

# CARSON CITY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

## Minutes of the March 4, 2008 Meeting

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A regular meeting of the Carson City Parks and Recreation Commission was scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 4, 2008 in the Community Center Sierra Room, 851 East William Street, Carson City, Nevada.

**PRESENT:** Chairperson Donna Curtis  
Charles Adams  
Tom Keeton  
Steve Lasco  
John McKenna  
Kathryn Shabi  
James Smolenski  
Todd Westergard

**STAFF:** Roger Moellendorf, Parks and Recreation Department Director  
Mitch Ames, Theater Operations Manager  
Joel Dunn, Recreation Program Manager - Sports  
Will Geddes, Deputy District Attorney  
Kathleen King, Recording Secretary

**NOTE:** A recording of these proceedings, the commission's agenda materials, and any written comments or documentation provided to the recording secretary during the meeting are public record, on file in the Clerk-Recorder's Office. These materials are available for review during regular business hours.

**CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM (5:34:04)** - Chairperson Curtis called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. Roll was called; a quorum was present. Vice Chairperson Livermore was absent.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDIZED ITEMS (5:34:53)** - Jeff Nicholson, a Carson City business owner, advised that he boards horses on Hells Bells Road. He expressed concern over access from Hells Bells Road for the "northern property horse owners." He distributed to the commissioners and Parks Department staff a drawing, which he described as a proposal to change the "first walk-in entrance closest to Hells Bells Road ... to an equestrian access." He responded to questions of clarification. He advised of having talked with "most of the people on Hells Bells Road" and that he was representing them. Mr. Moellendorf acknowledged having spoken with Mr. Nicholson previous to this meeting. He expressed the belief that Mr. Nicholson's proposition is "doable." Mr. Nicholson expressed a concern over public safety. Mr. Moellendorf offered to visit the site and report back to the commission and to Mr. Nicholson. Chairperson Curtis thanked Mr. Nicholson and called for additional public comment. None was forthcoming.

- 1. ACTION ON APPROVAL OF MINUTES** - None.
- 2. MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA (5:43:20)** - None.

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**3. STAFF UPDATES (5:43:26)** - Mr. Moellendorf advised of having received notice from the Carson Water Subconservancy District that the City will receive grant funding for two projects: revegetation associated with Carson River Park phase II in the amount of \$7,500; and \$20,000 to assist with non-point source pollution concerns at the Fulstone Wetlands landscape and trail project. He acknowledged Open Space Coordinator Ann Bollinger, Open Space / Property Manager Juan Guzman, and Park Planner Vern Krahn as well as CWSD Board member Pete Livermore for their involvement in securing the grant funding.

Mr. Moellendorf advised of a construction meeting held earlier in the day regarding Ronald D. Wilson Memorial Park. Spring construction has begun, and he anticipates completion in the late spring or early summer. He further advised that Parks and Recreation Department staff is working with Regional Transportation and Public Works Department staff to design and construct street frontage improvements at the Fairgrounds / Fuji Park, including a JAC bus stop. The project will include a bus shelter and 20 angled, off-street parking spaces.

#### **4. NON-ACTION ITEMS:**

**4-A. DISCUSSION ONLY REGARDING RECREATION FEE ADJUSTMENTS FOR 2008, AND TOTAL REVENUE PROJECTIONS FOR FY 2008 / 2009 (5:46:20)** - Chairperson Curtis introduced this item. Mr. Moellendorf advised that staff is continuing to work on the total revenue projections. He noted the importance of updating fees and charges, especially in light of the spring / summer edition of the *Discover Us* being published in the near future. He advised that staff has also been working to develop FY 08 / 09 revenue projections. He referred to discussion of this matter at the February 23, 2008 commission workshop, and the FY 08 / 09 general fund financial plan included in the agenda materials as Exhibit A. He noted recommendation 11, to increase parks and recreation fees by ten percent to generate an additional \$140,000 in revenue. He described the plan as aggressive, and noted the challenge presented to the Parks and Recreation Department. He explained that \$140,000 does not necessarily equate to a ten percent increase in fees "across the board." In addition, the \$140,000 is based on revenue projections of \$1.4 million. Mr. Moellendorf advised that at "66 percent into the budget year, ... we've generated about 46 percent of our revenues." He noted a decrease in some of the recreation program participation levels, particularly some of the youth programs. He suggested the reasons are likely varied, but noted changing community demographics and "the overall malaise ... in our community where people aren't spending as much as they used to in the past" as possibilities. This relates to the diminishing sales tax revenue. Mr. Moellendorf explained that to generate an additional \$140,000 in revenue, fees may need to be increased "well in excess of ten percent. It may be ten to thirty percent, depending on the fees."

