

Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 7, 2015

Commissioner Jim Nadeau called the meeting to order at 2:32 pm

1. Roll Call

Members present: Anne Buckley, Nate Daniel, Janet Davis, Jim Nadeau, Tom Guinn, Scott Pierson and Al Sheakley.

Board of County Commissioner Liaison: Jeanne Herman

Staff present: Jennifer Budge, Dave Solaro, Nick Steuer, Andy Mink, Dennis Troy, Bill Whitney, Deputy District Attorney Michael Large and Joanna Schultz

2. Public Comment

Cathy Brandhorst discussed issues of interest to herself.

3. Approval of the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting April 7, 2015

Eagle Scout Gabriel Andrus is unable to attend therefore Item #5 will not be heard.

Motion by Commissioner Guinn to approve the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting April 7, 2015. Second by Commissioner Davis. Motion carried

4. Introduction of new Park Planner: Dennis Troy

Bill Whitney, Director of Planning and Development introduced Dennis Troy as the new Park Planner for the Community Services Department (CSD), Planning and Development Division. The two Parks Planners positions are under the Planning and Development Division of the CSD. Mr. Troy is filling the position that Jennifer Budge held. Mr. Whitney welcomed Mr. Troy and said he will be a great addition.

Dennis Troy, Park Planner came from the state of Washington. Prior to living in Washington Mr. Troy lived in Truckee where he worked in Community Development as a land use planner. Mr. Troy's background is in land use, residential and commercial development. When he was able to, he worked on Parks projects as much as possible because they are very rewarding. Regional Parks and Open Space is phenomenal with so much to work with and Mr. Troy is excited and grateful to join the team.

Commissioners welcomed Mr. Troy.

6. Update on Peavine Congested Shooting Area

Public Comment:

Kent Irvin resident of Northwest Reno said he hikes and bikes in the area. Too often feeling unsafe due to the frequents shooting near roads and trails both illegally, in the existing congested area zone and legally but unsafely in the unrestricted areas. He thanked the Commission for hearing their concerns at a previous meeting. Mr. Irvin handed out with a summary of the issues, proposed action plan, an updated map and photos.

The action plan has three elements: education, enforcement and smarter regulations. With the cooperation of the various agencies, Mr. Irvin feels there is progress being made. There needs to be smarter regulations to simplify the shooting restriction boundaries. Current boundaries are confusing, irregular, hard to communicate and hard to enforce and need to be simplified and recreated.

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Mr. Irvin asked this Commission to express their concerns to the Board of County Commissioners about these issues and consider changes to the congested boundaries on Peavine.

Marilee Wintz thanked the Commission for the time and effort that has gone into promoting safety on Peavine. She is looking forward to hearing the recommendation based on all of the reports. Ms. Wintz wanted to remind the Commission of the people who spoke of safety issues on Peavine due to illegal and unsafe shooting that is a big problem. The uses and boundaries of Peavine have a mix of hiking, biking, off road vehicles and shooting. She is aware of where the boundaries are, but still if she does not have a GPS she cannot determine where those boundaries are and asks how others can know. Law enforcement also has a hard time determining boundaries and enforcing these issues.

In addition to the proposed updated signage and enforcement the boundaries need to create rules and regulations for Peavine recreation. It does not cost money, but does require time and careful planning to create a plan that makes sense for all users. Responsible shooting needs to be located where there are no trails or roads in the crossfire. This is a simple concept and doesn't believe it is too much to ask for a community who advocates outdoor recreation.

Ms. Wintz looks forward to this Commission's leadership and recommendation on how we can achieve a safe Peavine for all.

Mac Rossi, resident of Northwest Reno. Mr. Rossi has property directly adjacent to the US Forest and Washoe County and is directly and indirectly involved in this situation with the guns. There are violations of motorbikes in both areas. Other residents adjacent to the property have addressed the motorbikes and now getting in the situation where, on two separate occasions, a gun has been pulled on them. This seems to be getting out of hand and we are asking for any help that can be provided.

Dave Solaro, Director of the Community Services Department said this item was brought forward as an action item at the February 3rd meeting and Commissioners requested this be brought back as an action item. Today's item is not an action item and Mr. Solaro will cover the reason in the presentation.

Mr. Solaro gave an update on what staff is doing.

Commissioner Guinn said in public comment it was mentioned that it was developed off of setbacks and seems like a weird configuration. He would like to know how the area was developed, as it has curves and weird angle points.

Mr. Solaro said the map on display is a compilation of two separate maps. The Washoe County Sheriff map takes into account the congested area, as defined by Washoe County Code. The Sheriff's office has taken the Nevada Revised Statute, the State law, in regards to shotguns and rifles and overlaid it onto the congested area. Shotguns can be discharged within a 1,000 feet from residences with rifles at 3,000 feet. He thinks the issue is not necessarily the residents, but trails and frequently traveled locations. Mr. Solaro will bring a larger map and send it out as well and it is also available on the County's website through this GIS portal. The quick map has a layer for congested area, shows the bubble map and explains it a little bit.

