

**City of Fairfax
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB)**

**Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2010, 7:00 PM
Green Acres Center, Room 110**

PRAB Members Present

Jane Albro
Mace Carpenter
Joe Harmon
Brian Knapp
Don Lederer
Esther Nasjleti
James Ogletree
Zinta Rodgers-Rickert
Gary Sidor
Mike Slawski
Toby Sorensen
Harry Wilbur
Mike McCarty, Director, Parks and Recreation Department

PRAB Members Absent

Paul Cunningham

Guests

(none)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the December meeting were approved.

4. Matters of the Officers

Chair Joseph Harmon announced that the PRAB table for the Mayor's Ball on April 15, 2011 was full. He also sought and received confirmation about the maintenance responsibilities for the area in the City known as 'Bell's Bird Sanctuary' (it is not an official City property).

[Vice Chair Esther Nasjleti and Acting Secretary Gary Sidor had nothing to add to the record.]

5. Business

a. Park Steward Program

A new presentation schedule through July will be circulated soon. Proposed for future discussion was a rotation of parks assigned each Member for the next operating year. In the future a uniform evaluation matrix will be expected to be completed.

b. CIP

No action to report in the last month. The City-wide CIP proposal has been sent to the Planning Commission.

c. Fairfax Bicyclists Group (FBG) Update

- (i) Esther reported that the focus of the group is on commuting routes and ease, especially from the GMU campus area to the Vienna/Fairfax/GMU Metro rail station. GMU representatives are attempting to find an interested student to help with this endeavor, and Esther is working with FBG to create a complimenting “statement of work.” Identifying potential routes, signage, and additional resources are priority outcomes.
- (ii) The creation of more “sharrow” dedicated spaces and signage will continue in the spring.
- (iii) Esther will begin to look at area special events in which recreational cycling activities can be incorporated and highlighted.
- (iv) Mike McCarty expressed concern about the proportion of resources allocated to and requested by the FBG. The recent past and current attention is likely unsustainable. Mike warned about the need for prudence and discussed the need for a vision statement, and recommended PRAB create a project priority list to seize control of the bicycle advocacy movement (for example, specific positions on safety, signage, improvements, and expansion).
- (v) Joe Harmon expressed interest in meeting with Doug from FBG sometime in the future.

d. Upcoming Parks Initiatives Discussion

The group had a general conversation about the strain these initiatives put on current staff. Without more resources, the P&R Department will find it difficult to support these plans and programs, even the smaller ones.

- (i) Dog Parks / Pet Advocacy: Zinta Rodgers-Rickert announced that the owner of the new Happy Woof store is looking for opportunities to partner with the City and others to get more exposure for pet owner issues.
- (i) Community Garden: Councilman Jeff Greenfield is in need of one more sponsor (for fencing) to make the Gardens a reality without cost to the City. Donors for irrigation, soil, etc. have been secured.

Additional general conversation took place on whether Parks and Recreation staff member Edwin Rivera’s white paper on community gardens should be the model for emerging issues in the future. Such a proactive system and collection of “off the shelf” preliminary analysis would allow PRAB and P&R staff to mobilize more quickly. Zinta expressed interest in leading a subcommittee on this issue.

e. Trails Day Discussion

There has not been any outreach to Denise from the See Mommy Run group. It was universally acknowledged that without that partnership, we should plan for a drastically scaled-down event. There is little support the City can provide.

f. Legacy Fund Update

To date there has been \$350,000 in contributions and pledges, and \$5,000 in new gifts. When this idea was originally pitched to the City Manager and the City Council, the expectation was to collect \$50,000.

g. Land and Water Conservation Fund Resolution Discussion

Created in 1965. Federal money granted to states, who then, in turn, allocated to projects on the city and county level. The issue is being raised because it could be a potential revenue source if we can be creative and make good and reasonable cases. Mike McCarty stated that the National Recreation and Park Association is the initial sponsor/backer in getting a lot of projects off of the ground. There is also initial seed and matching grant programs for recreation initiatives. PRAB encouraged Mike to keep the information coming – to potentially identify a funding vehicle.

6. Stakeholder Updates

NVRPA

Brian Knapp announced that January monthly meeting would be held in the City at the Blenheim property. This is good exposure for the property and for the City.

7. Parks and Recreation Department Report

Mike McCarty reminded the Board that the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center (SCSCC) is slated for its grand opening ceremony on February 12, 2011. The remaining puchlist items (for example, installation of the wood ceiling and some outside asphalt work) will be completed by then. He announced that Edwin Rivera has been hired to work in the Sherwood center, and that he is encouraged by future bookings potential.

Funds for a centerpiece sculpture at the SCSCC continue to be sought. Currently, between \$7,000 and \$9,000 more (of expected \$17,000 total) needs to be secured.

The process to form the budget for Fiscal Year 2011-12 progresses, and that he has advocated for the reinstatement of four temporary seasonal employees for the Parks group.

8. Matters of the Members

Harry Wilbur announced an event at the SCSCC to attract performing artists and arts groups that may be potential patrons. He also recognized the great jobs in putting together the Fall Festival and in publishing the *Leisure Times*.

Toby Sorensen informed us of an important sapling planted at Providence Elementary.

Zinta Rodgers-Rickert invited others to read and contribute to her blog, which includes issues related dogs and City parks.

Mike Slawski inquired whether the Blenheim property could construct a sign making passersby aware that its public spaces are available for rent. Mike McCarty stated that he did not think that that would be permitted, given the protective attitude of the surrounding community and the historical preservation advocates.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

The next PRAB meeting will be held on Thursday February 10, 2011 at 7:00 PM at the Stacey C. Sherwood Community Center.

Minutes prepared by Gary Sidor.