

MINUTES

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

Chairman Cliff Young called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

1. Roll Call

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

County Commission Liaison: Commissioner Kitty Jung

Staff present: Mary Kandaras, Deputy District Attorney; Doug Doolittle, Al Rogers, Eric Crump, Doug Mullens, Jennifer Budge and Melissa Currie.

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

Commissioner Nadeau motioned to approve the agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of July 7, 2009; Commissioner Jacobson seconded. Motion carried.

3. Approval of the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission meeting of June 2, 2009.

Commissioner Moen motioned to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2009 meeting; Commissioner Nadeau seconded. Motion carried.

4. Public Comment and Discussion Thereon

No public comment was given.

5. Adopt and execute a Proclamation for July, 2009 as "Recreation and Parks Month."

Chairman Cliff Young read the proclamation into the record.

WHEREAS, The Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space Department's mission is to provide exceptional parks, open space and recreational opportunities while preserving our natural, historical, and cultural resources; and

WHEREAS, Public parks and recreation systems throughout the world are dedicated to enhancing quality of life for millions of people by providing space for outdoor leisure and recreation, while helping to promote conservation efforts; and

WHEREAS, Parks are important to all generations in our County. They contribute to the positive growth and development of our youth; attract business, jobs and families; and create lifelines and continuous life experiences for older members of our community; and

WHEREAS, Parks bring people together to experience a true sense of many communities connected by one County; and

WHEREAS, The National Recreation and Park Association celebrates the month of July as Recreation and Parks Month and calls upon park and recreation supporters to join in recognizing the importance of our nation's parks and recreation facilities; now, therefore, be it

PROCLAIMED, By the Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commissioners that July 2009 is designated as "Recreation and Parks Month" and the Board urges all residents of Washoe County to enjoy what our community has to offer by visiting their favorite park and participating in their favorite sports, spending time with family and friends, or just relaxing.

Commissioner Nadeau motioned to adopt and execute the proclamation; Commissioner Nappe seconded. Motion carried.

6. Presentation by Caleb Wolz on his Eagle Scout Project for construction and installation of bat boxes at Galena Creek Regional Park.

Park Ranger John Keesee introduced Eagle Scout candidate Caleb Wolz.

Caleb Wolz provided the Commission with a brief presentation on his project to create bat boxes for Galena Creek Regional Park. He plans on making six boxes, each capable of housing about 15-20 bats or about 120 bats total. They would be hung about 7-8 feet above the ground. The cost for each box is about \$40 and he plans on obtaining donations for the supplies. The overall bat population has declined about 60% over the last 10 years. Bats eat 800-1,000 insects each night so 120 bats at Galena Creek Park would greatly reduce the insects and the spraying that would need to be done. He plans to have the boxes installed within the next two weeks with the assistance of his Scout Troop 12. He has scoped out installation places with Ranger John Keesee.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau on how you make sure bats will use the boxes, Mr. Wolz explained that bats like hot, humid areas with close proximity to water. He and John looked for areas that get sunlight, and the boxes will be stained a dark color to help them heat up during the day. The 8 foot installation height is high enough to avoid vandalism and the bats will notice them better at that height.

In response to Commissioner Nappe regarding homeowners encouraged to install bat houses, Mr. Wolz explained that if the right conditions were met they could be successful. He got the plans for the boxes from the Bureau of Bat Preservation Institute website and they mentioned that mounting the boxes in neighborhoods can be effective but the effectiveness is diminished in suburb areas because the bats do not like the noise and commotion during the day. In response to Commissioner Nappe regarding monitoring of the boxes, Mr. Wolz explained that he will follow up to see if there are bats using the boxes and also to check on vandalism.

Doug Doolittle, Director thanked Mr. Wolz for bringing this project forward and being proactive in doing something for this community.

7. Recommend to the Board of County Commissioners to approve an agreement between Washoe County and the Great Reno Balloon Race, Inc. for an event to be held at Rancho San Rafael Regional Park from September 8 through 13, 2009.

