



Recreation and Parks Commission

ACCEPTED MINUTES

Tuesday ~ April 1, 2014 ~ 6:00 p.m.

McKinley Arts & Culture Center
925 Riverside Drive – Reno

MEMBERS

Vacancy, Chair
Nate Daniel, Vice-Chair
Mike Ginsburg
Gerry Taylor
Joe Arrascada
Tom Stille
Layne Van Noy
Troy Harsh
Erik Scalise

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Daniel called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. A quorum was established.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nate Daniel, Layne Van Noy, Joe Arrascada, Troy Harsh, Erik Scalise, Tom Stille and Gerry Taylor

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

POSITIONS VACANT: Two positions vacant

ALSO PRESENT: Julee Conway – Director
Leslie Smith – Program Assistant

II. PUBLIC COMMENT – This item is for either public comment on any action item or for general public comment and is limited to no more than three (3) minutes for each commentator.

None

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MARCH 4, 2014 MEETING OF THE RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION (For Possible Action)

It was moved by Commissioner Van Noy; seconded by Commissioner Harsh, to accept the March 4, 2014 minutes as presented. The motion carried: Commissioners Daniel, Scalise and Stille assenting; Commissioners Arrascada, and Taylor abstaining; and two vacant positions.

IV. PRESENTATION – Recognition of prior Commission members Franco Crivelli and Mike Ginsburg.

On behalf of the City of Reno Recreation and Parks Commission, Chair Daniel presented Mr. Crivelli with a Certificate of Appreciation for his dedicated service and commitment as Recreation and Parks Commissioner from August 2008 through January 2014. Also, on behalf of the City of Reno Recreation and Parks Commission, Chair Daniel presented Mr. Ginsburg with a Certificate of Appreciation for his devoted service and commitment as Recreation and Parks Commissioner from March 2008 through March 2014.

V. BUSINESS ITEMS

Business items 1. and 2. were heard in reverse order:

2. Update on Rosewood Lakes Golf Course:

Commission requested that this matter be a standing item on the agenda.

Director Conway updated the Commission on the status of Rosewood Lakes Golf Course. The ability of the City of Reno to continue to operate the golf course will be addressed by the Reno City Council possibly in April. Currently, the City Council is looking at a non-profit organization, *The First Tee of Northern Nevada (First Tee)*, which serves youth and the public, to operate the golf course. This is a relatively recent development. Pursuant to the direction of the City Council, Parks, Recreation and Community Services is currently negotiating a possible contract with *First Tee*. Michael McDonald, President of *First Tee*, was introduced to the Commission as being part of the overall discussion and negotiations; however, he was unable to attend the meeting. Chris Dewar, Executive Director of *First Tee*, was present at the meeting primarily to introduce herself to the Commission and to answer any questions from the Commission. City staff is currently maintaining the golf course, as is normally done this time of year. The driving range is currently open to the public; however, the course is not open as yet. A contract may be forthcoming as early as April and *First Tee* is ready to take over the golf course and its operation immediately.

Chris Dewar of *The First Tee of Northern Nevada* took questions/comments from the Commission. Commissioner Van Noy requested a quick overview of what *First Tee* has planned for youth programs next year. *First Tee* will phase its operation into Rosewood Lakes Golf Course by offering *First Tee* classes for youth. Currently, *First Tee* operates in 25 elementary schools. *First Tee* is also willing to offer classes to accommodate youth who are in Parks and Recreation programs. Instructors consist of 13 paid staff and 62 volunteers. *First Tee* is a non-profit organization that started five years ago with 600 youth. There are currently 1,258 youth in their programs. Their fundraising approach consists mostly of grant writing, corporate and individual contributions. Commissioner Stille asked if *First Tee* is expecting to expand their program in the future to include disabled seniors and disabled veterans. *First Tee* believes it is an option that could be explored. Rosewood Lakes Golf Course is the first course *First Tee* has ever assumed management of its entire operation. This is also their first partnership with Parks and Recreation to serve youth and seniors. They are very excited to be working with City of Reno Parks and Recreation in this capacity. Director Conway stated that this is a great opportunity for the City and the work done by *First Tee* is appreciated along with an acknowledgement to Andy Bass, Recreation Manager, for his work on this project.

