

Kern County Parks and Recreation Commission

**Public Services Building
2700 M Street
Bakersfield, CA 93301**

**June 24, 2015
6:30 P.M.**

MINUTES

A meeting of the Kern County Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Wednesday, June 24, 2015. Chairman Jamison presided.

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

Staff: Bob Lerude, Director, Kern County Parks and Recreation Department; Pamela Schekel, Kern County Parks and Recreation Department; Michele Timmerman, Kern County Aging and Adult Services Department.

Others: There were 10 others present.

NOTE: Ja, Fa, Pa and Mc are abbreviations for Commissioners Jamison, Faull, Park and McGiffney. 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 April 22, 2015

Fa-Pa to approve the Minutes of April 22, 2015. All ayes, motion carried.

2. Public Presentations

No comments from the general public.

3. Old Business

- a. Potential Fee Increases at Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area; Kern River County Park; Lake Woollomes; Special Event and Reservation/Application Fee.

Chairman Jamison asked Mr. Lerude if he had any information on this item. Mr. Lerude went over the potential fee increases that were listed in the packets sent to each commissioner.

Chairman Jamison asked for public comment. No public comments.

Chairman Jamison asked for Commission comments.

Commissioner McGiffney wondered if \$1.00 was enough to generate the revenue needed to make a difference.

Mr. Lerude stated that the fee increase was comparable to fee increases made in other areas a few years ago and that generated about \$50,000.00. This will not make up for the past losses, but it will help in the area of hiring some extra help positions.

Commissioner Park said he felt that the fee increases were reasonable and supports them.

Commissioner Faull said he also felt the fee increases were reasonable and could be a burden on some lower income families but understands the need.

Chairman Jamison asked how big of a hit did the county take with the new budget and how long it would take to move forward with this request.

Mr. Lerude said it was a little over 2% hit and that we will go 3-4 more months for public input

b. Potential Annual Permit at Hart Park

Chairman Jamison asked Mr. Lerude for input on this proposal and he referred to the material handed out at the April meetings. He noted that most state and county parks do charge an annual fee. These fees are used for maintenance and upkeep. The Park Rangers would enforce the annual fee permits. This money would go into a fund strictly for maintenance and equipment needed for the upkeep of Hart Park.

Chairman Jamison asked for public comments.

Barbara Hayes is president of the organization called The Cat People and they have had a formal partnership with Hart Park since 1996 where they are at the park 7 days a week taking care of the abandoned animals. This is a costly endeavor and they believe that an annual fee might discourage the amount of animals that are dropped off at the park.

Darren Schmidt says he feels that paying a fee is an acceptable solution.

Bob Rutledge wondered how it would be implemented and thinks that imposing a fee would stop or halt the spontaneity of families going to the park for picnics.

Chairman Jamison asked for Commission comments.

Commissioner McGiffney wondered if an automated kiosk, like they use at universities could be used with special discount passes issued for veterans and free passes for the disabled. This would also help with tracking the

amount of people using the park.

Commissioner Park likes Commissioner McGiffney's idea about using kiosks perhaps at the East and West ends of the park. He wondered if fencing off the streets coming off Alfred Harrell Highway would help. Does not feel we should charge walkers or bikers.

Commissioner Faull feels there is merit in the idea of an automated entry system but wondered if it is economically feasible, what would it cost to maintain. He also feels that we need to come up with a plan that could be presented to the public to show what the money from the fees are going to in the area of improvements.

Chairman Jamison wanted to make sure that the money would be 100% used for the maintenance of Hart Park.

Mr. Lerude said that a Master Plan was developed years ago and would have to be updated to show what the plans for the park are now and he insured everyone that the money would be used solely for Hart Park.

4. New Business

a. Extension of OHV agreements

1. Friends of Jawbone
2. Stewards of the Sequoia
3. Kern River Parkway Foundation

Chairman Jamison asked for public comments. No public comments.

Chairman Jamison asked for Commissioner comments.

Commissioner McGiffney believes all of the OHV agreements should be extended and all have a good track record.

Commissioner Park was in support of the extension.

Commissioner Faull was in support.

Chairman Jamison was also in support.

All ayes, motion carried.

b. Discussion of the future OHV park/facility and funding available.

Chairman Jamison asked Mr. Lerude to go over the OHV funding.

Mr. Lerude said there was a little less than \$500,000.00 in the fund which is designated for a 60/40 split with 60% going towards a future OHV park and 40%

for other OHV uses. Kern County is only 1 of 2 counties that are county funded San Luis Obispo is the other county. The Commission is seeking input on a facility in Bakersfield.

Chairman Jamison asked for public input.

Richard Pratt brought up the current motorcycle track at Enos Lane & I-5, it is currently being operated by a group of individuals who pooled their money together to open up the track one day a week. It is owned by Mr. Beard and he does not want to be bothered with the motocross aspect of the park. Dave Walker, Todd Snider and Chris Leavelle are all a part of the Friends of Kern Open Space and said that if some of the OHV funds could be used towards leasing this property from Mr. Beard it is already a functioning site and ready to bring in money. Having a local venue would keep Bakersfield riders in town and bring out of town riders to Bakersfield. With upfront money for the initial lease and equipment needed for maintenance it could be operational more than one day a week.

Dave Walker, Todd Snider and Chris Leavelle all brought up the positive aspect of having a local motocross facility and the revenue it would bring to the county and the fact that the venue is already set up and ready to use is a plus.

Darren Schmidt suggested counter offering Mr. Beard on the suggested upfront money requested and partnering with other county agencies for the equipment.

Chairman Jamison asked for Commissioner comments.

All Commissioners felt that this location has a lot to offer but at this time they are trying to get public feedback on different sites that would benefit those using the facility and the general public also. They also stated that they need to understand that this whole process will take time and to be patient. They are going to seek public input for several more months and it will then need to go through all of the proper channels before a definite outcome.

4. Department Staff Report

Mr. Lerude reported on the following:

- There was a 2% cut to the budget this year, there will be another budget meeting held in July and again in August.
- The water issue facing Kern County is critical and he stated that there are many ideas being looked at including acquiring water from Lake Isabella to taking water from Lake Ming. He said the county is preparing for the worse and hoping for the best.
- Legal fireworks were banned in all County Parks with the exception for authorized firework shows conducted by licensed Pyrotechnic Operators. Electric signs will be placed at parks reminding the public about the ban and those in violation could face fines up to \$1,500.
- He is preparing a list for next month in regards to individual grants pertaining to:
 - Low income housing projects at various parks

- Taking out turf at the Ridgecrest Admin. facility and putting in Xeriscape (3 year project)
- There was a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Museum for an old barn that was moved from Shafter belonging to the Hayes family.
- A \$50,000 donation by Cynthia Lake to move the home of Merle Haggard to the museum
- Orientation center fencing and ADA walkway at the front of the museum
- Bakersfield High School wants to donate their water tower to the museum

5. Commission Comments

Commissioner Faull thanked the public for their input and new ideas.

Commissioner Park thanked everyone for attending and hanging in there.

Commissioner McGiffney thanked everyone and reminded everyone that we all need to think about the drought situation and trade off to be made regarding other wildlife.

Chairman Jamison thanked everyone and stated that the Farmers Almanac said we should have rain September – November.

6. Date and Location of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for July 22, 2015, 6:30 pm at the Public Services Building.

7. Adjournment

Mc-Pa Motion to Adjourn

Chairman Jamison adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.