

Kern County Parks and Recreation Commission

**County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue,
1st Floor Board of Supervisors Chambers
Wednesday, January 23, 2019
6:30 P.M.**

MINUTES

A meeting of the Kern County Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Wednesday, January 23, 2019 Commissioner Arnold-Chambers presided.

Present: Commissioner Gary Bray, District I; Commissioner William Chapman, District II; Kathleen Arnold-Chambers, District III; Commissioner Gregory McGiffney, District IV

Absent: Vacant, District V

Staff: Carl Brewer, Senior CAO Manager - General Services Geoffrey Hill, Chief General Services Officer – General Services;

Others: There were 24 others present

NOTE: Br, Ch, Mc, Ar are abbreviations for Commissioners Bray, Chapman, McGiffney, and Arnold-Chambers. As an example, Mc-Br denotes Commissioner McGiffney made a motion and Commissioner Bray seconded the motion.

Meeting called to order at 6:37 p.m. Flag Salute: Commissioner Arnold-Chambers

1. Approval of the Minutes of November 28, 2018

The minutes from November 28, 2018 were reviewed. Br-Ch, motion to approve the minutes. 4 Ayes, 1 Absent, Motion carried - Minutes were approved.

2. Public Presentations

Eddy Laine heard regarding collaboration on several issues including Hart Park's peacock house and the upcoming Proposition 68.

3. Correspondence

Motion to Receive and File Correspondence. Br-Ch 4 Ayes, 1 absent - motion carried.

4. New Business

Selection of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Commissioner Bray nominated Commissioner Arnold-Chambers as the new Chairwoman. Br-Ch motion to approve nomination. 4 Ayes, 1 absent – motion carried

Commissioner McGiffney nominated Gary Bray as the new Vice Chairman. Ch-Mc motion to approve nomination. 4 Ayes, 1 absent – motion carried.

Hart Park Master Plan

Ryan Alsop heard - made a presentation on the Hart Park Master Plan. He first thanked the Commission for all the work they have done and how important the Commission's commitment has been to our community. Ryan discussed the multi-year plan for the park saying Hart Park is a principle aspect in the Kern River Parkway and outlined the geographic area of the Kern River Parkway. He discussed the previously held town hall meetings in which the public's interest and input was received from these meetings and other sources (emails, text messages etc.) The information was gathered together and a consultant (RGM) was hired to use that information to form the Hart Park Master Plan. The info showed what the community most values about the park including the wildlife and natural settings and that it is still a public space. Children's play areas, multi-use and specific use trails, water features and concessions were some other areas of importance. Ryan showed the Commission of the Hart Park Improvement Plan with the proposed changes to the park. If the plan is fulfilled as a whole (multiple phases) it will include: a new children's adventure area; improvements to the park's disc golf course; a fishing peninsula on Hart Lake; a dog park; a sandy beach on Hart Lake at the east end; repair and rehabilitate restrooms; expand and rebuild the Area 7 entertainment, food and stage section; new signage at the east entrance; irrigation, landscaping, river and lake improvements; new equestrian area – fencing off a large portion of county-owned land north of the river; trailhead improvements including the demolition of the old adobe house; building of a multiuse trail that will go all the way around the park; concession and food truck rallies; and a renewed focus on educating park-goers on park rules (enforcing rules that are ignored). The County is hoping to accomplish these changes within the next 3-5 years. He discussed all the recently completed and current projects underway. Ryan discussed the issues of the excessive cat population at the park and what is being done to help that situation. A collaboration with city of Bakersfield to have a more unified vision of the Kern River Parkway was discussed and Ryan has been in touch with City officials about this. Phil Stroud Jr. heard OHV and the area near Hart Park. David Shaw with Kern Audubon Society heard regarding connecting bridges on walking and biking paths. Maria Polite heard about the Kern County General Plan 2020. Lorelei Oviatt, Director of Planning and Natural Resources, addressed the comment stating that they are still in the early planning stages of their healthy community work groups in which they are bringing in the stakeholders to discuss what makes a healthy community, one of them being parks. Marion Vargas heard about the fencing around Hart Park and the equestrian trail. Recommendation to move forward and support the concept of the Hart Park Master Plan. Br-Ch motion to approve. 4 Ayes, 1 Absent. Motion carried.

