

Kern County Parks and Recreation Commission

Public Services Building
2700 M Street
Bakersfield, CA 93301

January 27, 2016
6:30 P.M.

MINUTES

A meeting of the Kern County Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Wednesday, January 27, 2016. Chairman Jamison presided.

Present: Bob Jamison, District I; Carl Park, District III; Manuel Barerra, District V.

Absent: Mark Faull, District II; Gregory McGiffney, District IV

Staff: Bob Lerude, Director, Kern County Parks and Recreation Department; Suzanne Boyd, Kern County Parks and Recreation Department.

Others: There were nine (9) others present.

NOTE: Ja, Fa, Pa, Mc and Ba are abbreviations for Commissioners Jamison, Faull, Park, McGiffney and Barerra. As an example, Ja-Fa denotes Commissioner Jamison made a motion and Commissioner Faull seconded the motion.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Chairman Jamison led the flag salute.

1. Approval of the Minutes of October 28, 2015

Ja-Ba to approve the Minutes. All ayes, motion carried.

2. Public Presentations

Chairman Jamison introduced and welcomed Manuel Barrera as the newest commissioner for District V. District V is represented by Board of Supervisors (BOS) member Leticia Perez. Manuel is a long time resident of Bakersfield he attended Bakersfield High School and California State University, Bakersfield. He currently is employed in government and has worked with several non-profit organizations.

Chairman Jamison also introduced and welcomed Suzanne Boyd. She has been hired as a permanent employee of the Parks & Recreation Dept. and will be attending all of the meetings for the Parks & Recreation Commission to take minutes.

Carlinda Batiste from the California City introduced herself. She is a Parks

Commissioner in that area. She came to our meeting to observe and learn so perhaps they could grow their Commission. Their monthly meetings are on the 3rd Wednesday of the month and they invited any of the members from Kern County who would like to attend. Carlinda stated that Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreation is very popular in California City. They would like to grow that environment and bring more services for people who enjoy the outdoors. Their goal is to grow California City and be more visible in the State. There will be a Parks conference in Long Beach in March. Carlinda and one of the other Commissioners from California City will be attending. Bob Lerude mentioned that there are amazing OHV trails in that area. Commissioner Jamison thanked Carlinda for taking the time to attend our meeting and let her know that our Commission would be happy to help their group in any way possible.

Mr. Bob Rutledge asked what the status of the resolution is that was passed for Lake Ming and how we are coming along with the fee system at Hart Park. Bob Lerude, Director of Parks & Recreation, stated that we have a swimming update for Lake Ming. The Environmental Health Dept. is testing the water. They will bring their results back to the BOS. This commission has already passed swimming in the lake. We are already had much of the language passed on the ordinance. We are waiting for the BOS to give us that information when it is completed.

We are waiting for the language on the ordinance that discusses possible parking fees at Hart Park. It was decided that fees would not be charged to visitors who are just walking, running, or biking through the area but rather will focus on charging vehicle parking fees. We are currently researching the cost and what type of parking meters are available or if we should bring back day passes and season passes. The reason that the fee issue came about is because over recent years the Parks department has taken a number of budget cuts and this has resulted in cutting over 50% of our staff. The future revenue from the parking fees will go into a special fund to be used specifically for Hart Park. This way the money cannot be used elsewhere. We are looking at different ways to increase funding for maintenance to keep Hart Park and Lake Ming at decent levels for the public to enjoy.

Commissioner Berrera asked if there were any reports that would show the types of budget cuts that have affected Hart Park over the recent years, especially in terms of staffing and maintenance, so that the Commissioners and the public could understand what the Parks Dept. is up against. Bob Lerude said he will research that to bring something back to next month's meeting.

3. New Business

- a. Appoint new officers
 - Chairman
 - Vice-Chairman

Ca-Ba made a motion to table appointing new officers until next month since Commissioners Fa-Mc were unable to attend the meeting this month. All ayes, motion carried.

b. Proposal to rename a portion of Linda Kissack Ballfield. DISCUSS, RECEIVE PUBLIC INPUT AND MAKE RECOMMENDATION.

