



SOUTH AREA PARKS AND RECREATION Wickham Park Advisory Committee

**REGULAR MEETING
September 5, 2007**

A regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department, Wickham Park Advisory Committee, was held on Wednesday, September 5, 2007, 6:30 p.m., at the site of Wickham Park, 2500 Parkway Drive, Melbourne, Florida.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Eleanor Munton
Ben Elliot
Karen Kilianek

MEMBERS ABSENT

R.L. Jones
Cheryl Palmer
Kevin Walsh
Liz Lee

REFERENDUM MEMBERS PRESENT

Ken Baker
Greg Welsh
Tom Seaman
Carol Mulligan
Bill Connor
Greg England
Sally Richardson

REFERENDUM MEMBERS ABSENT

Lauren Milne
Ralph Earusso

STAFF PRESENT

Jeff Whitehead, South Area Operations Manager
Fred Poppe, South Area Recreation Superintendent
Josh Henderson, Park Supervisor III, Wickham Park
Denise Hayes, South Area Administrative Secretary
Gustavo Vergara, Special Projects Coordinator I
Ted Mieczkowski, Parks Repair Technician, Wickham Park
Susan Gosselin, Natural Resources Management Office

PUBLIC

Mattie Connor
Laine Seefelt, Spacecoast Arabian

MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Ken Baker called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Mrs. Hayes called the roll.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Members were provided with a copy of the minutes from the January 3, 2007, meeting. Mr. Baker asked if everyone had had a chance to review the minutes, and called for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Greg Welsh made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes, and Mr. Bill Connor seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Jeff Whitehead informed the Advisory Committee Members and the Referendum Committee Members that a chairperson and vice-chairperson would need to be re-elected at the next meeting. Mr. Whitehead explained that Mr. Baker could not be the chairperson because Mr. Baker is a Referendum Committee Member and that the chairperson and vice-chairperson must be a Wickham Park Advisory Committee Member by resolution. Mr. Thomas Seaman raised question on how to become an appointed member of the Advisory Committee. Mr. Whitehead informed him, he or whoever else was interested would need to write to the District IV County Commissioner and express interest to become a member of the Wickham Park Advisory Committee and the County Commissioner would make the appointments. Mr. Whitehead also informed the Advisory Committee Members that all their appointments expire as of December 31, 2007.

Mr. Connor asked if they were operating under referendum money.

Mr. Whitehead stated that copies of the budget both operating and general which would include the referendum budget would be made for each of the Advisory Members and the Referendum Members by the next meeting.

Mr. Josh Henderson reported his staff installed a culvert and two hundred sandbags on the Soccer field road and a sidewalk was started at the retention pond area and hoped that Road and Bridge will have completed the sidewalk by the end of March. He also met with Superior Concrete to discuss the needs to be poured for the wall. Mr. Henderson stated that he is still waiting on two quotes.

Mr. Henderson reported that two Kiosks had been installed on August 29, 2007.

Mr. Henderson informed the members that the demolition of the old bathhouses was completed on June 14, 2007, and the Gang restroom was demolished on June 15, 2007 and sod has been laid.

Mr. Henderson stated that in the last nine months about 80 dead trees have been removed. He stated that the park is still having problems Pine Beetles.

Mr. Henderson stated that a new water line has been installed at the Dog Park, and a water fountain. He also informed the members that one of the three Eagle Scout projects was completed by placing the "Pets Prohibited in This Area" signs along the fences.

Mr. Henderson reported that the Department of Forestry began to implement the first stage of fire management plan at Wickham Park.

Ms. Eleanor Munton questioned if the Senior Center was going to be built here?

Mr. Whitehead informed Ms. Munton that it was going to be built at Wickham Park in fact the project got unanimously approved from the Melbourne City Council on June 26, 2007.

Mr. Henderson reported that he purchased two speed deterrent devices that will flash if a person is going over 15 miles per hour to help manage the speeding problem in the park. He informed the members that devices when hooked up to a lap top computer will give the rangers the ability to track the speeders and to stop the speeders of violation of the posted speed. He informed the members after a person's third speeding violation in the park that person will be asked to leave the park. Mr. Henderson stated that the cost of the devices was \$3,500.00 each and the cost to have the devices installed will be \$1,200.00. One device will be installed by the horseshoe pits and one by the straight a way by the hill bathroom.

Mr. Whitehead introduced Susan Gosselin with Brevard County's Department of Natural Resources. He stated that Ms. Gosselin would be providing the members with information regarding the trees, the burn and the fire management.

Ms. Gosselin stated that fire management could be done in a lot of areas but there are a lot of areas without extra work can't be managed and that the cost for managing those areas would be tremendous. Ms. Gosselin reported that they are looking at invasive exotic removal and that Mr. Henderson does not have the manpower or the money to purchase the chemicals to do the job thoroughly. She reported they are looking at reduction in some of the canopies in some of the oaks, and taking down the remaining dead trees.

Ms. Gosselin explained that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are looking for organizations or individuals who own land and give money to the organization or individual in turn for management. She stated that there is no in perpetuity clause and there is nothing and nothing that states the property has to managed that way forever. She informed that the park would get funds for management and the park will also get a special agreement from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service stating that the park will only be responsible for the number of Scrub Jays and Gopher Tortoises that were on the property at the time of U. S. Fish and Wildlife's survey which will count the number of species before the fire management begins. In return the U.S. Fish and Wildlife ask that

they be notified if more of the scrub areas need to be removed so that they have the opportunity to remove the species in that area.