In response to a question, Mr. Moellendorf advised that some of the larger programs span two budget years, such as Summer Kamp which begins in May. Much of the revenues are generated "on the front half of that program which is the back half of the fiscal year." Mr. Moellendorf explained that some of the recreation programs are tied to staffing levels. A one to ten ratio of instructors to participants has always been maintained in the Latch Key and Summer Kamp programs. Mr. Moellendorf advised of increasing difficulty with hiring staff, which also translates to decreasing participant numbers. Consideration has been given to increasing the ratio of instructors to participants without compromising the safety and quality of the programs. In response to a further question, Mr. Moellendorf advised that staff is actively considering how to implement cost savings without sacrificing the integrity and quality of programs, and how to implement fee increases without impacting participation because people are unwilling or unable to pay. He discussed the point at which there becomes an "intolerance to pay." "Sometimes it's very difficult to

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understand where that is until you hit it” and realize “people aren’t signing up anymore ... because they don’t think the value of the program is worth the cost of the fee. Once you hit that point of intolerance, it’s very hard to back track” and re-establish tolerable rates. “The ability to pay and the tolerance to pay varies ... by the program and the individuals involved ... and can vary from season to season, year to year.”

Mr. Moellendorf noted a key factor to establishing fees and charges, and referred to the commission resolution changing existing or adding new fee policies, included in the agenda materials as Exhibit B. He provided background information on the origin and purpose of the resolution. He noted that the resolution allows staff flexibility in establishing fees and charges, and established a framework to set fees and charges based on direct program costs. He provided an example, and advised that “internal tweaking and changing of those fees and charges becomes administrative and operative.” He noted the emphasis, in the parks and recreation master plan element adopted in 2006, that fees and charges would relate back to direct program costs. He read into the record language from the parks and recreation master plan element which was quoted in the staff report. He explained that recovering direct costs is standard for municipal parks and recreation programs. Unfortunately, given the City’s financial situation, consideration has to be given to recover “above the direct costs” whenever possible. “Whenever possible” is dependent upon the tolerance to pay and “what is fair and equitable.”

Chairperson Curtis expressed understanding for passing the resolution to provide the Parks Department administrative flexibility. She suggested the \$140,000 “target” proposed by the former city manager may or may not be feasible. She expressed understanding for the City’s team building approach to the budget process over the past several years. She expressed the belief that reviewing fees is the commission’s duty “because ... it means that we’re doing it on the backs of ... people that may find this really difficult to afford.” She referred to Vice Chairperson Livermore’s suggestion, at the February 23<sup>rd</sup> workshop, to consider fees at the Fairgrounds / Fuji Park “because some of those may be way under ... There, you might be able to recapture some of this and maybe take it easy on some of these others.” Chairperson Curtis reiterated the option of advising the Board of Supervisors that the \$140,000 target, “based on everything that you’ve tried to do is just not feasible.”

Mr. Moellendorf discussed the purpose of this item to receive input from the commissioners. He pointed out that review of fees and charges is somewhat dynamic in that the timing doesn’t always coincide with commission or Board of Supervisors meetings. He reiterated the request for input. He acknowledged “there is going to pain whenever you increase fees ...” He reiterated comments from a previous meeting that “there are no sacred calves.” Increases will have to be considered for all areas. Mr. Moellendorf suggested that increasing park rental fees for special events may offset program costs. He noted that fees can also be used for regulatory purposes. He discussed consideration given to corresponding fees charged in adjacent counties. He advised that Carson City’s program fees and charges “tend to be on the lower side pretty much across the board.”

Commissioner McKenna suggested the possibility of increasing fees by a flat ten percent. “If that turns out to be \$70,000, fine; if it turns out to be \$150,000, fine.” He inquired as to the possibility of reducing fees once the “budget crisis” passes. He suggested establishing a surcharge which could be withdrawn once the budget crisis has passed. He expressed a preference that any non-permanent increase be “separately stated and removed.” He pointed out that taxpayers are funding these facilities and services “and now we want to charge them to use the property that they’re paying taxes to buy.” Mr. Moellendorf commended Commissioner McKenna’s suggestions as interesting. He expressed reluctance to consider a surcharge

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because when times are tough for the City, they're usually tough for the public as well. He advised of having spent a great deal of time earlier in the day, with Recreation Division staff, considering such things as the cost of bus trips for the Summer Kamp program. He expressed a preference to evaluate fees and costs, identify the percentage to recover, and establish fair and equitable fees across the board. He suggested the fees may be sustained over the period of a couple of years or may have to be revised annually. He clarified that fees and costs will be annually reviewed by staff. He advised of having discussed the possibility of reducing fees so as to "drive more people into the programs," and increase revenues "by bulk rather than on a per participant level." He further advised of having considered the City of Reno Latch Key program, and that a substantial increase in Carson City's Latch Key Program fees would still be less than Reno's existing fees. He expressed a preference to ensure fair and equitable fees, and make adjustments to them over the years. He diagramed a pyramid approach to setting fees and reviewed the same with the commissioners.

