

MINUTES

Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission September 2, 2014

Commissioner Jim Nadeau called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.

1. **Roll Call.**

Members present: Ed Harney, Allan Sheakley, Scott Pierson, Jim Nadeau, Thomas Guinn and Nathan Daniel. Anne Buckley has an excused absence

Staff present: Eric Crump, Deputy District Attorney Leslie Admirand, Jennifer Budge, Cheryl Surface, Dave Solaro and Joanna Schultz

2. **Public Comment**

No public comment

3. **Approval of the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting September 2, 2014.**

Motion by Commissioner Guinn to Approve the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting September 2, 2014. Second by Commissioner Daniel. Motion carried

4. **Approval of the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of May 6, 2014.**

Motion by Commissioner Scott to Approve the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of May 6, 2014. Second by Commissioner Harney. Motion carried

5. **Approval of the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of June 3, 2014.**

Motion by Commissioner Sheakley to Approve the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of June 3, 2014. Second by Commissioner Harney. Motion carried

6. **Approval of the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Workshop of June 23, 2014.**

Motion by Commissioner Daniels to Approve the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Workshop of June 23, 2014. Second by Commissioner Guinn. Motion carried

7. **Approval of the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of July 1, 2014.**

Motion by Commissioner Sheakley to Approve the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of July 1, 2014. Second by Commissioner Pierson. Motion carried

8. Presentation by Eagle Scout Hunter Mason on installation of a flagpole at the Galena Creek Recreation Area Visitors Center.

Park Ranger John Keesee introduced Hunter Mason who gave a presentation.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding anticipated costs of project, Mr. Mason said if he did not receive donations he estimates the costs to be \$650.00.

Commissioner Daniel said he knows the area very well; this is a great project and needs to be protected.

Commissioner Nadeau thanked Mr. Hunter. Without the help of the Eagle Scouts Parks would have to do it.

Ranger John added that the Galena Creek recreation area is a partnership with US Forest Service. The property is on US Forest Service land and they gave the approval for this project.

9. Presentation by Eagle Scout Jack Bonnett on a project on Herman's Pond Overlook Deck funded by the Lahontan Audubon Society.

Ranger Marie Fong introduced Jack Bonnett who gave a presentation.

In response to Commissioner Harney regarding how many boys assisted with the project, Mr. Bonnett said 15.

Commissioner Harney thanked Mr. Bonnett for doing a good job, it looks great.

Commissioner Nadeau thanked Mr. Bonnett.

Ranger Fong added that the Lahontan Audubon Society is celebrating their 50th year in Nevada. They funded in part the completion of this project and are continuing to sponsor that area. They are looking at doing a series of hikes this Fall, an exhibit at the Visitor's Center, considering sponsoring new informational placards on the decks, and working with the Nevada National Guard to secure viewing scopes for the deck.

Mr. Bonnett and his troop put in over 300 hours of their time to complete this project. He will continue to volunteer even after the completion of his Eagle Scout.

10. Possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners for the approval of a lease agreement between Washoe County and Great Basin Institute for lease of the residence located in Galena Creek Regional Park.

Eric Crump, Director of Operations said this is a renewal of an existing lease agreement. As the Galena Creek recreational area was developed under a special use permit we hold with the US Forest Service, Washoe County is responsible for staffing and programming for the Visitor's Center. Five years ago when the Visitor's Center opened it was during the economic downturn. The County has some difficulty meeting that obligation and turned to our nonprofit partner Great Basin Institute (GBI) and they have fulfilled this.

The agreement will expire in October. GBI utilizes the house to provide housing for staff that staffs the Visitor's Center. The original agreement was for a 3-year terms with 2-1 year renewals. The terms of the new agreement will be similar in where in lieu of rent for the house they provide staffing and programming.

The agreement is still in review with the Property Manager and was not ready in time for this meeting. The agreement is scheduled for the approval by the Board of County Commissioners at their September 23rd meeting.

