

City of Fort Lauderdale

*City Hall
100 North Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
www.fortlauderdale.gov*



Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

Wednesday, November 9, 2016

12:00 PM

**Joint Workshop with the Parks, Recreation and Beaches Advisory
Board
City Commission Conference Room**

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP

FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION

***JOHN P. "JACK" SEILER Mayor - Commissioner
DEAN J. TRANTALIS Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District II
BRUCE G. ROBERTS - Commissioner - District I
ROBERT L. McKINZIE - Commissioner - District III
ROMNEY ROGERS - Commissioner - District IV***

***LEE R. FELDMAN, City Manager
JOHN HERBST, City Auditor
JEFFREY A. MODARELLI, City Clerk
CYNTHIA A. EVERETT, City Attorney***

ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Commissioner Romney Rogers, Commissioner Bruce G. Roberts, Vice Mayor Dean J. Trantalis, Commissioner Robert L. McKinzie, and Mayor John P. "Jack" Seiler

Also Present: City Manager Lee R. Feldman, City Clerk Jeffrey A. Modarelli, Assistant City Attorney Cole Copertino, and City Auditor John Herbst

Parks, Recreation and Beaches Advisory Board:

Present: Chair Debby Eisinger, Vice Chair Caleb Gunter, Brucie Cummings, Darin Lentner, Esq., Karen Polivka, Jo Ann Smith

Not Present: Ryan Fletcher, Ronald Goff, James B. Jordan, JoAnn Medalie, Bruce A. Qualey, Jo Ann Smith

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Seiler called the City Commission's Joint Workshop with the Parks, Recreation and Beaches Board to order at 12:18 p.m.

PRESENTATIONS

[16-1424](#)

Parks and Recreation Master Plan Presentation by Aecom

Mr. Phil Thornburg, Director of Parks and Recreation, addressed the City Commission and the members of the Parks, Recreation, and Beaches Board. Mr. Thornburg stated the City had requested AECOM to develop and in-depth presentation on a Comprehensive Parks System Master Plan (Plan) to serve as a guide for the planning, acquisition, development, and operations of Parks and Recreation programs and facilities in the City. (AECOM is a professional engineering firm that provides professional design, engineering, consulting, construction, and project management services to a wide range of global clients.)

A copy of the AECOM Presentation is attached to these minutes.

Mr. Thornburg introduced Mr. Joe Webb of AECOM who thanked the Commission for the opportunity to work with the City and its staff. Mr.

Webb also noted his colleague in attendance, Mr. Nick Cune. Mr. Webb stated they welcome any comments and questions both during and following the presentation.

Mr. Webb said the purpose of this project was to develop a Comprehensive Parks Master Plan (Plan) for the City that looks forward 30 years while taking into consideration that Parks and Recreation for the City, the nation, and the world is changing. The goal of this Plan is to put the City's Parks Department in the best position to be ahead of the curve and progressive.

Mr. Webb noted the Plan looks at the City's Parks by comprehensively studying the linkages between and access to green areas, the historical and cultural facilities, and how they work together to service the community. Additionally, the Plan works towards advancing the City's greater vision of how Parks can work in concert to promote the City's broader vision for its many initiatives including Press Play and Fast Forward for the future planning efforts of the City.

Mr. Webb explained AECOM's process over the last 16 to 18 months including an assessment of where the City is, where the City would like to be. Mr. Webb reviewed and highlighted the process AECOM went through to arrive at the Plan. He noted that the process included reading the City's guiding documents (research and analysis), its future direction about development along mass transit lines and connections and its future population growth.

Vice Mayor Trantalis asked about the future population growth between Sunrise Boulevard and 13th Street North as result of the long-range transportation Plan for Broward County versus the high density that currently exists in the areas North and South of Broward Boulevard. Vice Mayor Trantalis noted the necessity of integrating Parks in popular high-density areas of the Plan. Mayor Seiler noted the Plan also provides for future areas of high density. Commissioner Rogers commented that future development in the Sunrise Boulevard area could impact the City's Parks. Vice Mayor Trantalis noted that the zoning in the Sunrise Boulevard area North would not equate to the current high-density areas North and South of Broward Boulevard. Mayor Seiler concurred with Vice Mayor Trantalis that the area North of Sunrise would be less dense than the downtown area of Broward Boulevard. Mayor Seiler also agreed with Commissioner Rogers that the Davie Boulevard South area density would be higher. Mr. Webb agreed that there could be a variance in density in the future.

