



Washoe County

COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Operations Division

STAFF REPORT

COMMISSION MEETING DATE: April 5, 2016

DATE: April 5, 2016

TO: Open Space and Regional Parks Commission

FROM: Jennifer Budge, CPRP, Park Operations Superintendent

THROUGH: Dave Solaro, Director, Community Services Department

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

SUMMARY

Washoe County Code Chapter 95-Parks and Recreation is specific to Washoe County's Regional Parks and Open Space functions, the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission and the County's park facilities and parklands. Throughout the years there have been minor changes to Chapter 95; however, the last major update was done in 1987. The code has become outdated and lacks cohesive organization, making it difficult for the public to understand and for staff to enforce. The Board of County Commissioners directed staff in July, 2014 to evaluate the existing code. Staff has spent a significant amount of time evaluating the code and researching best practices through the nation in an effort to assure the County's park facilities provide a safe and enjoyable experience for the public. Also, with the changing environment, and the creation of the Community Services Department, other changes to Chapter 95 are needed.

The purpose of this item is to allow for discussion and input from the public as well as the Open Space and Regional Park Commission, with possible recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners for future consideration.

PREVIOUS ACTION

July 1, 2009- Open Space and Regional Parks Commission recommended to the Board of County Commissioners approval of the changes to Washoe County code, Chapter 95 – Parks and Recreation.

June 2, 2009 – The Open Space and Regional Parks Commission provided input on proposed changes to Washoe County Code Chapter 95 – Parks and Recreation (no action taken).

2004 – The Board of County Commissioners amended code to reflect the department name to Regional Parks and Open Space.

2003 – The Board of County Commissioners amended code to reflect the commission name change to Open Space and Regional Parks Commission.

2002 – The Board of County Commissioners amended the section of code regarding the collection of fees.

1987 – The Board of County Commissioners approved updates to several sections of the code.

BACKGROUND

The Department involved many staff in reviewing and recommending changes to the Code. The recommended changes to the Code include reorganization from three general areas into eight more specific categories to make it easier to research and understand. The original areas were:

- Open Space and Regional Parks Commission
- Department of Regional Parks and Open Space
- Use of County Park System Facilities

The new specific categories are:

- General Regulations
- Motor Vehicles
- Non-Motorized Vehicles
- Domestic Animals
- Visitor conduct
- Overnight Use
- Cultural, Historic, Natural and Wildlife
- Enforcement

The ordinance is arranged first by itemizing the sections to be repealed, then the new sections to be included, and finally the sections to be amended.

The deleted sections are as follows:

- Definitions were found in two areas so they were combined and expanded upon in section 95.010.
- Open Space and Regional Parks Commission, sections 95.030-95.100 were condensed and included in section 95.020 in the new General Regulations category.
- 95.260 regarding abusive language was revised and included in the Enforcement category.
- Names of Parks and Recreation Facilities are no longer included in County Code.

The new sections include:

- A section on electrically-powered, gasoline-powered and remote/radio controlled devices as Code was silent on these issues.
- A section on the use of food storage lockers to address the issue of bears and other animals in the campground.

There were several sections with recommended changes. Major changes include:

- Groups in excess of 25 must have a valid group use permit for functions. This change will address the use of community parks and non-reservable areas in the regional parks for activities not compatible with those areas.
- The section on bicycles is expanded to address unsafe activities in the parks.
- Enforcement authority is now given to park staff to issue warnings and notices of violation, which would be a misdemeanor.

Public input was received from the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission at two public meetings and the Park Commission formally recommended these changes on July 7, 2009. The highlighted changes, additions and modifications proposed include:

- Reduction in number of meetings of Open Space and Regional Parks Commission.
- Provision for designating off-leash areas in parks.
- Provision for use of remote control devices in parks.
- Provisions for use of food storage lockers in parks.
- Adding powers for enforcement officers to issue notices of violation and citations for violations of Chapter 95.

We have included a copy of the draft ordinance and are looking for input from the public and the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission.