

MINUTES

Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission February 5, 2013

Commissioner Cliff Young called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

1. Roll Call.

Members present: Ed Harney, Bob Jacobson, Anne Buckley, Cliff Young, Bill von Phul, Sarah Chvilicek, Jim Nadeau, and Patty Moen.

Staff present: Eric Crump, Deputy District Attorney Leslie Admirand, Jennifer Budge, Bill Whitney and Joanna Schultz

2. Approval of the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of February 5, 2013.

Commissioner Chvilicek motioned to approve the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of February 5, 2013. Commissioner von Phul seconded. Motion carried.

3. Approval of the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of September 4, 2012

Commissioner Nadeau motioned to approve the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of September 4, 2012. Commissioner Moen seconded. Motion carried.

4. Approval of the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of October 2, 2012.

Commissioner Nadeau motioned to approve the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of September 4, 2012. Commissioner Moen seconded. Motion carried.

5. Public Comments and Discussion Thereon:

No public comment.

6. Election of Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Chairman and Vice-Chairman for a term through January 1, 2014.

Commissioner Nadeau asked if it was possible to elect the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for just a six month term. Deputy District Attorney Leslie Admirand answered there was nothing that would prevent it. Commissioner Nadeau commented that both Commissioner Young as Chairman and Commissioner von Phul as the Vice Chair had been doing a good job and suggested their reelections through the end of their terms. He motioned for both to continue their term for six months. Commissioner Harney seconded. Commissioner von Phul didn't feel it was appropriate to be elected for just the next three meetings. Commissioner Jacobson asked if there would be another election after June. Deputy District Attorney Leslie Admirand answered yes because the positions would be vacated at that time. Commissioner Buckley asked if the election would take place in June and Deputy District Attorney Leslie Admirand

answered that it depended on when it was put on the agenda. Commissioner Buckley suggested putting it on the agenda in June. Commissioner Chvilicek confirmed that they would be electing a Chair and Vice Chair in June. Motion carried.

7. Community Services Department update and presentation.

Eric Crump, Operations Superintendent gave an update on the Washoe County Community Services Department which included a handout that showed the structure of the department and the directors of each division. Five departments were consolidated: Regional Parks and Open Space, Public Works, Water Resources, Community Development, and Building and Safety. The new directors are: Al Rogers, Division Director of Projects and Programs; Dave Solaro, Division Director of Operations; Dwayne Smith, Division Director of Engineering and Capitol Projects; Bill Whitney, Division Director of Planning and Development; Ben Hutchins, Division Director of Administration and Finance. It is expected that the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Board will be supported by the Planning and Development Division which also supports two other boards.

Bill Whitney, Planning and Development Division Director, offered to answer questions and reassured the Board that Parks and Open Space is still very important. Mr. Whitney has worked for the County for 24 years in Community Development. His related work experience over the years has included working on Regional Open Space issues, working on public land issues with BLM, Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife, and public access issues. He also authored the first Washoe County Regional Open Space Plan in 1994, and then worked with Lynda Nelson to update it in 2008. Mr. Whitney talked about Park Planners Cheryl Surface and Jennifer Budge joining his department. His division also manages the Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment so they are used to taking care of commissions.

Commissioner Young asked where Bill Whitney's office will be. Mr. Whitney answered that it will continue to be on the second floor of the West End in Planning and Development. Commissioner von Phul commented that he didn't see the efficiency in moving Parks staff to three different divisions but it wasn't his decision to make. He also asked about keeping the Plumas office open and where the staff would be sent. Mr. Whitney responded that a decision hadn't been made yet. Ben Hutchins is currently interviewing the Plumas office staff and is asking them where they think they would physically fit in best. Jennifer Budge and Cheryl Surface are happy where they are and now is not a good time to move them due to them being so busy.

Commissioner von Phul also asked if it was still appropriate to have an Open Space and Regional Parks Commission since there was no longer a Regional Parks and Open Space Department and if the Board of County Commissioners even needed them. Mr. Whitney responded that he felt that the Park Commission is now more important than ever because they are the face of a formal Parks and Open Space entity in the County. He also felt now was a good time to reevaluate the commission and discuss how they may want to run things differently in the future.

In regards to Parks being divided into three divisions, Commissioner Chvilicek commented that she didn't know where they would call home. She feels the perception is that Regional Parks and Open Spaces is being severely diluted, and maybe Washoe County does not care that much about Parks and Open Space which concerns her gravely. The Department has come so far and has been awarded and honored for its achievements in Parks and Open

Space and this appears to be a dramatic step backwards. Mr. Whitney understood and said other departments have similar concerns. His feeling, however, is that there will be efficiencies in areas such as operations, but he reiterated that he understood her concern and promised to work to keep Parks in the forefront.

Commissioner Chvilicek then asked about who would address issues such as capital improvements in a park and said the Park Commission does not know any other Division Directors besides Al Rogers and Bill Whitney. Ms. Chvilicek asked for clarification on whom to contact when there are concerns about a park and pointed out that Mr. Whitney is now listed on the Parks Commission agendas as the staff liaison to the Board as opposed to Al Rogers who was listed a few months ago. Mr. Whitney admitted that what to put on business cards and letterhead so that it is logical and easy for the public to understand is something they are working on. It is now a reality that there is no place in a phone book or the county website to find the "Parks Department". For right now, Mr. Whitney said if there is an issue to contact Eric Crump. Mr. Crump agreed. Mr. Whitney then said to contact Cheryl Surface or Jennifer Budge with any planning issues or to contact him directly. Capital Projects would fall under Dwayne Smith but would often start at the planning level. Al Rogers is also still available to give a historical viewpoint.

Commissioner Chvilicek asked if Rosemary Menard would be giving a presentation before the commission, or any of the other division directors. Mr. Whitney asked if that is something she would like to see and Commissioner Chvilicek responded yes, especially the directors that have responsibilities to parks.

Commissioner Moen asked who was in charge of appointing new commissioners. Eric Crump answered that there is an application on the website or they can contact Joanna Schultz.

Commissioner Jacobson asked Bill Whitney if there are dotted lines from the Finance Division and Operations Division to him, and who would answer questions on fee schedules, etc. at their meetings. Mr. Whitney responded that they will have the experts in those areas to the meetings when needed. Commissioner Jacobson asked if Mr. Whitney would be attending each meeting and he answered that he would initially but he wasn't sure about in the future. Mr. Whitney assured them that the right people will attend to answer questions.

Commissioner von Phul suggested that the Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space logo be retained on parks as a matter of public perception.

Commissioner Buckley asked what the other two commissions Bill Whitney deals with are. He answered that the Planning Division handles the Board of Adjustment and the Planning Commission. Both are appointed commissions. The Board of Adjustment handles special use permits and variances. The Planning Commission handles things like master plans and zoning amendments. Commissioner Buckley asked if there are additional commissions within the five divisions. Mr. Whitney included the Board of County Commissioners as well as the monthly Development Services forum, staff on the Regional Transportation Commission, and the Design Review committee, just in the Planning Division alone. Commissioner Buckley explained that she was asking to find out if there is some overlap in some of the commissions but that it didn't sound like it. Mr. Whitney agreed that there is not overlap.

Commissioner Nadeau wanted to know who would establish the Parks Commission agenda and how budget priorities would be established. Commissioner Nadeau also brought up that

there is a Volunteer Coordinator and asked who would handle those types of sub functions. Mr. Whitney answered that the five division directors and Rosemary Mernard meet regularly to coordinate everything they are doing in operations, planning and finance as well as in the budget. Community Services is one department with one large budget but each division will have its own budget underneath that. Parks funding is now spread out among divisions which could possibly be an advantage. Eric Crump answered that the Volunteer Coordinator Denise Evans will likely fall under Operations or Finance/Administration. She still supports the Operations staff and works with Mr. Crump on a daily basis. The Volunteer Coordinator is not expected to go anywhere, and is a support function to Operations. Regarding agenda items, Mr. Crump did not expect to see much change and the commissioners can suggest items to be put on the agenda during the meeting or by calling. Reporting will remain the same.