In response to Commissioner Pierson regarding AmeriCorps and paid staff, Mr. Crump said they have both staffing the facility.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding GBI does a variety of things not just with Washoe County for the Visitor's Center, Mr. Crump said they have many contracts with several federal and state agencies.

Motion by Commissioner Daniel to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners to approve a lease agreement between Washoe County and Great Basin Institute for lease of the residence located in Galena Creek Regional Park. Second by Commissioner Guinn. Motion carried

11. Discussion and possible action for scheduling a joint meeting with City of Reno Recreation and Parks Commission and City of Sparks Parks and Recreation Commission.

Eric Crump, Director of Operations explained that this item is on the agenda at Commissioner request.

Commissioner Nadeau said Commissioner Buckley mentioned in a previous meeting that she would like this item on the agenda. He thinks it's a good idea and agenda items should be joint interest of all agencies.

Commissioner Pierson said would like the meetings to have a purpose and is open to suggestions.

Motion by Commissioner Guinn for staff to move forward with creating the meeting. Second by Commissioner Sheakley.

Commissioner Daniel suggested dog parks as a possible agenda item.

Commissioner Guinn suggested adding outstanding projects to the agenda to get them moving forward.

Motion carried.

12. Possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners for the approval of an Exhibition Agreement between Washoe County and Advanced Animations, LLC, for the 2015 Spring Exhibit at the Wilbur D May Museum entitled "Grossology".

Kristy Lide, Curator said since 1992 when we built the traveling wing at the Museum we've had different types of exhibits that appeal to the general public, especially children. When staff

considers exhibits they always try to find exhibits that meet with the curriculum of the Washoe County School District.

The traveling exhibits bring in 50% of the Museum's revenue. This exhibit is similar to the animal Grossology exhibit from several years ago and which was a successful exhibit financially. The agreement is still in the negotiations and Ms. Lide is confident it will be finalized soon.

This is a large exhibit that comes in four large semi-trucks. They have been able to negotiate the freight, two technicians to assist with putting it together then taking it apart. Also included in the budget is permanent and seasonal staff salaries and advertisement. The Wilbur May Foundation has underwritten the exhibit for \$100,000.

Proposed fees are \$9/adults, \$8/senior/child and \$6/person for groups of 15 or larger.

In response to Commissioner Guinn regarding do they reach out to the Washoe County School District, Ms. Lide said yes. The success with that has changed over the years with the competition from the Discovery Museum and Art Museum. About 45% of attendees reside in Washoe County with the remaining from outside. Staff will be applying for grants to assist with bussing to increase attendance at the exhibit.

In response to Commissioner Daniel regarding the early shipping schedule of the exhibit, Ms. Lide said it will ship earlier as it will not be available later in May.

Staff will be back to this Commission with a construction project to redo the Garden Court. We have been working on this project with the May Foundation for several years and are getting close to an agreement. The construction would start in May.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding the exhibit from years ago was successful, are there any scholarships to underwrite some of the costs for the schools, Ms. Lide said they are going to reinstate grants hopefully this year. All of the prices have increased from when the exhibits first came out and staff will be working on financial aid from different foundations.

Commissioner Guinn thanked the Wilbur D May foundation for underwriting this exhibit.

Motion by Commissioner Guinn to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners approval of an Exhibition Agreement between Washoe County and Advanced Animations, LLC, for the 2015 Spring Exhibit at the Wilbur D May Museum entitled "Grossology". Second by Commissioner Harney. Motion carried

13. Presentation on Park or Program of the Month featuring the Galena Creek Regional Park including a presentation from Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District on their inaugural Kids Fire Camp.

Eric Crump, Director of Operations said every month we try to feature a park or program. This month is Galena Creek Regional Park.

Chief Charlie Moore, Fire Chief for Truckee Meadows Fire said the Kids Fire Camp is an inaugural debut this summer. It was a great success and in no small way some of that success

is attributed to cooperation with Washoe County Parks. In his line of work there are a lot of tears associated with it and it was such a blessing to have this program be successful.

