

Kern County Parks and Recreation Commission

**David Head Center
10300 San Diego Street
Lamont, CA 93241**

**March 23, 2016
6:30 P.M.**

MINUTES

A meeting of the Kern County Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Wednesday, March 23, 2016. Chairman Faull presided.

Present: Bob Jamison, District I; Mark Faull, District II; Carl Park, District III; Gregory McGiffney, District IV; Manuel Barerra, District V.

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

Others: There were five (5) others present.

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

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

1. Approval of the Minutes of February 24, 2016

There was one (1) small correction that needed to be made to last month's minutes. It was stated on page 3 in the second paragraph that Bruce Miller stated that he approves the extension to the OHV grant ... This should read: Bruce Miller stated that he approves of ... Ja made a motion to approve the Minutes as amended; Ba seconded the motion. All ayes, motion carried.

2. Public Presentations

Bob Rutledge, owner of Bob's Bait Bucket, inquired about the concessionaire's contract at Hart Park that ended approximately four (4) months ago. Will there be another concessionaire filling the need soon? This weekend will be Easter Sunday, which is one of the busiest weekends in the park. Director Lerude stated that there was a dispute between the father and son who ran the concessions which caused their contract to be cancelled. Mr. Rutledge suggested that perhaps food truck vendors could put in a bid with the County until the concession dispute is resolved or another concessionaire takes over. Mr. Lerude mentioned that no vendor can sell goods on County property without an agreement. There is an ice cream concessionaire who sold his products at Hart

Park last year and was very successful. He will be returning again this year. The County would be happy to receive agreements from other food vendors.

3. New Business

a. Projects/Activities – 5th District – DISCUSSION ONLY

The process of improving Lamont Park started with past Supervisor Karen Goh and finished with present Supervisor Leticia Perez. Kern County owns Lamont Park and Bear Mountain Recreation and Parks Department owns the David Head Center building and other parks in the area. Improvements at Lamont Park through various grants included basketball court resurfaced, concrete walking paths, playground equipment, exercise equipment, lighting, benches, bi-lingual signs, trash cans, etc. The number one priority for the community was the walking path and extra lighting. There are other things on the Master Plan that the community would like to see such as a spray park, picnic shelter, etc. We will continue to try to go after grants to fund these items. A recreation action team through Building Healthy Communities in South Kern which is funded by the California Endowment has worked with the community. We had community input on restricting alcohol and tobacco products use in the park. Law enforcement has been working with us to curtail illegal activities.

We hired a pollster group to poll the residents of Lamont, Arvin, Greenfield, Rexland Acres, etc. and found that the #1 issue for the residents who utilized the parks was safety concerns. An active law enforcement presence is desired by community members who were polled.

Older neighborhoods in the outlying communities do not have maintenance fees and developer fees for parks in place like the residents in the city of Bakersfield and the newer housing tracts do. The County does not have this fee structure in place. This is an issue that we continue to address when it comes to funding for the parks. Approximately 55% of the voters support increased funding fees but we need 2/3 (approximately 66%) of voter approval to pass the fees.

The County has cut department budgets every year for the past several years. For the Parks Department we have had to cut approximately 50% of our staff over the last eight (8) years. We work as diligently as possible at applying for and receiving grants but we don't have adequate staffing for grant writing. Even so, we do continue to apply for grants and work with volunteers in our communities for clean-up and maintenance services.

b. Schedule of meetings in outlying areas of Districts 1, 2, 3, 4 – DISCUSSION ONLY

Approximately half of our monthly meetings are held in downtown Bakersfield at the Public Services Building at 2700 M Street. Our goal is to hold one monthly meeting in each of the five (5) Districts throughout the year. For recommendations on where and when to have these meetings we are asking for input from each Commissioner in each District.

District I: Commissioner Jamison stated there has not been a meeting at Greenhorn Mountain Park in a very long time and it would be great to have a meeting there. It would need to be during one of the summer months when the weather is good at that high elevation. Improvements have been made at Camp Yenishante and Camp Okihi. We hope to open Camp Kaweah again soon. This area has been closed for a few years. We are doing some rehabilitation work in the area. We are working on some of the buildings at Camp Kaweah. At Camp Yenishante we put in a new well and new pipe lines. Commissioner Jamison suggested that we meet tentatively in July at Greenhorn Mountain Park.

District II: Commissioner Faull recommended that we meet in either Rosamond or Boron. We have met more recently in Tehachapi and Mojave, but it has been quite some time since we have met in Rosamond or Boron. Director Lerude stated that recent improvements have been made in Rosamond so that perhaps we should meet there to discuss the improvements with the community. October was recommended by Commissioner Faull.

District III: Commissioner Park recommended that we have a meeting at the Kern County Museum this year. Director Lerude will check the Museum calendar to see when a good month would be. Tentatively we are considering September. There are 5 big construction projects scheduled at the Museum grounds taking place within the next 6 months.

District IV: Commissioner McGiffney suggested that we meet at Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area in June when we have the most daylight available to visit the entire park.

In summary, the following meeting locations are tentatively planned for the remainder of this year:

April 27 – Bakersfield – Public Services Building – 2700 M Street
May 25 – Bakersfield – Public Services Building – 2700 M Street
June 22 – Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area
July 27 – Greenhorn Mountain Park
August 24 – Bakersfield – Public Services Building – 2700 M Street
September 28 – Bakersfield – Kern County Museum
October 26 – Rosamond (Hummel Hall or Library)
November 23 – (Day before Thanksgiving)
December 28 –

4. Department Staff Report

A list of the Parks Department projects was given to the Commissioners. It is kept up to date by our Planners.

