

## MINUTES

Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission  
April 2, 2013

### **1. Roll Call.**

**Members present:** Patty Moen, Jim Nadeau, Sarah Chvilicek, Bill von Phul, Cliff Young, Ed Harney. Bob Jacobson arrived at 2:52pm. Anne Buckley has an excused absence.

**Staff present:** Deputy District Attorney Leslie Admirand, Eric Crump, Denise Evans, Jen Budge, Cheryl Surface, Rosemarie Entsminger, Joanna Schultz.

### **2. Public Comment**

No public comment.

### **3. Approval of the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of April 2, 2013.**

Commissioner Chvilicek motioned to approve the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of April 2, 2013. Commissioner Young stated that item #7 must be pulled because the financial records were not available to go with the item. Item #10 will be moved earlier in the agenda. Commissioner Chvilicek moved to approve as amended. Commissioner Nadeau seconded. Commissioner von Phul commented that he wanted item #7 to be back on the agenda next month as the Washoe County Bond Fund is extremely important as are the projects still to be done. Motion carried.

### **4. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of December 4, 2013.**

Commissioner Nadeau motioned to approve the Minutes of the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of December 4, 2013. Commissioner Chvilicek seconded. Motion carried.

### **5. Adopt a Resolution of Appreciation for 25 years of service to volunteer Pat Walsh.**

Commissioner Young presented Pat Walsh with the Resolution of Appreciation. Ms. Walsh spoke to say how much she enjoyed working with everyone. When she retired from teaching, she knew she still needed to work with children. In 1988, she decided to work at the May Museum at Rancho San Rafael.

Commissioner Chvilicek motioned to adopt the Resolution of Appreciation for 25 years of service to volunteer Pat Walsh. Commissioner von Phul seconded. Motion carried.

### **6. Update by Karen Mullen on the SR-28 Corridor Management Plan.**

Karen Mullen, a consultant with the Tahoe Transportation District on State Corridor 28, an area from Crystal Bay to Highway 50, gave a presentation.

Commissioner von Phul understands that this corridor is far more extensive than just a bicycle

trail. He is glad that she is devoting her efforts towards this, but wondered what is the expected time frame for completion. Ms. Mullen responded that the initial bikeway piece slated to be under construction next summer. On the south demo, one mile was constructed last summer and another mile will be constructed this summer taking us from the Kale Drive at Stateline to Nevada Beach and then on to Round Hill Pines Beach. The following summer of 2014, instruction is slated from Incline to Hidden Beach, providing bike and pedestrian access.

Commissioner Nadeau asked if the bus service would be continued or extended. Ms. Mullen said it will run this summer, but a 40% match is needed for 2014. Conversations are being held with the Nevada Division of State Parks about a portion of the parking fees going to help make up that 40% match, about \$80,000 total. Commissioner Nadeau asked if there was pushback from Incline as far as having parking at the elementary school. Ms. Mullen said they did not. A secondary parking lot at the new elementary school was also utilized and some complaints were received on July 4<sup>th</sup> so they are looking at how to handle that day this year. Commissioner Nadeau confirmed that the path will continue from Incline to San Harbor with no plans to extend it to Highway 50. Ms. Mullen answered that there are plans to extend it from Incline to San Harbor to Chimney Beach and to Secret Harbor in the future. They would also like to go to Hidden Beach at some point. NDOW is working with them to add some pullouts for the buses as part of their other projects. The plan is to eventually run the entire corridor but it is a matter of financing.

## **7. Item pulled. Discussion of WC-1 Bond funding. --Karen Mullen**

## **10. Discussion with Division Directors of the Community Services Department (CSD) concerning Parks and Open Space.**

Bill Whitney, Planning & Development Division Director, started the conversation. His Division includes the Planning Department which was the old Community Development Department, the Building & Safety Department, possibly some Water Planners if they are not merged with TMWA, and the two Parks Planners Jen Budge and Cheryl Surface who are still physically located at the Plumas Office. What he is looking forward to with the two Parks Planners is better cooperation among land use planning and the kind of things that they have normally done in planning and what the Parks Planners can work with them on. An example would be a special use permit that is going to be needed for the Regional Shooting Facility out on the Pyramid Highway to move dirt to make berms, making the area safer for the shooters. This is the type of thing his current planners do all the time which they can help Jen and Cheryl with.

