

Reading Recreation Commission
Tuesday, June 12, 2012
7:00PM
Reading School District Board Room

The Reading Recreation Commission meeting was called to order Tuesday, June 12, 2012 at 7:05PM by Eddie Moran, Commission Vice-Chairman.

The Board performed a Roll Call of members and the the Pledge of the Allegiance. The following members were present: Eddie Moran, Vice-Chairman, Otis Smith, James Washington, Robert Heebner, Jr., and John Santoro. Staff in attendance: Daphne Klahr, Executive Director. Acting Recording Secretary: Karen Regenfuse; Diane Kripas, Division Chief of Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; Russ Hoke and Barbara Coffin of SCORE.

James Washington questioned what the actual quorum of the Commission is. The Commission is down by a few members. The quorum was determined to be the majority of the Directors presently in office according to the by-laws that were accepted at last month's meeting.

Marsha Goodman-Hinershitz entered the meeting at 7:38PM

Frances Acosta entered the meeting at 8:10PM

Minutes

Minutes were reviewed. John Santoro, made a motion to accept the minutes of the May 8, 2012 meeting as submitted. The motion was seconded by Jim Washington and unanimously approved.

The Minutes of May 8th meeting will be revised to indicate that at that meeting it was the first reading of the By-Laws.

Old Business

Proposed Employees Handbook

Daphne suggested that this be tabled until the next meeting.

Part of the handbook was to include the Director's benefit package be detailed and at present time it is not. Daphne will put the benefit package together in writing and pass it along to all Board Members for discussion at next meeting.

Jim Washington questioned how the future meetings will be conducted. He suggested that a separate meeting be called to discuss how the meetings will be conducted. Eddie Moran would like a non-public meeting to discuss this. Daphne will work on getting someone to mediate a meeting how the official meeting will be conducted.

Daphne would like the minutes revised to indicate Mike Schorn was present at the meeting. It does indicate that Mike Schorn called the meeting to order. Is that enough to show that he was present? The Board members agreed that was adequate.

There was a question on whether or not the By-Laws need to be on the agenda. They need to be accepted during a second reading? The May minutes stated the By-Laws were approved. Some Board Member says they were approved for a first reading only. John Santoro made a motion to approve the By-Laws during a second reading. Jim Washington, seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved. John would like the May minutes be amended to reflect that the By-Law were approved for the first reading and not just approved.

Since the bylaws are now approved Otis Smith would like to have the election of officers. Discussion took place about when this should happen. The Board will wait until Ms. Goodman-Hinershitz and Mr. Acosta join the meeting for elections.

Otis Smith asked to address a personnel issue in Executive Session.

Public Comment

Ricardo Medina, Jeovany Rodriguez, and Jose Figeroa were present to talk about constructing hand ball courts on the property of the 3rd and Spruce Recreation Center.

The Handball Community has been neglected here in Reading. Mr. Medina started a Handball Organization called PA Handball Association. He would like new courts in Reading. Mr. Medina has chatted with Daphne Klahr about the possibility of building 4 new hand ball courts to specifications. Mr. Medina would like to see courts in Reading because it is an inexpensive sport. In the Reading Community this will be advantageous. Handball is a lifetime sport. Jose Figerea stated that during the course of learning the sport the younger generation will learn the rule of the game and being respectful.

Comments from Daphne Klahr: She announced that the City will be pursuing CDBG money that would include the construction of the handball courts to regulation size.

Otis Smith suggested that the Commission needs to get the biggest bang for our dollars in the early stages of the Commission. How many people do you think these courts will serve?

Eddie Moran stated that handball was a big part of his upbringing. The rules of the game and the respect for other will be learned. There is a larger population of NY resident moving into the Reading area.

NOTE: Marcia Goodman-Hinershitz entered the meeting at this point.

Executive Director's Report

Highlights:

- Paperwork for the 501 © is being process. It might take as little as 2 months.
- Hired John O'Mara to do some summer maintenance
- Currently in the process of interviewing for the Business Manager.
- Purchased a convection oven and cheese warmer for the pool concession area.

- Have been paid by the Reading School District for the first two quarters of the year.
- Summer Playground will start next week and the pool opened last week.

Daphne would like to come back to item #7 once Frances Acosta gets to the meeting.

Otis Smith suggested that the RCC contact the school district about how we can work together on cleaning up the playgrounds at the local school. John Santoro suggested that it might be a union issue. Mr. Smith thinks it needs to be pursued to show good faith. If a school has a playground that is fenced in it is closed to the public over the summer months. The contact at the school district would need to be researched. Jim Washington feels this is not an issue we are ready to pursue.

