

MINUTES

Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission June 26, 2013

Commissioner Cliff Young called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

1. **Roll Call.**

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

Newly appointed Commissioners present: Scott Pierson, Tom Guinn, Allan Sheakley and Nate Daniel.

Staff present: Eric Crump, Deputy District Attorney Leslie Admirand, Jennifer Budge, Al Rogers, Dave Solaro, Bill Whitney, Ben Hutchins and Joanna Schultz

2. **Public Comment.**

No public comments.

3. **Workshop Discussion**

Five minutes of workshop was not recorded due to malfunction of recording equipment.

Community Services Department staff introduced themselves.

Al Rogers, Projects and Programs Division Director explained to the Commission and newly appointed Commissioners how the Community Services Department (CSD) came to be and how this change affects Parks. The purpose of this workshop is to have an open dialogue on the Community Services Department, where Parks and this Commission fit in.

In response to Commissioner Chvilicek regarding how long will he be in the Acting Director position, Dave Solaro said we are trying to get on the Internal Audit Committee agenda for Washoe County. If they are able to get on the agenda the earliest that audit will be done is in October and the earliest recruitment for the Director position could be started is January or February 2014.

In response to Commissioner Chvilicek regarding are there public hearings, Mr. Solaro said it is only an internal audit but is made up of external business people, not County employees.

Commissioner von Phul thanked the newly appointed Commissioners for their interest, volunteering for this Commission and congratulated them on their appointment.

Commissioner von Phul wanted to discuss the role the Parks Commission is going to play in the upcoming years. Parks functions have been melded in with the Community Services Department. The people who work in the Parks Department are now in three areas of the CSD and Parks is lacking a champion. There is no longer one person, such as a Director of Parks as a champion. He hopes this new Commission could take on some of that role. In the last eight years of being on the Commission they didn't make a lot of important decisions. One example of this is when the Parks Department's budget was cut by 60% Park Commissioners were never asked to make any decisions on the cuts. The Parks Director took

care of those decisions and he feels the new Commission will need to take on a more active role. There is still a Parks Commission yet no real Parks Department even though there is still a Parks system.

Commissioner von Phul added that the official title of this Commission is the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission. Often times the open spaces are neglected and they are a mess. The illegal dumping in open spaces is astonishing. Commissioner von Phul passed around information about illegal dumping and hopes the new Commission will be advocates for a cleaner community.

Bill Whitney clarified that public lands is included when Commissioner von Phul is talking about open space, Commissioner von Phul said yes. It is a community wide problem and feels it is something the new Commissioners need to be aware of.

Commissioner Moen said individual Commissioners have a role. When she started eight years ago she didn't know what her role was going to be. What she came to advocate for was children and family activities especially the swimming pool issue in our community. She hopes that someone in this Commission will take up this issue in her place.

Commissioner Buckley said she will advocate for the pools. When she first came here in the 1980s there were a lot of pools in the community. The population has increased but now there are fewer pools. She will also advocate for golf as well as building more trails in the community.

Commissioner Chvilicek said like Commissioner von Phul, she takes to heart open spaces issues. We need to be good stewards and advocate for alternative recreation activities for families.

Commissioner Nadeau asked Deputy District Attorney Leslie Admirand if it would be okay for the newly appointed Commissioners to introduce themselves, Ms. Admirand said it would.

Commissioner Jacobson said it's been a great eight years. They've addressed many issues in his time. In addressing the Organizational Chart of the CSD, Commissioner Jacobson said he has experience going into an organization and realized that there were silos. He feels there could be five silos and cautioned staff to be on the lookout for this. What they did when they saw that is they tore down the walls and became one organization serving their customers. As this relates to Parks we should keep in mind the Parks Mission Statement. Commissioner read the mission statement and said whatever they do as a department make sure they are serving that mission.

Commissioner Young said his passion is bicycling and hiking. During his tenure we have done a great job of acquiring more land and doing what we can with a shirking budget. Going forward he hopes that CSD will work closer with other agencies to build some of the projects such as more bicycle and hiking trails.

