



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Administrative Office Building located at 5841 Brookshire Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28216 on Wednesday, October 7, 2009 at 6:00 p.m.

**PRC MINUTES
October 7, 2009**

ATTENDANCE

Present: Brad Pearce – Chair
John Barry – Exec. Secretary
Rob Brisley
Jeff Tarte
Scott McClure
Paul Bailey
Charles McRee
Brenda McMoore
Owen Furuseth
Tim Morgan, Vice Chair
David Morgan
Jim Garges
Dot Law

Absent Beverly Lawston (Personal)
Norman Mitchell

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Brad Pearce, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Commissioner Tarte.

Welcome and Introduction

Proclamations and Awards

Public Appearance – Trail of History Update

Gwen Cook, Greenway Planner, introduced Dr. Tony Zeiss, CPCC President an avid history buff, to give an update to the Park and Recreation Commission on the “Trail of History” planned for Little Sugar Creek. Prior to Dr. Zeiss’ presentation, Gwen gave an update on the Urban Section of Little Sugar Creek Greenway:

7th Street to Elizabeth Avenue: This project consists of two phases. Phase I, part of the CPCC Culinary Arts building is nearly complete, including landscaping and sidewalk improvements along King's Drive in front of the Duke substation and a path adjacent to the Culinary Arts building. Phase II will begin after the CPCC parking deck is complete, however, construction is on hold until bonds are sold.

Elizabeth to Charlottetowne: This three block section is not under construction and is under review by NCDOT as we wait for them to give an encroachment agreement. The Department continues to work with them to address any concerns. This project will be largely paid for by a \$4.4 million NCDOT grant. The Department hopes to award a construction contract before the end of the year. Coordination with the May 20th Society for accommodations for the placement of Captain Jack, the first statue in the "Trail of History" continue.

Charlottetowne to Pearl Parkway: This section is primarily the Metropolitan section. Plantings and irrigation are in and should be 2 – 4 weeks to completion.

Pearl Parkway to Morehead: This section will hopefully be completed by next spring. The construction of the Rotary Clock Tower will begin soon. The fountain is taking shape.

The entire stretch from 7th to Morehead should be open by fall of 2010 except for the parking lot section at the CPCC Culinary Arts building; until the deck is complete.

Gwen Cook then introduced **Dr. Tony Zeiss** to update the Park and Recreation Commission on the "**Trail of History**". Dr. Zeiss shared that the Trail of History Inc. was organized to continue the "Trail of History" statues along Little Sugar Creek Greenway. This organization, currently applying for 501C3 status, will raise money and develop a series of representational statues of key Mecklenburg County historic figures that developed Mecklenburg County and will be done in chronological order. As they are placed, they will be gifted to the County through Park and Recreation. The first and largest statue, (2 ½ times life size), in the series will be Captain James Jack. Captain Jack carried the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence in June of 1775 to the Continental Congress. There will be a private unveiling on May 19, 2010 for the donors who raised \$525,000 for this first statue and a public unveiling on May 20, 2010. Plans for the second statue, Thomas Spratt, are underway.

Dr. Zeiss reminded the Commission of the \$8.3 million in appropriated construction bonds for LSC GW Urban Section that will complete this project when released.

Gwen Cook said that a contract is near completion between Mecklenburg County and the Trail of History Inc. for the gifting and acceptance of the statues to the County. The document will go to the Trail of History committee for review and then ultimately to the Board of County Commission for approval.

Jim Garges, Director, thanked Dr. Zeiss for passion and interest and for his professional and personal time to make this project what it is.

(NOTE: Pictures of the Captain Jack Statue are included in the PRC Minutes Binder, October, 2009, **Agenda Item 3**, housed in the Director's office.)

Program Presentation: Greenway Planning and Development

Blue Line Extension: Creating Connections: Julie Clark, Division Director of Greenway Planning and Development, introduced Joe Mangum, Greenway Planner, to present information on the Blue Line Extension and how greenway team is working to integrate into the city's transportation system. Joe Mangum explained that the Blue Line Extension is an extension of the existing light rail line from uptown northeast to I-485. The Greenway Division sees the benefit of connecting greenways with light rail to encourage bicycle and pedestrian transportation. (**NOTE:** The PowerPoint presentation is included in the PRC Minute's Binder, October, 2009, **Agenda Item 4**, housed in the Director's office.)

Julie Clark praised the greenway team for consistently being at the table with CATS with options and ideas and for their diligence and constant advocacy for the integration of pedestrian and bike connections into the City's transportation plan.