Commissioner Adams discussed his son's participation in the Latch Key program, which he commended as "wonderful." He described the conveniences and efficiencies afforded his family by the program amenities. He commended the program fees as "really reasonable," and expressed the belief that staff has kept program costs down over the years. He advised of having conducted research into the cost of other programs over the past week, and expressed no personal problem with accommodating a ten to 15 percent increase in Latch Key program fees. He expressed support for providing staff the latitude to consider increasing fees. He expressed a preference to pay an increased fee "rather than to see the program be cut." Mr. Moellendorf commended the Latch Key program as one of the most successful, and reviewed its origins and history in conjunction with Recreation Superintendent Barbara Singer's involvement. He discussed a recreation program in Green River, Wyoming which was so successful that it subsidized the start up of other programs.

Mr. Moellendorf acknowledged that the resolution provides for review of the fee schedule throughout the year. He discussed the importance of annually reviewing fees in order to keep the customers informed. At the same time, he advised that Recreation Division program managers are constantly evaluating fees and charges in light of expenditures. He advised that fees are established on an annual basis, but implemented at different times during the year. He reiterated that some classes and programs run with the budget year and some transcend the budget year. He discussed the difference between programs and special events, and noted that the resolution provides a great deal of flexibility to ensure costs are covered for special events "almost on a per-case basis."

Mr. Moellendorf reviewed the Aquatic Facility rates and proposed increases which he had previously distributed to the commissioners and staff. He advised of having implemented a 15 percent increase in aquatic facility fees last year. He explained that recreation center and aquatic facility fees are always "built on a daily rate." In reference to earlier comments, he acknowledged that the taxpayers have already paid for construction of the parks and recreation facilities. He pointed out that tax revenues also pay for operations and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities. This is where the general fund support comes in "with the idea that we need to offset that general fund wherever possible." Mr. Moellendorf discussed the philosophy of paying to play as an overriding concept across the country.

Commissioner Westergard inquired as to the possibility of increasing non-resident fees by a greater percentage to help offset resident fees. Mr. Moellendorf referred to paragraph 11 of the resolution, and read the same into the record. He noted the acknowledgment that non-taxpaying users of parks and recreation

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facilities should pay “in addition to what the residents would pay.” Commissioner Westergard pointed out that the aquatic facility non-resident swim lesson fees were increased less than the resident fees. He reiterated the suggestion to increase non-resident fees at a greater percentage than resident fees. Mr. Moellendorf agreed that, wherever possible, residents should pay less of an increase than non-residents. He noted the differences in fees between for-profit and non-profit organizations. In response to a question, he advised that non-resident aquatic facility fees have historically been increased by ten percent. He offered to consider, together with Aquatic Facility Operations Manager Kurt Meyer, a higher percentage increase pursuant to the provisions of the resolution.

Commissioner Shabi expressed the opinion that the KinderKamp, Summer Kamp, Kinder Latch Key, and Latch Key programs are among the most important offered by the Recreation Division. In response to a question, Mr. Moellendorf explained that the Kinder programs were popular among “a fairly small group of people.” He further explained that the “very well qualified individual” who was managing the program left City employment. A replacement manager was subsequently hired and resigned a short time later. Additional efforts at rehiring a qualified individual were unsuccessful and, eventually, the decision was made to temporarily eliminate the program. Mr. Moellendorf announced that a retired school teacher interested in a part-time position would be an ideal candidate to manage the Kinder program. He noted unfortunate situations, outside of fees and charges, which result in programs succeeding or not. Commissioner Shabi inquired as to participation levels in the Latch Key and Junior Ski programs. Mr. Moellendorf advised that the Junior Ski Program “has taken a big hit.” He noted that last year “was a tough snow year,” and speculated as to corresponding reasons for the decrease in Junior Ski Program participation. He advised of similar declines in the Latch Key and Summer Kamp program participation. In response to a further question, he advised that the Boys and Girls Clubs offer less expensive programs. Recreation Division programs are “a little more structured and ... more tightly supervised and, therefore, the costs are higher.” [Chairperson Curtis recessed the meeting at 6:38 p.m. due to a fire alarm, and reconvened the meeting at 6:42 p.m.]