A proposal has been made to rename a portion of the Linda Kissack Ballfield for a future skate park to honor George Randall who recently passed away. He was a beloved member of the Kern River Valley community and a benefactor to other park projects. The Randalls have worked on various projects with the Parks Dept. over the years. We have two members of the skate park committee here as representatives to the project, Teresa Contreras and Chris Brayman. The request they submitted meets the policy in terms of recognition.

Chris and Teresa were instrumental in funding the entire Christmas tree lighting project at Circle Park in Lake Isabella.

In the past we have had other groups who wanted to put in a skate park in Lake Isabella but it was too expensive to build a skate park through the County process, up to \$500,000. The other groups were unable to raise the funds needed so the project was shelved. Teresa Contreras is rejuvenating the project to get private contractors and donations.

Chris Brayman, former professional BMX racer, mentioned that in the past George & Darlene Randall donated all of the money to build a baseball field on private property in the Kern River Valley. Chris worked with George Randall on various projects over the years and they became very good friends.

The skate park committee is still working out details for the skate park. They have found a contractor, Spohn Ranch Skateparks, who may be able to build the skate park for approximately \$162,000. Their counsel is currently in touch with the County Counsel to work out the legalities. The committee is also working with the County. They are hoping for more donations to make the final total cost approximately \$50,000-\$60,000. They may get some other contractors to help with the project as far as grading and rebar. There will be a meeting in Lake Isabella tomorrow to create a contract for the County. Parks & Recreation Dept. Planner, John Laybourn will be in attendance. The community will be involved with the design of the park and the decision making process. Numerous people in the community want to help with the project.

Bob Lerude informed Teresa and Chris that a sign has been approved for posting that will say something to the effect of "Home of future skate park".

Chris Brayman told the Commission that they had a \$1,000 per person dinner scheduled earlier at Ewing's on the Kern restaurant and 35 people had committed to the dinner. But due to contract issues with the County they had to delay the dinner for a future date. Chris stated that the skate park committee is very confident that the project will happen. They have promises of substantial donations and a very strong committee. With possible in-kind donations they may be able to lower the cost of building the skate park even more.

Commissioner Park recommended to Teresa and Chris that someone on the

committee contact the Kissack family to be sure they are agreement on renaming a portion of the park for the skate board section. The Commission would like to see something in writing from the Kissack family. The Commissioner also recommended getting a roster of committee member names. Bob Lerude stated that Mr. & Mrs. Randall are very much loved by the community of Lake Isabella.

Pa-Ba moved to table further discussion and decision making on renaming the skate park section until next month when a contract should be completed and when the committee receives written approval from the Kissack family. All ayes – motion carried.

c. OHV Update – DISCUSSION ONLY

Regarding the OHV grants that were approved last year, they need to provide project updates. We are going to be advertising next month for the projects that the Commission will hear. The grants are due in April, it will brought to the Commission in May, and the proposals will go before the BOS in June. The current amount available for 2016-17 is \$70,000, in the future OHV park facility we have a little over \$500,000. Just as a reminder, 60% of the revenue of the green sticker funds goes to the future OHV facility. 40% is spent annually on projects that the public brings before the Commission and then the Commission recommends and it goes before the BOS for final approval. There is no question that the OHV funding is down, which is probably attributed to the economy.

Dave Walker from Friends of OHV stated that funding is down but the opportunity for Kern County is still there. Along with what we have banked for the OHV park, we will have a current plan soon. We hope to complete planning by next week, with the County's cooperation, and be able to move forward. We hope to fund approximately \$1.2 million from the California OHV Fund directed for the local projects. We received a \$10,000 grant from the Kern County Bureau of Tourism for an event this year, similar to what we did last year. Our OHV projects are expanding. We have signed a contract with the city of Porterville, we will be operating their track at the airport. We hope to make a full presentation at the next meeting. After approval, this could be opened within 60 days. State funding can be completed as early as June of 2017 pending our proposal process. There is only simple paperwork still to be completed. We are looking to find a permanent solution to help insulate us from volatilities.