In response to Commissioner Guinn regarding the issues on non-motorized or motorized areas and trying to understand what the public's major concern is, Mr. Solaro said currently the information being received is from people who frequent the non-motorized trails. We would like to reach out to the people who frequent the motorized trails, as it can be equally as unsafe. Washoe County does not have a lot of jurisdiction as far as how to use the land as it is US Forest Service land. It is hard for Washoe County staff

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to designate areas for certain recreation uses. This is why Mr. Solaro would like to get everyone together to discuss this issue.

In response to Commissioner Daniel regarding is any of that area in the bubble owned/operated by Washoe County, Mr. Solaro said Washoe County land sits within congested area - Rancho San Rafael Regional Park. You cannot discharge firearms in that area but there is always that possibility that there could be over shot from the bubble area so we want to be certain the congested area boundary is appropriate for all recreational users.

Commissioner Daniel said this is pretty much out of the purview of what this Commission would do. However, the reason Commissioner Daniel requested this as an action item because what this Commission can do is give recommendation that they support the action of staff. Without this being an action item the little power this Commission has is further diminished and he would like to see this come back as an action item.

Mr. Solaro said that he spoke to staff and it was decided that since the Board of County Commissioners had already taken some action to direct staff to work on this we were not sure that was an action this Commission needed to take.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding are all points of access official trailheads into Peavine, Mr. Solaro said he believes they are recognized by one entity or another as a trailhead.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding will Las Brisas be a trailhead or access point, Mr. Solaro said he believes their plan is to connect trails that are on Peavine Mountain. They are using that as a starting point with the trail system but will have access to Peavine through existing trails. He is not sure about the trailhead, but will check with City of Reno staff.

7. Presentation and discussion on removal of the log flume ride located within Rancho San Rafael Regional Park

Andy Mink, District Park Manager gave a presentation on the removal of the aging log flume ride

Commissioner Daniel said it's sad to see one of the last vestiges of the GBA leave, but is a good thing as it is a liability.

Mr. Mink added the removal is not costing the County anything.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding during the last year it was open was it running on its own or in a deficit, Mr. Mink said was really close but didn't cover costs.

Jennifer Budge, Park Operations Superintendent thanked Andy Mink and especially Park Rangers Bob Holland and Marie Fong for working with our community partners to make this a no cost effort. It saved over \$50,000 and is reducing the liability for Washoe County.

8. Program of the month

Nick Steuer, Park Ranger gave a presentation

Commissioner Nadeau requested item #11 be moved up in the agenda as one Commissioner will need to leave early.

11. Director's Report

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Dave Solaro reviewed actions of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) during their February and March meetings.

Mr. Solaro said there was an informational meeting to discuss the budget with some Parks Commission members, as well members of the public. Discussed in the meeting was a review of last year's budget and this year's above base requests the Community Services Department (CSD) has requested. This year the majority of the requests have been in relation in Parks and Open Space. There is a presentation by the County Manager to recommend a budget to the Board of County Commissioners scheduled for the April 27th meeting. Mr. Solaro is not sure of the time, but a notice will be sent out.

One item that will be heard at that meeting is while things are looking up, we are still being very cautious with spending within the Washoe County budget. Some of the above-base requests we asked for as a department will most likely not be recommended only because of lack of funding.

They've been asked to look at their budget to find ways to fund the above-base requests within the current budget. We've been given a little more flexibility to utilize funds within the budget. This is important for the CSD budget, as we have the Public Works and Culture and Recreation functions and we can't cross those funds without BCC approval.

\$30,000 has been identified from the Public Works budget, a larger budget than the Culture and Recreation budget, to fund some of the programs necessary to maintain the health of our parks. The BCC also directed CSD to look at maintenance of our infrastructure, making sure we are doing the right things associated with the infrastructure so it doesn't cost us a lot more in the future.

We will be getting \$350,000 for Capital funding, another above-base that is not tied to the operating budget.

In the current fiscal year, we have \$250,000 for seasonal employees. This is now a part of the base budget and will continue in the next fiscal year and hopefully future fiscal years.

We also been able to leverage \$500,000 in grants for pools, noxious weeds, open space and continuing to acquire open space from the Parks Bond. We are trying to grow our Parks and open space system but at the same time being mindful of the maintenance needed in the future.

A letter is going around to the Commissioners about the general awareness about what parks mean to the citizens of Washoe County. The BCC, Manager's office and CSD are very aware of the importance parks play in our culture in the Reno/Sparks/Washoe County area and appreciate that.