Debby Eisinger, Chair of the Parks, Recreation and Beach Board

(Board), asked if the information received from AECOM came from the City or the County. Mayor Seiler noted that this information most likely came from the County. Ms. Eisinger agreed with Vice Mayor Trantalis's comments regarding high-density areas. Further comments ensued on high-density areas of the City. Mr. Webb stated they would modify the areas of high density in their presentation. Mr. Webb discussed the transformational aspects as to how the City will provide ways to accommodate the City's Parks Services in high-density areas. Discussions continued on the future demographics of the City.

Mr. Webb outlined the City's inventory assessment of its Parks as it relates to their effectiveness. He noted the high level of maintenance was well done at the City's Parks. He also said the assessment pointed out that there was no consistent branding of the City's Parks and their signage was inconsistent. The assessment also observed that there is an opportunity for incorporating sustainability and resiliency practices that could be integrated into the City's Parks because many aspects of the Parks have run through their useful life cycle resulting in the need for capital improvements and redevelopment. Mr. Webb noted the additional challenge of modifying the City's Parks and Community Centers for new lifestyles.

Mr. Webb noted the level of service for access to the City's Parks is good though there is room for improvement to include cooperation with schools. Mr. Webb noted the public's involvement in the Plan's survey included community meetings, focus groups, stakeholders, an online public opinion survey, and a statistically valid survey resulting in a rounded viewpoint. As a result of this involvement, the common themes of the survey are noted on page 8 of the attached presentation.

Mayor Seiler questioned the results of the survey as to the lack of sports fields for youth activities stating it is the number one issue he hears about from citizens. Further comments and discussions continued on the lack of sports fields in the City.

Chair Eisinger asked the process used for reaching out to the City's youth sports groups. Mr. Cune noted that many of those youth sports groups who were contacted did not show up due to conflicts. Discussions ensued on ways to get those involved in youth sporting teams to participate in the survey.

Commissioner Rogers asked about the number of people surveyed who currently use the facilities. Mayor Seiler noted the number of constituents 55 and over is growing. Discussions ensued on the priorities and needs of the City's Parks.

City Manager Feldman acknowledged that the greatest need exists for youth sports program. Chair Eisinger concurred with Mayor Seiler that there is a greater need for a sports fields for youth sports. Ms. Eisinger also noted there are an increased number of younger families with children who have relocated to the eastern area of the City and Mayor Seiler agreed. Mr. Webb noted transformational youth sports programs would require the City acquiring more land. Additional aspects of the survey were also discussed.

Mr. Webb discussed the percentage of City residents who have the perception that they feel unsafe in the City's parks. Commissioner Rogers questioned the reasons for this and the discussions cited issues such as lighting, activation, loitering, location, traffic, lack of parking as well as other issues. Mr. Webb noted these safety issues require drilling down into the specific Park locations to determine the exact reasons for safety concerns in those City Parks.

It was again noted by the Commission that youth sports were not in the top ten needs assessment of the study. Commissioner Rogers suggested that Small Neighborhood Parks in the Needs Assessment Summary (page 14 of the presentation) most likely correlates to the youth sports needs of the City.

Chair Eisinger noted there are many different age groups of youth sports. Mayor Seiler expressed his dismay at the lack of youth sports in the survey. Mr. Cune stated youth participation in youth sports has declined in the City. Mayor Seiler stated this is due to their having to go out of the City to find available fields for youth sports reiterating this is his number one issue.

Mr. Webb confirmed there is a need for more fields for youth sports and would require funding of \$24,000,000. Commissioner McKinzie raised the issue of the importance of the small Parks already existing in areas of the City.

Mr. Webb noted it takes a concentrated effort to acquire park property to address the need for youth sports fields. The amount of land currently available for youth sports fields was discussed noting the unincorporated land in the Windgate area is available for this purpose. It was suggested possibly using the property located outside of the City on Dixie Highway next to the hospital. Mayor Seiler stated it is located in the City of Oakland Park. The question was asked if the City could venture with the City Oakland Park to service the Northeast Broward area. Comments and discussions ensued on the tangible aspects of using this area.

Mayor Seiler stated there are areas near the Executive Airport that could also be used for field space for youth sports.

Mayor Seiler discussed working with the Broward County School Board to work with schools to utilize their fields. City Manager Feldman stated the latest update from the School Board was that it is up to each school principal. It was noted that some schools were more accommodating than others, but it is at the discretion of the principals. Mayor Seiler noted that in his efforts while in the legislature, the schools did not want to be forced to hold youth sporting events on their property.

City Manager Feldman noted his discussions with the School Board about selling or leasing the area of land near Edgewood. However, he stated no response was received and no reciprocity exists with the Broward County School Board.

