

City of Newport  
Parks and Recreation Committee  
Minutes 04-15-2009

ROLL CALL: Members present: Parks and Recreation Department Head Jim Protiva; Committee members Susan Boehlert, Roger Holstein, Sarah Follett, Ed Simon, Committee Chair Paul Reed, Karen Smith, and Sandra Surber. Also present: Sports Coordinator Liam Hughes and Administrative Assistant Bob Fuller.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Committee Chair Paul Reed called the meeting to order at 8:30 A.M. Ed Simon moved to approve the March 18, 2009 minutes. Motion was seconded by Jim Protiva and approved on a unanimous voice vote.

CONCERNS OR COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS: None.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR: Jim introduced Bob Fuller, who recently transferred to Parks and Rec from the Newport Airport. Bob takes over Judy Mayhew's duties as administrative assistant. Judy has been promoted to Recreation Superintendent. Many people were interviewed for the Recreation Superintendent position and Jim advises Judy was clearly the best candidate.

Jim reports Betty Wheeler Park is having major water drainage issues, creating a large body of water in the park after heavy rains. About a month ago, personnel did some trenching and laid perforated pipe; however, this has not solved the problem. Jim determined the main line may be plugged due to a maintenance problem. Later today personnel will be doing some further exploration to pinpoint the problem. Also much of the soil appears to be clay and this could be part of the issue as well. If all goes well, this may be remedied within the week.

Parks Department has a new truck. All city vehicles will now be painted white for uniformity.

Jim reported the budget is not looking quite as good as it did last meeting; the current economic situation is an issue. All city departments have been directed to restrict purchasing to essential items only, and vacant positions will not be filled at this time. The room tax revenue is down about \$500,000, which has resulted in about \$270,000 less in the general fund and about \$230,000 less in tourism-restricted dollars. There has not been any discussion yet regarding layoffs (unlike Lincoln County, which is anticipating 50-100 layoffs). The City of Newport and Lincoln County both get a large portion of funds from property taxes, and values are holding above assessed values so far. The city manager and finance director are "surgically" reducing each line item to balance the budget.

Sandra asked if there is a coordinator for various events such as Loyalty Days to extract more monies from these events for increased revenues. She suggested visitors would probably spend more time in the area and hence spend more money. Ed advised at Seafood and Wine Festival, many businesses have pulled back, and also the U.S. and

Canadian Navies don't visit Newport during Loyalty Days as they did pre-9/11. Several ideas were put forward regarding additional activities/revenue sources during some of these events, but Ed cautioned that often insurance costs often go up with more activities; hence, many entities are reluctant to participate. He brought up the "Newport Passport" program, which has not been active for the past few years, and it might be a good idea to remind folks of this program; it actually did lead to increased tourist dollars. Jim said he will mention these ideas to the Destination Newport Committee.

**RECREATION CENTER BUSINESS:** Liam Hughes gave an extensive Powerpoint presentation on Sports Center activities and plans for future programs. The sports programs are doing well and Liam is planning extending existing programs and initiating some new activities to take advantage of the unique environment of the coast and Ollala Lake area.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Jim discussed the use of chemicals in parks (herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers). Although not at zero use of chemicals, the city purchases less than five gallons a year of Roundup, Crossbow, and Speedzone for all city parks. Three staff are assigned to manual removal of weeds, although this does not eliminate the plants. The challenge is getting a balance: Weeds simply out-compete grass. Additionally, the city has two Parks employees who are certified herbicide applicators. It was mentioned that Lincoln City is claiming to be "chemical-free", but Jim advises that time will tell; it is very difficult to control weeds without chemicals. Ed mentioned he'd heard the OSU Extension Service is testing a new "golf course" grass that has some resistant properties and it might be worth investigation for use in parks and ball fields. Another suggestion was to post a sign after fertilization or similar application to advise park users of the substance being used. Native plants are being used as well; the department grows plants in the city greenhouse near the cemetery. Attempts have been made to recruit volunteers from Master Gardeners and similar groups to help in the greenhouse, but the need is for regular, return volunteers and that has been an issue. Ed suggested offering the greenhouse program to the community college for lab work to attract student volunteers. Also Jim reports the community garden program is getting so popular the beds were relocated to the reservoir to provide more space for the garden areas.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Jim reports a grant request has been submitted for the Coast Park by the Performing Arts Center and is under review by the grantor. The project is estimated at \$495,000: \$350,000 from grant funds, and matching funds of \$100,000 cash from system development charges, and \$45,000 from in-kind labor donations. Grant interviews will be held between June 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 A.M.