Commissioner Buckley said she will be attending the Board of County Commissioner budget meeting as a private citizen to address Parks' budget. Parks' budget was cut approximately 65% and the pie chart budget of Washoe County, Culture and Recreation receives 4%. Parks actually receives less than 1% of the total budget, approximately \$3 million with the libraries receiving 9%. Libraries does not have anything like the infrastructure that Parks has and she feels people are not aware and they should be.

Demolishing the log flume ride is only the tip of the iceberg as money isn't spent on maintenance. We would be demolishing playgrounds and parks because they are not being maintained. Athletic fields have not been fertilized for four years and will need a large Capital infusion to make them playable again.

To cut the budget 65% and not restore it is going to cause hardship. She understands that the public perception is the first thing the public wants is public safety but when we attempted to close the Sun Valley pool the community stepped up and are paying an assessment fee to keep it open. City of Reno tried to close the Trainor pool there was a public outcry. They do want it and they are prepared to pay for it. Some

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of our taxes should go into maintaining County Parks and should make the BCC aware of the fact that people want them. Just because the public are not marching, or saying it's not their number one choice for budgetary purposes doesn't mean they don't care about them.

Commissioner Buckley encouraged the Commissioners to take part or send their own letters to the BCC, talk to neighbors, or write to the newspaper.

Commissioner Nadeau said getting seasonal staff funding is an important and big step in trying to bring back maintenance required. When we lost seasonal staff, we lost a lot of support to permanent staff. We would like to see the funding returned.

Mr. Solaro wanted to be clear that no parks have been closed, parks are open, people are still enjoying them and staff is doing a great job at keeping them up with the resources available. Staff has shouldered this and able to push the parks to where they are at today and Mr. Solaro appreciates what they have done. In the past we have closed some areas such as the Great Basin Adventure due to lack of funding. That was a program that was supposed to support itself and couldn't.

Commissioner Guinn thanked staff for what they have done with the amount of funding and discussion on the budget which was very eye opening. We haven't purchased a new truck for years and amazed by this. There are volunteers who come in but have no way to get from park to park to assist. Commissioner Guinn asked that Commissioner Herman push for Parks in the upcoming budget talks.

In response to Commissioner Guinn regarding on dates for Strategic Plan adoption and the State of County on 4/14 and budget public hearing on 5/18 with a backup public comment of 5/26, Mr. Solaro said he believes those are still accurate. The County Manager's proposed budget to the BCC on 4/27.

Commissioner Daniel said staff has done an amazing job given the limitations to the budget. We understand that the overall General Fund budget for the County is nothing like what it was, but when you look at the breakdown of percentage, or piece of the pie, is much smaller that it was for Parks. It is resulting in differed maintenance, something we want to avoid as it cost more in the long run. With the size of the pie Parks has the Commission wants to make the BCC and Manager's office understand we want to see that slice also grow back to where it was, which is more sustainable.

9. Overview of proposed changes to Washoe County Code Chapter 95 and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners

Jennifer Budge, Park Operations Superintendent said Chapter 95 of Washoe County Code as it pertains to Parks and Recreation. We manage over 1,300 acres of Park land ranging from Bowers Mansion in the south to land up in the Sheldon Wildlife Refuge in the north near the Oregon border. It's a vast Parks system with only 8 Park Rangers trying to enforce rules and regulations.

The last major update to Chapter 95 was in 1987. There have been a few updates over the years but not a full update. Staff has researched best practices throughout the nation to ensure what we are doing is consistent with other practices, thoughtful and easy to implement and use.

Page 2 of the staff report gives an overview of the proposed changes. Changes include:

- Clean up of the organization of the code to make navigation easier
- Proposed General Headings and Sub-categories
- Deletion, addition and changes to sections
- Change to number of Park Commissioners and meetings
- Use permits for groups in excess of 25

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- Department name change
- Off-leash areas in parks
- Remote control devices in parks
- Food storage lockers in parks

In response to Commissioner Daniel regarding clarification on strikethrough of 95.010-95.090, Ms. Budge said those sections were moved into another section.

Ms. Budge explained that the redline document is a starting point. The second document is what the final document would look like with those changes.

Commissioner Nadeau clarified that the second document is the first redlined document cleaned up, Ms. Budge said yes.

In response to Commissioner Guinn regarding the official process, Mr. Solaro said the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) has already allowed us to open Chapter 95 in an official process. Staff and the District Attorney staff have been working on this. Staff brought this item before the Commission shortly after the BCC requested that we look at Chapter 95 and solicit comments. This is part of the process to come back to this Commission with comments staff and this Commission had. It is currently with the District Attorney's office for legal review for some items the BCC asked for. We are looking for additional comments and questions and bring this item back to this Commission before it goes to the BCC for adoption. At the BCC there will be a first hearing as an introduction with a second hearing to adopt the Code. There will be at least three more options for this Commission and the public to comment.

