

**SOLANO COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF July 10, 2014**

**County Administration Center - First Floor Hearing Room
675 Texas Street, Fairfield
10:00 A.M.**

Members Present: Commissioners Riddle, Whited, Leong, Alvarez and
Chairman Hermsmeyer
Members Absent: None
Staff Present: Dan Sykes and Diane Gilliland

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Hermsmeyer called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. A quorum was confirmed.

2. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of May 8, 2014 were approved as prepared (motion by Commissioner Leong second by Commissioner Riddle).

3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as prepared (motion by Commissioner Riddle, second by Commissioner Alvarez)

4. Chair and Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Whited noted that he recently stayed at Sandy Beach Park and observed that it was kept clean and operated efficiently by staff. Although the park was crowded, staff was always on hand to assist the public as needed. He suggested that the Commission stay at one the parks together to observe park operations.

Commissioner Alvarez asked if staff was moving forward with changing the Commission meeting time. Mr. Sykes responded that the paperwork had been forwarded to the Director of Resource Management. Commissioner Alvarez also asked if staff would include in the Parks status report how the recent fire near Lake Berryessa had impacted Lake Solano Park.

Chairman Hermsmeyer asked if staff would speak again on the Newell Open Space area.

5. Public Comments

No public comments.

6. Present Certificates of Appreciation (Presentation)

Mr. Sykes introduced Emily Combs, Management Staff Analyst for the Parks division. She presented each of the Commissioners with certificates of appreciation from the Board of Supervisors. On behalf of Solano County she thanked the Commissioners for their volunteer efforts.

7. Commissioner Outreach Reports (Informational)

Commissioner Leong reported that he attended the Solano State Park Committee meeting on May 22nd. There was a status update on the Benicia Capitol State Historic Park and the Benicia State Recreation Area.

Commissioner Alvarez thanked Commissioner Leong for attending the Solano State Park Committee meeting. He thought that with the County and the Cities of Benicia and Vallejo attending the meetings that they were sending a message to the State Parks Department that they want to keep the two State parks open.

Commissioner Riddle has been attending Solano Resource Conservation District (Solano RCD) meetings and noted that Solano RCD indicated that they wish to work more with Solano County Parks and would like to acquire funds to help with park improvements. They are already involved with activities at Lynch Canyon and Lake Solano. Commissioner Riddle also noted that he toured the Putah Creek area to see the conservation efforts underway with the help of the Solano County Water Conservation Agency. There are also Arundo eradication efforts underway in Pleasants Valley Creek which is a major tributary to Lake Solano.

Commissioner Leong commented that the Park and Recreation Commission might consider endorsing a pending Congressional bill called the Invasive Fish and Wildlife Prevention Act. Mr. Sykes noted that Parks has been talking with the Solano RCD about working together. Approximately \$5,000 has been earmarked for them to do some preliminary site plans and come up with cost estimates for materials and labor to remove invasives and plant native species at selected park locations. The estimates would be used to look for grants or find maintenance funding for the purchase of plants. Volunteers from the Putah Creek Council could also be utilized.

Chairman Hermsmeyer suggested hearing Item 8 with Item 11. The Commission agreed with his suggestion.

8. Appoint Ad Hoc Committee to Review Park “Master Plans” (Action Item)

Items 8 and 11 have been combined. See Item 11 below.

9. Approve Application Materials for FY2014/15 Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund (FWPF) Grant Program (Action Item)

The Commission reviewed the Application Materials for the FY2014/15 Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund (FWPF) Grant Program. There will be an appropriation of \$15,000 for the new cycle. Staff's recommendation is for a maximum grant request of \$2,500. Other than the increased grant request the proposed grant program will be run as in past years with presentations made at the September Commission meeting. Mr. Sykes recommended that the Commission approve the Application Materials for the FY2014/15 Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund (FWPF) Grant Program.

Commissioner Alvarez asked if there will be a subcommittee assigned to review the grant applications and make recommendations to the full Commission. Mr. Sykes answered that there will be a subcommittee.

Commissioner Riddle commented that he liked the idea of limiting the amount of the grant request because it spreads the money around by putting it in more hands. He made a motion that the Commission approve the Application Materials for the FY2014/15 Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund (FWPF) Grant Program. Commissioner Whited seconded the motion. Commissioner Leong asked if the grant request was increased to \$2,500 because there will be more funds available. Mr. Sykes responded that it was raised because instead

of \$10,000 (FY2013/14) the FY2014/15 appropriation is for \$15,000. Chairman Hermsmeyer called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