Dave Solaro, Operations Division Director, will have the bulk of the Parks employees under him. The Operation & Maintenance portion of the Parks Department is now consolidated with the rest of the Operations personnel within the County – the Water and Sewer workers, Facilities workers, Roads workers, and Equipment Services. They are currently conducting a GAP analysis to understand the assets that Washoe County owns, how much money should be spent on them and the man power associated with keeping those assets in a useable state. Parks is a very big component of this. His primary goal is to pool resources and make it easier to maintain our assets by working across departments. In September of 2011, all five departments had 535 employees. We are now left with 280 employees due to budget cuts and the economic downturn. Consolidating into one Community Services Department allows for a larger expanse of resources available to upkeep Washoe County assets.

Ben Hutchins, Finance & Administration Division Director, gave the Commission an overview on

how the Executive Team determined the organization of the CSD. Originally when the County had the budget cuts, one of the things discussed was putting the five departments under one director but that was decided to not be the most effective way to do it. Instead, after a long and arduous process they came to the conclusion that it would be most efficient to create a department organized by like assets where resources can be shared. Mr. Hutchins recognizes that fact that department identity is a concern, but he reiterated that every function that the County had before is still there. Parks should still be answering the phone as Parks. He hopes the new organization will provide more resources to help with areas such as customer service.

Dwayne Smith, Engineering & Capital Projects Division Director, gave a brief overview of the internal and external support his division provides. Staff includes the engineers, technical staff, surveyors and inspection staff.

Al Rogers, Projects & Programs Division Director, explained that this division does not have employees that he directly supervises but does work with all CSD employees on various projects/programs.

Mr. Rogers is currently working with six cross functional teams on projects identified over the last couple of months. Teams include: Team Tahoe includes all CSD employees working on various projects within Tahoe to combine efforts. Workplace Analysis Team is looking at how the department is currently organized/configured physically then bringing those resources together. Economic Development Team is driven by the County Manager and CSD is part of this team with outside agencies. The Permits Plus Team's goal is to bring all permitting departments on one system and regionally adopted. Communications Team has been focused on how we communicate with external and internal customers.

Mr. Solaro distributed a reference Service Card with departments, phone numbers and services provided.

Commissioner Chvilicek said she still has a lot of concerns regarding the loss of identity of the Parks Department.

Commissioner Nadeau said he is still trying to take in all the Parks Department changes. In the past, budgets have been put together by the Parks Department and now staff has been split into several different divisions of the CSD. How does this affect budgeting? Mr. Hutchins said it is the same as it has been in the past with the exception of that fact that there will be more support. There has been some restructuring of the cost accounting but line items remain the same and those line items are given budgets to work with.

Commissioner Nadeau is also concerned that when a citizen looks for Parks in the directory it can be found now, what about in the future. Who will be answering the phone when there is a concern about a park if Parks is consolidated with other divisions? Mr. Rogers said locations may change but he doesn't see the way or who citizens contact at Parks changing.

Commissioner Jacobson said he appreciates hearing from each Division Director. In response to what approach Mr. Rogers is taking, since he does not have a staff, Mr. Rogers said it is a matrix form of structure. The teams are employees in all divisions of the CSD.

Commissioner von Phul is concerned the strategic mission of the Parks Department is going to be neglected. We have first rate Park Planners in Cheryl Surface and Jen Budge who may

have the vision but not the voice of a Director. Mr. Rogers said that is a valid concern and the Executive Team has discussed this but he does not have an answer at this time on how to address this. He believes the combination of the five departments still represents not only Parks but all of the other services/departments that make up the CSD and Washoe County provides. He will still champion Parks as will the other members of the team but will now do this in a collaborative fashion that will benefit the customer, just look a little different. Mr. Whitney added that there are now five Division Directors who will be the voice of Parks.

Commissioner Chvilicek said she agrees with Commissioner von Phul that there is not a champion for Parks. To Commissioner Nadeau's comment regarding as a citizen will she be able to reach Parks easily and will her question/concern addressed/handled as a citizen? Mr. Whitney said we will and have it setup so there is not a change to how Parks is reached. We are hoping with the combined services if there is a problem that requires other resources within the CSD it will save money.

