

MINUTES

Washoe County Open Space & Regional Parks Commission January 6, 2009

Chairman Cliff Young called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members present:

Sarah Chvilicek, James Nadeau, Patty Moen, Robert Jacobson, Cliff Young, Tina Nappe, and Bill von Phul . A quorum was present.

Staff present: Leslie Admirand, Deputy District Attorney; Doug Doolittle, Al Rogers, Eric Crump, Doug Mullens, Lynda Nelson, Bob Harmon, and Melissa Currie.

2. Approval of the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of January 6, 2009.

Commissioner Nadeau motioned to approve the agenda for the January 6, 2009 meeting; Commissioner Nappe seconded. Motion carried.

3. Approval of the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission meeting of December 2, 2008.

Commissioner von Phul motioned to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2008 meeting; Commissioner Nadeau seconded. Motion carried.

4. Public Comment and Discussion Thereon

John Bradbury, former Open Space and Regional Park Commissioner: Good to see everybody again and Happy New Year to everybody. I just want to make a comment about the 2008 Wonderful Christmas that was held at the Lazy 5. A big thanks to Amy Vieira, who is the acting manager for the PahRah District, and Barbara Borges, who is a recreation specialist. They are always great but I just wanted to let you know that they are still great and will probably be great forever out there. We gave them a little over \$1,200 from the event to go back to the parks department, and of the 18 spaces that we have out there, 14 have already been asked for 2009. It's a popular event. It's been well received by the public as well as the exhibitors each year. Also, I wanted to let you know that, if you haven't already heard, I have had inquiries about why I've not been back on the commission, I was told by Commissioner Larkin several times that all appointments for the voluntary positions to the commissions and boards with the exception of the CABs are on hold because of budget restraints and I'm sure at some point in time that is going to get all worked out. But I thank you for all your support in the past years I have worked with you.

5. Adopt and Execute a Resolution of Appreciation for former Washoe County Commissioner Jim Galloway

This item will be postponed until Commissioner Galloway arrives.

This item was read following item #12.

Chairman Young read the resolution into the record.

**RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION
WASHOE COUNTY COMMISSIONER JIM GALLOWAY**

WHEREAS, Jim Galloway has completed his third four-year term as Washoe County Commissioner; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Galloway has always been a strong voice for Regional Parks and Open Space, serving for two years as the County Commission liaison to the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Galloway has consistently advocated the Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space Department's vision of leading the region in providing world class facilities and unsurpassed services that maximize resources, engage the public and grow with our community's priorities and expectations; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Galloway has played an important role in supporting the Department's efforts to acquire open space, parks and trails for the use and enjoyment of the community and benefit of future generations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Open Space and Regional Parks Commissioners express our appreciation to Jim Galloway for his many years of service as a Washoe County Commissioner. We wish him success in his future endeavors and hope he, along with family and friends, will continue to enjoy the many Washoe County park facilities and services he has helped to create.

Adopted this 6th Day of January 2009

Commissioner von Phul motioned to adopt and execute the Resolution of Appreciation for former Washoe County Commissioner Jim Galloway; Commissioner Nadeau seconded. Motion carried.

6. Election of Open Space and Regional Park Commission Chairman and Vice-Chairman for a term through January 5, 2010.

Commissioner Nappe nominated Commissioner Young to continue as Chairman. In response to Commissioner von Phul regarding Commissioner Young's second term expiring in June 2009, Leslie Admirand, Deputy District Attorney, confirmed that according to the Board of County Commission rules and procedures since Commissioner Young's first term was only two years, he is eligible to be reappointed. Commissioner von Phul seconded the nomination. Commissioner Nappe motioned to close nominations; Commissioner Nadeau seconded. Motion carried

Commissioner von Phul nominated Commissioner Jacobson to continue as Vice Chairman; Commissioner Nadeau seconded. Commissioner Nappe motioned to close nominations; Commissioner von Phul seconded. Motion carried.

7. Recommendation to approve a request by the Northern Nevada Police and Fire Games executive board to waive fees [approximately \$12,700] for use of Washoe County Regional Park and Open Space Department Facilities for the Western States Police & Fire Games 2010 to be held July 24 – August 1, 2010.

Al Rogers, Assistant Director, explained that the staff report outlines a request from the Northern Nevada Police and Fire Games for fee waiver. This is a similar event that was held in 2005 at Washoe County facilities and others in the area. The group is asking for the use of five facilities and those fees comes to approximately \$12,700 based on the 2009 fee schedule. The number of competitors anticipated in the report has been modified from 8,000 to 5,000 participants. Mitch Glazner, representing the Northern Nevada Police and Fire Games, is present to answer questions.