Al Rogers, Assistant Director, explained that the prior agreement and renewals with the Great Reno Balloon Race expired last year. Nothing has really changed this year with the event. It will be held September 8th through 13th, and as identified in attachment A of the agreement, they will use essentially the whole park. The fee for this year as identified in the staff report is \$6,300, which is less than the event paid last year. This is based on the Great Basin Adventure not operating this year therefore we have not factored that loss of revenue into the fee. The fee is based on the approved fees for the amenities within the park for the days and times they are using them and also the revenue we would have gathered if the event were not taking place.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding parking on the Sierra Street pasture, Mr. Rogers explained that it is included in the master agreement and that function has in the past been contracted to the South Reno Rotary Club to operate the parking in that area. In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding a percentage of parking revenue to be received, Mr. Rogers explained that 100% goes to the balloon race and he is not aware of the financial arrangement between those two groups. In response Commissioner Nappe regarding the value of the two pasture areas, Mr. Rogers explained that the pastures are factored in as one area and the fee is \$150/day.

Commissioner Chvilicek motioned to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners to approve an agreement between Washoe County and the Great Reno Balloon Race, Inc. for an event to be held at Rancho San Rafael Regional Park from September 8 through 13, 2009; Commissioner Nadeau seconded. Motion carried

8. Recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve changes to Washoe County Code, Chapter 95 – Parks and Recreation.

Al Rogers, Assistant Director, explained that this is a follow-up with the input provided by the Commission at last month's meeting. With approval today, we would go forward to the Board of County Commissioners through the District Attorney's Office for the change to County Code.

In response to Commissioner Nappe regarding the number of park commissioners and the length of terms, Eric Crump, Park Operations Superintendent explained that those requirements are specified in NRS (Nevada Revised Statutes). Regarding commissioners holding office until their successors are appointed and qualified, Mr. Crump explained that adding "they resign or are removed for cause" would need to be deferred to the District Attorney's Office as the specific language in NRS is just the language prior to that.

Mr. Crump pointed out that regarding the three consecutive unauthorized absences, it will read "An unauthorized absence from a meeting of the commission by any commissioner may result in a vacancy in the office of that commissioner." Doug Doolittle, Director, added that this is really

an issue for the commission to decide; that the idea is to have commissioners here and keep people engaged. In response the Commissioner Young regarding the procedure, Mr. Doolittle explained that it is the responsibility of the chair to counsel the commissioners. In response to Commissioner Chvilicek regarding the number of meetings, Mr. Doolittle explained that the recommendation is for a minimum of four meetings.

In response to Commissioner Nappe regarding the powers of the commission, Mr. Crump explained that there is language in NRS that give powers to the Board of County Commissioners, who in turn give this board powers. The powers in NRS are somewhat vague and as long as you don't go outside of the powers, this board can make a recommendation regarding this section and we will take it forward. Commissioner Nappe feels some of the decisions and action that have come before this board are outside this definition. Mr. Doolittle, Director, explained that any dealings with land owned by the County go before the Board of County Commissioners for approval and this board is advisory to the Board of County Commissioners. As listed, the powers of the Park Commission are to act in advisory capacity to the Board of County Commissioners in promoting, aiding and encouraging public recreation including the development of recreation and park facilities. Development would be consideration of any use of the land, even in cases such as easements. Mr. Rogers clarified that Commissioner Nappe's suggestion was to add "to review current and proposed park uses taking into account public well being, the purpose of parks, diversity of uses and protection of natural and historical resources." Mr. Doolittle stated that the addition more clearly identifies what this board has been acting upon. Commissioner Chvilicek feels that in terms of easements the public should have the opportunity for input as opposed to going directly to the Board of County Commissioner. Mr. Doolittle concurs that our process is a public process and we want as much opportunity for the public to come forward and comment. Commissioner Nappe does not feel the current code reflects the scope of work that they have been doing. Mary Kandaras, Deputy District Attorney, advised that a statement such as the powers of the commission is meant to be a broad statement that encompasses what this board does on a broad level; to make it to specific starts to narrow the powers. She encouraged the board to keep it broad and feels it encompasses easements. Commissioner Nappe does not feel that it encourages protection of natural and historical resources, and it implies a maximization of public use. Commissioner Nadeau suggested language such as "proposed park uses considering but not limited to" to give a guide to start with but it is not the sole things to consider. Ms. Kandaras added that the definition of park facilities includes open space.

