why all of the parking areas were not paved, and Mr. Porzio replied that St. John's Water Management had requirements on the balance of hard and soft surfaces and what impact it has on the system. There has to be a certain amount of soft surface.

Ms. Gorecki inquired into the drainage conditions at the dog park, and Mr. Porzio responded that the dog park is actually one of the higher points in the park. Ms. Gorecki then asked about the completion date for the dog park, and Mr. Porzio indicated that January 20, 2006, was the scheduled target date of completion for the entire park, but that the contractor had already prepared a claim for additional time. It was noted that perhaps the first quarter of 2006 would be a good estimate.

Wendi Kunkel from Palm Bay Youth Soccer stated that playing on the cricket fields is great but that getting to them is problematic. Players had to walk through the mud and it was difficult to get back to that area because of barricades. Mr. Schuh noted that the barricade was a stipulation of the contractor and that he would talk to him about the issue.

Mr. Whitlock thanked the citizens for their input and informed them that the comments were not only necessary but also appreciated and encouraged them to continue attending meetings. Mr. Schuh added that safety was always the number one concern of the County.

Mr. Schuh noted that the construction did alter the drainage on Fields 1 and 2 and stated that all of the water runs off of the parking lot onto Field 1. Mr. Whitlock indicated that perhaps the City of Palm Bay's civil engineer should be contacted.

ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no further business, Mr. Whitlock called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Wechsler made a **MOTION** to adjourn, and Mr. Barber seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.** Mr. Whitlock adjourned the meeting of the Palm Bay Regional Park Citizens Advisory Committee at 8:15 p.m. and noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, January 26, 2006, 7:00 p.m., at the Palm Bay Community Center.