



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at Jetton Waterfront Hall located at 19000 Jetton Road, Cornelius, NC on Tuesday, March 8, 2011 at 6 p.m.

**PRC MINUTES**  
**March 8, 2011**

**ATTENDANCE**

**PRC Present:**

Rob Brisley, Chair  
Beverly Cotton Lawston, Vice Chair  
Charlie McRee, Executive Secretary  
Norman Mitchell (Left at 8 p.m.)  
Philip Carey  
Ed Barnhart  
Kendel Bryant  
Elaine Powell  
Doug Burnett  
Brenda McMoore  
Paul Bailey  
Jeff Tarte  
Joe Pata

Jim Garges

**Guest Present:**

Jeff Fissel, Historic Rural Hill  
Ed McLean, Historic Rural Hill  
Blaine Gregory, Historic Rural Hill Consultant  
Jim Puckett, Former County Commissioner and Historic Rural Hill Board Member  
Lee Cochrane, The Housing Partnership  
Dan Dodd, LandDesign  
Ashley Hood, LandDesign

**Absent:**

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Rob Brisley, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance. Each Commissioner introduced themselves and their area of representation. Chair Brisley thanked Commissioner Tarte for hosting staff and PRC at his home prior to the evenings meeting.

## **Welcome and Introductions:**

James Worsley, North Region General Manager, welcomed the PRC to Jetton Park Waterfront Hall and shared information on the amenities at the park.

## **Proclamations and Awards - None**

### **Public Appearance – Historic Rural Hill Master Plan Update**

Jeff Fissel, Executive Director of Historic Rural Hill, introduced himself and Ed McLean, Sr. Development Director, and Blaine Gregory, Consultant. Mr. Fissel shared some basic background on Rural Hill; a 265 acre historical property serving as an education facility, working farm and event site; founded in 1760 by Major John Davidson. Historic Rural Hill is a 501C-3 non-profit with a long term partnership with Mecklenburg County and is best known for events such as the Scottish Festival and Loch Norman Highland Games, the Amazing Maize Maze and the Sheep Dog Trials. New events scheduled for this year are Bark in the Park, NC Brewers and Music Festival and the Warrior Dash. All events have a significant economic impact on the Lake Norman areas as well as the hotel and tourism business. Mr. Fissel introduced Blaine Gregory, Consultant to present the updated Historic Rural Hill Master Plan.

Blaine Gregory provided a general overview of Rural Hill and the updated Historic Rural Hill Master Plan including:

- Goals
- Capital Development Plans
- Programming Plan
- Business and Financial Affairs

(NOTE: The PowerPoint presentation with additional details can be found in the March, 8, 2011 PRC Minute's Binder, **Section 3a**, housed in the Director's Office)

Discussion followed to address camping opportunities, available facilities for rent, reaching out to CMS for field trips and camping and working with the African American Museum.

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Tarte that the PRC endorse the proposed Historic Rural Hill Master Plan Update as presented, which was seconded by Commissioner Barnhart. The motion was amended by Commissioner Powell to add that each capital project to be brought before the Stewardship Advisory Council and the PRC to insure that each project is consistent with the Park and Recreation Master Plan, which was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. The motion and amendment were approved unanimously.

## **Program Presentation: None**

### **Appointments –Advisory Councils – Applicants**

**Golf** – **Motion was made** by Commissioner Lawston to appoint **Duwanda Dorsey and Hong Liang** each to an unexpired vacancy, expiring 6/2011, which was seconded by Commissioner Bailey and approved unanimously.

**North Region** – **Motion was made** by Commissioner Carey to appoint **Rixon Campbell** to an unexpired vacancy, expiring 6/2012, which was seconded by Commissioner Tarte and approved unanimously.

Discussion followed regarding Advisory Council concerns from among the Commissioners. Those concerns included maintaining a geographic balance of members throughout the park regions, suggestions to reduce the number of council members on the regional councils, possibility of going to quarterly or bi-month meetings for the regional councils, clarification on what constitutes a quorum, and keeping council members engaged and connected.

