

**SOLANO COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
January 8, 2015**

**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 Excused: 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 November 13, 2014 were approved as prepared (motion by Commissioner Whited, second by Commissioner Leong).

3. Approval of Agenda

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

4. Comments and Outreach Reports from Commissioners

Commissioner Leong brought in a copy of the "*Breeding Birds of Solano County*" that was recently published by the Napa-Solano Audubon Society. The book illustrates where each species breeds within Solano County. He thanked the Solano Land Trust and Solano County Parks for allowing them to survey birds on their land. The book is available at Solano County libraries. The commission suggested that the Nature Center at Lake Solano have a copy also.

5. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

6. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Commissioner Whited made a motion to nominate Chairman Hermsmeyer and Commissioner Riddle to serve again (respectively) as Chair and Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Leong. Chairman Hermsmeyer and Commissioner Riddle accepted their nominations. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Discussion of Alternative Revenue Sources

7a.) Receive/Comment on Report on Alternative Revenue Sources

Mr. Sykes stated that he was following up on the Commission's request for a report on alternative revenue sources. The report described the County Parks primary revenue sources, alternative revenue sources and options for future alternative revenue sources.

The primary funding sources that the County parks currently rely on are property taxes, fees for services, and to a lesser extent the County of Solano general fund. Other funds are from charges such as administrative charges/refunds, fines, insurance claims, interest and donations. There was a suggestion to include Solano County Parks in developer fees to generate more funds. Mr. Sykes noted that there are a variety of funding mechanisms, but getting voter support is difficult.

During the discussion of Parks funding sources it was noted that the Park and Recreation Commission should be allowed to review and comment on any plans regarding the possible formation and funding of a Regional Park District before they are made available to the public. After further discussion Commissioner Leong made a motion that the Park and Recreation Commission send a letter to the Solano County Administrator requesting that the Commission be allowed to review and comment on any report regarding the funding and formation of a Regional Park District before it is made available to the public. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Alvarez. The motion passed unanimously.

Turning the discussion back to alternative revenue sources, Mr. Sykes noted that alternative revenue sources are a fairly minor part of total revenue sources. The only notable exception is grants which can be used to start a new program or complete a project. However they cannot be used for operational expenses. Other sources of income have been derived from boat rentals, firewood sales, RV/boat storage fees, ice cream sales (vendor) and rental fees from the Nature Center. A table of various alternative revenue options was reviewed, and future opportunities for alternate revenues were discussed. It was noted that an increase in fee-based park services could result in an increase in park revenues. If the County were able to help vendors be successful, then the parks would benefit, by both providing a service to the public and creating a revenue source. Pros and cons were presented for various potential revenue sources.

Mr. Sykes outlined the activities with the most likely potential for revenue generation. These include preparing more grant applications; adding vending machine services that have a low overhead cost and only need the County to provide a secure location; and reevaluating Wi-Fi services that have a lower cost model. The Commission asked Mr. Sykes to further develop these ideas for the most likely revenue sources, along with identifying any obstacles to implementation, and bring this item back for discussion at a future meeting.

7b.) Discuss Use Policy for Nature Center

The Lake Solano Nature Center Use Policy was last updated on April 8, 2011. Commission discussion points included Sections 1.1.2 (Introduction) and 1.5 (Nature Center Use Priority) of the Policy. Although the Nature Center has not been actively marketed, information about the Center is available on the Solano County website. Uses for the Center include public exhibits that focus on the natural, water, historical and recreational resources of Lake Solano, training and rental of the Exhibit Room, patio and outdoor circle area for exhibitions and other park-related activities. The Center has been promoted to non-profit groups; however, its rental fees were a potential issue for some. Volunteering at the park was suggested as a way for groups to reduce their rental costs. Another suggestion was that the use of the building could be marginally increased by having a staff person tasked with marketing the Center.

Such a staff person could identify target groups that might rent the Center, suggest revisions to the fee structure, and promote all that the Center has to offer.

8. Discuss Scoring of Future FWPF Grant Applications

The Commission considered the merits of setting up a threshold for grant applicants to receive funds; and whether or not there should be a minimum score established. One point made was that there is some value to having a minimum application score. The grant money is intended to help fish and wildlife propagation and it should be given to projects that meet the criteria of Fish and Game Code 13103. Another point considered was that, if there was grant money left over, should it be given to an applicant that didn't get a high enough score, or should the money be carried over to the next year? Another consideration was if there were more applicants than funds, a scoring system should be in place to resolve the matter.

Commissioner Riddle made a motion that the Commission set a minimum score of 70% for an application to move forward in the review process. Commissioner Leong seconded the motion. The motion carried with three ayes and two no votes. (The 70% requirement will be used in the next FWPF Grant Application process – tentatively scheduled for July 2015).

9. Staff Report – Updates on the Following:

A. Commission Work Plan

Mr. Sykes provided an update to the Commission work plan. The impacts of the County smoke free ordinance that will be going before the Board of Supervisors soon will need to be considered as to its effect on County Parks.

B. Native Grass Planting Project at Lake Solano Park

On December 20, 2014 there was a native grass planting at Lake Solano Park next to the fishing pond. For many years people have commented that the area needed more landscaping and now it has irrigation and grasses. Shrubs will also be planted soon. The project was coordinated by Solano Resource Conservation District (RCD) and the Putah Creek Council. The plants were provided by Solano County and Solano RCD.

C. Attendance and Revenue Summary

The Parks and Recreation Division is steadily working towards its revenue goal for the fiscal year. Currently it is at 42% of the revenue goal.

D. Status of FWPF Grant Projects

The Fish and Wildlife grant projects for the 2013-2014 grant cycle have been completed with the exception of one group which has until May 2015 to be finished.

Mr. Sykes stated that he will be bringing revised fee proposals to the Commission in March. He also commented on an article in the Sacramento Bee about Putah Creek being designated a "Wild Trout Water". The distinction is meant to ensure that Putah Creek always remains healthy for self-sustaining trout. Copies of the article were given to the Commission.

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

The Commissioners agreed by consensus to a regular Commission meeting on March 12, 2015 in its regular location, at 10:00 a.m. in the County Administrative Center, 1st Floor Hearing Room. Meeting was adjourned at 11:56 a.m.