Appointments –Advisory Councils – Applicants

- a. **CPD I:** In the absence of the PRC Chair for CPD I, appointments and applications were deferred to the November 10, 2009 PRC meeting.
- b. **Cultural Arts:** *Motion was made by Commissioner Brisley to appoint Eric Ritchie, Maggie Giraud and Kia Lockhart to a full term expiring 6/2012, which was seconded by Commissioner David Morgan and approved unanimously.*
- c. **Senior Citizens:** *Motion was made by Commissioner Brisley to appoint Vickie Flowe and Mary Wallace to a full term, expiring 6/2012, which was seconded by Commissioner Tarte and approved unanimously.*
- d. **Stewardship:** *Motion was made by Commissioner David Morgan to appoint Amber Paddock to an unexpired vacancy, expiring 6/2010, which was seconded by Commissioner Tarte and approved unanimously.*

Director's Report – Jim Garges

Director Jim Garges Reported the following:

- a. **911 Memorial:** The Department is working with Commissioner Brisley and the Fire Fighters Foundation on a 911 memorial for the 10 year anniversary.
- b. **Eastway Park Opening:** Director Garges thanked Commissioner Furuseth for the nice job he did at the Eastway Park opening ceremony. The park looked great and the neighbors expressed appreciation for the effort placed on this park.
- c. **Economic Value Study:** Jim reported that we now have several partners (Trust for Public Land, Charlotte, Catawba Lands Conservancy, Partners for Parks and Charlotte Regional Visitor's Authority) for the Economic Value Study at \$5000 each towards the \$40,000 project cost to be completed by Peter Harnik of Trust for Public Land, Washington, DC. This study will be an important tool to show the economic benefits of the County's investment in parks, recreation services as

well as air quality and environmental protection. The first committee meeting with Peter Harnik will be held at 10 a.m. on November 12, 2009 at the Administrative Office Building.

- d. **Bond Projects/County Issuance of Debt:** The County is in the process of deciding how to distribute the next issuance of \$150 million in debt. The biggest contenders will be Park and Recreation, Public Library, CPCC, CMS and the Jail Project. The Department has presented their needs to the BOCC of \$38 million (an amount that can be spent in one year). This amount will cover \$10 million for land and the balance will get every greenway project and park project started on the Unsold Bond Project List. (**NOTE:** This list is included in the PRC Minute's Binder, October, 2009, Agenda Item 8b, housed in the Director's office.) Jim asked that the Commissioners work together to determine the best method to advocate to the BOCC for the \$38 million needed for Park and Recreation.
- e. **Berewick Center Reimbursement:** The Berewick Recreation Center, which is ready to open, was funded and built by CMS. Reimbursement from the County for this cost was included in the 2008 Bond referendum. The school is asking for reimbursement and this cost will come out of any debt amount allocated to Park and Recreation.
- f. **Land Acquisition:** Jim reminded the Commission that property identified for land acquisition in the 07 bond referendum was primarily for natural resource protection, Mountain Island Lake and critical natural areas and that all the property owners have been contacted. Letters have gone out to the land owners of the property identified for preservation in the 08 bond referendum and soon to go out to the property owners of land identified for parks. (\$60 million in the 08 bond referendum was allotted for land acquisition.) The Department continually evaluates the original list of identified properties as new offers and opportunities arise. Commissioner Pearce suggested the Department re-examine the population growth estimates used to determine neighborhood park gaps in case there may be a need to reallocate money from potential need to actual need. Jim agreed and added that the Department continues to also look for opportunities to partner with CMS in order to fill neighborhood park gaps with existing school properties.
- g. **Romare Bearden Artwork:** Jim shared that he recently attended an Arts and Science Council meeting regarding the Romare Bearden Artwork, of which he is a member of the committee, and will be advocating for an interactive piece of art since it will be in the children's area of the park. He also noted that \$256,000 has been set aside for the artwork made up of funds from the 1% bond allocation for art, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, an Arts and Science Council gift and private money. Additional fund raising both for the art and for the park will be necessary and this was discussed at the meeting as well.

Staff Reports and Requests

PRC Chair Report

Chair Pearce reminded the Commission members of the following:

- Share with their Advisory Councils the information learned at the PRC meetings so that the council members are aware of the issues and changes facing the Department as well as to keep them informed of the bigger picture and not just the issues facing their particular district or specialty.

- Encourage council members to advocate to the Board of County Commissioners for the \$38 million the Department is requesting from the upcoming County issuance of debt. Put this on the agenda for upcoming meetings.
- Make sure to use council members as a source of ideas. Sometimes the best ideas come from disgruntled citizens turned advocate. Pass those ideas on to staff.

Consent Items:

Motion was made by Commissioner Barry to approve all consent items, including the September 8, 2009 PRC minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Tarte and approved unanimously.

Park Commissioners Reports and Requests

Commissioner Tim Morgan invited everyone to attend “grilling on the green” on October 22 at 12 noon. This picnic, arranged by John McClelland, is held on the greenway at Highway 51. Participants are made up of a diverse group of greenway users and advocates.

Commissioner David Morgan invited everyone to attend a Northern Town Nature Preserve Tour on Monday, October 12. This is an all day event with lunch included.

Commissioner Tarte reminded everyone of the McDowell greenway opening on Saturday.

Commissioner Tarte shared that Huntersville is getting ready to build a massive sportsplex. This may be something that the Department would like to get involved with. Director Garges said that this is a 41 acre tract given to the Town of Huntersville by the Griffin Brothers of Griffin Tire in exchange for the use of another piece of property.

Ajournment

Having no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.