

MINUTES

Washoe County Open Space & Regional Parks Commission April 7, 2009

Vice Chairman Bob Jacobson called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members present: Sarah Chvilicek, Bill von Phul, Tina Nappe, Bob Jacobson, Patty Moen, Jakki Ford and Jim Nadeau. Cliff Young had an excused absence. A quorum was present.

County Commission Liaison: Commissioner Kitty Jung

Staff present: Leslie Admirand, Deputy District Attorney; Doug Doolittle, Al Rogers, Eric Crump, Lynda Nelson, Colleen Wallace-Barnum, John Keesee and Melissa Currie.

2. Approval of the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of April 7, 2009.

Commissioner Nappe requested that the Commission hear the Director's Report (item 14) and Commissioner's Comments (item 15) after item 9. Commissioner Nadeau asked that we still have items 10 – 13. Commissioner Nappe motioned to approve the agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of April 7, 2009 as amended; Commissioner Nadeau seconded. Motion carried.

Commissioner Nappe welcomed County Commissioner Kitty Jung as the liaison to this Commission.

3. Approval of the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission meeting of March 10, 2009.

Commissioner Nappe motioned to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2009 meeting; Commissioner Ford seconded. Motion carried.

4. Public Comment and Discussion Thereon

No public comment was given.

5. Recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve and execute an easement agreement with Mr. Ed Bath for a 20-foot wide by 250-foot long easement (.12 acres of land) for the installation and maintenance of a private 4" sanitary sewer line on parcel APN 09-740-01, commonly known as Betsy Caughlin Donnelly Park and accept the mitigation measures in accordance with the master plan valued at approximately \$15,000.00 plus the addition of six parking spaces dedicated to park users to be located on applicants property.

Ms. Nelson, Planning Manager, explained that staff has had an opportunity to meet with Chris Barrett and Darrin Georgeson to discuss possible mitigation measures. The preferred alternative for the easement request is approximately 20' wide by 240' long from the northeast corner of the applicant's property line going in an easterly direction paralleling Mayberry Drive. We asked the applicants to prepare a cost analysis of taking the sewer line down the middle of Mayberry Drive (method #1) versus going through the park (method #2). Method #1 was \$32, 981 and Method #2 was \$11,888 with an approximate difference in cost of \$20,000. That is what we used to determine a beginning cost for mitigation. We are asking for \$15,000 in mitigation that would come directly to the park as outlined in the staff report. We did not have an appraisal done on the easement.

Commissioner von Phul requested clarification on the staff report that states the project did not meet the criteria of being in the best interest of the County and community at large. Ms. Nelson explained that going back to our Parkland Easement Policy, projects that come before staff and the Park Commission need to be in the public interest as we don't as a whole grant private easements. Commissioner von Phul felt that the mitigation that we are requesting puts it in the best interest of the public. Doug Doolittle, Director, added that we have found that there is a public interest in not tearing up the road.

Commissioner Nappe questioned why we are not going for \$32,000 in mitigation. Ms. Nelson explained that using Rancho San Rafael Pipeline easement as an example; we did an analysis of the alternatives and received a median amount in mitigation. Commissioner Nappe feels the benefit to the applicant is not tearing up the road and disrupting traffic, and the benefit to the park should be the entire amount. She is concerned since it is always cheaper to go through a park that we will be subjected to many pipelines and roads. Ms. Nelson clarified that Commission Nappe would like us to have an agreement in place for the on-going mitigation.

Chris Barrett, representing the Bath family, explained that the applicant supports staff's recommendation with the exception of parking spaces. At the time of the mitigation discussions, they were not aware of conditions of historic overlay, which will not allow parking out front by the street. Adjacent neighbors to the north did not want parking adjacent to their residence and also there is a deep culvert that would prevent traversing to park property. The entrance and exit to the property will be gated and if they had parking behind the gate, cars could be locked in after business closing hours. He requested that we move forward to get the business established with parking spaces and signs stating they are available only during business hours. They want to be a good neighbor to the park.

In response to Commissioner von Phul regarding on-street parking, Mr. Barrett explained that it is very limited and he recommended that they continue to work with staff to work out a solution.

