



# **SOUTH AREA PARKS AND RECREATION**

## *Wickham Park Advisory Committee*

### **REGULAR MEETING** **March 1, 2006**

A regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department, Wickham Park Advisory Committee, was held on March 1, 2006, 6:30 p.m., at the site of Wickham Park, 2500 Parkway Drive, Melbourne, Florida.

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ken Baker  
Ben Elliott  
Eleanor Munton  
Thomas Seaman  
Carol Mulligan  
Bill Connor  
Greg Welsh  
Sally Richardson

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

R.L. Jones  
Lauren Milne  
Greg England  
Cheryl Palmer  
Ralph Earrusso  
Karen Kilianek

#### **STAFF PRESENT**

Bill Ross, Senior Construction Coordinator  
Carlos Zarate, Construction Coordinator  
Jeff Whitehead, South Area Parks Operations Manager  
Josh Henderson, Park Supervisor III, Wickham Park  
Jessica Breault, Park Supervisor II, Wickham Park  
Vickie Rogers, Office Assistant, Wickham Park  
Lisa Nicholas, South Area Administrative Secretary

#### **PUBLIC**

Jeff Pritchard  
Julie Pritchard  
David Pavone  
Debbie Pavone  
Jennifer Fountain  
Jasper Trigg  
Dick DeLauder  
Sheila Miller  
Linda Wood  
Debora Nadeau  
Susan Palmbach  
David Palmbach  
Cynthia Van Gaasbeck  
N.A. Nelson  
Sal D. Mati  
Daniel Davis  
Dianne Young  
Jackie O'Connell  
Mary Checchia  
Kendra Quirico  
Judith Quirico  
Celine McCallister  
Gordon Pye

## MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Baker called the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m. Ms. Nicholas called the roll, and Mr. Baker noted that a quorum was present and that the meeting would be conducted. Ms. Nicholas reported that Mr. Corelli had recently resigned his position on the Committee and that another representative of the South Area Advisory Board would be named as his replacement in the near future.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Members were provided with a copy of the minutes from the January 4, 2006, meeting. After review, Mr. Connor made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes, and Mr. Welsh seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

## STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Henderson reported that the Department of Health had received reports of certain campers using blueboys to transport blackwater. Mr. Henderson then indicated that staff was looking into purchasing a honeywagon and that campers would be charged a certain amount for the service. Mr. Baker asked if there were plans to upgrade the sewer in the referendum, and staff responded affirmatively.

Mr. Henderson informed the Committee that two selections had been made for the vacant ranger positions and that advertisements for two part-time permanent staff and one full-time permanent staff for the dog park would be posted the following Monday.

Ms. Breault indicated that a new road was created in front of the lake area, which should keep individuals from driving to Pavilion 3. In the playground area, two parking lots had been completed, and the following Saturday was slated to be the opening day for soccer.

Mr. Ross reported that the amphitheatre should be completed within two weeks. The footer had been poured for the restroom/shower building in Loop A, and the building would be arriving on Monday. Once Loop A was completed, work would begin on the building in the Youth Area and then Loop B. Much electrical must be switched over, but nothing would be shut down until after the Veterans' Reunion. Mr. Ross reported that a proposal had been received from PBS & J for Phase II, which included upgrades to the campground and the main pavilion, as well as the Remembrance Memorial.

A member of the public asked if there were any plans to place a small pavilion in Loop B, and Mr. Ross indicated that there were no plans yet, as that was not part of the referendum.

Mr. Ross reported on the equestrian area. The original budget for the equestrian center was \$860,000, and the low bid came in at just over \$1 million just for the barns. The numerous storms in the past year and half caused the Road and Bridge Department to become delayed in getting started with the site work. That caused the contractor to come back with a delay claim of \$147,000. The price then jumped to \$1.3 million just to construct the barns. After the January meeting, staff went back to the contractor to see what it would cost for 48 stalls. Even though the County would directly purchase the materials in order to cut costs, the price for 48 stalls still came in at well over \$1 million.

Staff went back to the contractor and requested a price for 24 stalls (three barns of eight stalls) and a tack room. With the delay claim included, the price was \$694,000. The County-purchased materials would cost \$930,000, just for the barns. With upgrades to bleachers, ring improvements and a sanitary system, the price would come to \$1.6 million. Staff was prepared to go to the Board of County Commissioners with \$694,000 for 24 barns as a change order.