Kern River Nature Park

Geoffrey Hill heard – made a presentation for a preserve along the Kern River on the east end. After speaking with Planning and the CAO, and consulting with the Parks staff they have come up with an idea for consideration which is the Kern River Nature Park. Stating this is a beautiful space and will be a way to reconnect with nature. Lorelei Oviatt heard discussing the attributes of the nature park. She provided a handout to the group, which has also been provided to the public, showing that this will be a way to connect with, honor and protect the wildlife and land in this area. Eddy Laine heard regarding collaboration and communication. Expressed his concern about the process timelines for the proposal. Ryan Alsop heard regarding the goal of working towards this project and see it come to fruition. This is a new concept for Kern County and will be the first of its kind here. Recommendation made to move forward with Board approval. Ch-Mc motion to approve. 4 Ayes, 1 absent. Motion carried.

Parks Projects

Geoffrey Hill heard asking that a representative/Commissioner from the Commission attend the Board meeting as an extra effort to show the Board of Supervisors that these projects have the support of the Parks and Recreation Commission Board. Geoff said the subject of parks projects will be a periodic regular presentation to the Commission. This will be about system wide improvements that have been made to our parks within the last 18 months. South Kern areas parks playground surfacing is being replaced with ADA accessible surfaces, new shade structures have been installed for the playground equipment, new surfacing for basketball courts (this has been in conjunction with the local schools), all sand has been replaced with wood chips making it ADA accessible, and a fenced soccer ring – this was completed using grant funds. Some of the FY18-19 ongoing projects were discussed including pavement maintenance and updating equipment at the Buena Vista Wastewater Treatment plant among many other ongoing projects.

Kern County Soccer Park

Carl Brewer heard regarding the completion of the RFP process and the awarding of the soccer park to Cal South as the new operator. Commissioner Chambers had a role in choosing the new operator as a member of the RFP selection committee. The County is excited about having Cal South as a partner. They will attend a future meeting to discuss their plan as the operator. The lease terms have not been negotiated at this time. Kathleen Arnold-Chambers heard commenting that the whole RFP process was a very positive experience. She thanked Carl for representing the County in the meeting. Bill Cooper heard regarding concern for the dumping at the soccer park.

6. Old Business

OHV

Carl Brewer heard regarding OHV grant opportunities through the state. He attended a grant workshop last fall where he learned that grant funding may be utilized for identifying land and environmental impact reports associated with any land that is identified for OHV use. He says there is a 20% match and recommends that the Commission allow the County to utilize \$100,000 of the OHV funds which would in return allow the County to apply for a grant for \$500,000 in which could be used to hire a consultant for identification of appropriate land as well as the environmental impact reports. Dave Walker, Friends of Kern Open Space, heard in support of the use of OHV funds for this purpose. March 4th is the initial preliminary deadline. Recommendation made to utilize \$100,000 from OHV grant funding to move forward with the grant application in which awarded funding will be used to hire a consultant and identify appropriate OHV land. Mc-Br motion to approve. 4 Ayes. 1 Absent. Motion carried.

7. Department Staff Report

Proposition 68 Update

8. Commission Comments

Commissioner Bray heard asking what the long terms goals for Parks as a stand-alone or identifiable parks service budget. Ryan Alsop heard saying they will do the best they can with the budget that Parks has. Going forward Parks is a priority of this County and that Parks should be a stand-alone department.

9. Dates and Locations of Future Meetings:

The meeting time is at 6:30 p.m.

Future meeting dates and locations (subject to change):

- February 27, 2019 at the County Administrative Center, 1115 Truxtun Ave, 1st floor

10. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn Br-Ch, 3 ayes, 2 absent. Chairwoman Arnold-Chambers adjourned the meeting at 9:09 P.M.