Ms. Karen Kilianek stated that she had had a chance to talk to a few people about fire lanes and there being through the park and that many people are sick over the size of the fire lanes and all that has been have taken out.

Mr. Henderson said that nothing had been taken but palmettos.

Ms. Gosselin stated that they chopping palmettos and knocking down dead trees.

Mr. Henderson acknowledged that only two live trees which were invasive exotics.

Ms. Gosselin stated that the fire lines are usually not pretty to start with, but they do grow in and become more esthetic trails and that the only time the lines won't be able to be used is during a fire.

Mr. Thomas Seaman stated that he would like to remind Ms. Gosselin that Wickham Park is a recreational park and property does not belong to EELS, and would to see the property turned back into some of the aerial photos that were taken back in the 1940's or 1950's so that the park would be returned to its natural state prior to development precluding any regular burns. Mr. Seaman stated his point was as the plan progress it should be kept in mind that the property has recreational value as well.

Mr. Greg Welsh asked how long it will take to get the grant from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services.

Ms. Gosselin replied some of the money will be coming in through mitigation funds and another source would be coming in through Partners for Wildlife grant which is a 50/50 match and the match would be in the Division of Forestry coming in and burning. Mitigation funds will trickle and come in over time. She also stated that the money will not go into general fund.

Mr. Baker asked if the paperwork had been filed yet.

Ms. Gosselin stated that it had not and that there is a meeting planned next Friday, September 14, 2007 to discuss the filing of the grant.

Mr. Baker asked if she need approval from this board and entertain a motion in support of filing the grant.

Mr. Connor made a **MOTION** to support the application for grant money.

Mr. Welsh seconded the Motion. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

Mr. Whitehead, in continuation with his staff report, stated that five positions have been lost to the property tax reform cut and all of the employees come from the dog park. Mr. Whitehead informed the members that staffs last day would be September 21, 2007.

Mr. Fred Poppe stated a consultant has been hired to work on the plans to do the electrical upgrade for the campground and that he had received an email from that consultant stating the finalized plans would be ready on Monday, September 10, 2007 so that the electrical upgrade can go out to bid.

Mr. Baker asked if the lakes at Wickham Park were checked for ameba.

Mr. Henderson replied that the lakes were checked monthly, and the reports were kept on file.

Mr. Ben Elliot asked when the horse barn roof would be completed.

Mr. Henderson replied that the projected completion date is January 2008.

Mr. Whitehead stated that upper echelons a decision need to make how the horse barns are to be managed. He stated that the individuals who were in the horse barns previously are not allowed to just move back in, there is a process that needs to be followed. He stated the County Attorney, Morris Richardson informed Mr. Palmbach that there are only three ways to allow people to go into the barns. Mr. Whitehead stated it will either go to the highest bidder; the group will have to create an organization; or have someone else manage the facility ourselves. Mr. Whitehead stated that the Board of County Commissioners already said that the barns will have to be self-sufficient and they will be paying market price. Mr. Whitehead said that the issues need to be worked out so that horse boarders can get back in.

Mr. Baker wanted to make clear when someone is hired to manage and do the up keep of the barns, the money will not be coming out of the Wickham Park funds the money will be coming from the boarders.

Mr. Welsh asked what will happen at the dog park with all the employees gone due to the budget cut.

Mr. Whitehead replied that the dog park would remain open and signs would be placed around the park that say, "Use At Your Own Risk" just like the playgrounds and the lake. He also stated that alternative ways are being looked at such as going automated; or possibly going through Animal Services and using registration were the dog owner would get a different colored tag to use the park.

Mr. Welsh suggested that some of the various dog rescue organization send volunteers to man the park some kind of control and someone would be able to keep the revenue coming in.

Mr. Whitehead stated when the dog park was in the planning stages the organization BARK came to the County and pushed to have the park opened. Mr. also stated that there are over 500 members of BARK and not one member would volunteer any time to assist with the operation of the dog park.

Mr. Baker suggested that the signs at the dog park should read “Use At Your Own Risk, If It Does Not Function Properly The Park Will Be Shut Down.”

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Kilianek wanted to know about the replacement of the trees that have been burned.

Mr. Whitehead and Mr. Henderson stated that the Division of Forestry had seedlings at a very low cost.

Mr. Baker suggested the replacement trees should be resistant to the beetles.

Mr. Poppe suggested that the trees not be replaced until all the projects are completed.

Mr. Whitehead brought up the idea of the new South Area Parks and Recreation Operations building be built on the site of the current ranger station and move the ranger station the west side of the entrance road and asked what the members thought.

Discussion ensued regarding where and if the building would go at Wickham Park.

Mr. Seaman asked for a new overall view of the park and the members agreed they would also like to see a new overall view.

PUBLIC INPUT

Ms. Laine Seefelt inquired about the sound booth for the horse area and the time frame for finishing the dressage arena.

Mr. Henderson replied that the sound booth had gone out to bid and they are now awaiting permitting, and the dressage arena has been stopped for referendum issues.

ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no further business, Mr. Baker called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. England made a **MOTION** to adjourn, and Mr. Welsh seconded. **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.** Mr. Baker adjourned the September 5, 2007, meeting of the Wickham Park Advisory

Committee at 8:04 p.m. and informed the Committee that the next meeting would be held on November 7, 2007, 6:30 p.m., at Wickham Park.