A member of the public indicated that the stalls previously provided good revenue, and Mr. Ross indicated that fees would have to be raised. A public participant noted that some boarders would be willing to pay \$200 per month in order to be closer to their horses and suggested that a subcommittee

be established separately from the Advisory Committee for the purpose of brainstorming and coming up with other ways to construct something suitable.

Mr. Ross indicated that it would be staff's recommendation to go to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) with the change order for 24 stalls and that further discussion on the matter would be appropriate in that venue. Mr. Whitehead noted that the more time goes by, the more expensive the project will become. Mr. Baker stated that 24 stalls could at least get the boarders back into the park, and more stalls could be added later. Ms. Richardson noted that, previously, many months had been spent talking about the details of the barns, which delayed the start time of the project, and also stated that there are no other projects where only 24 people benefit. A member of the public stated that the project benefits many more people than just 24 because it would be advantageous to entire families and indicated that 40 or 50 stalls could probably be built for the same amount as the 24.

Mr. Whitehead stated that, if the project goes out again, the numbers will not come back as even close; they will be much higher. Ms. Mulligan indicated that many boarders felt betrayed. Mr. Baker stated that staff could approach the BOCC in order to determine if additional funding for 48 stalls would be approved, and Mr. Ross noted that Interim Parks and Recreation Department Director Don Lusk already had concerns going to the BOCC for 24 people with the amount of money involved.

A member of the public stated that this issue had been being discussed since 2001. The boarders have been interested in getting six, eight-stall barns with no amenities, just barns and paddocks with no frills. The horse boarder community was reluctant, after four years, to give up 24 stalls and questioned what would happen to the rest of the boarders. Ms. Mulligan asked what would happen if the BOCC voted down the request for 48 stalls - would the boarders be stuck with 24. Mr. Baker responded that the request could be shot down by the BOCC completely and that the boarders could end up with nothing and that the boarders may not be allowed back into Wickham Park at all.

Mr. Ross stated that the change order would have to go before the BOCC regardless, even if there was to be a new contractor, because the BOCC is the only entity that can terminate an existing contract. Mr. Whitehead reiterated that the issue all boils down to what can be afforded; the BOCC may say "zero". If the BOCC says 24, it is a way to get back in the door.

Mr. Baker indicated that there also used to be a rifle range at Wickham Park, but now there is not, and he suggested that, since the issue has to go to the BOCC regardless, staff should aim high and request 48 stalls.

Mr. Seaman made a **MOTION** to accept staff's plan to go to the Brevard County Board of County Commissioners and request to construct 24 stalls with additional stalls to be added later. The motion carried by a vote of 7-1. The record reflects that public sentiment did not support the decision to request 24 stalls; a request for 48 stalls would have been preferred.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

It was noted that, during the previous year, the archers spent \$2,400 on targets for public use. It was requested that staff include the archers in the budget when it comes time to purchase new targets. Mr. Henderson responded that all organizations affiliated with the park are in the budget but there has not been a cash balance for three to four years. Mr. Henderson assured that the archers would be kept in mind. Mr. Whitehead noted that staff was still looking for additional land for the club.

## NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Whitehead brought the issue of relocating the South Brevard Senior Center to Wickham Park before the Committee. Mr. Whitehead provided some background information on the matter, noting that the Senior Center was originally on the site of the Henegar Center, but the building had to be demolished in 2004 because it could not be brought up to code. At that time, the South Brevard Senior Center was shifted to the Melbourne Airport's property. A new building would need to be constructed to meet seniors' needs, and the cost would be \$3.8 million and the building would be located on airport property. In addition, the property would have to be leased from the airport at a cost of \$300,000 per year for 30 years. After 30 years, \$9 million would have been paid to the Airport Authority, and the County would not have even a building to show for the expended money. Mr. Whitehead reported that the South Brevard Senior Center was one of the original referendum projects and stressed that no funds would be taken from the Wickham Park referendum moneys to complete the senior center.

