

MINUTES

Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission November 1, 2016

Commissioner Thomas Guinn called the meeting to order at 2:36 p.m.

1. **Roll Call**

Members Present: Thomas Guinn, Nathan Daniel, Janet Davis, Anne Buckley, Doug Doolittle and Austin Olson. Al Sheakley had an excused absence.

Board of County Commission Liaison: Jeanne Herman

Staff Present: Dave Solaro, Eric Crump, Deputy District Attorney Herb Kaplan, Colleen Wallace Barnum, Mike Furlong, Rick Hollinger, Bill Carlos, Dennis Troy, Cheryl Surface and Joanna Schultz

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

3. **Public Comments**

No Public Comment

4. **Approval of the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of November 1, 2016**

Motion by Commissioner Olson to approve the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of November 1, 2016. Second by Commissioner Davis. Motion carried.

5. **Approval of the Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of October 4, 2016**

Commissioner Buckley requested that the Minutes reflect that she had an excused absence. Note: The October 4, 2016 Minutes reflect that Commissioner Buckley had an excused absence. No change was made.

Motion by Commissioner Daniel to approve the Minutes of the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of October 4, 2016. Second by Commissioner Buckley. Motion carried.

6. **Acknowledgement and recognition of Park Operations staff for their outstanding service and contributions to Washoe County**

Dave Solaro, Director of Community Services recognized two employees: Mike Furlong for 15 years of service and Rick Hollinger for 20 years of service. Robert Brown and Bob Miller with 15 years of service each were not in attendance, but Director Solaro wanted to acknowledge their service to the County.

Commissioner Guinn said on behalf of this Commission thank you, your service is appreciated.

Commissioner Buckley also thanked staff for their service and it speaks very well for the department that there is so many staff with long years of service.

7. **Presentation and update by May Arboretum Horticulturist Bill Carlos**

Bill Carlos, Horticulturist, gave a presentation.

Commissioner Doolittle congratulated Mr. Carlos on receiving the Gold Leaf Award. Staff is doing a great job.

Commissioner Buckley also thanked Mr. Carlos.

Commissioner Guinn said that when he first started on this Commission they voted on Phase I of the fencing. They said hopefully four years for Phase II and to know that Phase III and IV are going in now says a lot for the donations, volunteering and hard work staff is doing. He is looking forward to seeing it finished.

8. **Update on the Little Valley Fire**

Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent, gave a presentation on the areas affected by the fire.

Ms. Wallace Barnum introduced Dennis Troy, Park Planner to give an update on the BAER (Burn Area Emergency Response) Team.

Dennis Troy, Park Planner, said he and Cheryl Surface, Natural Resource Planner are a part of the BAER Team along with staff from the Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF), Truckee Meadows Fire, US Forest Service, NDOT, TMWA, County Roads and Bureau of Land Management. Ms. Surface is the team lead with Mr. Troy assisting. The team is in place to assess the fire post burn, evaluate and minimize immediate threats to property, as well as prevent any unacceptable resource damage.

This fire burned hot and fast moving very quickly with 70-90 mph winds and then was put out with 5-6 inches of rain. The hillsides are completely denuded of all vegetation, so we move from a fire event to a flood event. With all the vegetation being denuded, we are seeing new drainages pop up everywhere and some of the remaining homes are being flooded out. Twenty three homes, 17 out buildings and 7 barns were burned. There was no loss of life, but did lose one mare.

The team took a look at the site, which was approximately 2,000 acres, and divide it into two areas; mountain area (from Little Valley over the crest) and ranch area (Franktown Road corridor), which includes all the residences out to Washoe Lake. The assessment of the burn areas has been completed and the BAER Team has gone into approximately 30 privately owned parcels to help out with potential flooding threats to homes and immediate hazards.

Currently the County's Roads crew is out on JS Bar Ranch Road and Ranch Road putting in silk fencing and straw waddles on the uphill side. With this latest rain fall, we have about another foot of erosion in some of the gullies. We are seeing tremendous amounts of sediment transport in some of the drainages.

NDF has a vested interest in this and is working proactively with all the homeowners to assist as much as possible. They've been felling trees perpendicular of the hillside to prevent the sediment from coming down the hillsides.

The BAER Team has been meeting with homeowners on a case-by-case basis. The team will meet tomorrow to prioritize the assessment sheets for each individual property. The BAER team will be active in restoration efforts for probably the next two years and is currently stabilizing potential hazards before the winter freeze. In the spring we'll probably do some hydro seeding and actively be out on the site for the next two years.