Commissioner Nadeau felt part of the concern is that they always felt there was a director that was their advocate when it came to things like a budget and they don't see an advocate at this point. Mr. Whitney said there are three advocates, and each division director will be advocating for their own budget. Commissioner Nadeau said the other concern is they see the role of the commission being diluted. How will it be decided what items are brought to the Parks Commission as opposed to straight to the Board of County Commissioners? Mr. Whitney answered that is something they would decide in their division director meetings.

Commissioner Harney said that overall it makes sense to put finance in finance, planners with planners, etc. but he was concerned about, for instance, the parks cross training to do building and safety and then parks slowly start getting sided and the planners absorb into other departments. Mr. Whitney agreed that division directors have the latitude to make those kinds of moves but looking at the park planner workload, they need to focus only on parks and there is a lot of work they can be doing in the Open Space arena. They have their hands full and most likely will not be cross trained.

Commissioner Nadeau asked if Chapter 95 will be rewritten. Mr. Whitney responded that there are things that need to be changed such as the director position. He didn't see where Chapter 95 limited terms for Park Commissioners. Deputy District Attorney Leslie Admirand said that it may be in the NRS and she would take a look at that. Mr. Whitney said he did not see it in NRS. NRS and County Code both say there should be nine members and there should be nine meetings a year. Deputy District Attorney Leslie Admirand addressed that the two term rule is one of the County Commissioner's policy and rules that they adopt every January for appointed boards and commissions.

Commissioner Buckley asked how the budgets for the five divisions compares to the five previous department budgets. She questions if departments with larger budgets will bleed into the others. Mr. Whitney asked if the questions could be saved for when Ben Hutchins comes and talks to the Board. Commissioner Buckley assumed the intent was to save money from the previous structure and wanted to know where the cuts would be. Mr. Whitney emphasized that finding efficiencies by combining departments is where they will save budget.

Commissioner Young said he hoped you can still find "Washoe County Parks" in the phone book or in internet searches because the public won't know to look for "Community Services". Mr. Whitney agreed that it still needs to be easy for the public to find.

Bill Whitney said he would bring the comments from this meeting to the executive team meeting and will invite them all to come and introduce themselves during future Park Commission meetings.

8. Recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners for 2013 Department Fees and Charges Policy and Schedule.

Eric Crump, Operations Superintendent reviewed changes to the Fees and Charges Schedule. Commissioner Nadeau asked how the deposit on small size groups using pavilions is enforced. Mr. Crump answered that it is only on reservable facilities and it is collected at the time of reservation. Otherwise in the past when deposits were not required it was noted that the groups had no incentive to clean up after themselves. Commissioner Nadeau then confirmed that the Bowers Mansion fee was for admission, not to use the public area around it, which Mr. Crump agreed to.

Commissioner Moen asked how many players a high school golf team usually has so that she could determine how much the increase will impact each player. Mr. Crump did not know for sure, but when he played golf in high school it was 15-20. Commissioner Nadeau asked if the golf fee increases have gone before the golf clubs yet. Mr. Crump believed they had. Commissioner Jacobson asked if the Board of County Commissioners has to approve Sierra Sage's rates. Mr. Crump thought they did, but he was not positive.

Commissioner Nadeau motioned to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners approval of the 2013 Department Fees and Charges Policy and Schedule. Commissioner von Phul seconded. Motion carried.