Commissioner Nappe motioned to recommend to the BCC to Commissioners to approve and execute an easement agreement with Mr. Ed Bath for a 20-foot wide by 250-foot long easement (.12 acres of land) for the installation and maintenance of a private 4" sanitary sewer line on parcel APN 09-740-01, commonly known as Betsy Caughlin Donnelly Park and accept the mitigation measures in accordance with the master plan valued at approximately \$32,981.00 plus the addition of six parking spaces dedicated to park users to be located on applicants property;

\$15,000 will be part of the current mitigation and the balance to be worked out subsequently in a cooperative manner with the property owner in a reasonable amount of time.

Commissioner Nadeau asked for clarification as the motion does not look at the savings by using park property but the cost of putting sewer down the street. Commissioner Nappe stated that the savings to the owner is not disrupting traffic in the street. Commissioner Nadeau pointed out that the savings to the owner is \$21,096, as there is still an expense to the owner to go along the park property and he cannot support \$32,981.

Commissioner Nappe amended the motion to include mitigation measures valued at approximately \$21,000; Commissioner von Phul seconded. Motion carried.

Mr. Doolittle explained that since this item is being heard at next Tuesday's Board of County Commission meeting, the staff report with \$15,000 in mitigation has already been submitted and we will make the Commissioners aware of the Park Commission's recommendation of \$21,000.

6. Presentation by Joseph Pelham on his Eagle Scout Project for the transplanting of cattails from the Swan Lake Nature Study Area to the new Verdi Pond and Crystal Peak Park.

Colleen Wallace-Barnum, District Manager, introduced Joseph Pelham.

Joseph Pelham, Life Scout in Boy Scout Troop 162 in Reno, Nevada, outlined his project. There will be cattail plants removed from the Swan Lake Nature Study Area and replanted on the island in the Verdi Mill Pond as part of the Verdi Mill Pond project currently going on in Crystal Peak Park. The project will benefit the community;

- The island will be planted with cattails to promote waterfowl habitat rather than nesting habitat for the double-crested cormorant that will prey on the stocked fish
- The project will beautify the pond and the park.
- Removal of plants from the Swan Lake Nature Study Area to make way for a new bridge crossing the waterway
- By accomplishing these tasks the project will greatly benefit the community and the visitors of the new section of Crystal Peak Park.

The project consists of three stages; 1) Swan Lake vegetation removal; 2) Vegetation transport; and 3) Vegetation transplant (planting on the island at Crystal Peak Park)

At Site #1 (Swan Lake), the plants will be removed by hand at a depth of six inches below the surface of the ground, so that the plants will be able to return during the next growing season. Because of the nature of the soil and the size of the transplant site, approximately 300 cattails will be removed from Swan Lake Nature Study area. Due to the fact that the site is in an area of reclaimed water, all regulations of Nevada Water Treatment Statute 1B (WTS-1B) will be followed. The vegetation will be transported in pickup truck beds in water filled containers so that the plants do not dry out.

At the transport site, the plants will be transported to an island by one of various methods depending on whether the pond is full of water. The plants will be planted approximately 6"-10" in depth and will have their leaves and stems clipped between 6 and 10 inches from the base to

allocate more energy to root production. Pictures of the site show that the island is not a really large area but it is big enough so that it should come out nicely and really help the park.

Commissioner von Phul thanked Mr. Pelham for undertaking the project.

Commissioner Chvilicek congratulated Mr. Pelham and asked if he had met with our horticulturist to ensure he will not be causing erosion at Swan Lake and not introducing invasive species into either area. Mr. Pelham explained that the cattails will be removed from an area at Swan Lake where a bridge will be installed so the plants would need to be removed anyway. Ms. Wallace-Barnum explained that they have worked with Lynda Nelson on the planning of the project.

In response to Commissioner Nappe on the impact of nesting birds, Ms. Wallace-Barnum explained that the removal area is a 10x10' swatch where a bridge will be installed.

7. Presentation by Jake Flynn on his Eagle Scout Project for the landscape improvement to the Historic Huffaker School.

Colleen Wallace-Barnum, District Manager, introduced Jake Flynn.

Jake Flynn explained that his project is the beautification of the Historic Huffaker School. The original drip irrigation system, installed in 1999 by volunteers, has failed, leaving most plants dead with unwanted vegetation growing. In order to beautify the area surrounding the school he would like to do two things; 1) remove the old drip system and replace it with a new one; and 2) remove all the non- living plants and replace them with new plants that are full of life and color. Everything needed for the drip line has already been donated, so all he needs now is to get the plants donated. These plants will include forsythia shrubs, dwarf lilac shrubs, hollyhocks, gaillardia, daisies, salvia, dusty miller, wild onions, nasturtium, alyssum, and phlox.