Marcia talked about the program called Service in Lieu of Taxes. There may be a possibility to get some church groups to do this. This is a talk that RCC may need to have with the Mayor's Office.

Diane Kripas interjected that there is a model program in Philadelphia where the Recreation Commission and the Philadelphia School District are working together to green-up the school yards. There are plenty of schools where their playgrounds are still on asphalt.

Otis Smith was at the pool for the first time ever over the weekend. He commented that it was in very good shape and looked well maintained. It could be a very good revenue source.

Treasurer's Report

The current balance of the Reading Recreation Commission is \$192,312.11. There is a balance of \$4800 in the youth account. John Santoro made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report as presented. Jim Washington, seconded the motion. Discussion:

Comment was made by Otis Smith that at this moment the RCC needs to be very careful about their spending.

Comment was made by Robert Heebner on the Swim Team line item. This was for the Albright Aquatics Club rental.

Comment was made by Marcia Goodman- Hinnershitz about receiving rental fee from facilities. At this point the money is being deposited in the Recreation Commission's account.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Introductions

Diane Kripas, Division Chief of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources was introduced.

She started the DCNR circuit rider program started over 20 years ago.

She congratulated the Board on the advancement of the Commission. The agreement was signed in the most difficult of economic times. This circuit rider project was the most difficult to bring together. It did not meet the criteria of the normal circuit rider program. The Director's position [for Reading] will be very hard and as a result, a higher than usual starting salary was approved. In her opinion, the Commission has found a capable Director that has been able to come into the position and accomplish a great deal in a short time frame. Diane has put her comments in a hard copy form. If at any time you have comments on the formation

of the Commission, please contact Diane. She has experiences from Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton PA.

Diane suggested that the Board get in a van and see the facilities that the City has to offer. This would allow the board to see the facilities from a Director's prospective. It would also help to prioritize the needs of the Commission.

Reading's circuit rider grant is not administered by the Commission. The City was the applicant of the grant. Cindy DeGroot is the project manager. The Director's benefit package should have been in place before her hire. It is the responsibility of the Commission to provide a copy of the Executive Director job description; which needs to be approved by DCNR, the selection process of the Director, recommendation for hire, her hire date, the Director's benefit package, and DCNR are recommending an appointment package. Diane asks that the Commission make this a priority so that a payment can be processed. The payment will not be processed until all this paperwork is turned in to DCNR.

Marcia asked who received the correspondences from DCNR. She asked that the Chair of the Recreation Commission also get any correspondences from DCNR.

DCNR also asked for, and received from the Executive Director, a copy of the budget. Once all documents are received the RCC will get at least 50% of the funding as an initial payment.

Diane looked over the Strategic Plan and think it is awesome. She suggested that the Commission pick five things from the plan and concentrate on them.

The most successful circuit rider projects have communication between all members. Establish clear lines of communication. Celebrate the success that you have had.

Daphne should be fully engaged in any funding that are being requested from DCNR.

There will be continued DCNR support for years 2 to 4. During the 2012-2013 budget year there is the possibility of losing the Keystone funding that supports the circuit rider programs. International Urban Parks Conference is in New York City this July. DCNR is willing to send a coalition of people to this conference. Daphne will be one of those individuals. It will not cost the Commission anything except her time. The dates are July 14 thru the 17, 2012.

At the end of Diane's report is some lessons learned from other circuit rider projects. Eighty percent of the projects do continue past the fifth year. The first year usually is the honeymoon, and then in year two the terrible twos set in. If you can get to year three and four things will get better. Please approach this process with grace.

The grant funding is a total of \$65,000 for the first year, then reduces to 75%, then 50%, then 25%.

Jim Washington wanted to know if there is a step by step process as to what another circuit rider project needs to do to get the project started. DCNR has some documentation as to what should have been done, but many things could have been done better.

NOTE: Frances Acosta, President of City Council, entered the meeting at this point.

It might be good if the history of the parks were documented. Daphne held up the ten year old Open Space plan that has some of the history of the parks. Marcia wanted a short history of all the parks before they went on the tour of the park. They tour may take more than one night to complete.

Russ Hoke and Barbara Coffey of SCORE were present to the results of the Strategic Plan.

Russ Hoke thanked the Board Members that come out on that Saturday morning to talk about the Strategic Plan.

There are five major categories that include: Management and Organization, Administration, Strategic Analysis, Financial and Marketing.