Director Garges said that the Administrative Assistant is currently working on reviewing and updating the council by-laws for consistency. Jim suggested that the executive team meet before the next PRC meeting to review the by-laws and discuss the concerns and report back at the April 12 PRC meeting.

### **Director's Report – Jim Garges**

**4-Mile Creek Greenway Parking Lot:** Director Garges gave an update on the parking lot proposed for 4-Mile Creek Greenway: The request for the zoning variance needed for the parking lot at 4-Mile Creek Greenway went back to the Zoning Board and was denied. City Council will meet on March 21 for a final decision. If City Council denies the request, the parking lot location and request for zoning variance will be dead and the Department will then pursue a parking lot at the location included in the original greenway plan, but was not built due to lack of funding. This parking lot is further down the street and at a greater cost.

Commissioner Barnhart felt that it was important that City Council receive the citizen input from the Greenway and South Region Advisory Councils following the public meeting regarding the parking lot and made the following motion:

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Barnhart that the PRC endorse the resolution regarding the 4-Mile Creek Greenway set by the Greenway and South Region Advisory Council which reads as follows:

- In an effort to mitigate parking issues on Bevington Place and surrounding areas  
**And**
- In an effort to address citizen safety for greenway users  
**And**
- In an effort to allow more users to have access to the Four Mile Creek Greenway

The Greenway Advisory Council and the South Park Region Advisory Council CONDITIONALLY endorse the proposal to construct a parking lot on Bevington Place ONLY with a significant increase in private/public partnership “cost sharing” (on the order of 50%) between the Shops at Piper Glen and Mecklenburg County.

*The motion was seconded by Commissioner Burnett. Discussion followed regarding the resolution wording and **the motion was amended** as follows:*

- In an effort to mitigate parking issues on Bevington Place and surrounding areas  
**And**
- In an effort to address citizen safety for greenway users  
**And**
- In an effort to allow more users to have access to the Four Mile Creek Greenway

The PRC endorses the proposal to construct a parking lot on Bevington Place with an increase in private/public partnership “cost sharing” between the Shops at Piper Glen and Mecklenburg County.

*The motion carried 10 -2 with Commissioners Burnett, Brisley, Lawston, Barnhart, Pata, Bryant, McRee, Carey, Tarte and Bailey voting **for** the resolution and Commissioners Powell and McMoore voting **against** the resolution.*

**Romare Bearden Park:** Director Garges said the Department is continuing to push towards building Romare Bearden Park; ideally to have it complete by the time the Democratic National Convention comes in 2012. General Manager Bobbie Shields plans to ask the BOCC if they will support building Romare Bearden and the Mid-town Park. This ask will be in advance of the budget process since construction on Romare Bearden will need to begin this month if the intent is to have it complete before the DNC.

**Park Road Park Shelter Update:** The Department continues to work on the agreement with the YMCA with regard to usage of the shelter facility the Y plans to construct at Park Road Park. In order for the public to get fair access to a facility built on public land, the Department would need use of the facility evenings and all day Saturdays and Sundays.

Commissioner Lawston questioned the balance of time for fee based programs and drop in usage at our centers. Director Garges said he would provide that information.

**Budget:** Director Garges asked that the Commissioners keep an eye out on the budget and to begin talking to the BOCC about the importance of what we do and ask that Park and Recreation not be given any further cuts.

### **PRC Chair Report**

#### **Consent Items:**

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Pata to approve all consent items, including the February 8, 2011 PRC Minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner McRee, and approved unanimously.

### **Staff Reports and Requests**

**Naming of UNC Charlotte Section of Toby Creek Greenway:** Lee Jones, Division Director of Capital Planning Services, introduced Dave Cable, Executive Director of Catawba Lands Conservancy and Carolina Thread Trail to present the proposal for renaming the section of Toby Creek Greenway that runs through the UNC Charlotte Campus to the Ruth G. Shaw Trail on Toby Creek Greenway. Mr. Cable shared information on Ruth’s many civic and community activities and her positions of leadership on various boards, in particular her roles as Chair of the Governing Board of The Carolina Thread Trail and as Chair of the UNC Charlotte Board of Trustees. (**NOTE:** The application for renaming, containing details on the accomplishments of Ruth Shaw, and the petition are included in the March 8, 2011 PRC Minute’s Binder, **Section 14**, housed in the Director’s office.)