He believes his project will benefit many people. The Regional Parks and Open Space Department will benefit from it because they will be saving roughly a couple hundred dollars on plants and tubing alone. Also, free labor for doing the planting will be beneficial. It will benefit the volunteers that take care of the school. It will provide a greater appeal for those wanting to rent out the school. And in general, it will beautify a historic site. The project will involve approximately fifteen scouts and eight adults. Two or more trained nurses will be on site in case of an accident and lunch will be provided by his family. The project's estimated time will be seven hours which includes a one hour lunch break.

Commissioner Nappe stated that the presentation was very well put together. Commissioner von Phul added that the Commission applauds his efforts. Commissioner Ford stated that the flowers are lovely choices.

8. Presentation by Nathan Chapelle on his Eagle Scout Project for the construction and installation of two kiosks and one flag pole at Galena Creek Regional Park

John Keese, Park Ranger at Galena Creek Park, explained that recently they moved the park ranger office to the Historic Stone House at the south entrance of the park. Last fall when he was

contacted by Eagle Scout candidate Nathan Chapelle, they discussed this project to assist in directing the public to the new office location and will be of great value to the park in these days with the extreme budget reductions. Mr. Keesee introduced Nathan Chapelle.

Nathan Chapelle, Life Scout in Boy Scout Troop 245 in Reno, Nevada, outlined his project. He has developed an interest in preserving Nevada's wildlife and parks. His service project will be the replacement of a kiosk, a wooden structure used for posting information, and a flag pole as well as the installation of a mount for a road that the ranger will be installing at a later date. The reason for replacement of the flag pole is as of now it is held on to the kiosk by four screws and two clamps that are no longer able to keep the pole at its intended position. The new taller 20' flagpole will be free-standing behind the kiosks and will be able to display both the American flag and the Nevada flag. He plans to replace the existing kiosk with two new kiosks using composite shingles. The Plexiglas sheets that cover the kiosks currently open upwards making it difficult to place announcements and other postings; therefore, the new kiosks will have doors that open outward. For the sign mount, he will be digging two holes, sinking two posts in to the holes and cementing them in place. Over the next few weeks he will make sure he has the volunteers necessary for manual labor as well as send out solicitation letters to local organizations asking for donation of supplies.

Commissioner von Phul congratulated Mr. Chapelle and asked what material will be used for the flag pole. Mr. Chapelle explained he is aiming for a metal pole, possibly aluminum. Commissioner von Phul offered to help transport the pole.

Commissioner Ford is delighted with the project. Commissioner Nappe expressed appreciation for Mr. Chapelle's enthusiasm.

Vice Chairman Jacobson thanked each of the scouts for their presentations and the projects.

Doug Doolittle, Director, added that we initiated this program to have the Eagle Scout candidates make presentations before the Parks Commission to help them with their citizenship component of the Eagle Scout process, and also it gives them a great opportunity to speak before a board.

9. Recommendation to support a request by the Sun Valley Cal Ripken Baseball, Inc. to name a baseball field located at Gepford Park the Ray Hegarty Field and install appropriate signage.

Al Rogers, Assistant Director, explained that we have a request to support an idea brought forward by the Sun Valley Cal Ripken Baseball group. This ties to our Park and Facility Naming Policy. Our policy has three components; 1) to name a park with a rigorous criteria; 2) to rename a park; and 3) other alternatives. Other alternatives include when we receive a developed park or a donation, we take the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. Another alternative is when we are naming an amenity or a piece of a park. We are bringing forward a request to name a field with the park. The staff report contains background on Ray Hegarty, who was a tremendous asset to the community and did great things for 40 years in Sun Valley for the youth and the baseball league until his untimely death last year. Staff supports the naming of a field the Ray Hegarty Field and the league has requested that a plaque be installed at their expense including maintenance of the sign. The policy allows for the director to make this

decision, but with this and in all future requests, we would like to bring these to this Commission in a public forum to communicate the change and give recognition.

In response to Commissioner Nappe regarding the public process this request has gone through in terms of the neighborhood, Mr. Rogers explained that in naming or renaming a park it would go through a public input process but the policy is structured so that naming an amenity can be done by the director and only the Sun Valley Cal Ripkin baseball group has provided input.