9. Update and discussion on Sky Ranch Park reconveyance and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners.

Jennifer Budge, Park Planner gave an update on Sky Ranch Park. The last update was given in 2007. Sky Ranch Park, located on the corner of La Posada and Pyramid, has been owned and operated by Washoe County since the early '80s. Sky Ranch Park consists of two parcels, one dedicated to us in 1984 and the other purchased by Washoe County using residential construction tax for \$100,000 in 1982. The park was built by Spring Creek Development Company and was in a very rural community at the time – not a busy intersection like it sits today. Intensive road usage along with commercial developments on either corner has really changed the nature of the area, making it no longer compatible with the surrounding uses. In 2007, the Park Commission adopted a plan recommending the park as a disposal property because of the intensive uses around it. After this, Eagle Canyon Park, which is less than a half of a mile west of this property, was expanded to accommodate the existing uses that currently occur at Sky Ranch Park. Primarily, Sky Ranch Park is used by Spanish Springs Cal Ripkin who has permitted athletic use on the field. There is also a picnic pavilion and a playground with very little use. The closest park is just a block away to the east. In December of 2012, options were provided to the Board of County Commissioners about this property along with pros and cons. The County Commissioners directed staff to reconvey the 6.377 acres to the previous owner or his assigns. The parcel was dedicated by Mr. David Frear, and he has assigned his interest to that property to a Nevada limited liability company called Pyramid Urban Achievers, LLC. Staff has been working with representatives from this group for a few years behind the scenes but received the official direction from the BCC in December and is working with that group to develop appraisals and agreements according to NRS. Parks

will be going back to the Board of County Commissioners on February 26th with a draft agreement and a resolution of offer of reconveyance for the one parcel. Once the reconveyance process is complete, there are several options for the remaining parcel including selling it at a public auction, sell it to Pyramid Urban Achievers through an economic development provision in NRS, or other possibilities based on the direction of the BCC. Deputy District Attorney Leslie Admirand agreed with her statements.

Commissioner Chvilicek wanted to know the plan of Pyramid Urban Achievers. Mr. John Krmpotic, who does land use planning and was representing Pyramid Urban Achievers, addressed the question and answered neighborhood commercial or general commercial. There are no definitive plans at this time. There are challenging physical constraints including a drainage easement and access easement.

Commissioner Chvilicek expressed a concern with losing open space to unidentified commercial use. Jen Budge responded that the Board directed them to have two appraisals for the property and the purchase price would be the average of the two appraisals. They are going to do a highest and best use appraisal and an appraisal for land zoned for Parks and Recreation. All revenue from the sale would go back into the Parks Department, most likely back into the same district. The current field user is promised a permit through spring ball and then will be moved full time to Eagle Canyon. The hope is to financially recoup at least what has been invested into the park, which is a little over \$900,000 to invest elsewhere in the Spanish Springs community.

Commissioner Young asked when the BCC directed staff to reconvey. Ms. Budge answered that it was at their December meeting.

Ms. Budge also let Commissioner Chvilicek know any commercial use would need to have a master plan amendment and go through rezoning, and have a plan in action that they would have to present to the public and planning commission. RTC and NDOT would be part of the review.

Commissioner Harney lives in this district and his concern is if the trees will be maintained or if everything will die. Ms. Budge answered that they could discuss a provision in the agreement for that, but there are no water rights being sold with the property. Deputy District Attorney Leslie Admirand added that terms of the agreement are still being negotiated and they would consider that idea.

Commissioner Young stated that he is not particularly familiar with the intersection but that if it isn't very good for youth sports as a baseball field that it could have been a soccer field or something not as risky to traffic. Ms. Budge thinks that the concern is the users, not the type of use. Access is a challenge and there are many safer park alternatives nearby.

Commissioner Nadeau is sensitive to Commissioner Chvilicek's concerns about the open space, but there is commercial property surrounding the park already and it makes sense for the land to be a similar use, particularly with the traffic. He agreed the park is dangerous and commercial use would be more suitable.

Ms. Budge also stated that maintenance of this park is considered burdensome, especially since staff has been cut 60%. Maintenance dollars are not really being spent where they need to be as there are not many drop-in park users.

Commissioner Young asked about the possibility of other use like a skate park. Commissioner Moen felt it is too dangerous. Ms. Budge added that the park is 9 acres but a huge chunk of the park is a flood channel that goes under Pyramid Highway. The south side of the park is also a storm water overflow ditch. Her personal opinion is that it is not the best place for a public park. Commissioner Harney agrees. It was the only park at one time and used to be full on the weekends but there was nothing else there but vacant lots. Eagle Canyon Park didn't even exist. Now when he drives past it he doesn't really see anybody there and it only seems to be used during baseball season.