Commissioner von Phul suggested the new Commission should get to personally know the staff in Parks. The staff is an amazing group and very passionate about what they do and have kept the Parks system a float through incredible adversity.

Eric Crump, Park Operations Superintendent asked the current Commissioners what they would recommend to the future Commissioners on the role of the Parks Commission.

Commissioner von Phul said create subcommittees on the Commission for each of the divisions. Parks staff needs a voice or advocate because they can't push issues that need to be pushed.

In response to Scott Pierson, newly appointed Commissioner regarding has there been an issue with Parks Commission getting involved in the day-to-day operations, Mr. Crump said not in his experience. We've never utilized this Commission through the budget process but have in the Strategic Planning several years ago. This may be the right time though with the CSD and thinks it may come in at some point in time.

Mr. Rogers added that this hasn't been a problem but there has been too much of a void and maybe having the subcommittees reporting back to this Commission is an opportunity going forward.

Commissioner Buckley added that it would be useful to staff to have Commission members who understand the budget process or other issues. She sees her role as being a shell for the Parks division and this does sometimes work very well. Having a Commissioner present when there are Parks items before the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) could be helpful especially on issues where staff can't really voice their thoughts, recommendations etc.

Bill Whitney said we are there as staff to the BCC to give them information and recommendations. When we go beyond that it becomes very uncomfortable for both. A third voice such as from the Parks Commission is helpful.

Commissioner Moen added that sometimes items on the BCC agenda cause problems when the Parks Commission is not aware that it is going forward. The recommendation is from staff but knowing the background of the item before going before the BCC during public comment would be helpful.

Commissioner Young agrees knowing ahead of time would be helpful. He also recommended setting 5-10 year goals and how it ties into grants or federal funds. Having other agency representatives come to a Commission meeting to learn more about how we can work together.

Mr. Rogers said another thing for future consideration is a joint meeting with Cities of Reno and Sparks Commissions.

Commissioner Chvilicek said we are here because we have a passion for parks and open spaces. We are staff's strongest advocates and are able to say what others cannot, that this matters to us. Staff has involved us in projects such as Red Hill and now she can be a strong advocate for the development where others might think it's a dump. Another is the development of the North Valleys water park. We can be the voice and let the public know what Parks can do for them. This is the goal, not to get into the daily operations.

Dave Solaro, Acting CSD Director said the conversations are going in a positive direction. Staff needs to hear the Commissioners needs in their role and how they can be a champion for Parks. This Commission is the staff's citizen component to be able to move forward with

projects for the region/community. Staff knowing what things the Commission wants to see before they go before the BCC. In the past, decisions were made then brought to the Commission, Mr. Solaro would like to see this Commission be advocates for things to occur, not after they've happened.

Newly appointed Commissioners were asked to introduce themselves.

Thomas Guinn was born and raised in Reno. He is a Civil Engineer and recently moved back from San Diego. He worked for Carson City Public Works as a Project Manager, then in water utilities and the waste water treatment plant. He understands about budget cuts and woes and can offer his views as he's been in that situation before. One reason he is here is because he took Parks and open spaces for granted. He hopes what he can bring to this Commission is an engineering view.

Nathan Daniel is the Director of the Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation. The mission of the foundation is to support all the parks in the Truckee Meadows. In addition to this Commission, Mr. Daniel also serves on the Reno Parks Commission and could be appointed to the Sparks Parks Commission. He has been attending all the agency Parks meetings and the issues are very similar. There doesn't seem to be a lot of communication between the Commissions but the departments communicate well.

Scott Pierson is new to the area, has been here since January of 2012 coming from Colorado. He has lived in six different states and Reno is the best place he's lived in since Denver. He has been in recreation almost all his life. He has worked for Minnesota Department of Natural Resources working in Parks, state parks, US Fish and Wildlife and as Executive Director of Parks and Recreation districts on the western slope. He can bring a new viewpoint coming from different areas.