Commissioner Shabi reiterated her concern with regard to the Kinder and Latch Key programs. In response to a comment, Mr. Moellendorf agreed to consider increasing the program manager’s salary in order to attract a qualified individual. He noted this would have a “cascading effect” in that the program fees would be increased. Commissioner Lasco discussed his experience managing after-school programs at the South Lake Tahoe Boys and Girls Clubs in 2006, and advised of having supervised an average of 50 children per day. He noted the smaller ratios of teachers to children in Recreation Division programs, and suggested “there is some sense of you get what you pay for.” Chairperson Curtis inquired as to the possibility of conducting a poll to attempt to determine the reason for declining program participation. Mr. Moellendorf agreed with the importance of attempting to determine answers.

Mr. Moellendorf distributed, to the commissioners and staff, the Recreation Sports Program Budget Cuts / Revenue Generation, and provided an overview of the same. He discussed Recreation Program Manager Joel Dunn’s recommendation to increase program registration fees by 10 to 15 percent. Mr. Dunn provided background information on the mandated budget cuts, and reviewed the budget cuts / revenue generation proposal. Mr. Moellendorf noted that sports programs are an area where “people vote by their feet;” i.e., people are more willing to travel to another jurisdiction with a less expensive sports program. He further noted the importance of being mindful of the competition. In response to a question, he noted that the concept of covering direct costs is related to program participation. “To a certain extent, as participation in any program drops ..., expenses should drop accordingly. ... It may not be dollar for dollar.”

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Commissioner McKenna suggested subsidizing youth and senior programs with adult program fees. Mr. Moellendorf reiterated the importance of considering ability / willingness to pay, but advised that subsidizing youth programs with adult program fees is not unusual. Mr. Dunn anticipated no decline in program participation with the proposed fee increase. He advised that operational costs are offset “on the backs of all of our programs. Every one of the programs within the sports budget, not just the youth but the adult programs, are more than 100 percent cost covering. That additional money goes to offset the general fund support ... which, in turn, does offset the operational costs of every one of our youth programs.” In response to a question, Mr. Dunn expressed the belief that Carson City “is still below the standard as far as market value.” He expressed no concern over losing teams. Commissioner McKenna suggested “pushing the envelope.” Mr. Moellendorf expressed the opinion that adult soccer is already pushing the envelope. In response to a question, Mr. Dunn noted the proposed \$50 increase in fees for the adult futsal program, which second season started last Sunday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>. He discussed extensive consideration given to starting the youth futsal program. Chairperson Curtis thanked Mr. Dunn.

Mr. Moellendorf distributed, to the commissioners and staff, a list of proposed fees for special events. He explained the philosophy to avoid closing public parks for private events. He noted the importance of keeping in mind the political sensitivity often associated with special events, and that the Board of Supervisors often wants to provide park facilities at no charge for non-profit special events. He reviewed the proposed fee schedule. [Commissioner Smolenski left the meeting at 7:07 p.m. A quorum was still present.]

Mr. Moellendorf distributed, to the commissioners and staff, the 2008 Latch Key projected revenues and fees, and reviewed the same. In response to a question, he advised of a five percent discount for monthly payments. There is no multiple-child discount. Commissioner Shabi reiterated concern with regard to retaining qualified staff, and suggested that program participants could tolerate a higher fee. In response to a comment, Mr. Moellendorf advised there are very few non-residents in the Latch Key program because the participants are enrolled in local schools. He advised that similar increases are being considered for the Summer Kamp program, and reviewed the same as outlined in the distributed materials. He noted the considerable difference in fees between the Latch Key and Summer Kamp programs in that Summer Kamp activity fees are included. Bus availability also defines the number of program participants. Mr. Moellendorf advised that Latch Key and Summer Kamp are recreation / activity programs, not educational. The Kinder programs were more educational which required an individual qualified in early childhood education. Chairperson Curtis reiterated the request to research the reasons for declining participation.

Mr. Moellendorf and Mr. Ames reviewed the proposed community center fees, which were outlined in a spreadsheet distributed to the commissioners and staff. Mr. Ames responded to questions of clarification. Mr. Moellendorf discussed the significance of implementing fees for dark or semi-dark theater production days to require the users to “budget their time a little bit better.” In response to a question, Mr. Ames explained that every production is in the process of being “run through” the new fee schedule. Commissioner McKenna suggested that if the result is a decrease in use, the commission may need to approach the Board of Supervisors to request general fund subsidization. Mr. Moellendorf noted the importance of ensuring that the across-the-board increases don’t result in preventing community theater productions. [Commissioner Keeton left the meeting at 7:35 p.m. A quorum was still present.]