Commissioner Barnhart informed the board that the Greenway Advisory Council had endorsed the renaming proposal at the last council meeting. Commissioner Powell asked if the County would incur any cost associated with signage. Lee Jones said that the Department and UNC Charlotte would be working together on signage to make sure it complies with our sign guidelines. Commissioner Barnhart said he and the Greenway Advisory Council members felt it was important that signage or information be available to inform the public as to why a particular area or facility was named. Mr. Cable said that in this case, a kiosk was in the plans to share information on Ruth Shaw with the public.

Mr. Cable said that if approved, the request would go to the BOCC on March 15 and that the dedication ceremony is scheduled for May 3, 2011 at 3 p.m.

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Barnhart for the PRC to endorse the request to rename the section of Toby Creek Greenway that runs through the campus of UNC Charlotte the Ruth G. Shaw Trail on Toby Creek Greenway and to recommend approval of the renaming request to the Board of County Commissioners, which was seconded and approved unanimously.

**Double Oaks Redevelopment Park and Greenway Improvement Project:**  
Lee Jones introduced Lee Cochrane of The Housing Partnership and recognized Dan Dodd and Ashley Hood of LandDesign.

Mr. Cochrane shared background information on The Housing Partnership's work over the past three and a half years on the redevelopment of Double Oaks as part of its larger revitalization of the Statesville Avenue Corridor. Due to the many County facilities that border the Double Oaks redevelopment area, The Housing Partnership is requesting that Mecklenburg County join them and the City of Charlotte in the redevelopment of the Double Oaks Apartments site including improvements to park facilities as follows:

- Anita Stroud Park Improvement
- Anita Stroud Park Extension
- Irwin Creek Connector
- Druid Hills Park Connector
- Irwin Creek Greenway (Anita Stroud Park to Double Oaks Park)
- Double Oaks Park
- Stream Restoration through Anita Stroud Park (Statesville Avenue to I-77)
- Double Oaks Pool

The Housing Partnership will seek a \$1.3 million dollar tax increment grant joined with the County's '08 bond money to pay for the improvements to County facilities in and around this development.

Discussion and questions followed with regard to air quality, connection from Lincoln Heights, pool improvements, housing cost and financing, tree canopy, passive park definition, playground availability, funding for improvements and parking.

(NOTE: Additional details regarding the Double Oaks Redevelopment Master Plan and The Housing Partnership can be found in the March 8, 2011 PRC Minute's Binder, **Section 15, 15a**, housed in the Director's office.)

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Mitchell that the Park and Recreation Commission endorse the proposed Double Oaks Redevelopment, Park and Greenway Improvement Project, which was seconded by Commissioner McMoore and approved unanimously.

**Fee Increase - Athletic Fields/Lights** – James Alsop, presented a request for endorsement of the recommended hourly rate increase for athletic fields and lights; recently approved by the Fees and Charges Committee. Following a survey by Recreation Resource Services and a study of rates within a 250 miles radius, the Department determined that athletic field rentals should be increased from \$12.50 to \$17.00 an hour and lights be increased from \$10.00 to \$25.00 an hour. The increase would be effective July 1, 2011, but rates will not be increased for reservations that are already set. Pending endorsement by the PRC, the fee increase request will go before the BOCC for approval on April 15, 2011

**Motion was made** by Commissioner McRee to endorse the recommended rate increase for Athletic Field rentals from \$12.50 to \$17.00 an hour and increase from \$10.00 to \$25.00 an hour for lights and to submit to the BOCC on April 12, 2011 for approval, which was seconded by Commissioner Bryant and approved unanimously.

Director Garges pointed out that part of the revenue from the increase will go back into a capital reserve account for more lighting and field improvements.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.