Mr. Whitehead introduced Jasper Trigg and Dick DeLauder from the South Brevard Senior Center. Mr. Whitehead indicated that the senior center would be placed in the same area as the 18,000 square-foot community center in Wickham Park. Additionally, moving the senior center to Wickham Park would save the County a tremendous amount of money (\$9 million over 30 years for the lease alone), and public transportation would be easily accessible for seniors in that area. Mr. Whitehead stated that, if the Committee approved the recommendation for the relocation of the South Brevard Senior Center to Wickham Park, the concept would be presented to the South Area Advisory Board for approval on March 20, 2006, and then to the Board of County Commissioners for its approval in April.

Mr. Welsh inquired as to whether there would be two separate buildings or whether the senior center would be incorporated into the community center, and Mr. Whitehead responded that there would be two buildings but they would share parking.

Mr. Baker noted that the park currently closes at dusk and asked whether the gate would remain open to permit activities in the evening, and Mr. Whitehead responded affirmatively and also indicated that, when the community center was constructed, activities would also be conducted there in the evenings.

Mr. Whitehead introduced Carlos Zarate, Parks and Recreation Construction Coordinator and project manager for the South Brevard Senior Center. Mr. Zarate referenced a 12-acre site within Wickham Park that would be utilized for both the senior center and the community center. The site could easily accommodate both the 18,000 square-foot community center and the 10,608 square-foot senior center. The senior center and surrounding area would contain three multi-purpose rooms, a library, lobby area, catering area, and 12 shuffleboard courts. The senior center would not have to generate revenue to pay for a lease, which would save seniors money because activities could be offered for a nominal fee or at no charge.

Mr. Welsh asked if additional staff would be required for maintenance, and Mr. Whitehead responded that current park staff could maintain both centers and that it would actually be more efficient to have the senior center on Wickham Park property. Mr. Whitehead also noted that tying into utilities and so forth would not be a concern because it was already being done for the community center.

Mr. Trigg noted that having the senior center at Wickham Park would provide increased access to programs for all seniors in Melbourne.

Ms. Seaman inquired as to whether any other options had been explored, and Mr. Zarate responded that the Airport Authority was determined to be about the only other option available and reiterated that the building would need to be leased from the Authority at a cost of \$300,000 per year for 30 years, and, at the end of the 30 years, the County would not own the building.

Mr. Baker stated that he felt the addition of a senior center at Wickham Park would be an added plus for the park.

Mr. Connor made a **MOTION** to approve staff's conceptual plan for moving the South Brevard Senior Center to Wickham Park, and Mr. Welsh seconded. Discussion ensued. Mr. Elliot asked whether the building would be hardened and noted that he would like to see a site plan at some point in the future. Ms. Muntun inquired as to whether there would be conflicts with scheduling events, and Mr. Whitehead responded that Parks and Recreation employees are trained to handle multiple events and that there would be two large buildings and plenty of parking, so there should not be a likelihood of events overlapping.

Mr. Seaman asked how the senior center members felt about relocating to Wickham Park, and Mr. Trigg responded that there would be a meeting of the center's Board the following Monday. Mr. Trigg stated that he felt the Board would respond favorably but that it was fair to say that some members may be lost, but it was entirely possible that other members would be gained. Mr. DeLauder noted that the Board will determine whether the move should take place and also stated that, when the South Brevard Senior Center moved to its present location, 40% of the membership was lost. At Wickham Park, the facility would be very close to the bus route, so many new members may be acquired.

Ms. Mulligan asked where from where the funding was being obtained, and Mr. Whitehead reiterated that the South Brevard Senior Center was one of the original referendum projects and again noted that none of Wickham Park's funding would be impacted.

Seeing no further discussion, Mr. Baker called for a vote on the motion. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

#### **PUBLIC INPUT**

A member of the public asked what could be done to enhance safety in the park and suggested that a sign stating that surveillance cameras were in use could be posted. Mr. Whitehead replied that is not permitted and that, if there is a sign stating cameras are in use, then cameras actually have to be in use. Mr. Whitehead suggested increased lighting as one means of increasing safety.

Mr. Elliott provided minutes from the Wickham Park Trail Crew to staff.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Seeing no further business, Mr. Baker called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Connor made a **MOTION** to adjourn, and Ms. Richardson seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.** Mr. Baker adjourned the March 1, 2006, meeting of the Wickham Park Advisory Committee at 8:56 p.m. and informed the Committee that the next meeting would be held on May 3, 2006, 6:30 p.m., at Wickham Park.