Chief Moore wanted to publicly express his gratitude and thanks to Ranger John Keesee and Colleen Wallace-Barnum for their help. Without them this program would not have been the success that it was. Chief Moore presented them with a plaque.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding the number of participants and ages, Chief Moore said 30 kids, 10-13 year old boys and girls.

Ranger John gave a presentation.

Colleen Wallace-Barnum, District Manager added that staff from Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District all volunteered their time.

Commissioner Nadeau thanked staff.

14. Update and discussion on proposed off-leash pet area at Hidden Valley Regional Park and possible recommendation to staff on the management of certain area(s) within Hidden Valley Regional Park.

Eric Crump, Director of Operations said back in April he attended a meeting of the Hidden Valley Homeowners Association (HVHOA). During the meeting they brought up some concerns and a proposal to designate certain areas within Hidden Valley Regional Park as off-leash.

The park has two entrances, the Mia Vista entrance and the large entrance off Parkway. The park is roughly 480 acres with approximately 50 acres developed. Between the entrances there is a large open space that goes up into the hill where many of the residents walk their dogs off-leash and have for many years. Staff for the most part didn't pay much attention to this use for various reasons; no complaints and appropriate at the time. However, in the last few years the number of comments and complaints staff has been receiving regarding dogs off-leash and other users have increased experientially parks wide. Mr. Crump receives at least one call a week regarding dogs off-leash.

We have received complaints specific to Hidden Valley asking if dogs need to be leashed in the open space area. By County Code through Chapter 95, any area within the parks system dogs must be leashed unless designated otherwise by the Director. There are two areas designated as off-leash; multiuse pasture at Rancho San Rafael Regional Park and the Link Piazza dog park at Hidden Valley Regional Park. In the last year staff has started to increase compliance of this code in the open space area of Hidden Valley.

At the April HVHOA meeting Mr. Crump heard many complaints with the vast majority wanting further discussion on designating an off-leash area. This prompted staff to hold a public input meeting on August 28th where staff gave background on how we got to where we are, took comments and sent out a survey. Twenty seven (27) people attended the meeting and to date have received 65 responses to the survey. The survey is still open and we anticipate keeping it open for a few more weeks.

Staff is not seeking a recommendation from the Commission today simply providing all the information and requesting comments. A full report will be brought to the Commission in October with staff recommendation.

This is a user group that is underserved with only two locations. There are advantages and challenges to designating an off-leash area. Users going to an off-leash area recognize that they are likely to encounter dogs off-leash vs users going to an area not off-leash and encounter dogs off leash. That's when they call and ask us what we're going to do about it.

A survey was conducted at the meeting to pinpoint what that area look like. The undeveloped area is very large (400+ acres) and the majority would like the whole area designated. Mr. Crump feels that is not the solution but there are areas that would be conducive to off leash. This would provide a different experience from the Link Piazza dog park which is turf and fenced. It's more of a social area for people with dogs running around.

In response to Commissioner Guinn regarding the liability to Washoe County when you allow dogs off leash, Mr. Crump said no liability as long there is signage. When we opened the Link Piazza dog park the signs were review by Risk Management. Signs needed to state the rules such as no aggressive dogs, dogs must be under control, up-to-date on shots etc. As longs as those rules, much like any recreation area are clearly identified it releases Washoe County of liability.

Public Comment:

Melvin Choy, Hidden Valley resident said he has been a resident of Reno for the 70 years and a business owner for 35 years. This is a highly emotional issue with a lot of people. Washoe County has two parks that are designated off-leash areas. Parks claims 95 acres is developed at the Hidden Valley Park and this is an issue exclusive to Hidden Valley but could come up for other parks. He disagrees with having a dedicated area for Hidden Valley. He would like it to be an open space area so users would have multiple uses. There are 12,000 acres of park land and only 11 rangers. He feels if you open up everything it would save money and time for all by leaving it open space with multi use and allow off leash.

Mr. Crump said the next steps would be for Commissioners to look at the information, if there are comments to contact him. Staff will also be looking at the information and creating a report that would be brought back to the October meeting with a potential recommendation. He feels that this is neither an easy decision nor one to take lightly. Since the meeting he has received two emails from users who have serious concerns.

