

Kern County Parks and Recreation Commission

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

**July 22, 2015
6:30 P.M.**

MINUTES

A meeting of the Kern County Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Wednesday, July 22, 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.

Others: There were 13 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 June 24, 2015

Fa-Pa to approve the Minutes of June 24, 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 to report on this item. He stated that this has been reviewed by the commission at several meetings and referred to the fee increase hand out provided to commission members at the last meeting.

Chairman Jamison asked for public comment. No public comments.

Chairman Jamison asked for Commission comments.

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

Commissioner Faull said no one likes to raise fees but it is a necessity and will allow for the upkeep necessary for the park.

Commissioner McGiffney stated it is unfortunate but reasonable yet necessary.

FA motioned to accept, Mc second. All ayes. Motion carried.

b. Potential Annual Permit at Hart Park

Chairman Jamison asked Mr. Lerude for input on this proposal and he stated that again this matter has been brought before the commission the last few months and nothing would be recommended until the fall. Other Regional parks have implemented park fees and the money generated by this fee would be used strictly for maintenance of Hart Park. A fee has not been decided on due to logistics, i.e. annual fee, daily fee, vehicle parking fee, etc. If it is a vehicle fee those without a parking pass would be cited.

Chairman Jamison asked for public comments.

Jonathon McDonald was there representing his family, the Spurlock's. He argued the fact that LA County parks don't charge a fee and they are in very nice condition. He told of his family's migration from Oklahoma to Bakersfield in 1938. He wanted to relate how important Hart Park is to the community and that there should not be a fee to enjoy it.

Bob Rutledge expressed how times/conditions have changed from 70 years ago and that people today do not take care of the parks like they did in the past. He would like to see plans for families that make a spur of the moment plan to go to a park and get cited they can, within 7-10 days, pay only for the admission sticker and forego the citation. This would not discourage low income families from enjoying the park.

Chairman Jamison asked for Commission comments.

Commissioner Park hates to charge but we need to bring in some money, the condition of the park desperately needs upkeep and this may help in that effort.

Commissioner Faull thanked those who spoke up and reiterated the fact that no one wants to create or raise fees but money is needed to maintain the park, the budget is stretched to a breaking point. These funds would stay solely with Hart Park.

Commissioner McGiffney stated that Hart Park is poor condition but feels that if people pay a fee to enjoy the park they may place more value on the park. There should be no fee for walking or biking only for parking, this might be the easiest way. Perhaps create a way to donate funds to the park.

Chairman Jamison said the more input we get the more likely we are to reach a decision quicker.

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

This topic was discussed at the last meeting and at this point in time we are still in the stage of gathering information before a decision will be made. There is approximately \$475-500 thousand in the fund and the fund goes up every year. Once a decision is made it will have to go through the public process.

Chairman Jamison asked for public comments.

Bruce Miller said that there is a large population of residents who enjoy using OHV's, jeeps, side by sides and other off road vehicles. They are willing to invest the time to travel to out of town OHV parks and thinks having a local venue would keep them in town and might help with the illegal riding. He thinks the time is right for this to happen.

Dave Walker of Friends of Kern Open Space (FOKOS) presented the commissioners with an invitation to visit the Kern County Raceway Park (KCRP) on August 18th from 3:00 – 7:00 to see what it is all about. They would also like for the Board of Supervisors to attend to get a firsthand look at what has already been done to the facility and how much of a family activity it is. He said that word is already out to the OHV community and there are families coming into Bakersfield so that their children can compete with our own local talent. He also said that there is room for expansion in the future.

Crystal Langford wanted to thank KCRP for making the racetrack available even if it is only one day a week. Her whole family enjoys riding and she takes her 16-year old daughter to Lancaster every weekend to ride. They also ride in the foothills but says having a racetrack to go to is much safer. She feels that this is a great way to keep young children active in sports and out of trouble.

Ed Paulson said he has lived in Bakersfield for 11 years and didn't realize how big off road riding was but has come to enjoy the sport and having a local venue is great. Without this location he would not be able to ride as often as he likes due to having to travel out of town.

Chris Lavelle had some questions regarding what the set backs are at this time and what can be done to move the process along. Bob stated again how we are still in the input gathering stage as to what we want:

- a county run facility
- a private run facility
- how many days would it be open, etc.

Once all of these questions are answered there is a whole process to go through ending with the Board of Supervisors.

Cindy Miller said they need to incorporate a camping area so that those traveling from out of town will have a place to camp. Dave said the KCRP location has open space for trailers.

Crystal Langford said they have had friends travel 4 hours to use the racetrack and said the close proximity to BVRAC and Bakersfield Raceway they will be back to visit again.

Bruce Miller wanted to know if this effort will have to be a part of the Kern County Master Plan. This is a facility that is already in place we are not starting from scratch. Mr. Lerude explained there is no one Master Plan for OHV. OHV will be addressed through the Specific Plan Process.

Chairman Jamison had a question regarding the purchase of heavy equipment that would be needed for the OHV facility that would come out of the PRC fund but used on leased land. Dave assured him that the equipment would be county owned and stay with the facility no matter who operated it.

Chairman Jamison asked for Commission comments.

Commissioner Park agreed that KCRP is a great idea but it is a complicated procedure but he would like to see it accomplished.

Commissioner Faull again thanked everyone for their input and encouraged everyone for more feedback via our website or in writing. KCRP is a giant step ahead with what they have already done and it could become a tourism venue.

Commissioner McGiffney stated that the feedback he has received on this project has been positive and that the location is a plus.

Chairman Jamison thanked everyone for all of their input.

4. Department Staff Report

Mr. Lerude reported on the following:

- He had handouts for the commissioners that showed projects that are either completed or being worked on in each district
- Over the last 8 years staff has been cut by 45% with layoffs 3 years in a row
- There used to be 141 permanent employees now we only have 80

- We used to have 50-60 part-time employees and we are down to 15-20
- We do use Work Release, Cal-Works, Community Service, MAOF and other when possible
- The latest report on the water situation is that we should be in good shape until at least September. The county has 30,000 feet in Lake Isabella

5. Commission Comments

Commissioner McGiffney appreciates all those that came out. There are a lot of challenges ahead now that we don't have WPA anymore. KMC and Lerdo has taken priority over Parks and Recreation, we need to make it clear to the public the challenges that we face.

Commissioner Faull thanked the public for their input. We need to figure out how to bridge the gap. Perhaps the public can make donations, volunteer or get people or corporate sponsorships to "adopt" the park to assist in the upkeep. We need to come up with new models on how to get there. If there are any other ideas that could help in this area please bring them forward.

Commissioner Park thanked everyone for attending.

Chairman Jamison thanked everyone for coming out and their input is very valuable.

6. Date and Location of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for August 26, 2015, 6:30 pm at the Lost Hills Community Center – The Blue Building: Hall 101a, 17001 Lost Hills Road.

7. Adjournment

Mc-Fa Motion to Adjourn

Chairman Jamison adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.