Discussions ensued about the Arthur Ashe Field as a potential site in addition to Edgewood. Commissioner McKinzie noted the director of the Arthur Ashe School is very community oriented and would likely work with the City. Mayor Seiler stated the City might be able to share the field space at this location without having to purchase it.

Mayor Seiler stated the current programs at the Arthur Ashe School are all adult. Commissioner McKinzie said a piece of land in this area near the field is for sale. Mayor Seiler asked Commissioner McKinzie to take the lead to work with the Director of the Arthur Ashe School to see if this area could accommodate the City's youth sports.

Vice Mayor Trantalis recommended having a meeting with Robert W. Runcie, Superintendent of Broward County Public Schools. Mayor Seiler confirmed there would be a meeting in the form of a Joint Workshop with the Broward County School Board in December 2016. Chair Eisinger suggested including Heather P. Brinkworth, School Board Member from District III, in the upcoming meeting and Mayor Seiler confirmed Ms. Brinkworth would be in attendance.

Chair Eisinger commented that Cooper City had both success and excellent cooperation from the Broward County School Board in using school facilities. Discussions continued on the lack of cooperation from the Broward County School Board regarding using their facilities for activities with the City's Parks. Mayor Seiler requested City Manager Feldman add this item to the meeting agenda for the December 2016 Joint Workshop with the Broward County School Board.

Mr. Webb continued the presentations focusing on Community Health

and Safety at Carter Park. Commissioner McKinzie commented on the pedestrian access gates in Carter Park, noting they should be locked at 9:00 p.m. (page 9). Mayor Seiler and Chair Eisinger pointed out that Carter Park is one of the most utilized Parks in the City during the mornings and Commissioner McKinzie concurred.

The next portion of the presentation discussed the expanding the integration of public art in the City's Parks and open public spaces. Sustainability and Resiliency of the City's Public Parks followed, and Mr. Webb outlined and the presentation's recommendations in this area. The attendees gave their input on this aspect of the survey and the opportunities to address these issues.

The future cost estimates and the City's Parks and Recreation Department revenues were discussed in the presentation. Vice Mayor Trantalis asked how these estimates were determined. Mr. Webb explained how these amounts were determined stating they are realistic numbers for purchasing additional land. Mr. Cune said there were over 2,000 projects included in the cost estimate totaling \$175,000,716. This amount touches every existing park in addition to the acquisition of future parks. Discussions continued on the projected cost estimates, and the future projection of the 10-year timeframe of parkland acquisition is approximately 100 acres.

City Manager Feldman noted that there are no County Parks located within the City despite the fact that the City contributes collectively more to the County Park system. City Manager Feldman noted it would not be out of line in the future for the City to request the County to look at revenue sharing to provide recreational facilities in the City. Commissioner Rogers and Chair Eisinger discussed the feasibility of this idea and the need for an advocate for the City on the Broward County Commission.

Mayor Seiler noted that the County had contributed funds to the City's Mills Pond Park Project in the past. The dialogue continued on the circumstances surrounding the County's contribution. Mr. Thornburg confirmed that the wetlands located on the North side of Mills Pond Park and the entrance are areas that belong to Broward County. Mayor Seiler noted that the City could not build on those areas of the park. City Manager Feldman stated the City and the County are participating together to put a boardwalk over the wetlands portion of the Park.

Chair Eisinger noted the willingness of households to contribute on a monthly basis towards funding improvements to Parks and Recreation facilities. The dialogue continued on the survey's results for the top five

actions the public would most likely support to fund with tax dollars. Vice Mayor Trantalis asked for more detail relating to the upgrading of existing beaches. Mr. Webb responded that details relating to the City's beaches included access, parking, and beach renourishment.

The presentation continued with the capital funding projects, department funding, and the recommended phasing plan, and Mr. Webb noted these were large numbers. Vice Mayor Trantalis asked Mr. Webb for confirmation that, though the citizens believe that the City's Parks are well maintained, there exists \$50,000,000 in deferred maintenance in capital reinvestment in the City's Parks which will not go away. Mr. Webb stated the survey indicated the City's Parks are well maintained and clean. Commissioner Rogers asked if the City's cemeteries were included in the study. Mr. Webb reported that they were not. Mr. Webb continued his review of the survey's action items as noted in the presentation.

Mr. Webb commented on the City using the latest available technology for the Parks Department to communicate to the public. Mayor Seiler said that the City's Parks Program is outstanding with its communications to the public noting the many compliments he receives along with the requests from the public about the need for more field space.

Commissioner Rogers noted previous conversations with Mr. Thornburg about developing an application that the public could easily access to find out what field space is available along with the ability to reserve it electronically. Comments and dialogue continued on the feasibility of this idea.