In response to Commissioner Moen, Mr. Rogers explained that the sign would go on the scoreboard. Mr. Rogers clarified for Commissioner Nadeau that this is only naming the baseball field and not the park.

Commissioner Nadeau motioned to recommend to the Director to support the request to name a baseball field located at Gepford Park the Ray Hegarty Field and the installation of appropriate signage; Commissioner Ford seconded. Motion carried.

10. Planning Division Report

Lynda Nelson, Planning Manager, explained that we have planting plans in place for the 150 15-gallon phone book recycling trees we will receive from the 14 tons of books we recycled. The Great Truckee Meadows Community Clean-up will be Saturday, May 9th. She thanked Commissioner von Phul for helping review the RFQs for the Persigehl trailhead design. The Lockwood project is 90% complete including vault toilets, three benches, six picnic tables, over a mile of loop trail, and boat turn around. We will fund raise to have a grand opening there this spring. We will be turning on the water tomorrow to fill the Verdi Pond. We will be receiving Forest Legacy funds to acquire property behind Bowers Mansion. On April 13th we, along with City of Reno and Nevada Land Conservancy will be implementing weed eradication along the Truckee River using grant funding.

11. Park District Report – North Region

Eric Crump, Park Operations Superintendent, highlighted events from the North region.

12. Park District Report – South Region

Eric Crump, Park Operations Superintendent, highlighted events from the South region. We received another grant from the State Historic Preservation Office for \$100,000, bringing the total to \$210,000 for the Bowers Mansion renovations. He mentioned that the Scenic Byway Brochure has been completed and it will be used at the Galena Visitor's Center.

13. Golf Report

Al Rogers, Assistant Director, explained that in March we dipped in both rounds and revenue. We have planned some marketing strategies for the initial spring season. We will be aerifying the courses for the next two weeks and will be offering a discount rate during that time since it is not really a conducive time for play on the course. Other marketing programs include the Just Pay Half, and Play Golf America Family Days. We have initiated a smart card and they can be

purchased at the courses. In response to Commissioner Nappe if any of the promotions would be sufficient to save Sierra Sage, Mr. Rogers explained that we are looking at it to help drive the rounds and revenue up, but it will probably take more than a few marketing efforts to turn that operation around.

14. Director's Report

Doug Doolittle, Director, updated the Commission on the budget. We have been asked by finance find \$2.6 in reductions to our general fund budget and \$129,000 from the May Center Fund. We have found all those cuts.

At the May Center, we are going to continue the operation with the resources we have. The Great Basin Adventure will be opened and we will hire seasonal staff for that as well as the arboretum and the museum. We currently have an exhibit at the museum. We are reducing some of our seasonal staffing hours and looking at reductions in services and supplies. We also have savings as a result of the 2.5% wage reductions that County employees took a few months back, and we are turning in one vehicle there. So we have identified the \$129,000 there.

For the general fund budget, the Washoe County Employee's Association voted to take a 2.5% wage reduction and management staff agreed to do the same so this applies to everybody in our department and that saved about \$88,000. We currently have nine vacant positions, seven employees who have indicated they would take advantage of the retirement incentives. We have 12 employees offering up their longevity payments and merit increases for comp time. That totals about \$418,000 in savings. We are eliminating all seasonal employees (approximately 100 FTEs) and will be terminating staff we have hired already. The impacts will be significant. The swimming pools will not be opened. We have talked with the Sun Valley General Improvement District regarding the possibility of them doing some recreation component within the structure of their GID and taking on the operations of Sun Valley pool. They are contacting their citizens to see if that is something the citizens want to do. We are not putting on any County sponsored concerts at the Hawkins Amphitheater and that will save \$122,000. Additional fleet reduction of 19 vehicles will save \$237,500 plus another \$72,000 for the operation and maintenance of those vehicles. We are not doing any infrastructure preservation projects (i.e. resurfacing tennis courts or replacement of playground equipment). The remainder of the cuts comes from services and supplies in all areas. We will not be having Sani-huts in most of our parks. We typically do landscaping for 42 County buildings and we went out with a Request for Proposals on landscape services and snow removal for those areas. We found that there is about a \$40,000 savings so we will present that to the Board of County Commissioners. We are looking at building into the grant process the ability to bill back for our staff time for over \$100,000. There more than likely will be lay-offs as we are still about \$100,000 short of our target. Our budget presentation to the Board is Monday next week. We will have 60 staff to maintain over 10,000 acres of parkland where in the past we had almost 300 staff. We have a volunteer coordinator and we appreciate all the volunteer help we have received.

