

# **CARSON CITY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

## **Minutes of the August 12, 2004 Meeting**

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A meeting of the Carson City Parks and Recreation Commission was scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 12, 2004 in the Community Center Sierra Room, 851 East William Street, Carson City, Nevada.

**PRESENT:** Chairperson Tom Keeton  
Donna Curtis  
John Felesina  
Charlene Herst  
Michael Hoffman  
John McKenna  
Tom Patton

**STAFF:** Scott Fahrenbruch, Acting Parks and Recreation Director  
Juan Guzman, Open Space Manager  
Vern Krahn, Park Planner  
Kathleen King, Recording Secretary

**NOTE:** A tape recording of these proceedings is on file in the Clerk-Recorder's Office and is available for review during regular business hours.

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL (1-0007)** - Chairperson Keeton called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. Roll was called; a quorum was present. Vice Chairperson DePauw and Commissioner Livermore were absent.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDIZED ITEMS (1-0014)** - None.

**1. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA (1-0021)** - None.

**2. AGENDA ITEMS:**

**2-A. BRIEFING ONLY ON THE WATERFALL FIRE'S DAMAGE TO THE CARSON CITY SIERRA FRONT LANDSCAPE, WATERSHED, VISUAL RESOURCE, RECREATIONAL ACCESS, AND OTHER RESOURCES, INCLUDING PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES (1-0023)** - Mr. Krahn reviewed the staff report, and narrated a PowerPoint presentation of the Burned Area Emergency Response ("BAER") Plan. In response to a question, Mr. Fahrenbruch encouraged any homeowner interested in obtaining straw wattles to contact the Parks and Recreation Department. In response to a further question, Mr. Krahn advised that resources along creeks and drainages were mostly destroyed. He explained that although the priority is to restore as much as possible, the Ash Canyon Creek fishery is not among the top priorities at this time.

In response to a question, Mr. Guzman advised that staff has taken a "shotgun approach" to applying for emergency funding. FEMA appears to be the largest source of rehabilitation funding, and City staff is in the process of responding to questions and supplying requested information. The Nevada Department of Wildlife ("NDOW") and the Natural Resources Conservation Service ("NRCS") have also committed to provide funding for seed treatments and rehabilitation. All the grants have matching components. Discussion took place regarding the Ash Canyon Creek fishery which has been annually stocked, through NDOW, by the Ormsby Sportsmen's Association. Mr. Fahrenbruch explained that stabilization of the

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watershed is the top priority. Once this is accomplished, NDOW will review the possibility of restocking Ash Canyon Creek. In response to a question regarding access, Mr. Krahn read into the record a U.S. Forest Service ("USFS") press release, and discussed the importance of the public staying out of the burned area until safety issues can be addressed. In response to a further question, Mr. Guzman discussed the assessment and classification of roads in the burned area, and soil conditions in conjunction with the seed treatments recommended in the BAER Plan.

(1-0623) Stan Raddon discussed the importance of staging the seed treatments to correspond with anticipated precipitation.

Mr. Guzman provided background information on development of the seed treatment recommendations outlined in the BAER Plan. He acknowledged that hydromulching will be done in certain areas. Mr. Fahrenbruch discussed the importance of stabilizing the watershed as soon as possible.

(1-0709) Gil Yanuck, Vice Chair/Secretary of the Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife, advised that 550 fish were planted in Ash Canyon Creek several weeks prior to the fire. He explained that the pumping station at Hobart Reservoir moves water from Marlette Lake to Hobart. It then flows, by gravity, to Virginia City. He suggested considering conversion of the pump station from diesel fuel to natural gas. He advised that a natural gas line could be extended from the Lakeview subdivision, and that the benefits would include not having to truck in diesel fuel and that the pump could run year-round. He inquired as to whether sand bags will be available to area residents. With regard to the seed treatments, he discussed the possibility of seeding on top of the snow. With regard to access, he advised that many hunters have tags designated for the burned area. NDOW has indicated that the tags are still valid, and Mr. Yanuck requested information with regard to where and when access will be available.

Mr. Guzman advised that City crews have been filling sand bags which are available for private use, and which have also been strategically placed at the canyon mouths. He referred anyone interested in obtaining sand bags to contact him or the Development Services Department. He provided pertinent telephone numbers for citizens to contact the City with information on clogged or partially clogged drainages.