1. Discussion of citizen proposal regarding conversion of Plumas Park for dog off-leash use.

Commissioner Stille went to Plumas Park recently and noticed that currently there are no areas designated as dog off-leash use and there are no established hours for such use. Because of public interest in this matter, he suggests that there be designated dog off-leash hours or designated areas for off-leash use. There were a lot of dogs off-leash when he was there.

Commissioner Taylor asked, (1) Would the dogs be sharing the same grassy area as the soccer players at different times? and, (2) How many soccer fields are at Plumas Park? Director Conway responded that the area to be potentially used is indeterminate at this time, or whether there would even be a dog off-leash area at this park. Currently, the park is open to dogs on-leash; it is not a designated dog off-leash park. There are only two designated dog off-leash parks in the City at this time, Whitaker Park and Virginia Lake, both of which have fenced areas. In other parks, dogs are allowed on-leash. The number of soccer fields at Plumas Park depends upon the age of the group and the type of practice or games being held there. The area is often reconfigured depending on the type of practice or games. It was also noted that representatives from youth soccer groups were present at the meeting.

Chair Daniel noted that there seems to be a greater need for more dog off-leash parks in the City of Reno. Commissioner Arrascada said his concern is the mess left behind when a dog runs away from its owner and the owner does not control the dog. If dog owners cleaned up after their dogs, he would be more agreeable to a dog off-leash park. Commissioner Harsh is in agreement that there should be more dog off-leash parks made available because of the culture it develops. As animals, they should have the opportunity to run free. At the same time, there are many different parts of this culture at Plumas Park that are emerging and it is not just a Plumas Park issue, it is also a county-wide issue. Hopefully, with seeing the bigger picture, what is decided will suit everybody's needs.

Public Comment:

Betty Dodson – Ms. Dodson is in favor of having Parks and Recreation begin to look at the opportunity for special dog hours in parks. Other cities across the country have dealt with this same issue. San Diego, New York, and Portland all have talked about dogs being under control. In some places, a special dog park permit must be worn by the dog. In Boulder, Colorado, a voice site control tag is used where the owner has to go through a special training session with their dog. This is also being implemented in Salt Lake City, Utah. It should be addressed here in our community because people want a place to go with their dogs. Nobody is asking to take over the park all day. The school has the park for a great deal of the time and the neighbors don't have use of the park then. She suggests perhaps two hours be designated out of the day for the residents to take their pets to the park as long as they are under control.

Robert Calhoun – Mr. Calhoun lives in the neighborhood and got a dog a few months ago. He thinks the real problem is the defecation in the park. Dogs are already allowed on-leash in the park. It is a few bad apples that are ruining it for everybody. Even on-leash use, some people don't clean up after their dogs. Perhaps designating a few hours a day for off-leash use and increasing the fines for those who do not pick up after their animal might be the solution.

Richard Jay – Mr. Jay represents Great Basin Youth Soccer League (GBYSL) as well as Reno Youth Sports Association (RYSA). He also lives close to Plumas Park. He wants the Commission to take into consideration a couple of things before they make any decisions on dog off-leash use of the park. He agrees that the dog feces in the park is horrible. They have had to stop games in order to clean the field. In the past, they have also hired a company to clean the field. Also, female dog urine kills grass. The fields need to be taken care of. They want to rehabilitate two fields, one of which is

Plumas. The problem is that it is expensive. It will cost \$15,000 to rehabilitate the sod, not to replace it, plus the sprinklers have to be fixed. The school, soccer league, City of Reno will all have to cooperate jointly and contribute to this project. Are dog owners going to help with the cost? It is known that the budget of the City of Reno is very limited and some of this will have to come from private citizens. In addition, Mr. Jay has spoken with some dog owners and a veterinarian who have seen a disproportionate number of dog and dog-related injuries at open dog parks. This is something else to take into account when the Commission is making a decision. Everyone using the park needs to co-exist, but he asks that the Commission consider the condition of the fields and the cost to maintain them if dog off-leash use is allowed.

Margie Hicks – Ms. Hicks lives about two blocks from Plumas Park. She would like the Commission to consider designated hours for dog off-leash use. She used to walk the park with her dog in the mornings but doesn't go as often because of fear of getting a ticket if her dog is off-leash. She wants the park to be enjoyed by the neighborhood and considers herself and some of her neighbors as stewards of the park. She often picks up litter left behind by children and other groups using the park as well as animal waste that is left behind by other people's dogs. She asks the Commission to consider the neighbors of Plumas Park and designate off-leash hours in the mornings and evenings so that the park can be enjoyed by everyone, not just the school and soccer league.