In response to Commissioner Nappe regarding the staff involvement in facility rentals like Burkes garden, Mr. Doolittle explained that we will look at opportunities to push some of the expenses back on user groups, possible asking groups to provide security. We do not want to erode our revenue.

In response to Commissioner Chvilicek regarding the possibility of community groups volunteering to open and close the parks to help reduce the residual cost of vandalism associated with leaving the parks open 24/7, Mr. Doolittle explained that we can develop Adopt-a-park contracts. The difficulty with volunteers opening and shutting gates is the inconsistency.

In response to Commissioner von Phul regarding impact of the elimination of County sponsored concerts on Artown, Mr. Doolittle explained that they will continue their concerts at the venue.

Commissioner Ford suggested that we look at a partnership with the Aces baseball.

In response to County Commissioner Jung regarding the two budget targets, Mr. Doolittle explained that one is the General Fund that does not include May Center or Golf Fund, and that is \$2.6 million. The other target is the May Center (the museum, arboretum and the Great Basin Adventure) and that is \$129,000. That equates to a 36% budget cut from each fund.

Commissioner Jung announced that she received an invitation from JR's 24/7 Bar in Sun Valley for a fund raiser this Saturday, April 11th. 100% of the proceeds will go to Sun Valley pool.

In response to Commissioner von Phul regarding the Northgate Golf property, Mr. Doolittle explained that a public meeting was held two weeks ago and another one is scheduled for this Thursday. The property was managed by RSCVA and it has a reversionary clause that if it wasn't operated as an 18-hole golf course it would revert back to the developer. They are interested in selling the property.

Commissioner Nappe pointed out that the 2006 budget was almost \$9 million in general fund and asked what we are looking at after the cuts. Mr. Doolittle explained that we will be operating at less than 50% of the 2006 budget. We are going to making certain we do everything we can to preserve the investment that the County has in the infrastructure that we have. We have to maintain our 10,000 acres of parkland to a certain level to make certain that it doesn't fall apart, and in two or three years whenever the economy does come back, we are not in such a bad situation that it would cost millions to bring it back. We are essentially in a caretaker mode. We are working with Washoe County Senior Services to share some facilities, in particular Sun Valley. They are currently leasing a facility in Sun Valley for \$18,000/year and we are working with them to move them into the Sun Valley center. It is a savings to his budget and at the same time puts staff in that building to add more eyes to that park. Commission Nappe commented that most park users think of them as free (no costs associated with them) and asked if it is possible to put up signs at parks to inform the public of the budget cuts, to identify needs and to solicit donations. Mr. Doolittle explained that there is more visitation to the parks now than ever, and it is there because it is free and close by. The trailheads we have in this community are world class as is the river areas. When surveys are done, Parks rates among the highest in services we provide but we rate very low in their willingness to pay for it. If we can provide information through a "Friends" group, we will try. Mr. Doolittle offered to try to go to service groups and talk about how they can help us with volunteer groups or contributions.

County Commissioner Jung mentioned that Mr. Doolittle and Mr. Rogers have done a tremendous job and have been beat up by residents who do not want changes in their parks. Parks and libraries got hit so hard in both rounds of this budget because of Charting our Course

that was created for the County Commission as a way to strategize should we hit poor economic times. That committee decided that parks and library were the least of all priorities should the economy sour. She feels that flies in the face of good data; we see that if the economy goes down people use the libraries more and resort back to their local community parks with no admission fees. We do need to be careful about preserving the infrastructure of the parks we have. She does not believe in Charting our Course and a better recommendation would have been that parks are libraries are in the middle regardless of the economy.

Commissioners Chvilicek and Nadeau left at 4:05 p.m.

13. Commissioner's Comments

Commission Nappe thanked the WCEA for stepping up to the plate. She feels as individuals but collectively as a group we are not very helpful. Doug Doolittle explained that there is great value in the Park Commission. We are not structured in the same way as the Library Board or the District Board of Health. This board is advisory to the Board of County Commission. County Commissioner Jung added that they are looking at our Citizen Advisory Boards and possibly some may be disbanded. This commission is important to hear the issues before they come to the County Commission. It saves time and money because it makes the Board of County Commission decisions faster.

Vice Chairman Jacobson adjourned the meeting 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Currie, Recording Secretary