Commissioner Rogers noted a negative he has heard was that when residents want to use a park's field space, they were not allowed on the field. Chair Eisinger suggested having free field space listed on a social application for the public, specifically indicating the area near the Parker Playhouse that available at any time.

Karen Polivka, Board Member, asked if the City encourages the availability of park space for pickup games and activities or if park space is maximized with organized sports. Commissioner McKinzie commented on his experiences in these situations and the value in advising the public on what is and what is not available along with information as to how the public can reserve park space.

Mr. Webb concluded his presentation with recommended action items including acquisitions, policies, and initiatives in numerous areas as noted in the presentation.

Vice Mayor Trantalis thanked Mr. Webb for the study's presentation stating it is a useful tool.

Chair Eisinger thanked the City Commission for having this joint workshop noting the Board had good participation in their monthly meeting and it was unfortunate that they were not available for this Joint Workshop due to scheduling conflicts. Chair Eisinger requested updates to this presentation to be discussed at the Board's monthly meetings in order offer their input. She reiterated the importance of youth sports and the lack of field space stating she is in agreement with the Commission.

Chair Eisinger noted the importance of the public having access to fields, recognizing there is no down time on the fields to address safety concerns. Commissioner Rogers said, though expensive, Astroturf is the way to move forward in the long term to address safety concerns as it would negate the need for the fields requiring downtime. Chair Eisinger noted good discussions the Board has had regarding the different types and recommendations for Astroturf. Mayor Seiler commented on the huge success story of Carter Park's field and the possibility of marketing, sponsoring, and branding of City Parks to assist with field area upgrades. Chair Eisinger concurred with Mayor Seiler's comments, and examples were noted.

Mr. Thornburg said the City is redoing the fields a Mills Pond Park. Mayor Seiler noted both Mills Pond Park and Carter Park are consistently busy. However, he noted Holiday Park, because it does not have turf, requires downtime. Mayor Seiler pointed the need to focus on each school within the City in order to work together to add four sports fields.

Commissioner Rogers noted that previously there had been objections by the City's Parks and Recreation and Beaches Board for placement of a fire station at Mills Pond Park due to the fact it would take up park space. Chair Eisinger noted that this was before her membership on the Board. Commissioner Rogers discussed Fire Station No. 8 (Fire Station) that is slated to go just South of 17th Street East of railroad tracks on land owned by the City. He suggested the Board consider putting this Fire Station at the corner of Hardee Park noting it would take up the bocce ball courts and the pump house on the Northwest corner. Mayor Seiler recalled that the Tarpon River Homeowners Association did not want the fire station at this location, and dialogue on this topic continued.

Chair Eisinger raised the issue of pursuing public/private partnerships

and asked if there is a listing within the City that the Board could review for the opportunity to participate in a partnership or a naming. Mayor Seiler discussed an example of a previous donation by the Stiles Corporation. Vice Mayor Trantalis stated the City does not have a program set up for this and he has been requesting this for several years. Chair Eisinger concurred that this type of program is necessary. City Manager Feldman noted the City has gone out with a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a public relations firm to pursue this goal and thus far the City has received one response. Chair Eisinger stated this expense would be recovered in the long run noting many opportunities exist in the City for this type of programming.

Mayor Seiler asked City Manager Feldman the next steps for following up on this study. City Manager Feldman stated the Commission has officially received it. Mayor Seiler said he would like to prioritize ball fields ahead of all other recommendations because it impacts the largest number of people. Chair Eisinger concurred with Mayor Seiler.

Commissioner Rogers asked if the \$1,000,000 allocated to the Nova site was still available. City Manager Feldman explained that this money was used for Mills Pond Park and Mr. Black's property. He also noted nothing was designated for the Nova site as the lease was extended for five years. City Manager Feldman continued his comments on funding the needs of the City's Parks and Recreation Department and recommended perhaps utilizing a bond as done in the past. Commissioner Roberts noted that there are several significant funding needs in addition to the City's Parks and Police Department including infrastructure needs of the City. Commissioner Roberts pointed out the need for the City to have the plan to address these significant funding requirements and to prioritize those needs and find sources of financing. Discussions continued on the funding of the City's needs in these areas.

Chair Eisinger noted the success of a previous program in Cooper City called Cops and Kids which included the development of both a new police station and a new park for children that were bundled together for a bond that was overwhelmingly approved.

Mayor Seiler asked City Manager Feldman to bring this study back to the City Commission for further discussions and recommendations.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Seiler adjourned the Workshop at 1:55 p.m.