Bob Lerude stated that we are looking to utilize the Famoso racetrack facility. We need to develop a contract with the County and the private owner to make sure the user fee is reasonable. Dave Walker stated that we are moving forward.

4. Department Staff Report

The Department of Fish & Wildlife have been planting fish in the local lakes. This year we went to Idaho for fish, our usual sources were not available due to the drought. Our fishing revenue is up at Buena Vista because of the planting. Fish were planted at Buena Vista, Lake Ming and Riverwalk Park Lake. We are planting every couple of weeks.

We have been working on getting restrooms completed at Mt. Mesa Park, low income housing grants are going at Pioneer Park along with a new spray park. We are using reclaimed irrigation water for the spray park. Another low income housing project will go in at Lamont Park. That project has been started with a walking path and exercise equipment going in. There is a low income housing project at Potomac Park, also with a walking path and exercise equipment. They are also going to do some ADA (American Disability Act) things there that need to be fixed. We have some low income funding that we are going to use at Buena Vista to put in some soccer fields and basketball courts.

We are finalizing a contract with the State Wildlife Resources to eradicate the raccoons at Buena Vista campgrounds. We have had a number of citizen complaints about the raccoons becoming very aggressive. We had to do that a few years ago. Raccoons are not able to be relocated due to the spread of diseases they pick up from public places where people have dogs and cats that will decimate the wild raccoon population.

We are working on a big electrical project at Tehachapi Mountain Park in conjunction with the County General Services Construction Dept. We are doing some things with our Building Healthy Communities Recreation Action Team which meets on a monthly basis. We did a survey of the residents in Lamont, Arvin and Greenfield to see what they would support in terms of a ballot initiative. We polled separately in each community because we knew that each community would only want to pay for the Park resources in their individual communities. They stated that their number one priority for their parks that they would be willing to pay for are law enforcement and security above everything else. Number two on the list would be clean restrooms. Surprisingly maintenance was way down on the list. We need a plan to educate residents in the communities near the parks that to get the improvements that they would like, what works well in other areas is to have a development fee in place, so when developers create new developments they pay fees for new parks. Also it works well to have maintenance districts set up so that when the new housing developments are completed and the new homeowner moves in they pay a fee on their property taxes. Then it is not a big issue, but if you try to do it after the fact then the voters generally vote it down. The City of Bakersfield, North of the River, and the City of Tehachapi have this in place, but the County does not. This is one of the things that we are trying to educate the County residents about. We have had multiple meetings at Heritage Park. We originally went through operational items there, then we developed a new master plan. We are working with the Bakersfield Police Department and the Park Rangers to work out security and safety issues for the residents living near the park. We are doing the same thing in Frazier Park and are in the process of finalizing plans for them. We have completed master plans for DiGeorgio, Rexland Acres, Greenfield, and Lamont parks.

We are working on getting funds for the parking area at Lake Woollomes. We are working with the Bureau of Reclamation whom we have a lease with for Lake Woollomes. Hopefully we will be able to get funding for 2017. We sometimes have trouble getting funding from the State but usually not the Federal Government.

The County CAO's office has requested that all County departments reduce their budgets by 1% for the remainder of this fiscal year and further reduce by 1.5% next fiscal year.

5. Commission Comments

The Commissioners agreed that good visibility from the main streets near the skate parks means there will be less negative behaviors from the kids using the facilities.

Chairman Jamison once again welcomed our new Commissioner Barrera and thanked him for joining the Commission. He also thanked the attendees for their participation in the meeting.

6. Date and Location of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for February 24, 2016, 6:30 pm at the Public Services Building, 2700 M Street.

7. Adjournment

Pa-Ba Motion to Adjourn

Chairman Jamison adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.