In response to Commissioner von Phul regarding staff's recommendation not to support the request, Mr. Rogers explained that the number one reason is that money is tight. We looked at what would be the loss of revenue in addition to the loss of use for the public. Doug Doolittle, Director, added that the last time this came before the County Commission; they approved the elimination of fees for the use of the facilities although that was not necessarily our recommendation. Community support funding has a granting program available for activities that may benefit the community and that funding is not available this year or next. We have a fiduciary responsibility. We cannot see that kind of loss in revenue or the added expense of hosting something like that when we do not have the staff or resources to do so.

In response to Commission Nappe regarding hiring temporary help out of money received to help manage these events, Mr. Doolittle explained that the revenues go into the County general fund and any special use permit that we bring forward for any activity that comes to us in the next couple years will outline that event organizer must provide staff for extra things.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding fees waived for their last activity, Mr. Rogers confirmed that fees were waived but direct costs incurred by the department were borne by the organizer. Commissioner Nadeau asked if the fees were not waived at this time, could they come back if there is a change in the economic status of the County and ask for forgiveness of the fees. Mr. Rogers deferred to Mitch Glazner. Mr. Glazner explained that he has heard the comments about concerns the board has and is well aware of the financial situation. The games in 2005 had 5,000 athletes and brought in \$10 million to community for that one week. That is why they are putting the event on again. They were approached by some governmental officials and some of the hotel representative in the area requesting the games in 2010. In 2005 they were given \$25,000 from Reno, Sparks and Washoe County in cash plus they were given the venues for free with the exception of any of the hard costs. 90% of the participants are police officers and while they are in town we see a decrease in crime rates. The games run from 6 or 7 in the morning and end by 4 pm so they do not impact the local sports leagues. They have their own volunteers. They will only be using Bowers Mansion for four hours on 2 days; the shooting range will be used almost all week. He would hate to see the County miss the opportunity to pull

in revenue for the whole community. They are having trouble raising money and might not be able to put the games on if they do not get some help and support from the governmental agencies.

In response to Commissioner von Phul regarding the impact to the games if we decline the fee waiver, Mr. Glazner explained that if they do not start raising funds, they will have to drop the games by June. They have already invested \$30,000 to get the games here and the Police and Fire Federation was happy they were bidding again as it was so well received in 2005. There will be another \$25,000 impact fee if they lose the games.

Commissioner Nappe is unclear how park users benefit from the games. The RSCVA and the hotel owners should be helping. It may benefit the community but it will not benefit the parks directly. She is concerned about the precedent nature. We are trying to establish a value for the use of the parks and if we give away that value, who else will come next time and ask for the same thing?

Mr. Glazner pointed out that they were looking at bringing the games back to the area every 4 years so there is a revenue trail that could be established.

Doug Doolittle, Director, pointed out that when the games were here in 2005 we had a great experience. We did not see any major issues. The Board of County Commissioners would have to make the decision and we will go forward to the Board with either recommendation. We like to have these types of activities in our parks but we have to speak against it because of the budget impacts.

Commissioner Nadeau stated that the games are very well organized and well run, and have a positive impact on community. However, it would be contradictory for us to waive fees at a time like this. Commissioner Chvilicek concurred that it is not fiscally prudent. Commissioner Young likes the idea of bringing this much money into the economy and the event would draw nationwide attention and would help set us apart from Las Vegas.

In response to Commissioner Jacobson regarding the fees paid by competitors, Mr. Glazner explained that approximately \$250,000 in registration fees is anticipated, which is about \$65/athlete for registration plus \$10 per event.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding a contribution from the RSCVA, Mr. Glazner explained that last time they came forward with approximately \$50,000 and at this time they are not contributing anything.

In response to Commissioner Chvilicek regarding other grant opportunity, Mr. Glazner explained that they have hired a marketing firm to seek grants and donations.

Commissioner Nappe thinks this would be a wonderful event for the community but she does not see the Parks Department underwriting this. Maintenance of park goes well beyond any event and the events are hard on the parks. We have a lot of other events that bring people to the community and they are all having to step up to the plate and pay.

Commissioner Nappe motioned to support the department's recommendation not to support a request by the Northern Nevada Police and Fire Games executive board to waive fees [approximately \$12,700] for use of Washoe County Regional Park and Open Space Department Facilities for the Western States Police & Fire Games 2010 to be held July 24 – August 1, 2010; Commissioner Moen seconded. Motion carried with Commissioners von Phul and Young opposed.