Commissioner von Phul also agrees with Commissioner Harney that this park is too dangerous and we should let it go. Ms. Budge will include these comments in the staff report to the BCC on February 26th.

Mr. Krmptotic brought up that if the area goes to retail there would be more landscape based on landscape code. Mature trees with value would most likely be saved. He asked Commissioner Chvilicek what her definition of open space is. Commissioner Chvilicek responded that it is passive space. In this case, she would be satisfied with the sale if the proceeds stay within the same district and some effort would be made to use those funds to allow easier in and out access to Lazy 5 Regional Park.

Commissioner Chvilicek made a motion that the proceeds from the sale of this property stay within this park district to support area parks. Commissioner Nadeau seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public Comment: Tina Nappe, wanted to thank the current Commission, especially those that had been there for eight years or more, for hanging in during very difficult times. She also wanted to appreciate the new people for coming on board. Ms. Nappe expressed concern with the new organization when those that have "grown up" with the county are gone and Parks is fighting for its own budget after being blended in with so many things. Ms. Nappe stated we need far more of the private sector involved in parks and their funding and is afraid there will no longer be a parks system. She advised those who are retiring over the next several months to form private, nonprofit groups to adopt the parks or park issues to speak out on. She feels the Parks Department is losing out not just because of the economy but because people are not speaking out. Ms. Nappe gave an example of a small nonprofit group that spoke out to get support for Rancho San Rafael Regional Park.

10. Parks Reports

Eric Crump, Operations Superintendent highlighted the Park District, May Center, Volunteer, Golf and Board of County Commission Action Item reports.

Commissioner von Phul asked if the Board of County Commissioners approved alignment number one at Betsy Caughlin Donnelly park, and if that was the alignment that went right down the middle of the park. Mr. Crump answered that it was. Commissioner von Phul didn't recall that they liked that one but Mr. Crump explained that the issue with alignment number two is that there were several mature trees mostly on private property and the potential damage to those trees was significant. The water line shouldn't be visible and there shouldn't be a vent system above ground so it was okay to go down the middle of the park.

Commissioner von Phul asked if the restaurant was open at Sierra Sage Golf Course during the winter or if they closed it down. Mr. Crump responded that the restaurant was open nearly every day.

Commissioner Jacobson commented that Sierra Sage was jammed around noon over the previous weekend. Mr. Crump responded that Washoe Golf Course also had a good weekend.

Jennifer Budge, Park Planner highlighted the planning report. Commissioner von Phul asked about the completion date for the Ballardini Trailhead but Ms. Budge did not have an answer yet. Mr. Crump mentioned that there are two creek crossings with bridges so it will be at least a year of construction with it not opening until at least 2014.

Commissioner Chvilicek asked if we were still on target for a June 2013 opening of phase IV at North Valley's Regional Park. Ms. Budge responded that it will be closer to the end of June.

Commissioner Moen left at 4:00pm

11. Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Chvilicek was contacted by community members about projects being taken out of operations, particularly the Silver Knoll's horse arena. It was her understanding that since we did not plan for an arena at North Valleys Regional Park that the Silver Knolls arena would stay in place so she would like a report on that.

Commissioner Buckley pointed out that they have been short a member of the commission for at least a year and with losing four in the near future she feels it is especially important to make these appointments in a timely manner. She would like to add this to next month's agenda if needed.

Commissioner Young would like to see a future agenda item discussing possible joint trail funding between NDOT and Nevada State Parks. Commissioner Young had conducted a survey of 25 to 30 people regarding projects on the Regional Transportation Commission's approved plan and of those projects the highest vote was for a bicycle trail between Timberline and Galena Creek Park. Part of that is because it is dangerous where four lanes move down to two. The second highest priority was from that location connecting down to Arrowcreek. As a caveat, he thinks the Parks Department should lead the charge because the RTC is very focused on biking to work and would consider this trail more recreational.

12. Public Comments

No public comment.

13. Adjournment

Chairman Young adjourned the meeting at 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Denise Evans