Brad Allured – Mr. Allured would love to see hours set aside for dog off-leash use. There are other parks in the area that have dog off-leash areas; however, he and his dog did not like them for various reasons. Plumas Park seems to have a sense of community and is self-policing. Dogs that are mean or out of control are encouraged to go elsewhere. When a dog owner fails to pick up after their dog, there are usually two or three people who will bring it to their attention. The community has often come together to clean up after other dogs. He has noticed that female urine does kill grass; however, he has also noticed that there are a handful of holes that seem to be from people standing in the same place tending the goal. He agrees that the community wants Plumas Park to be a beautiful park and he is willing to volunteer his time and resources to make sure that the minimum specifications are met and to make sure the park stays beautiful.

Commissioner Stille asked what the City policy is for refilling bag stations used for dog waste in parks. Director Conway stated that with the move of licensing going to Washoe County, the City no longer has funds to supply the bags like they once did. The funds that were once available for the installation and servicing of the stations are no longer available. Due to reductions in the budget, this was one of the items that was phased out. The City has worked with groups and individuals to adopt-a-park in certain areas and the waste containers are still put out for public use. However, the City can no longer purchase the reusable bags and people are encouraged to bring their own. Commissioner Arrascada reminded the Commission that at a previous meeting there was a presenter who talked about getting sponsorships to supply bags with their logo or name printed on the bags as advertisement. Director Conway said she will look to see who the named sponsor was and report back to the Commission. She further stated that the item is much broader than that, it is not just about the cost of the bags. Maintaining the bag stations which have been vandalized in the past and removing trash from the bag stations is all part of the management of a park whether it is a dog on-leash or dog off-leash park and having citizen assistance is critical.

Commissioner Taylor commented that should the Commission agree to changes in the park usage, she would stipulate that rules should be posted at the entrances to the park. She is concerned that there would be no way to get participants to adhere to the rules. If there is a problem and the program isn't working, where would citizens go to report the problem and who would handle it. There doesn't seem to be enough structure to the plan.

Chair Daniel shared that if the dog off-leash use becomes available to Plumas Park which has a great group of citizens who are committed to the park, it might have to be allowed at other parks and those folks might not be as committed to taking care of the park.

Ted Levatter – Mr. Levatter said the broader issues need to be addressed, specifically, how to increase citizen engagement, meet everyone's needs and give people a sense of ownership.

He previously provided research to the Commission specific to off-leash use. Some people follow the rules and, unfortunately, some do not. This is one of the reasons there is a problem with dog feces in the park. He introduced the idea of a Friends of Plumas Park committee comprised of individuals from the neighborhood, soccer player representatives and Our Lady of the Snows school. It would be a place where people could voice their concerns and promote self-policing. Mr. Levatter said he found a sponsor to supply free waste bags for Plumas Park, but the Commission never followed up with him so the proposal was dropped.

Rayna Brachmann – Ms. Brachmann lives near Plumas Park and she supports off-leash hours. She previously sent an e-mail to Reno Direct regarding the matter. She spoke about Portland's rules of use for dog off-leash parks. She asked the Commission to consider the types of rules in place in other areas that seem to work and she distributed a copy of the Rules of Use for Arbor Lodge Park. Commissioner Scalise asked how the rules are enforced in Portland. Ms. Brachmann said she did not know.

Mary Stollenwerk – Ms. Stollenwerk said if she didn't have a dog, she wouldn't know her neighbors. She said a process to communicate problems or concerns is needed. People need to be self-policing.

Chair Daniel read a comment card from Judith Lockwood. She said that Plumas field is a community area and she is in favor of dog off-leash hours.

Commissioner Arrascada asked if Our Lady of the Snows school was represented at the meeting. Mr. Levatter said that he spoke with the Principal and that he could not be at the meeting; however, they are supportive of forming a committee. Mr. Jay also spoke to the Principal and they recognize the problem as well. Further discussion continued regarding the cost of repairing and maintaining the field and the need for everyone to come together to help with a solution. Director Conway said she spoke with Tim Fuetsch, Principal of OLS, and he is very interested in tracking this with the Commission. He received a copy of the meeting agenda and knows what is being discussed. This matter will be on a future agenda. Any legal issues, such as park ordinances, operational impact and related cost will be investigated and staff will come back with a proposal and recommendation on how to move forward.