8. Discussion regarding APN 038-401-02, known as the Verdi Historic Schoolhouse property, located at 165 Bridge Street; and outline of the process to transfer this property as defined within Nevada Revised Statutes 277.050.

Al Rogers, Assistant Director, explained that the staff report was prepared by Wendy Pitts, Washoe County Property Program Manager for Public Works. We are looking for the commission's input on a request to transfer the property from Washoe County to the Verdi Volunteer Fire Department.

Ms. Pitts explained that the Parks Department acquired the property for \$3,000 with hopes to restore the building. It has been used by NDF and the Verdi Volunteer Fire Department. The building requires extensive rehabilitation. The Verdi Volunteer chairman asked to acquire the property. They feel if they have control of the building they will be able to generate some enthusiasm from the neighborhood to save the building for their use. Washoe County did a similar transfer when they closed the Verdi Justice Court and a non profit was formed to maintain that building. The Board of County Commissioners supports letting the public do the things that they can do. The Verdi Citizens Advisory Board unanimously supported the transfer. Deed restrictions would be in place so if they are not using it for a community purpose it would automatically revert to County ownership. We are offering the transfer with no water right so their offer to us for \$1,000 is equal to what we saw with the Justice Court even though it is less than what the Parks Department paid for it.

Doug Doolittle, Director, explained that this has been a project in the process for many years. The funding available for restoration was not enough to do what we wanted to do. We applied for State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) grants and were not successful. The building has been used by the volunteer fire department. We cannot see having funding through next decade. We support what is being requested because it is a better use for the community if they can pull together and find the funding.

In response to Commissioner Nappe regarding how the process works in terms of maintaining the historical appearance of the building and grounds, Ms. Pitts explained that we have not in the past required folks to keep things to a historic standard. Commissioner Young mentioned that the property is a great lot although the building doesn't have much value and he wouldn't mind seeing it torn down and a park created. Mr. Doolittle pointed out that just a block away is the school park and a ½ mile to west is Crystal Peak Park. People of Verdi are sensitive to that building and if they can find the funding we would advise them to use it as a community center and use the outdoor turf area.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding what year it built and if it was classified as a historic resource, Ms. Pitts explained that we took property in 1964. Commissioner Nadeau

commented that he would hate to see it torn down but his biggest concern is that if we turn it over to someone else it may deteriorate to the point that it will have to be torn down, and requests that the deed restriction include that it must be kept in some type of habitable condition. Ms. Pitts explained that the volunteer group can do fundraising that includes alcohol so they may be more successful raising funds. In the past we haven't conditioned deeds upon building habitation; we have conditioned it upon use but we could look at that.

Commissioner Nappe would like to see a draft of the document because it is not just the building, but also the grounds and in particular the trees, which create the ambiance as well. She would like to see a condition in the transfer that maintains the values. Ms. Pitts explained that our Fire Services Coordinator and the Sierra Fire Protection District are negotiating a new agreement with the volunteers on the use and occupancy of that property and that is where those conditions would be. Mr. Doolittle pointed out that what he is hearing from the commission is that it continually be maintained as a historic building, and not torn down and replaced with a fire station. We would like to see a reversionary clause attached to the structure itself to be utilized for the community good but maintained as a historic schoolhouse building. Ms. Pitts stated that it would be cost prohibitive to require them to make it a historic building or fall under the SHPO guidelines, but we could implement language that says they will retain the current historic character. Commissioner Nappe wants to include the trees and commented that she is concerned about the County declaring surplus property because every park could be declared surplus property at some point. The transfer needs to have more written into the deed. She commends the people of Verdi and the volunteer fire association.

Commissioner Nappe motioned to show support to the Board of County Commissioners for the request by the Verdi Volunteer Firemen's Association to acquire the property and to include within any of the deed restrictions the protection of the historic charter including the open space portion of the property; Commissioner von Phul seconded. Motion carried.

9. Planning Division Report

Lynda Nelson, Planning Manager, updated the Commission on a few projects. As of December 30th we closed on two properties; the 22.26 acre Carcione property on the south side of the river in Mogul, and the 1.28 acre Stone property in New Washoe City. Crystal Peak Park restoration project is 80% complete and in 1-2 weeks we will fill the pond. The Lockwood river restoration project is 80% complete on the restoration and 50% complete on the recreation/trailhead component, with a grand opening anticipated this spring. The Michael D. Thompson trailhead construction contract has been awarded to WES Construction with construction to start next week. Two Requests for Proposals staff will be working on are for the Ballardini trailhead design and the Canepa trailhead design. On the O'Brien property at Galena Canyon, we are starting asbestos remediation and when complete we will demo the buildings. Staff will be working on writing and finalizing all of the Park District Master Plans.