NDOT crews have been working along Franktown Road with survey crews going through all the culverts and anticipate they'll have their other vector up here, at the end of the week.

In response to Commissioner Doolittle regarding funding being in place, Mr. Troy said right now there is not. They need to put together a list of priorities and determine the quantities of material needed first. The emergency order expired yesterday, but NDF has their finance staff searching for funding.

In response to Commissioner Buckley regarding locations of the straw barriers, Mr. Troy said most of it is on private properties, as well as in roadway right-of-ways. We are cleaning out the culverts and placing them on the uphill side to keep the culverts from getting plugged up. One of the biggest issues they're facing is that Franktown Ditch runs through the middle of the hillside. There are 12-15 homes located within 50-100 yards below that ditch and what we've seen is the sediment from the uphill side slowly dropping into the ditch, filling it up and overflowing, or breaching in some cases. Last Monday NDF crews were there digging it out by hand and today you can't tell they were out there.

In response to Commissioner Doolittle regarding impact to County property, specifically the areas above Bowers Mansion and Davis Creek, Mr. Troy said there is standing water in the fields. Ms. Wallace Barnum said that the areas above Bowers and Davis were not impacted.

In response to Commissioner Buckley regarding reimbursement of costs, Mr. Troy said NDF has a vested interest and have been cooperative with getting crews out and felling logs. It was explained to him today that their hands are somewhat tied by what they can and cannot spend their monies on. They do have quite a bit of money for fire suppression efforts; however what we are doing right now, by their definition, is not considered suppression because the fire is contained.

Commissioner Guinn said he was in the volunteer evacuation zone for this fire and it is unfortunate with all the houses that were lost. We did learn a good lesson from this. They turn off the ringer to their house phone because of telemarketers. This does not do any good when you have a reverse 911 call to tell you to get out of your house. The coordination efforts by all agencies notifying residents are appreciated.

Ms. Wallace Barnum added that the response efforts were tremendous and the EOC stood up for the majority of the day. Things were changing rapidly and they were really proud to not have any loss of life, their main goal.

Mr. Troy added that the majority of people he spoke with who either lost their home, or did not receive the reverse 911 call because they did not have landlines. What you can do, if you have a cell phone, is go to readywashoe.com and enter that number.

9. **Introduction of new Parks Operations Superintendent Colleen Wallace Barnum**

Eric Crump, Operations Division Director, introduced Colleen Wallace Barnum. Ms. Wallace Barnum has many years' experience with Washoe County Parks, starting as a Seasonal Park Aide Ranger in 1995 and has worked as a Park Ranger, District Ranger and most recently a District Manager. Ms. Wallace Barnum holds a Bachelor's Degree from University of Massachusetts and a Master's Degree from UNR. She understands the value of parks and the value they give our community. When she is not working she is consistently recreating in our parks with her family. Ms. Wallace Barnum has many great relationships with many of our partner agencies, Forest Service, BLM and a lot of our nonprofit partners. She has been serving on the Board of the Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation since 2013 and Mr. Crump has had the privilege to work with Ms. Wallace Barnum for the 10 years he's been with the County and is truly excited to continue that relationship.

Ms. Wallace Barnum said she is glad to be here and excited for the opportunity.

Commissioner Doolittle congratulated Ms. Wallace Barnum and it's good to see her growing with the department.

10. **Review, discussion and possible authorization for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Chair to sign a letter on behalf of the Commission to the Board of County Commissioners regarding Parks budget allocations (requested by Commissioner Daniel)**

Commissioner Daniel said he will draft the letter and asks this item be brought forward to the next meeting for review and approval of this Commission.

Commissioner Guinn said he thinks it's a great idea, especially now to secure funding.

Commissioner Daniel said part of the issue is he is having a hard time with the numbers. It looks like there was a \$2,000-3,000 increase in General Funds, but that may cover cost of living increases. He would like assistance with looking at the budget, to write the letter. Commissioner Doolittle said he would be happy to assist.

Commissioner Buckley said she feels the letter had some affect. In the State of the County, Manager Slaughter addressed funding for Parks. He said Parks received a \$4million increase. This money is what was set aside for new parks and park improvements and not an increase in funding for Parks. It made it look like we received that funding. The population is increasing, the work is increasing, but the funding is not there to cover and hasn't been for eight years.

Commissioner Doolittle said it's not just the new parks being brought online, but the additional resources necessary to manage the parks. That infrastructure needs to be maintained, but without the additional funding the park system is slowly going to erode.