In response to Commissioner Chvilicek regarding the draft organizational chart from 6/8/12, what is the status of the Assistant Parks Director, Mr. Solaro said the position still exists because the Board of County Commissioners has not eliminated this position. We are still working with the Board on whether that position and others will be abolished. Mr. Solaro said one thing he is tasked with is to work with stakeholders in the community and the Board of County Commissioners to understand their concerns and try to come up with a solution. We have lost employees and trying to do what is best for the organization and don't want things to get lost, Parks identity is one of them. He would like a representative from this Commission to work with to really understand the concerns and move forward and address them.

In response to Commissioner Chvilicek regarding status of Division Directors and Director of CSD, Mr. Solaro said the Division Directors have been selected. As of last Monday the Director, Rosemary Menard tendered her resignation. We are working with the Manager's office to determine the process moving forward.

In response to Commissioner Chvilicek regarding cost analysis of cross-training staff, Mr. Hutchins said an analysis on cross training has not been done. As an example, there is more CSD staff that can be cross trained to assist Parks reservations. They are open 4-days a week and with more staffing perhaps they could be open 5-days a week and increase customer services.

## **8. Update by Cheryl Surface on the ARRA Fire Restoration.**

Cheryl Surface, Park Planner, gave a presentation on the restoration projects.

Commissioner von Phul said he is impressed with the presentation and number of people employed because of these grants.

In response to Commissioner von Phul regarding what is micro raise (ask Cheryl???) treatment, Ms. Surface said is an additive to a seed mix that is supposed to cling to the roots of the plant. It attaches itself to the roots and helps the plant grow.

\*\*Commissioner Moen left at 4:15pm.

**9. Discussion and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners on the Building and Garden Facility Use Fees and the Photography Permit Fees categories in the Regional Parks and Open Space 2013 Fee Schedule.**

Eric Crump, Park Operations Superintendent, explained that the fees are being proposed under the guidance of many of the existing policies: facility usage, market analysis and customer feedback. All fees were brought to this Commission in March 2013 and it was recommended that the Board of County Commissioners approve the schedule. The same fee schedule went to the Board in March and they approved the schedule with the exception of the building, garden and photography fees.

Mr. Crump explained that there was concern from some of the Board members that our fees may be too high. The Board recommended that the fees be brought back to this Commission for further review, discussion and possible recommendation. The spreadsheet in the packet gives a snapshot of the fees and usage in various categories from 2008 to 2012. Cost recovery ranges from 14% to 67%, this goes to the Fee Policy where we identify different levels of cost recovery for various facilities and programs. The buildings/community centers fall into a Level II with a recommended cost recovery of between 10 to 49%, which is where we are at. It is very hard for a community center to have full cost recovery.

In response to Commissioner Jacobson regarding the spike in 2009 reservations especially at Lazy 5's Cottonwood reservations, Mr. Crump said that there is a church that rents that facility every Sunday. The trend for reservations closely follows the economic trend and 2008 was the beginning of the economic downturn. Because we reserve 12-months in advance, after 2009 is when reservations started to taper off.

Commissioner Young said the irony is that the rates were raised in 2008/09 and asked if the Board thinks lower rates will increase reservations. Mr. Crump said he has heard this and it will help if we show that we tried decreasing rates but it did not increase reservations.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding the discussion by the Board on the minimum hours that needed to be reserved, Mr. Crump said the concern was that the hours reserved needed to include the setup and cleanup hours and maybe those fees were too high. There are some agencies that distinguish between setup, cleanup and event time. In his experience that model is challenging and a lot of people who say the hours are setup and go in to check on them and it's the actual event taking place. We practice the model of as soon as you utilize the building the clock starts.

In response to Commissioner von Phul regarding the chart in the packet which represents the number of reservations, would a chart with revenue show any differently. Mr. Crump said he would say no because fees have not really changed since 2009 with the exception of the decrease in Group C for buildings and a \$15 increase for one building. He feels revenue would look pretty much the same as the number of reservations.

In response to Commissioner Chvilicek regarding what is the recommendation, Mr. Crump said staff is recommending based on current polices and market analysis that there be no changes. In Group C we recognize now, and in 2009, when fees were decreased that we have some underutilized facilities. He feels the demand for these facilities isn't there and lowering the fees is not going to create demand.

In response to Commissioner Chvilicek regarding what is the Board's primary concern with the Fee Schedule. Mr. Crump said there was no concern over the cleaning/security deposit but thinks the concern is with events that need/take more time. Paying the same hourly rate for setup, cleanup and actual party may keep customers from reserving. This concern was not shared by all of the Board members.