Betty Dodson spoke again and said that Plumas Park is central to old southwest and midtown and, if the City is striving to make it a walking neighborhood, then this matter needs to be addressed. People who live in the area are mostly working class. They want to take their dogs for a walk and they want to take their dogs to the park after work.

Commissioner Arrascada thinks the Commission should focus on the idea of three groups coming together as one as the Friends of Plumas Park. Bringing the groups together to work as an organized collective to maintain the park should be considered. It should be brought up to the City Attorney at the next meeting. Commissioner Taylor suggested that if this meeting is scheduled, a professional facilitator should run the meeting so that it is productive and serves its purpose.

Commissioner Van Noy developed a dog park in Lake Tahoe. He is familiar with the dog community and the value of it. It helped to build a sense of community and brought people together. Along with the research suggested by Director Conway, it would be helpful if the Friends of Plumas Park would go to Washoe County and ask that the \$2.00 license fee be reinstated and used as a funding source. This is not just a Plumas Park issue; it affects other areas as well. If it comes from a grass roots group in the community, it might fare better with the County.

VI. Council Liaison Report – Council Member Oscar Delgado - *No action may be taken on announcements. Limited to items that do not appear elsewhere on the agenda.*

None

VII. Staff Liaison Report /Updates – Updates will be given about general Department operations including, but not limited to, FY14/15 Budget Process, Specialty License Plate Application and Virginia Street Bridge Reconstruction.

The budget timeline has not changed since the last time it was presented to the Commission, and Director Conway will distribute the budget schedule when available, as well as the budget package.

The City of Reno, Parks, Recreation and Community Services has the opportunity to apply for a State Specialty License Plate application. If successful in the application process, 100% of the proceeds generated will go directly to City of Reno, Parks, Recreation and Community Services and facilities for program enhancement and parks maintenance. The City Council approved the license plate design in 2012 when the first application for the specialty license plate was submitted. However, the final design is subject to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

The Virginia Street bridge reconstruction should start in Fall of 2014. The project has not gone out to bid as yet.

Complimentary tickets were distributed to members of the Commission for the train at Idlewild Park. This year, the City of Reno, Parks, Recreation and Community services received a grant from the Pennington Foundation for the restoration of some of the train cars.

RTC has not received approval from the Army Corp of Engineers to move forward with the Southeast

Connector roadway.

VIII. Commissioner/Liaison Reports & Announcements – *No action may be taken on announcements. Limited to items that do not appear elsewhere on the agenda.*

Commissioner Taylor said this Commission needs a City Council liaison that can participate in the monthly RPC meetings. Chair Daniel will meet with Council member Oscar Delgado to discuss the Commission's needs.

Commissioner Stille said the City of Reno has rules on how to prune trees and questioned the practice of pruning shrubs into rounded shapes.

Commissioner Van Noy said Jeff Mann extended an invitation to him to attend the Sierra Vista Park planning meetings. There have been some pre-planning staff meetings to get ready for the two-day workshop. The American Institute of Architects Northern Nevada Chapter has offered to accept this project as their 2014 service project and they will work on a pro bono basis.

Chair Daniel shared that the Commission liaison for the Ad Hoc Committee for Washoe County, Reno and Sparks parks need to be addressed, as Mike Ginsburg was chair of the committee and he is no longer on the RPC. Staff will work with Washoe County on the committee status.

IX. Identify Agenda Items for Future Meetings – Update on Sky Tavern; Park Maintenance Plan Updates (Quarterly); Update on Moana Springs Aquatic Center Project; Proposed No Smoking in Parks Ordinance; Proposed Plumas Park Landscaping Improvements; collaboration with UNR's Athletic Director.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

X. ADJOURNMENT (For possible action)

It was moved by Commissioner Taylor; seconded by Commissioner Arrascada; to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. The motion carried: Commissioners Daniel, Van Noy, Arrascada, Harsh, Taylor, Stille and Scalise assenting; no one absent; and two vacant positions.