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(7:33:02) Dave Morgan inquired as to the possibility of tying fees “in some areas to whatever the performance and the ticket take was so that you’re not going to penalize somebody just because they got unlucky with a particular performance ...” Commissioner McKenna reviewed the Board of Supervisors’ directive to increase fees.

Mr. Moellendorf explained the mechanism of the theater fee structure as applicable to productions. He advised that Mr. Ames has considered creative ways to partner with production companies to share costs and revenues; however, production company representatives have had a “lukewarm” response to the ideas. In response to a suggestion, Mr. Ames advised that several user groups have agreed to cultivate a volunteer group rather than using theater staff. Mr. Moellendorf advised that Mr. Ames provides volunteer training at no cost to the production companies. He advised there has been “resistance” to this, however. Mr. Ames advised that student technicians are also used from time to time. Chairperson Curtis thanked Mr. Ames.

Mr. Moellendorf summarized the preceding presentations as the “major fees and charges scenarios.” He anticipated 10 to 30 percent across-the-board increases in program fees. He re-emphasized the importance of not exceeding the willingness to pay. Chairperson Curtis reiterated her suggestion to inform the Board of Supervisors that fees cannot be increased without detrimentally impacting programs and therefore the community. In response to a question, Mr. Moellendorf was not certain how close the proposed increases were to the \$140,000 target. Chairperson Curtis expressed appreciation for staff’s effort.

**4-B. DISCUSSION ONLY REGARDING FINAL FY 2007 / 2008 PARKS AND RECREATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET (7:41:25)** - Chairperson Curtis introduced this item. Mr. Moellendorf reviewed the staff report and attachments. He anticipated presenting the FY 08 / 09 department budget to the commission in April. He advised the FY 08 / 09 capital improvement budget may not be presented until the fall of 2008, and reviewed anticipated items to be included. Chairperson Curtis called for public comment and, when none was forthcoming, thanked Mr. Moellendorf for his report.

## **5. ACTION ITEMS:**

**5-A. ACTION TO APPROVE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION GOALS / OBJECTIVES FROM THE SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2008 PLANNING AND STRATEGY MEETING (7:46:14)** - Chairperson Curtis introduced this item. Mr. Moellendorf reviewed the staff report. Commissioner Shabi provided background information on the discussion which took place regarding the adopt-a-park concepts. Discussion followed, and Chairperson Curtis requested to include the concept of a community adopt-a-park program in the list of goals / objectives. [Commissioner McKenna left the meeting at 7:48 p.m. A quorum was still present.] In response to a question, Mr. Moellendorf offered to forward the commission’s goals / objectives to the Board of Supervisors. He suggested including the adopt-a-park concept under item 2 - Explore Business Partnership Possibilities. Chairperson Curtis suggested there may be minor changes to the list of commission assignments. Discussion followed, and Chairperson Curtis advised that Commissioner Keeton had expressed a continued interest in participating in the parks and recreation master plan element and unified pathways master plan element implementation strategy meetings. She welcomed the participation of any other commissioner. Discussion took place regarding the commission assignments, and Mr. Geddes provided clarification with regard to Open Meeting Law requirements. He responded to questions of clarification. Commissioner Westergard recommended removing the “Committee Assignments” section from the goals and objectives to avoid confusion with

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regard to the commission's intentions toward creating subcommittees or appointing liaisons. He suggested the list of commission assignments should serve as an internal reference, and the commissioners concurred. He further suggested adding the word "partnering" to item 2(B)(3).

Chairperson Curtis entertained additional comments and, when none were forthcoming, a motion. **Commissioner Westergard moved to approve the goals and objectives of the Parks and Recreation Commission from the planning and strategy meeting held Saturday, February 23, 2008, less item 4 under goals. Commissioner Lasco seconded the motion.** Chairperson Curtis requested Commissioner Westergard to amend his motion to include the adopt-a-park program. **Commissioner Westergard so amended his motion. Commissioner Lasco continued his second. Motion carried 5-0.**

**6. COMMISSIONERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION** (8:00:50) - Chairperson Curtis requested Mr. Moellendorf to advise Mr. Fahrenbruch that the trails on the north side of Long View are "seriously eroding." In response to a question, Mr. Moellendorf pointed out that Mr. Dunn's economic impact report would be agendized for the April commission meeting.

**7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS** - None.

**8. ACTION ON ADJOURNMENT** (8:02:20) - Commissioner Westergard moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m. Commissioner Lasco seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

The Minutes of the March 4, 2008 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting are so approved this 1<sup>st</sup> day of July, 2008.

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DONNA J. CURTIS, Chair