Commissioner Daniel said he will get the letter drafted and send it forward for edits.

In response to Commissioner Guinn regarding edits to the letter, Deputy District Attorney Herb Kaplan said edits can be added before the meeting.

Commissioner Guinn said that if you look through the project highlights, there are a lot of them. Expansions, new improvements and this all come with maintenance costs. Last year's letter helped and Commissioner Herman said some words to convey our frustrations and worries about

future funding. We congratulate staff with 10, 15, 20 years of service and understands their frustration. A letter is a good thing.

Motion by Commissioner Doolittle to move this item forward to the next meeting. Second by Commissioner Buckley. Motion carried.

Commissioner Daniel apologized for not having the letter available.

11. **Park Reports**

Colleen Wallace Barnum highlighted reports.

Eric Crump, Operations Division Director, said the annual meeting with the Wilbur May Foundation took place last week. Everything went well and they have committed to additional support to operations and special projects for the May Center. The annual report will be presented to this Commission at a future meeting.

In response to Commissioner Guinn the Pumpkin Walk cancelled, Ms. Wallace Barnum said yes it was cancelled. It was very popular and there needs to be some refining to the program. Some ideas include online ticketing, time slot reservations, as thousands of people come to this even. A better organized event for the future needs to be assessed.

12. **Director's Report**

Dave Solaro, Director, said the Commission Chambers is going through some renovations and that will affect this Commission's meeting location for December and January. Director Solaro let Commissioners know that if there is a spot they would like to hold those meetings, to let him know.

Eric Crump, Operations Division Director, said the City of Reno and Sparks have requested another joint meeting. They are potentially looking at holding the meeting in December.

Director Solaro said on October 25th, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) heard a staff report from staff regarding Washoe Golf Course. The BCC requested staff to continue negotiations with the current operator of the golf course for a 4 ½ year license agreement to operate, as well as provide negotiations to cover the outstanding amounts due to the Golf Enterprise Fund. Director Solaro and Deputy District Attorney Michael Large are working through this and will meet with the group tomorrow to discuss this. The timing is very important, as the current license ends December 31st and this will need to go back to the BCC.

In response to Commissioner Daniel regarding the \$400,000 Bell-Men Golf owes, if not awarded the license agreement, Director Solaro said we were still working with them on payment of the outstanding balance, as directed by the BCC, and would have kept that process going.

In response to Commissioner Doolittle regarding rumored/potential litigation, Director Solaro said he has not seen anything, or have heard from their attorney.

Commissioner Buckley said she was at the BCC meeting on October 25th and it was remarkable the number of people who were there in support of the two local vendors. It occurred to her that it would probably be good to bring supporters of Parks, to the BCC meeting.

Commissioner Guinn said he was part of the evaluation of the golf operators/managers. It was a very fair process and they were all close. He commended staff for their professionalism.

13. **Commissioner's Comment**

In response to Commissioner Davis regarding the joint meeting, Commissioner Guinn said no, it is not set.

Commissioner Guinn said the last joint meeting with City of Reno and Sparks was held in Reno.

Commissioner Daniel said City of Reno will not be meeting in December.

Commissioner Doolittle requested putting off the meeting until after the first of the year.

Commissioner Guinn agrees with Commissioner Doolittle and suggested holding the meeting at the McKinley Park location.

Commissioner Herman said she received a lot of emails regarding Washoe Golf and one from one of the applicants who didn't like the process and is very unhappy about it.

Commissioner Herman said we are still coming back from a bad time and are just now getting the Assessor's lists. The County is really working hard to understand everyone's problems and budget needs. It is good to have letters and suggestions. If it is an issue that affects you or somebody you know, show up to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meetings because you have a powerful voice.

Commissioner Herman suggested holding the joint meeting at North Valleys Regional Park.

Commissioner Guinn would like staff to bring back to the next meeting the list of evaluation criteria and package for the Washoe Golf RFP. It was a substantial package where applicants needed to predict future profits, Washoe County's portion, and their maintenance plan. It was a very fair process and as far as his judging, everyone came within a few points of each other. Commissioner Guinn always put what's best for Washoe County and his scores reflected that. He feels it's important for staff to show what evaluation criteria was used in the process.

Commissioner Buckley said at the BCC meeting they did show each applicant's scores.

14. **Public Comment**

No Public Comment

15. **Adjournment**

3:49 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanna Schultz