Mr. Crump added that we recognize that the facilities in Group C are underutilized and we continually look at that. We have repurposed a few such as the Lemmon Valley Joe Mitchell Center, which was in Group C. The Boys and Girls Club now uses this facility. It's a great community resource and great use for this building. We've also worked at increasing use at the Cold Springs Community Center with the senior groups in that area to some success. We will continue to do this but run the risk of devaluing the facilities. In that particular area the cost recovery is very low.

We could try lowering fees to see if the market reacts, but it would be a short term trial. The Fee Schedule is brought forward for this Commission's recommendation on an annual basis.

Commissioner Young said he feels the fees are very reasonable. For example, his family held a Celebration of Life in a Parks' facility and found it to be 1/10 of the cost of other facilities.

Commissioner von Phul said he agrees with Chairman Young. He does not think the fees are too high or sees a point in cutting more fees as an experiment.

In response to Commissioner Chvilicek regarding an opportunity for a case-by-case review if someone has fallen on a hardship, Mr. Crump said that would be a real challenge. There could be some legal issues unless we create a policy. Currently we do not recognize different groups whether they are a nonprofit or for profit, everybody pays the same. This has been at the direction of the District Attorney's office. The categories for rentals were created based on utilization, demand and location.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding can nonprofit groups go before the Board for a decrease in fees and can for profit groups do the same, Mr. Crump said yes they can. We cannot waive or change fees, only the Board can.

Commissioner Nadeau said the struggle here is that the budget for Parks has been cut by 60% and the one area that we have the ability to make up for this is in the Fee Schedule. Fees are reasonable but at some point if you cut the fees you have to augment the budget somewhere else and he doesn't see that happening. Commissioner Nadeau said he supports no changes to the fees.

Mr. Crump reviewed Photography Fees over the years. Based on our definition, Commercial Photography is any photography on parks lands for commercial gain or with the intent to sell. The policy drives the fees. Permits are not required for novice photographers such as family members taking pictures of their kids. Mr. Crump did some research and the fee policy somewhat mirrors the Nevada Division of State Parks and is very similar to all the federal agencies. They are somewhat more lenient in that if it was one person with a tripod, even if it is for commercial gain they do not require a fee for a permit. But as soon as another person is added, props, models etc. it does require a permit.

Mr. Crump said that if he were to interpret the Board's concern, it wasn't the fees but the fact that photographers in the park have a relatively low impact yet they're asked to show a permit. Mr. Crump added that this item could come back in May to give Commissioners a chance to think about it.

Commissioner von Phul said that the Class 4, Annual Permits seem to be picking up every year and doesn't feel it's out of the price range. Mr. Crump said it is the most popular. It covers the commercial photographer for all Washoe County Parks and saves the photographer from coming in if their client wants to have photos done at different parks.

Motion by Commissioner Chvilicek to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners approval of the Garden and Facility Use Fees and Photography Permit Fees as presented. Seconded by Commissioner von Phul.

Commissioner Nadeau said he would be more comfortable holding off on the Photography Permit and taking a closer look at that item. He heard part of the discussion by the Board and feels that if a professional photographer comes in for wedding etc. that should be part of the facility fee. He feels that there may be just one category that needs to be looked at in this schedule.

In response to Commissioner Young regarding a separate fee if the facility is rented and a photographer is hired by the party, Mr. Crump said there is no fee required for a photographer who is taking photographs associated with a rental.

Commissioner Chvilicek clarified that if a person arranged for a photo in the park/trail there would be a fee, Mr. Crump said there would be.

Mr. Crump said that we can do a further review of our definition for those cases where a photographer is in the park for commercial photography with just one person, with very little impact on the park and using areas open to the public.

Commissioner Chvilicek amended the motion to exclude the Photography Permit Fees until the next meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Chvilicek. Motion carried.

## 11. Park District Reports

Eric Crump, Park Operations Superintendent said due to time constraints he would not highlight report but would answer any questions.

## 12. Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Young discussed moving the May meeting from May 7<sup>th</sup> to May 1<sup>st</sup>. Leslie Admirand, Deputy District Attorney suggested that Parks' staff contact Commissioners regarding moving the date.

Meeting adjourned 4:34pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joanna Schultz