10. Consider Staff Recommendation of No Comment on Lead Ammunition Phase-Out (Action Item)

Chairman Hermsmeyer stated that staff recommends that the Commission offer no comments on the implementation timeline that would phase in non-lead ammunition as proposed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Mr. Sykes stated that in the Commission's advisory role to the Board of Supervisors on fish and wildlife propagation matters it routinely receives letters from the Department of Fish and Wildlife about proposed changes to rules. A law was passed in October which would phase out the use of lead ammunition for hunting wildlife. The Department of Fish and Wildlife sent the letter to the Commission in April asking for their review and comments on the proposed timeline to implement the law. They are required to begin implementation in 2015 and have it completed by 2019. The letter was presented to the Commission at the May meeting where it was discussed. Based on the fact that there was a lack of consensus by the Commission and a lack of any public comments on the issue, staff's recommendation is that the Commission offer no comments on the implementation timeline that would phase in non-lead ammunition as proposed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Commission agreed that they should respond to Fish and Wildlife that they received the letter; are aware that the law passed and that Solano County will comply with the law.

11. Status Reports (Informational)

Chairman Hermsmeyer stated that the appointment of an ad hoc committee to review the Parks Master Plan (Item 8) will be included in the discussion of the Commission work plan.

A. Commission Work Plan

Mr. Sykes referred to an update of the work plan that illustrated the Commission's progress since its adoption in March. The Commission has begun outreach by attending meetings of various committees (Item 1a of the workplan). There are more outreach opportunities coming up in terms of marketing (Item 1c of the workplan). The visit to Lynch Canyon in May was on the topic of resource management (Item 2a of the workplan). The appointment of an ad hoc committee to review and prioritize park improvement projects with County staff ties into item 5a of the work plan. The ad hoc committee would review master plans for Lake Solano and Sandy Beach Park as well as public access projects at Lynch Canyon and Belden's Landing. The Committee will make recommendations and come back to the Commission in a few months.

Chairman Hermsmeyer asked the Commissioners if anyone was available to serve on the ad hoc committee. After some discussion Commissioners Hermsmeyer and Riddle offered to serve on the committee. Commissioner Alvarez will be an alternate. Mr. Sykes will provide copies of the Parks Master Plan to committee members. Committee discussions to review and prioritize the Plans could begin anytime in the fall but would need to have begun around the first of the year.

B. Attendance and Revenue Summary

Mr. Sykes reviewed Park attendance and revenue thru May 2014. The report revealed that revenue goals had been exceeded for FY2013/14 to date. Park fees may be looked at again as many agencies have been looking to recoup operating costs through raising fees. Concession stands that could also provide revenue were considered as well.

C. Recent Park Events

The recent Monticello Fire caused the campground at Lake Solano to be closed and campers evacuated on July 5th. The campground was not burned and reopened the following Monday. The evacuated campers were refunded their fees. As of the date of this meeting the fire had burned approximately 6,500 acres.

On June 21st the Coast Guard Auxiliary had a life jacket giveaway and provided free vessel safety inspections at Sandy Beach Park. At Lake Solano Park the docent-led activities started up again in May. They are working with the Putah Creek Council to provide volunteer coordination services at Lake Solano Park.

On June 7th the Lynch Canyon Trail Run had its largest participation ever with 350 people participating in the run alone. The event generated approximately \$1,000 in parking revenue. Lynch Canyon was closed for four Mondays between June 9th and June 30th due to construction work in Lynch Creek.

The Newell Open Space in American Canyon was opened on June 28th. There are some concerns regarding visitors to Newell entering Lynch Canyon on days it is closed. Mr. Sykes has asked the City of American Canyon to address that issue. The City and Solano County Parks are putting up signage on the boundaries to indicate entry into Lynch Canyon is prohibited when it is closed. The Commissioners expressed concern over potential fire hazards.

D. Outreach Opportunities (Visions of Wild, County Fair)

Mr. Sykes noted that volunteers are needed to staff tables and hand out Parks brochures at upcoming events in Solano County. "Visions of Wild" is sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service and celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. It will be located on Mare Island and runs from September 4th thru the 6th. Volunteers are also needed to man tables at the Solano County Fair which runs from July 30th to August 3rd. Another U.S. Forest Service outreach service is the implementation of an urban ranger station. The ranger station is located in a storefront adjacent to the Farmers Market in downtown Vallejo. It is open every Saturday and provides information on outdoor opportunities in Solano County including Solano Land Trust and Solano County Parks brochures.

E. Status of ongoing FWPF Projects

The Commission reviewed the status reports on the FY2012/13 and FY2013/14 Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund projects (as of 6/23/14).

12. Confirm Date of Next Regular Meeting, and Adjourn (Action Item)

The Commissioners agreed by consensus to a regular Commission meeting on September 11, 2014 at 5:30 pm in its regular location at the County Administrative Center, 1st Floor Hearing Room. Meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.