In response to Commissioner Buckley regarding enforcing the Ranger authority, Mr. Solaro said this is one of the items staff would really like in the Code. An example of this is, Animal Control has made an attempt and been successful with the BCC to get leeway in doing things. We have yet to speak with Animal Services on how they deal with this issue. CSD went through an internal audit and one item that came out of that is to utilize those civil penalties across all divisions. We currently use them in Building and Safety, Planning and Development and Engineering. Staff will have to do more research to address how to handle the Ranger authority piece.

Ms. Budge added Animal Services has had citation authority in effect for some time now. They have had a lot of trial and error and we can benefit from their experience and expertise now. By mirroring their process and being consistent with another department within the County is a good thing and sending the same message to the public and being consistent as a County. There is an animal congested area, similar to our shooting congested area. Chapter 95 does not match what the animal congested is and creates another avenue for Animal Services and staff to be able to enforce their rules and regulations. We want to make sure all of that language is consistent throughout our Codes.

In response to Commissioner Guinn regarding will district plans, master plans go through Planning Commission then to Park Commission, Ms. Budge said typically Planning Commission doesn't approve those types of plans. We go to the BCC now for approval, on consent, no presentation and not heard. We felt this would be a great opportunity for the public to see those projects first and have an opportunity to have some dialogue about it. There are so many items on the BCC agenda that the public really doesn't get to hear about these things. Another item would be for staff to bring policies before this Commission.

In response to Commissioner Daniel regarding timeline, Deputy District Attorney Michael Large said we could possibly defer it to the next Parks Commission with the language and a presentation.

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In response to Commissioner Daniel regarding how the restructure of the Parks Commission affects the current Commission, Ms. Budge said there are some Commissioners whose terms will be expiring soon so we would look at the timing and work on this in advance. We went to five members because there are five County Commission Districts appointed by the BCC. Not only would we have each County Commissioner appoint a Parks Commissioner for their District but it creates more of a geographic coverage for Parks and Open Space Commission. There would be a subject matter expert from every region in the County and citizens would have someone to go to in their area. In the 80s and 90s this is how the Parks Commission was setup. You had to live in a certain geographic area to be appointed which we have not had in the last 10 years and thought this would help gear this back toward good geographic coverage across the County.

Commissioner Nadeau would like clarification on term limits, exclusion from the park, financial support, confiscating an animal and disturbing the peace items on the next meeting that this item comes back to this Commission.

Ms. Budge said the financial section is one of the areas that were very outdated. The Fiscal Compliance Officer will be editing this to ensure that it is compliant with how we are collecting monies.

Ms. Budge said that we could look at Animal Services language to address the exclusion from the park item.

Mr. Large said we could have answers to the potential/proposed changes in regard to the composition of this Commission reducing from nine to five members as they will need to change some language within the Code. Language will need to be modified on Commissioners staying on until a replacement can be appointed.

Commissioner Nadeau said that staff has done a tremendous amount of work and commended them for it.

Motion by Commissioner Guinn to take recommendations by staff, take it back to staff to meet with the District Attorney at which time incorporate any additional comments and bring back to the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission. Second by Commissioner Daniel. Motion carried.

Commissioner Buckley left 4:10pm

10. Park Reports

Public Comment:

Cathy Brandhorst discussed issues of interest to herself.

Jennifer Budge, Park Operations Superintendent highlighted reports.

12. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Herman apologized for not answering all the letters from all the devoted park folks. She wanted to assure everyone that everyone in the County is looking funding. It's a tight budget and they're still working on it and to be patient.

Commissioner Guinn thanked staff on the budget overview. He found it very helpful and informative. Welcome Dennis.

13. Public Comment

Cathy Brandhorst discussed issues of interest to herself.

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Kent Irvine thanked the Commissioners and staff for listening to the Peavine trails issue and support. Mr. Irvin wanted to address some of the questions that came up from Commissioners. The boundaries have a good explanation on how those arose. Some circular boundaries are distances from the radio towers so it's occupied structures of any kind. Many people on their Facebook site would like ban all shooting all the way to the California border, others don't want to ban shooting anywhere but there has to be some compromise as far not designate areas but make places legal. He feels there is opportunities just south of Red Metal, northwest part. It is within those 5,000 foot areas from the radio towers but some creative coding could change that. Another idea is making the boundary along major roads rather than arbitrary lines that are hard to find when you're out on the ground. Mr. Irvine feels a compromise can be made for the benefit of lots of people.

14. Adjournment

Chairman Nadeau adjourned the meeting at 4:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanna Schultz