Mr. Krahn narrated a slide presentation of the Waterfall Fire and the burned area. In response to a question, he advised that burned trees will not regenerate. The USFS is in the process of developing a timber harvest plan. Mr. Krahn discussed the importance of the public adhering to the access restrictions. In response to a question, Mr. Guzman advised that he would check with City Manager Linda Ritter with regard to advertising the access restrictions for the benefit of tourists. Mr. Krahn acknowledged that signs have been posted, and discussion took place with regard to the same.

Commissioner Hoffman expressed a preference that trees which have a chance of survival remain. In response to a question, Mr. Guzman advised that consensus among Nevada Division of Forestry ("NDF"), USFS, and City staff with regard to the revegetation priorities has been reached. He reviewed the time table associated with watershed stabilization and long-term rehabilitation.

Mr. Guzman provided background information on development of the BAER Plan, and narrated a PowerPoint presentation on the rehabilitation element. In response to a question, he reviewed financing mechanisms for rehabilitation as outlined in the spreadsheet attached to the staff report. He reiterated that FEMA appears to be the best funding source. The City will need more specialized funding for such things

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as augmenting the seed mixes. In response to a question, Mr. Guzman advised that the City will fund rehabilitation treatments on private land depending upon match requirements for implementation. Mr. Fahrenbruch discussed complications associated with aerial seed treatments and noxious weed control based on boundaries. Mr. Guzman advised that NDF and the City are the entities pursuing large amounts of funding. Agreements between the Washoe Tribe, the State, the USFS, and the City have been drafted by NDF personnel. Individual agreements with private property owners are being pursued by the City Fire Department. In response to a further question, Mr. Guzman advised that the land owners listed in the BAER Plan are those which, in some way, suffered as a consequence of the fire.

Commissioner Herst commended City staff on their accomplishments in the short period of time since the fire. In response to a question, Mr. Guzman advised that the Board of Supervisors appropriated \$500,000 which can be used as matching funds. In addition, the Open Space Advisory Committee ("OSAC") has authorized Open Space Program funding to the extent that the law allows. He discussed the watershed protection element of the Open Space Master Plan, and advised that the OSAC is considering the possibility of joint ownership or management of watershed properties currently owned by the City's Utilities Division. He explained that the watershed properties are in one of the OSAC's highest priority areas for watershed protection. He advised that the City will most likely be able to identify sufficient funding sources so as to make an Open Space Program allocation unnecessary.

In response to a question, Mr. Krahn advised that the time table for the parks and recreation master plan element update has been affected in terms of staff time. Mr. Guzman advised that presentation of the USFS Clear Creek / Kings Canyon Landscape Analysis has also been delayed. Mr. Fahrenbruch explained that the fire brings a whole new element to the master plan update. City staff has kept the master plan consultants informed with regard to the rehabilitation plan, and Mr. Fahrenbruch advised that this element will be included as part of the master plan update.

Mr. Guzman expressed appreciation for Commissioner Herst's compliment. He discussed the high degree of cooperation among the involved agency representatives and City staff.

**2-B. BRIEFING ONLY ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BURNED AREA EMERGENCY RESPONSE ("BAER") TEAM'S SHORT, MEDIUM, AND LONG-RANGE PHASING STRATEGY FOR RETURNING PUBLIC ACCESS AND RECREATION USES TO AREAS AFFECTED BY THE WATERFALL FIRE (1-1676) -** Mr. Krahn reviewed the staff report and the Public Recreation Assessment which was distributed prior to the start of the meeting.

Commissioner McKenna pointed out that the fire will not be completely extinguished until the first heavy snowfall. He noted that the BAER Plan did not include any recommendations for wildlife rehabilitation or community involvement. He advised that wildlife habitat protects home owners in that deer, bears, and rattle snakes "stay out of people's yards." He noted that wildlife habitat is an important part of the recreation element. He discussed the importance of "community buy-in" and suggested that there would be good community response if the City were to schedule fire rehabilitation days. In response to a question, Mr. Krahn explained the reason the firebreak trail system was designated as a long range, rather than a short range, management recommendation. Commissioner McKenna pointed out that trails serve to control erosion in that they shed water. He expressed the opinion that installing erosion control devices which are not permanent and not part of the recreation element is a waste of funding. He requested staff to revisit prioritization of the firebreak trail system with USFS management staff.

