



SOUTH AREA PARKS AND RECREATION Wickham Park Advisory Committee

**REGULAR MEETING
July 5, 2006**

A regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department, Wickham Park Advisory Committee, was held on July 5, 2006, 6:30 p.m., at the site of Wickham Park, 2500 Parkway Drive, Melbourne, Florida.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ken Baker
Greg Welsh
Eleanor Munton
Karen Kilianek
Carol Mulligan
Bill Connor
Tom Seaman
Sally Richardson

PUBLIC PRESENT

R.L. Jones
Lauren Milne
Greg England
Ralph Earusso
Ben Elliot
Cheryl Palmer
Kevin Walsh

STAFF PRESENT

Fred Poppe, South Area Recreation Superintendent
Josh Henderson, Park Supervisor III, Wickham Park
Jessica Breault, Parks Supervisor II, Wickham Park
Lisa Nicholas, South Area Administrative Secretary

PUBLIC

Sean Gallagher
Ron Weis

MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Baker called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Nicholas called the roll, and Mr. Baker noted that a quorum was present and that the meeting would be conducted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Members were provided with a copy of the minutes from the May 3, 2006, meeting. After review, Mr. Conner made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes, and Ms. Richardson seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Henderson reported that he maintenance staff at Wickham Park was at full capacity and that an offer had been made to an individual to fill the position of Office Assistant. Interviews were being conducted for a part-time permanent Dog Park staffer, and a Recreation Leader position had recently been approved.

Brevard County Parks and Recreation had conducted a summer camp at Wickham Park in May, and a Boy Scout camp in June. Brevard County Parks and Recreation held its first-ever Ultimate Challenge event in which children from camps in all three areas of Parks and Recreation were invited to attend and compete against each other in various events. The event drew over 1,000 children.

The roof on the bath house in the Youth Area had been replaced for the third time. Because it was the contractor's fault, no additional charges were incurred for the replacement. The restroom for Area B arrived last week, and folks from the Brevard Cultural Alliance had begun work on the mosaic on the amphitheatre.

Training had started for the Dog Park staff on the same new software, and the County would begin charging Dog Park patrons on August 1, 2006. Brevard County Animal Control would also be providing some training to Dog Park staff.

The new exercise trail arrived, and the current trail will be replaced in small portions so that it can still be utilized. Soccer fields will be closed until the end of the month in order to get them back into shape.

Staff dug a trench around the chemical shed, which burned during one of the fires. The structure cannot be touched until staff receives proper instruction.

Mr. Baker asked if the bathhouse in the Youth Area was the same type as the ones in Areas A and B. Mr. Henderson responded affirmatively but also indicated that the one in the Youth Area was the only one that had problems.

Mr. Poppe reported that staff had entered into an agreement with WFIT, and next month would be the first in a series of free concerts for the public. The concerts would be held in the amphitheatre and would be free to the public. Each month, a different style of music would be offered.

Mr. Henderson requested suggestions from the Committee on possible ways to deter speeding. It really becomes an issue of enforcement because, even though the rangers can

tell people to slow down, they cannot write tickets, nor do they have any way to “prove” a patron was speeding. Ms. Kilianek suggested installing additional stop signs at strategic places, and Mr. Henderson noted that he would look into that idea. Mr. Henderson stated that staff logs license numbers of habitual offenders and reports them to the police. The infractions are worst along the west road and the two long straight-aways.

Mr. Henderson noted that he had started to gather quotes for an electronic sign to advertise events.

Mr. Henderson introduced Sean Gallagher and Ron Weis from the Florida Division of Forestry for the purpose of making a presentation on prescribed burns.

Mr. Gallagher stated that being proactive, rather than reactive, with regard to fires is essential. Prescribed burns can be beneficial because they are confined to a predetermined area, they reduce hazardous fuels, and they maintain and restore natural communities. With a prescribed burn, the flame is lower and cooler and therefore less destructive to tree health. Post-burn evaluations are conducted in order to determine if the objective was met.

Mr. Weis noted that a unique opportunity was presenting itself right now because approximately three quarters of the park had already burned. The Division of Forestry would assist with a fire plan at no cost. Wickham Park is about 250 acres, so it could be broken down into 50-acre chunks. Each 50-acre area could be revisited every five years. The public would more than likely not be pleased to hear of such an endeavor, and that is why the Committee’s support is crucial. It would be the Committee’s fire management plan – not the Division of Forestry’s plan. Problems arise when land is unmanaged, and Wickham Park contains a lot of unmanaged land.