Allan Sheakley is retired from sales and marketing. Years ago he wanted to give back to the community and joined different organizations. He was a board member for Clackamas County Parks in Portland Oregon. Having lived in Oregon for 30 years he has a lot of background with what they did with the land and parks.

In response to Commissioner Young regarding the number of Commissioners, Mr. Rogers said there are nine Commission seats. Mark Elkins was appointed but had to resign due to health and family issues. There are still candidates available and will work on having another Commissioner appointed.

Commissioner von Phul suggested an issue Commissioners can get behind is open space dumping. People dump because if you've been to a transfer station you know it is very expensive. We need to work with Waste Management to make it easy for people to do the right thing and take their garbage to the transfer station.

City of Reno recently renegotiated their franchise agreement with Waste Management. They were able to add into the agreement that any customer of Waste Management can go to any transfer station four times a year to dump for free. A similar program in Clark County saw their residential open space dumping decrease. Washoe County and City of Sparks should look at their agreements and get a similar deal. It would go a long way to helping solve the problem.

Commissioner Young added the risk is especially high because Waste Management is taking away your right to put out seven big bags in addition to the green can. It forces people to either dump in open spaces or pay the money for the transfer station. They would rather not spend the money.

Bill Whitney said Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful has the Illegal Dumping Taskforce that is constantly working on the dumping issue. He knows that the County was waiting to see how Reno's renegotiations went with Waste Management. He said if everyone follows Commissioner von Phul's suggestion and tells their elected officials to renegotiate the contract to include reduced dumping fees or making transfer stations more accessible, it might happen.

In response to Nathan Daniel regarding the timeline for negotiation, Mr. Whitney said there is none, but same as with City of Reno, it can be opened up before the agreement expiration.

In response to Commissioner Buckley regarding is this done without public input, Mr. Whitney said he is not directly involved so he is not sure.

Leslie Admirand, Deputy District Attorney said she believes in the current agreement Washoe County does have a couple of free dump days as well but not as many as City of Reno. This is something that can be negotiated as she handles most of the solid waste issues.

Commissioner von Phul said the existing agreement Washoe County has four specific days per year where you can dump all fee items such as a sofa etc. at no cost. Those are specific days, in the City of Reno agreement you can go any day.

Ms. Admirand said those are good items to negotiate and she believes she will be involved in the negotiations.

Commissioner Young said lawn trimmings are another issue and perhaps could be added for free dumping.

Ms. Admirand said it sounds like this is an item that is important and perhaps put on a future agenda for further discussion so there is some sort of action and recommendation for the BCC.

In response to Nathan Daniel regarding how to create subcommittees, Ms. Admirand said because this is a public body, any subcommittee of the public body is subject to the same rules and regulations. During the Park Commission meetings Commissioners can request items to be on a future agenda at the Commissioners Comments.

Commissioner Jacobson added that in the City of Sacramento residents mow and trim their yards, put it in the street and it gets picked up.

Commissioner Buckley added that in Salt Lake they allow this one week in the spring to do the same thing.

In response to Allan Sheakley regarding no dumping signs posted, Jennifer Budge, Park Planner said sometimes yes, sometimes no.

Allan Sheakley added that in Clackamas they worked closely with the Sheriff's Department and had signage. With good signage and more Sheriff presence this could deter people. Commissioner von Phul said the Sheriff's Department has been extremely helpful. They have two hidden cameras at undisclosed areas. There is plenty of signage with more going up as signs do not last long.

Bill Whitney asked if any of the current or future Commissioners have been the entity that helps raise private funding for Parks and, is this something this Commission would be interested in doing. Tina Nappe brought this up a few months ago with funding being cut so drastically and it is a time for the private sector to step up and help with maintenance of parks.

Nathan Daniel said he spoke with Tina Nappe today regarding this same subject. One platform of the Parks Foundation is an endowment. It is administered by the Community Foundation of Western Nevada. They are currently collecting pledges up to \$50,000 then the Community Foundation will collect the money and administer the endowment. The Parks Foundation Board of Directors will then work with the Parks Departments on priorities and use of funds. Contact the Parks Foundation if you and someone else would like to make a pledge.