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With regard to community involvement, Mr. Fahrenbruch advised that many discussions have taken place. The top priority, at this point, is to stabilize the watershed. Mr. Fahrenbruch discussed serious safety issues in the burned area, and advised that once the watershed is stabilized there will be a time to involve the community. Commissioner McKenna discussed his experience in leading volunteer groups to work on forest projects. He suggested that, with the proper instruction, volunteers are capable of providing valuable assistance, and are usually able to "find the hazards ... in a safe way." He discussed the benefits of volunteers to expand the work force and multiply available funding. In response to a comment, Mr. Guzman advised that the Cooperative Extension is coordinating volunteers on behalf of the City. He explained that Cooperative Extension staff has determined the type of volunteer work which can be done now and into the future. He assured the Commissioners that the Cooperative Extension plans to eventually bring volunteers into the rehabilitation area. He recognized that volunteer work provides a mechanism for the community to heal.

Commissioner Curtis suggested that the firebreak trail system should be coordinated with the trails element of the parks and recreation master plan update. Mr. Krahn reviewed time tables associated with the short, medium, and long range management recommendations. He advised that although the planning stages of the firebreak trail system can begin, construction will be dependent upon funding. Commissioner McKenna suggested that volunteers could also help City crews install signs.

(1-2097) Laurie Walsh expressed support for the firebreak trail system, particularly if it connects to the existing V&T Trail. She expressed an interest in more access to the Tahoe Rim Trail, and discussed various connection/access points. She expressed the opinion that a road should be established between the canyon formed by Kings Canyon Creek and the Kings Canyon dirt road. She discussed the fire fighters' difficulty in accessing the Waterfall Fire once it was located. She listed and described the locations of two fires in the same area of the Waterfall Fire over the last 3-4 years. She requested the Commissioners and City staff to keep in mind the need for coordination between fire suppression access and trails. She expressed the opinion that, besides Lake Tahoe, the Tahoe Rim Trail is the most valuable asset in Carson City. She requested staff to add her name to the Commission's agenda distribution list.

**2-C. BRIEFING ONLY ON THE WATERFALL FIRE DAMAGE TO CITY PARK, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAIL FACILITIES (1-2242)** - Mr. Krahn reviewed the staff report. Mr. Guzman advised that the City owns approximately 3500 acres of land which was purchased for watershed protection. Discussions have taken place in the past with regard to whether the Open Space Program should manage these lands rather than or in conjunction with the Utilities Division. He requested the Commissioners' input with regard to this matter.

Chairperson Keeton advised that the brush which was cleared along the C-Hill path provided a sufficient fire break. He inquired as to the reason the brush clearing operation was stopped at a certain point. Mr. Krahn explained that the brush was cleared as part of the City Fire Department's fuel reduction program. Mr. Fahrenbruch advised that there were private property owners in the area who were not interested in participating in the program. Commissioner Curtis advised that many of the affected property owners were very upset to learn that certain other property owners would not participate in the fuel reduction program. She advised that legislation may be proposed to address the issue. In response to a question, Mr. Guzman explained that the pertinent City ordinance applies to new projects at the time land is subdivided. He discussed details of the fuel reduction program in various subdivisions throughout the City, and explained that the grant which funded the program required the voluntary cooperation of property owners. Battalion

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Chief Stacey Giomi is considering ways to renew the fuel reduction program efforts in addition to considering appropriate vegetation species to plant in the interface/trails/recreation area that will be more fire resistant. Chairperson Keeton agreed that the fuel reduction program should be mandatory.

(1-2532) Mr. Yanuck advised of having requested the Board of Supervisors to modify the Carson City Municipal Code to require fuel reduction and defensible space.