Matrix of recommendations (page 62). Who is responsible for what and when the task should get done we discussed.

Resolution of political issues, personal agendas, a religion interest need to be put aside for the good of the organization. Look for consensus building ad a common goal. Executive session issues should stay in Executive session. There needs to be a resolution of the time commitment issues of the Board Members.

Organization Chart was discussed. The senior management and operational management were outlined. Day to day operation is administered by the Executive Director.

Mr. Hoke talked about the organization chart. Internal committees and External Committees. Internal Committees can be Development, Finance committee and Program committee. Development of advisory board are usually outside Board Members to give ideas on the development of the Commission.

Suggestions for future Commission positions are Business Manager, Day Care Supervisor, and Property Maintenance Manager.

Part-time basis positions – volunteer coordinator, funding and grant writer, and marketing and communications.

Role/ Responsibilities – you need job descriptions for all position now and in the future.

Administration - develop the strategic plan and operation plan, develop performance matrix, communication, programs (assess what you have and revitalize the neighborhood associations), expertise, technology (use social media), culture (Hispanic organization).

Have alliance with various groups in the community. There are existing alliances? Maybe get a third financial partner. Have and alliances with a non-profit. Maybe cultivate and alliance with a for-profit organization.

Financial professional should review the Commission's account. There needs to be a good cash flow system. Report performance of budget. Funding support. Develop a funding plan. Grant writing is a teachable and trainable skill. Maybe an intern could do this.

Evaluate the programs for a fee base program.

Marketing – Segmentation of current residents being served. Who are the new target markets? Provide a niche for certain programs. What are the differences of your program with other similar programs. There needs to be a branding of your organization.

Please look over the plan and pick out 5 areas you want to target in the coming year. Be realistic about the goals.

Marcia suggested that this be on the agenda for our next meeting.

Questions were asked about how this board will be conducted. All boards are administered in different ways. This board needs to decide how it will move forward. The Board needs to use committee more to accomplish some issues. Most discussion should happen in the committee not at the board meeting.

Executive Director

We went back to the Executive Director's report to talk about point 7; which is about the recreation revenue that is being collected. Diane Kripas did mention to the Board that in past circuit rider that the fee generated by the Commission usually go back into the running of the Commission. This is historical how it has been done in circuit rider projects. The mayor's office wanted the rental fees generated to go back to city hall instead of going back to the Recreation Commission. Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz found documentation that at one of the early meeting that it stated the Recreation Commission will get money generated. Frances Acosta will meet with the mayor early next week to explain the background of this issue.

Marcia asked that this issue be put on a council workshop agenda and it was discussed. It is now on the City maintenance agenda. An amendment need to be drafted to make this issue clear for the future.

This is most likely a misunderstanding.

New Business

Urban Parks Conference

A motion was made by France Acosta to approval Daphne's attendance at the Urban Parks Conference in New York City. The motion was seconded by, Marcia Goodman- Hinnershitz. Discussion from John Santoro that this is professional development and not vacation time. There was a discussion about whether or not Saturday and Sunday should be considered for comp time since the conference is a work approved trip. There should be a report that comes back to the Board about what was learned. Motion was unanimously approved.

An Executive Session was called for personal issues.

Once the Board reconvened with public present, Frances Acosta made a motion to redraft Daphne's employment contract to adjust the salary to \$67,500 from her original hire date of Feb 13th. Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Election of officers

Frances Acosta took over to this portion of the meeting.

Nominations were opened for Chairman of the Board. John Santoro nominated Jim Washington, Otis Smith nominated himself, and Eddie Moran nominated himself. A motion to

close the nominations was made by Robert Heebner. Eddie Moran withdrew his nomination. There was a roll call vote. The vote was 5 to 2 for Jim Washington.

Nominations were opened for Vice-Chairman of the Board. Eddie nominated himself and Otis Smith nominated himself. A motion to close the nominations was made by Robert Heebner. There was a roll call vote. The vote was 5 to 2 for Eddie Moran.

Nominations were opened for Secretary of the Board. Jim Washington nominated Robert Heebner. A motion to close the nominations was made by John Santoro. The vote was unanimous for Robert Heebner.

Nominations were opened for Treasurer of the Board. Eddie Moran nominated Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz. A motion to close the nominations was made by John Santoro. The vote was unanimous for Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz.

Adjournment

There being no further business to be brought before the Board the meeting was adjourned at 9:50PM.

Upcoming meetings: Reading Recreation Commission – July 10, 2012 at 7:00PM at the Reading School District Board Room.

Respectfully submitted by:

Karen Regenfuse