Bill Whitney added that getting private businesses involved through Adopt-a-Park is another way of getting the community involved.

Commissioner von Phul said another way to fund Parks is Park Districts. Karen Mullen has been working for years to get legislation through to enable this. A difficult process but Karen continues to work on it. We also have Denise Evans who is the Volunteer Coordinator for the Parks. She is more than happy to set up anyone up for Adopt-a-Park.

Jennifer Budge said at the next meeting staff plans on providing a Parks packet to the Commissioners. Packets will be sort of an orientation to educate the Commission on who the staff are, what we do, volunteering information, Adopt-a-Park, Trail or Open Space info and about the 12,000 acres that we own and manage.

Eric Crump added if there is anything specific the Commission wants to please reach out to Joanna Schultz. All Parks Commission meetings are televised except for when we are off site. Previous meetings can be viewed on-demand should Commissioners be interested.

In response to Commissioner Moen regarding placing portable restrooms back in neighborhood parks when budget allows, Mr. Rogers said we're encouraged that we haven't been cut this year and have talked about priorities of reestablishing some of the service levels that were eliminated or reduced. This Commission will be an important part of determining those priorities.

In response to Scott Pierson regarding has this Commission had retreats where goals and objectives have been done, Jennifer Budge said staff has but not this Commission. Mr. Rogers added that the BCC does and it is rolled down to departments.

In response to Tom Guinn regarding with the fiscal year coming up no cuts were mentioned, but has there been an increase or flat lined and does the Parks budget come strictly from the general fund, Mr. Whitney said flat lined. Eric Crump added that a big portion of the budget is general fund. There are a few specific revenue funds for the May Arboretum, May Museum and Washoe Golf Course.

Jennifer Budge added that we also have projects through grants that staff can bill back time.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding Residential Tax for Parks, Ms. Budge said we do have Residential Tax up to \$1,000 per residential new construction when a building permit is pulled. This goes into a Residential Tax District so where that home was constructed there is a fund that goes to build new neighborhood parks 25 acres or less. We are currently working on the Parks Master Plan which is a great time for this Commission to be actively participating in the completion.

Commissioner Buckley said legislation was passed in 1989 and the maximum amount for the tax is \$1,000 and that has never been raised. The price of homes has increased, but this tax has never increased.

In response to Nathan Daniel regarding are plans available online, the timeline of Master Plan and do those funds earn interest, Mr. Rogers said most of it is earning interest. The challenge is the restrictive piece of the legislation. Ms. Budge said the Parks Master Plan link can be found at www.washoecountyparks.com. We're hopeful that we will have a draft plan to present to this Commission and public by the end of the summer.

Commissioner Jacobson said he recalls at one Commission meeting the department presented what was the result of a strategic planning process. He was wondering if the CSD would entertain a strategic planning process to ensure everyone is on the same page.

Mr. Rogers said it was started in the winter of 2006 and was a 6-month process. It involved every employee, multiple forums, external stakeholders and would be a great idea to start back on this. A lot of what was the end result we are not able to implement now but it is a good process. The CSD did a similar process about a year ago. Instead of a 6-month process it was a 3-day process where employees gathered and gave input into a strategic planning process.

Jennifer Budge added that one topic for a future agenda is the update to the Resource Management Plan for the Bureau of Land Management and how the County is involved. Bill Whitney added that it is the Carson City District that is updating their plan. They manage land up to the Pyramid reservation. Jennifer is the point person to interface with them and this would be a good time for this Commission to weigh in.

Ben Hutchins, Finance and Admin Director said as a result of an extensive review of services performed within CSD come up with a structure. The Finance and Admin Division has approximately 33 people and opens up a broad spectrum of additional support available to assist Parks that has been decimated in the past. One recommendation made was moving the Finance and Admin staff out of the Plumas office. We are looking at the Longley Lane, Energy Way and 9th Street locations as possibilities for relocation of staff.