(1-2560) Ms. Walsh advised that the fuel reduction program saved her house. She expressed concern over the Borda meadow and the need to establish a fire break between it and the adjacent residences. In response to a question, Mr. Guzman advised that the USFS owns the Borda meadow and that cooperative agreements have been entered into with the City. The OSAC has been urging the USFS to be more proactive regarding fire protection activities over the last several years. Ms. Walsh advised that she “begged and pleaded” for the “large ‘No Fire’ signs that every other trail head has.” Small signs were installed on a tree which is 20' off the non-driver side of the road prior to the Waterfall Fire. A very large sign has now been installed on a “burnt out tree.”

Commissioner Patton read portions of the ordinance regarding fuel reduction into the record. He pointed out that there is no provision for the ordinance to apply only to new development, nor for private property owners to refuse to comply. He expressed the hope that the District Attorney's staff and the Board of Supervisors be made aware of any perceived deficiency in the ordinance, and that it be addressed immediately. Commissioner Curtis suggested that the ordinance should be broadened to include unimproved private parcels. Mr. Fahrenbruch advised that there will most likely be more proactive enforcement as a result of the fire.

**2-D. ACTION TO RECOMMEND TO THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT STAFF POSSIBLE CHANGES IN STRATEGIES OR PRIORITIES IN THE BURNED AREA EMERGENCY RESPONSE (“BAER”) TEAM’S PLAN OF ACTION (1-2722)** - Mr. Fahrenbruch reviewed the staff report. He suggested including in the Commission's action the suggestion by Commissioner McKenna to allow the participation of volunteers in implementation of the rehabilitation efforts. He reviewed the OSAC's recommendations with regard to the seed mixes, and the suggestions and comments provided by the citizens in attendance at this meeting. Discussion took place regarding the Commission's action. In response to a question, Mr. Guzman advised that Question #1 funding will not be available for fire rehabilitation. City staff will present a funding request to the Carson Water Subconservancy District on August 18<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Hoffman expressed an interest in exploring the possibility of utilizing Question #1 funds for restoring the Kings and Ash Canyons trail heads, and wildlife habitat in the burned area. Mr. Fahrenbruch acknowledged that none of the discussions which have taken place at this meeting involve any portion of the Parks and Recreation Department budget.

**Commissioner McKenna moved to designate item #4 of the long range management recommendations as a medium range management recommendation, specifically to establish an interconnective firebreak trail system in the Carson City urban interface area; by the use of erosion control funds, this effort is designed to create permanent improvements and protections. Commissioner Herst seconded the motion.** Commissioner McKenna responded to questions and explained the intent of the motion. Chairperson Keeton called for a vote on the pending motion; **motion carried 7-0.**

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**Commissioner McKenna moved to recommend to Parks and Recreation Department staff that they lobby for implementation of the BAER Plan to include volunteer labor for as much of the actual work as possible. Commissioner Hoffman seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-0.**

**Commissioner Curtis moved to urge that agencies take whatever measures are necessary to enhance and enforce codes for creating and maintaining defensible space on private property as deemed necessary by the proper authorities. Commissioner Herst seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-0.**

In response to a question, Mr. Fahrenbruch advised of having informed City Manager Linda Ritter that most of the phone calls he has received have been related to wildlife issues. Ms. Ritter has, in turn, been in contact with NDOW to request development of a proactive plan. Mr. Fahrenbruch advised that the City is developing an informational website, and that he has requested the inclusion of wildlife issues. He further advised that the City will depend upon NDOW to develop a plan. Mr. Guzman explained that the BAER Plan is finalized and in the process of being implemented. He referred to maps included in the BAER Plan which consider deer migration areas, and advised that the recommended seed mixes include vegetation species which are supportive of wildlife habitat. The main concern was to provide for vegetation growth in the deer migration areas to avoid vehicle mortality. Commissioner McKenna expressed the opinion that implementation of the BAER Plan should address the residents' wildlife issues as much as possible. Mr. Fahrenbruch advised that staff would carry forward the Commissioners' concerns.

**Commissioner Hoffman moved to recommend to the Parks and Recreation Department staff to implement the BAER Team's plan of action as presented and modified. Commissioner Curtis seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-0.**

**3. ACTION ON ADJOURNMENT (1-3191) - Commissioner Hoffman moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m. Commissioner Herst seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-0.**

The Minutes of the August 12, 2004 meeting of the Carson City Parks and Recreation Commission are so approved this 7<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2004.

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THOMAS N. KEETON, Chair