

City of Newport  
Parks and Recreation Committee  
Minutes Dec. 16, 2009

I. ROLL CALL: Members present: Committee Chair Paul Reed, committee members Susan Boehlert, Sarah Follett, Sandra Surber, Roger Holstein, Ed Simon, and Council Liaison Lon Brusselback.

Also present representing staff: Parks and Recreation Department Head Jim Protiva, Sports Coordinator Liam Hughes, and Administrative Assistant Bob Fuller.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Committee Chair Paul Reed called the meeting to order at 8:35 A.M. Prior to approval of minutes from the November 18, 2009 meeting, Reed requested the mis-spelling of Surber's name at bottom of page one be corrected. Based on that correction being made, Roger Holstein moved to approve the November 18, 2009 minutes. Motion was seconded by Sandra Surber and approved on a unanimous voice vote.

III. CONCERNS OR COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS: Three representatives of a local environmental group, "Concerned Citizens for Clean Air", from Seal Rock, were present and voiced concerns regarding application of herbicides in city park areas. Group spokeswoman Maxine Centala requested information about city policies and procedures in this area, specifically signage policies. She also requested city spray records for the past three years. Another group member advised her husband had become quite ill after spending about two hours in Don Davis Park. She believes the park area had been sprayed shortly before this incident. Protiva advised it is policy to use chemicals to control weeds, primarily Roundup, Garlon 4 (for broadleaf plants such as blackberries), and Speedzone, for turf areas. The city employs two licensed chemical application staff who are trained in application procedures, and we carefully follow Federal and state guidelines for these products. Protiva also advised the city does not post signs, but we do have records available and we will forward these to the group. Centala asked if there could be citizen involvement in developing such policies; Protiva requested the group put their concerns in writing and submit them to either his office or the City Manager's office. Ed Simon noted the State Parks have jurisdiction over state property, including the beaches, and also any policy will need to cover private and other public entities as well. City Council Liaison Brusselback advised the group the City Manager would be the appropriate person to initiate policy. Follett requested an agenda item to discuss further issues on this.

IV. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR: Jim Protiva noted department staff has been involved in lots of cleaning of leaves from grates to deal with flood issues at the Senior Center. The upcoming remodel will rectify this problem.

The Recreation Center Winter Activity Guide is now available, and the Child Center will be open for last-minute holiday shoppers' convenience.

V. FACILITIES: We have some paint-peeling issues with some recent work done at the pool; the contractor has been advised and is working on a solution.

Tomorrow we will be meeting with the architect for the Senior Center remodel; we'll be working on a redesign for some areas to address some grant issues.

VI. NEW BUSINESS: Protiva requested committee feedback re: a current grassroots effort to expand the skate park at Sam Moore Park. The group recently hosted a fundraiser at Café Mundo with the help of the Northwest Skateboarders' Association. Due to city budget issues, any further monies for such a project would have to come from grants and fundraising efforts; Protiva met with the group recently and advised them the city and the department would back their efforts. This is in the early stages and several options are on the table. Brusselback said it would be a good idea to invite them to a future Parks and Rec Committee meeting. Protiva said the group's concerns are the age and size of the current facility, the new designs that are available, the need to have separate areas for various skill and age levels, and the location given the changing neighborhood. Several committee members agreed the park is a good idea because it got the skateboarders off the street into a safer environment. Ed Simon suggested 2 committee members act as liaison with the skateboard group to facilitate communication, and Brusselback advised a restroom for the park is in the budget for next year. Further discussion will center on a later agenda item, possibly in February 2010.

VII. OLD BUSINESS: Jim Protiva provided an overview of the proposed Recreation Center/Pool business plan development. On Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, city council met to discuss the proposed plan. Our objective is to reduce the subsidy from the city general fund to the Rec Center, recreation programs, and the pool. The existing rate schedule was developed by looking at other centers rather than developing a formula unique to the rec center and the pool.

Also staff was directed to develop a pool-only fee schedule. The rec center has ten times the annual users than the pool, and we have been directed to reduce the subsidy from the general fund, so fee proposals are more difficult, but necessary to avoid closure of these facilities.

Although some of the increases are dramatic, the methodology is valid. The city council will review these proposals, and can change or modify based on the formulas provided. Some fees are proposed to be raised over a 2-3 year period. We were directed by council three years ago to not look at fee increases, so some of the current rates are a great value. The goal is to strike a 50/50 balance between fees and subsidy, and these increases come very close to that goal. We've cut staff to '05-'06 levels and expenses are as low as we can get them. The only other alternative may be to cut services or reduce hours of operation. Additionally, we are requesting an "escalator clause" to increase fees regularly, tied to the Consumer Price Index or similar benchmark. The bottom line is if fees cannot reduce the amount of the subsidy in a meaningful way, other less attractive

options are on the table. At this time, the city council has elected to focus on fees and not on reduction of hours.

There being no other business, Chairman Reed adjourned the meeting at 10:30 AM. The next meeting is scheduled for January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 8:30 AM at the Rec Center.

Signed:

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Paul Reed, Committee Chair