Mr. Henderson stated that most of the trail system is actually old fire lines. Currently, there is no way to get into certain areas of the park to rescue people who may become injured.

Mr. Gallagher noted that, so far, luck has prevented fires from escaping into the surrounding neighborhoods. Mr. Weis stated that the only way to maintain the green space in Wickham Park is to burn it, which will also enhance the ecosystem. Now is a good time to get the fire lines in, seeing as much of the park has already burned.

Mr. Henderson stated that if there were to be any opposition, it would probably come from individuals in the surrounding neighborhoods and folks concerned about the feral cat population.

Mr. Baker called for a motion to pursue a fire management plan with the Florida Division of Forestry. Mr. Welsh made a **MOTION** to pursue a fire management plan with the Florida Division of Forestry, and Ms. Richardson seconded. **DISCUSSION:** Mr. Seaman asked how wide the access road would be, and Mr. Weis responded that it would be at least 12 feet. Mr. Seaman noted that the back area of the park is special to a lot of

individuals, and he is interested in hearing how this will transpire. Then there will be a natural break. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Kilianek asked about the feral cat population, and Mr. Henderson responded that it seemed to be stabilizing. The last litter of kittens to be seen was about three or four months ago.

Ms. Mulligan commented on the status of the horse barns and indicated that 48 stalls were to be built and that negotiations were ongoing with the contractor, I.C.E. As of now, there would be two shed row barns, with 12 stalls each, and a center aisle with 24 stalls. Tack rooms would be shared, and there would be dirt floors.

Mr. Seaman indicated that he would like to meet with Mr. Poppe and Mr. Henderson with regard to developing a trail system and noted that this issue had been ongoing for quite some time. Mr. Seaman stated that he would hate to see the establishment of a fire management plan push the trail system issue out even farther but commended Mr. Henderson for taking the fire issue seriously.

Mr. Seaman stated that he, and many other individuals, would like to see a trail system implemented and wanted to know what could be done to get such a project moving. Mr. Poppe indicated that, since he was new to the staff, he would appreciate seeing a plan.

Mr. Seaman noted that his group was always put off for a different reason, whether it was funding or something else, but that plenty of other projects have managed to be completed. Mr. Seaman indicated that he would like to have his group sit down with Parks and Recreation staff and come up with a schedule and timeline. Mr. Poppe stated that would be fine, but that some latitude in a schedule would be necessary.

Mr. Henderson stated that things were rolling and mentioned the GPS system and the fact that the trails had been marked.

Mr. Seaman stated that a plan should be designed to implement a trail signage system that would designate hiking, horseback riding and bicycling. A kiosk could be constructed that would contain maps and other information on the trail system. Mr. Henderson indicated that all trails would be shared trails and that a map would indeed be helpful for all users, as it is easy to get lost. Mr. Seaman noted that he had met last year with Mr. Henderson and Jeff Whitehead, South Area Operations Manager, and they had tried to get together again but schedules would not permit.

Mr. Poppe indicated that input from people actually using the plan would be invaluable and suggested that Mr. Seaman and his group create a plan and then present it to staff. Mr. Seaman stated that he would like to sit down with staff and develop a plan in conjunction.

Mr. Connor inquired as to what happened concerning the relocation of the Brevard County Senior Center to Wickham Park, and staff noted that the project had been approved and that a Senior Center would be built at Wickham Park. Staff also noted that the Senior Center has its own funding source and would not detract any monies from other Wickham Park projects.

Ms. Kilianek inquired as to whether anything had been settled with the Archery Group, and staff responded that nothing had been agree to yet.

NEW BUSINESS

Interest has been shown to name a pavilion at Wickham Park after Samuel Fuller, Jr., a deceased Parks and Recreation employee. Actions are currently being taken to discuss this matter with the Board of County Commissioners in hopes to approve this plan.

PUBLIC INPUT

NONE

ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no further business, Mr. Baker called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Conner made a **MOTION** to adjourn, and Mr. Seaman seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**. Mr. Baker adjourned the July 5, 2006, meeting of the Wickham Park Advisory Committee at 8:30 p.m. and informed the Committee that the next meeting would be held on September 6, 2006, 6:30 p.m., at Wickham Park.