Commissioner Chvilicek said staff needs to be involved in that decision. When you start isolating or fragmenting staff and their base of support goes away people start to feel demoralized.

Mr. Hutchins added that we all do advocate the Parks function and have a passion to make sure that function continues. From the Finance and Admin perspective we want to make sure

that we protect the budget for Parks. We are looking at ways to increase the levels of service from the areas that have been hurt the most and have involved staff through that whole process.

Commissioner Chvilicek said as a consumer and tax payer she wants to find one place or office to look to find a park. She also wants to be able to walk into that office and see that it says "Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space".

Commissioner Nadeau said staff's hearts are in the right place but what he is concerned with is sustainability of parks, recreation, and open space within the CSD. There haven't been many changes in the structure of Washoe County but when people leave is it going to be sustainable and the legacy carried on. As things get blended and lines of responsibility change Commissioner Nadeau is concerned that Parks takes on a secondary role rather than primary.

Dave Solaro said that is part of what we struggle with not only Parks but with Public Works, Water Resources, Community Development and Building and Safety. The change in culture that their trying to affect and continue is to make the entire CSD truly sustainable. One thing the County has not done very well is a succession plan. We are trying to build a culture around the succession plan not only for the positions staff holds but what we provide to the community as well. What Mr. Hutchins was getting at is we are trying to come to a resolution on a piece of the organization. There is a lot of uncertainty in staff about what their part is, where they fit in and we are trying to make business decisions around that. This Commissions' input will be very important as a consumer that we work with through this process.

**4. Recognition and Appreciation of outgoing Open Space and Regional Parks
Commissioners: Chairman Clifton Young, Vice Chairman Bill von Phul, Patty Moen and Robert Jacobson.**

Al Rogers, Projects and Programs Division Director said we want to recognize and thank the outgoing Commissioners for their service. What they have done over eight years by being there and being that champion for Parks is amazing. This item was placed on the agenda to recognize the Commissioners but Mr. Rogers would like to propose a couple of ideas from staff that were brought up.

1. Delay the July meeting and not have it next week as scheduled
2. Have a regular meeting with items discussed during this meeting
3. Have a Park tour and tie-in with a social activity celebrating the outgoing and incoming Commissioners

Commissioner Chvilicek likes the Park tour and social following the meeting. Trying to do a regular meeting would be too intense and elections also need to be done.

Commissioner Nadeau said he would prefer not the third week of July.

Eric Crump said there seems to be a consensus on a meet and greet. Joanna Schultz can also email everyone to compile the information and determine a date and location that works for the majority.

Commissioner Moen would like to have the meeting at Bowers Mansion since this is the first year it's reopened after being closed for a while.

In response to Commissioner Buckley regarding the time and if the meeting was held at the end of July could the August meeting be cancelled, Mr. Rogers said we have to have nine meetings per year and the time does not have to be 2:30 like the regular meetings. The business of this meeting would be the election of the Chair and Vice Chair with a social event following.

In response to Commissioner Moen regarding staff's recommendation on a location, Mr. Crump said any of our regional parks will work, there is something to see in all of them.

Bill Whitney suggested Galena Creek Regional Park.

Commissioner Buckley said she doesn't mind where it is, but if anyone, especially the new Commissioners had a park they'd like to see then it could be held there.

Commissioner Young will be gone the last two weeks of July.

Mr. Rogers suggested the week of July 8th, 4pm-6pm.

Joanna Schultz will send out an email and compile the information.

5. Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner von Phul said on a future agenda he would like to come back in his capacity as Vice President of the Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway with a thank you presentation for Jennifer Budge and Cheryl Surface as administrators of State Question 1.

Commissioner Nadeau would like for a future agenda an Illegal Dumping Taskforce discussion.

Commissioner Chvilicek would like for a future agenda creating a campaign to let the public know where to dump as well as an update on the water park.

Commissioner Buckley would like for a future agenda information and discussion on forming subcommittees.

Chairman Young adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Schultz