In response to Commissioner Daniel regarding the map, Mr. Crump said the undeveloped area is in the blue circle called Inner Loop all the way out to the red lines then everything east up into the hills. There is a fence line that runs along the eastern side, but not to the eastern border of the property that keeps the horses from coming into the developed areas. A lot of the residences were supportive of designating an off-leash area on the east side of that fence.

Mr. Crump added that this would not be a dedicated area rather than a designation of off-leash that does not prohibit other users from using the area. They just use it knowing that they could encounter an off-leash dog.

Commissioner Nadeau said he has also received feedback. There was a real appreciation from the residents that the meeting was held.

Commissioner Daniel said this is an issue that would be easier to accommodate all user groups if parks weren't operating at a 60% reduction in the budget and incredible number of reduced staffing than what is required to manage this kind of area and issues.

Commissioner Guinn would like opinions from maintenance staff on clean up and effort it would take to maintain

Mr. Crump added that he would like to recognize Park Planner Jennifer Budge and District Park Manager Colleen Wallace-Barnum. They helped him put the meeting together.

15. Parks Reports

Eric Crump, Director of Operations highlighted reports.

Jennifer Budge, Park Planner highlighted the Planning report.

In response to Commissioner Guinn regarding the time limit to send responses on the Pyramid/395 connector project, Ms. Budge said they did not give a deadline, it was very open-ended.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding the Sky Ranch Park athletic usage, Ms. Budge said the park is still open to the public but we no longer permit athletic leagues.

Ms. Budge added that they receive a lot of calls from the public on the status of the park, why is it not sold, and if it were, where would the money go. They are hoping to have terms agreed upon in the next couple of months then she could give a little more detail on the timelines. Proceeds from the sale of the park would go back into the into the Park District 2C funds so we can construct another park or expand a neighborhood park.

In response to Commissioner Daniel regarding buyer for the Sky Ranch Park, Ms. Budge said Pyramid Urban Achievers Limited Liability Company.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding the issue with Sky Ranch Park is the ingress and egress, Ms. Budge said yes. When the park was constructed in the late 80s it was agricultural and farm land. Now that Pyramid Highway is heavily traveled we don't want balls flying out on Pyramid from athletic play, kids crossing the street and creating an unsafe situation.

16. Director's Report

Dave Solaro, Director said the Organizational Chart provided is for Operations only. He will send the rest of the Community Services Department once the draft has been reviewed.

Mr. Solaro and Eric Crump will be putting together a schedule of completion of the changes to Chapter 95. Commissioners can call or send comments/suggestions to him or Mr. Crump. A draft for review by this Commission is expected sometime in December with the final expected to go to the Board of County Commissioners in January.

To better understand how we can use WC-1 funds staff has sent questions to Deputy District Attorney Leslie Admirand who has forwarded them to Bond Council. It will be at least another month or so until we have an answer on the status and what we can use that money for.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding WC-1 expiration, Mr. Solaro said he doesn't think the issue is expiration. There are three categories of funding with various levels of funding within. We've completed some projects and there are people looking for funding for their projects and the question is whether we can move the money around.

Jennifer Budge, Park Planner said Commissioner Nadeau may be thinking of State Question 1. It had an expiration date and we just brought a renewal on the agreement with the State back to the Board of County Commissioners to expire in 2019. The original agreement date was 2010. WC-1 as far as she is aware does not have an expiration date but that is a clarification Bond Counsel can make.

Mr. Solaro said the Wilbur May Foundation not only donated \$100,000 for the exhibit but also donated another \$200,000 restricted for operations support of the Museum.

17. Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Nadeau would like an agenda item to discuss how extensive Park Reports should be.

Commissioner Guinn would like to know from staff what takes up most of their time.

Commissioner Sheakley said Washoe Golf course is improving and staff is doing a good job of maintaining it.

18. Public Comment

No Public Comment

Chairman Nadeau adjourned the meeting at 3:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Schultz