In response to Commissioner Nappe regarding a Mission Statement included in the code, Mr. Rogers explained that we feel the mission statement is important but the code is not the proper place for the statement.

Commissioner Jacobson motioned to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners to approve changes to Washoe County Code, Chapter 95. In response to Commissioner Nadeau if the motion includes change to unauthorized absence language, Commissioner Jacobson amended the motion to include the change. Commissioner Nadeau seconded the motion. The motion carried with Commissioner Nappe abstaining.

9. Planning Division Report

Jennifer Budge, Park Planner, highlighted a few projects. The \$3.8 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Stimulus Funding) for seven fire rehabilitation projects include weed control, fuels reduction, reseeding, and revegetation.

The Galena Creek Visitor's Center and the recreation amenities are complete but we will not be able to open to the public until the fall because we need to do roadway improvement, including a new entrance to the visitor's center, left turn pocket, and acceleration and deceleration lanes.

Doug Doolittle, Director, added that on July 21st there will be a tour with the federal officials on the stimulus project sites. It will be an all day tour and Open Space and Regional Park Commissioners are invited to attend. In response to Commissioner Moen regarding who will do the work on the stimulus projects, Ms. Budge explained that there will be a competitive bid.

Commissioner Nadeau appreciates the way the report is now laid out.

10. Park District Report – North Region

Doug Mullens, Park Operations Superintendent, highlighted events from the North Region. Sports leagues have shut down for the summer and will start back up again in the fall.

11. Park District Report – South Region

Eric Crump, Park Operations Superintendent, highlighted events from the South Region. There is a free Nevada Arts Council exhibit at the Western Heritage Interpretive Center titled Honest Horses, which features photos, stories, and poems about the wild horses in Nevada.

The first Artown Monday Night free concert had a capacity crowd with 900 in attendance. It was sponsored by the Robert A. Hawkins Foundation. County Commissioner Jung pointed out that the Board of County Commissioners also helped sponsor the Artown Monday night events at the Hawkins Amphitheater with their special events funding.

12. Volunteer Service Report

Al Rogers, Assistant Director, explained that we are continuing to grow and get more involvement from the community. We now have 27 parks adopted, 168 on-going individual volunteers, and 760 group volunteers through the various events that have been conducted.

13. Golf Report

Al Rogers, Assistant Director, explained that June had unusual weather, which may have contributed to the almost 10% drop at Sierra Sage. Washoe Golf Course was very encouraging with a 4% increase in rounds and 10% increase in revenue. We will not continue the two-for-one promotion in July and August. We are still in the process of reviewing the proposals for Sierra Sage management. Commissioner Jacobson has participated in the interview and review

process. We will take a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners at the August 11, 2009 meeting.

14. Director's Report

Doug Doolittle, Director, updated the Commission on Board of County Commission actions. The Board of County Commissioners approved the continuation of contracts at Sierra Sage through the end of October. We are seeing a lot of attendance in the parks as they are a free option to the public, and we are getting good compliments regarding the condition of the parks. People are surprised with what we are doing with less staff and resources, and that is a compliment to the staff. The community is very happy that the Commissioners provided a source of funds to open the swimming pools facilities.

In response to Commissioner Nappe regarding who would manage the Northgate property if it is acquired, Mr. Doolittle explained that it is not yet determined. The first phase is to go through the appraisal process to see if it is affordable. County Commissioner Jung added that the people who live near the property and receive the benefit (scenic and property enhancement) have requested a special assessment so they can support it. In response to Commissioner Chvilicek regarding the lack of irrigation and potential for wildfires, Mr. Doolittle explained that the water rights were striped from the property.

15. Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Nappe asked about the status of reappointment to the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission. Mr. Doolittle explained that we have submitted a list of applicants – the appointments need to come from the Board of County Commissioners.

Chairman Young adjourned the meeting 3:45 p.m.

*Minutes Prepared by: Melissa Currie, Administrative Secretary Supervisor
Approved by the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission, September 1, 2009*