10. Park District Report – North Region

Doug Mullens, Park Operations Superintendent, highlighted events from the North region. In response to Commissioner Young regarding how many trees were donated last year from the phone book recycling program, Mr. Mullens explained that we received 68 trees.

11. Park District Report – South Region

Eric Crump, Park Operations Superintendent, highlighted events from the South region. We are working on the operations plan for the Galena Visitors Center and anticipate opening the facility sometime later this year. Park staff has been busy clearing snow and ice from our County facilities.

Commissioner von Phul commented that Ranger Marie Fong does absolutely fabulous children's programs. Commissioner Moen thanked the department for collecting phone books at South Valleys Regional Park this year.

12. Golf Report

Al Rogers, Assistant Director, explained that December was a good month compared to 2007. We are always at the mercy of the weather this time of year. We finished about 10% down in rounds and revenue at each location for the year. We are continuing the Two for Tuesdays at Washoe and Two for Wednesdays at Sierra Sage, which is a well received program.

13. Director's Report

Doug Doolittle, Director, stated that we have been tasked with the responsibility of reducing our budget another 7.5%, which equates to 30% over that past 18 months. There are significant program impacts as part of our recommendations. We are down 10 full time positions and about 80 seasonal positions. We are recommending closure of Sun Valley and Bowers Mansion swimming pools for 2009, closure of the Bowers Mansion for 2009, elimination of the Robert Z. Hawkins Amphitheater concert programs that are produced by the department, reduced days of operation at the May Museum and Great Basin Adventure to four days per week, elimination of staffing at picnic facility reservations, greatly reduced mowing, fertilization, weed control, and tree care programs in all parks, increased number of gates left open at parks thereby reducing staff needed for locking and unlocking on a daily basis, elimination of infrastructure program funding for facilities and structures, reduce funding for paving projects, reduce or eliminate summer and winter interpretive programs and eliminate low attendance contracted recreation programs at facilities. Repairs and maintenance of medium equipment will be accomplished in-house or deferred. We have some potential retirements and those will not be filled as we are in a hiring freeze. There will be a reduction in service. We will try to keep the parks open, safe and clean but some programs may not be available.

In response to Commissioner Nappe regarding donations, Mr. Doolittle explained that we accept donations but do not solicit them. We will continue to solicit grant funding although there are very few granting opportunities for maintenance. Leslie Admirand, Deputy District Attorney explained that it is traditionally not viewed as a County function to solicit donations but departments could partner with a nonprofit agency that could fundraise. Commissioner Nappe suggested that the department compile a list of things we want done and see if there are groups that might be interested in a special project, i.e. the dog user to provide for professional pooper bags. Mr. Doolittle explained that we do that with our special events and we will look at all the options.

Commissioner von Phul commented that we can solicit volunteers to work in the adopt-a-park program and this body should brainstorm ways to do that. Mr. Doolittle explained that one of the changes we have made this past year is assigning an individual to coordinate volunteers. We are also looking at shared services or contracting out landscape and snow removal services around County buildings. Commissioner Chvilicek asked if we had considered partnering with Glen Hare, RTI or Job Corps for repair and maintenance of equipment and Mr. Doolittle said that is something we should look at as we have utilized them in the past for small construction projects. Mr. Doolittle stated that he sees more reductions coming.

In response to Commissioner Chvilicek regarding closure of pools and how we will advertise to the community, Mr. Doolittle explained that these are still recommendations and the Board of County Commissioners will need to make the final decision. The pools are expensive to operate and they are a short term operation. In response to Commissioner Chvilicek regarding the possible cancellation of the February meeting, Mr. Doolittle explained that we are looking at reducing the minimum number of meetings, possibly meeting quarterly. In response to Commissioner Nappe regarding the reduction of the number of commissioners, Mr. Doolittle explained that we are looking at reducing it to seven.

Commissioner Nadeau stated he appreciates the volunteer report and he is OK receiving the commission packets on line. Commissioner Chvilicek is also happy to receive backup documents electronically.

14. Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner von Phul commented that the commission has been asked to make a number of recommendations involving easements and leases on park and open space property and he feels ill equipped and ill informed to make recommendations that involve the value of open space. He researched the issue and was directed to a study that was recently done about the value of open space. He provided each commissioner with a copy of the study and suggested we set up a workshop in the future to discuss this complex issue.

Chairman Young adjourn the meeting 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Currie, Recording Secretary