The County requested that all County departments make a 2½% cut to their budgets. They are also asking for a 10% step down plan to be submitted at the June 21st meeting. Their plan is not to have a carry over or tax roll over at that meeting. On July 26th will be the big meeting where the budgets will have to be put together. So far the State budget looks fine and hopefully there will be no

problems there.

The Fire Department is approximately \$23 million in the hole and the Sheriff's Department is approximately \$6 million in the hole due to the drop in oil revenue and property taxes. This is the main reason for the budget cuts. Our CAO's office is very conservative with funding. By August the non-profits are going to be cut 50%.

Commissioner McGiffney asked if the County is considering consolidation of services? Director Lerude explained that many County services have been consolidated and that more consolidation is currently being analyzed. There are some mutual aid policies in place.

There was a time in the past when the various Park districts were considering consolidating, i.e., KC Parks & Recreation, NOR, and the City of Bakersfield, but the issue never went anywhere.

Some of the County Departments have consolidated over the past couple of years. For instance, Public Health has consolidated with Environmental Health, Public Works has consolidated with Waste Management and Engineering Surveying Services. The County is still looking at more departments to consolidate. They are seriously considering consolidating Parks and Recreation with General Services. We will learn more about this later in the year.

The KC Parks department over the last two (2) years has met and conferred with the SEIU (union) in terms of privatization and the phase 1 where the annual cost for Lost Hills, Wasco, Shafter, Arvin, Delano first contract was approximately \$87,000 annually versus if our employees did the same job at the same number of days, in terms of service level, was over \$450,000. That is blue collar work. A County department head's job is to spend the tax payer dollars as efficiently as possible. We looked at that and met and conferred with the Union and we now have the okay to implement phase 1. We have already implemented phase 3 which is Lamont, Arvin, and the whole west side of the County and we are now getting ready to implement phase 2 due in part to some savings with phase 1 in Lost Hills. The company Wonderful is going to take over the entire park and pay for all the staffing, utilities, etc. They are running recreation programs and paying for it all so we will take the \$87,000 and use it for phase 2 privatization in the south desert in the Mojave, Boron, California City, and Rosamond areas which will provide a higher level of service.

With the approval of the Parks & Recreation Commission and the BOS, we have raised fees with no complaints from the public. We "cherry picked" the fees to raise, i.e. at Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area because lots of people from L.A. use the facilities and this area is a bargain compared to the fees they pay in the Los Angeles area. This is helping to generate more revenue.

Pioneer Park, by Foothill high school, has a new spray park being developed and a walking path through a low income residential housing grant, also new basketball courts, and lighting. Potomac Park is scheduled next year to receive many of the same improvements as Pioneer Park.

Many of our parks need to meet ADA (American Disability Act) requirements.

We installed new restrooms at Mt. Mesa Park. In the Lake Isabella Park, the community is working to get a portion of the Linda Kissack ballpark made into a skate park. A park bond goes on the local ballot in November. Bear Mountain Park and Kern County regional parks will get monies based on the number of people they serve. Many of our parks are in low income areas.

Supervisor Leticia Perez is going to use some CGB funds to put in walking paths, lighting and a dog park at Heritage Park. We are going to some replace swings in Frazier Park and are going to some remodeling at the senior center in Lake Isabella and possibly some other senior centers in Rosamond and East Bakersfield Veterans.

5. Commission Comments

Commissioner Barrera complimented the Parks Department on the work that was completed at Lamont Park. The community residents are very appreciative. We had a good turnout for the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Commissioner Faull asked about the 2016 Bond Act, he heard that it is struggling. Director Lerude said he will check on the status and give the Commission an update at the next meeting.

Commissioner Faull also asked if inflatable stand up paddle boards are allowed in our County lakes. Director Lerude said yes they are allowed, no problem.

Commissioner Park thanked Suzanne Boyd for e-mailing all of the Commissioners the information regarding the Brown Act. It was very informative.

Commissioners Jamison and McGiffney thanked the public for their attendance and input.

Commissioner McGiffney also thanked Director Lerude for doing so much for the Parks department with so little funding and resources. Director Lerude suggested that everyone look at the video on YouTube on "Finding Lost Hills" by the Wonderful Company. This is an incredible example of how a company has given back to the community and the local park there.

Commissioner Barrera would like to recommend that at future meetings we let the Spanish speaking communities know that there is a bilingual Commissioner at our meetings.

Commissioner Faull thanked the Lamont community for working together with the Parks department and other community partners on the great improvements at Lamont Park.

Commissioner Faull is from a State Parks background, he stated the economic climate is changing and that it is difficult to maintain parks. We need to find more

resources and create different types of partnerships. We need to be vigilant about communicating to others the value of our local parks.

Director Lerude stated that user fees are starting to occur more frequently and corporate sponsorship is expanding. More people are volunteering in the parks and recreation areas. We need to create a new partnership to emphasized working toward better health; parks and recreation areas offer this opportunity. We need to learn to speak to different audiences and be more pro-active. The County Public Health Department has partnered with the community near Heritage Park. There are a number of ongoing volunteer events there as a result of their involvement. In some of our local communities the Bakersfield Police Department and the Sheriff's Department officers are giving community members their cell phone numbers so they can be called directly when needed. There is a Kaiser grant for exercise equipment to be installed at Riverside Park.

6. Date and Location of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for April 27, 2016, 6:30 pm at the Public Services Building, 2700 M Street in Bakersfield.

7. Adjournment

Mc-Ja Motion to Adjourn

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