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## COMMISSION ON PARKS AND RECREATION

### SUMMARY OF COMMISSION MEETING

MAY 16, 2012

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A meeting of the Commission on Parks and Recreation was held at the Hunting Park Recreation Center, 900 West Hunting Park Avenue at 6:00PM.

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Nancy Goldenberg, Chair  
Commissioner Barbara Capozzi  
Commissioner Michael DiBerardinis  
Commissioner Jeffrey Hackett  
Commissioner Pete Hoskins  
Commissioner Leslie Anne Miller  
Commissioner Carol Rice  
Commissioner Sarah Clark Stuart  
Commissioner Clarena Tolson

**ABSENT:** Commissioner Debra Wolf Goldstein  
Commissioner Alan Greenberger  
Commissioner Howard Neukrug  
Commissioner Carlos Rodriguez  
Commissioner James Straw

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mark Focht, First Deputy Commissioner, Parks and Facilities  
Carol Roache, Administrative Assistant

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Commission Chair Nancy Goldenberg called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Commissioner Goldenberg stated that Commissioners' terms run concurrently with the Mayor's, and all appointed Commissioners have reapplied for their positions. There were approximately eighty applicants and they will testify before City Council next week. Commissioner Goldenberg thanked the Commissioners for their dedication and friendship and added that this has been a working Commission. She highlighted their achievements, the Open Land Protection Ordinance, the redesigned Facebook page and the PaRC Star Awards, among other things. Commissioner Goldenberg announced that Joan Schlotterbeck, Public Property Commissioner, has retired and wished her well in all her future endeavors. Commissioner Goldenberg noted recent special events. On April 13<sup>th</sup>, Mayor Nutter, Deputy Mayor DiBerardinis and Ryan Howard dedicated ball fields at Hunting Park. On May 6<sup>th</sup>, the Broad Street Run was held with over 40,000 participants. On May 10<sup>th</sup>, Sister Cities Park was dedicated. Commissioner Sarah Clark Stuart spoke briefly on the upcoming "Bike to Work" Day on May 18<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Nutter, Council members and Deputy Mayor DiBerardinis will participate.

Commissioner Goldenberg introduced Kathryn Ott Lovell, Executive Director of the Fairmount Park Conservancy. Ms. Lovell spoke briefly on the Hunting Park Revitalization Project. A Master Plan was created with \$20 million of improvements to the Park, which consists of 87 acres. Work started in the Park three years ago, the first project being the erection of a new playground. Next was a new baseball field sponsored by the Ryan Howard Foundation. Then came a community garden. New street lights were installed around the Park. Future projects include the rehabilitation of the recreation center and tennis courts and a healthy food concession stand to be run by a local concessionaire. Lastly, 200 dead or dying trees have been removed and replaced with 360 new trees.

Commissioners Carol Rice and Jeffrey Hackett introduced the newest PaRC Stars, Leroy Fisher and Michael Wilcox. Commissioners Rice and Hackett thanked Mr. Fisher and Mr. Wilcox for their dedication and commitment to the Hunting Park Recreation center and surrounding community and presented them with the PaRC Star awards.

Commissioner Goldenberg asked Deputy Mayor DiBerardinis to update everyone on the Parks and Recreation Department's activities. Deputy Mayor DiBerardinis addressed specific issues raised at the March meeting at Christy Recreation Center. The broken water pipe at Christy has been fixed by the Water Department. Councilwoman Blackwell has agreed to fund a new HVAC unit and hardwood gym floor at Christy. Deputy Mayor DiBerardinis announced that there will be 140 day camps and 70 swimming pools open this summer. There are numerous specialty camps (arts, sports, etc.) and new recreational activities (kayaking on the Delaware, bicycle clubs, rock climbing, etc.). There will also be an Urban Agriculture Program for youth and an Artist in Residency Program run in concert with Mural Arts. Commissioner Hackett questioned the screening process for lifeguards. The Deputy Mayor stated that lifeguards must go through rigorous training and testing before certification and then, also pass drug testing and a child abuse background check.

Commissioner Goldenberg introduced Kenneth Woodson and Nina Bisbee of the Philadelphia Zoo. The Zoo is seeking exemption from the Open Land Protection Ordinance for its new Intermodal Transportation Project. Mr. Woodson gave a short presentation. This is a 10-year project to ease traffic problems in and around the surrounding area of the Zoo. Ms. Bisbee presented proposed roadway improvements and streetscape designs. Parking garage plans were shared with the audience and Ms. Bisbee added that they are seeking input from surrounding neighbors. Commissioner Sarah Clark Stuart questioned bike access to the Zoo and Mr. Woodson stated that there will be a new bike lane created along with new bike racks.

Commissioner Pete Hoskins, Chair, Revenue Enhancement Committee, informed everyone that there will be a new bike rental operation at Lloyd Hall and Love Park, with revenues being reinvested into the Park. Burholme Golf now has a new lease and concessionaire for the driving range and miniature golf course. They will be serving food also. There are new food vendors at Love Park, and the café at Hunting Park will be opening in 2013. Commissioner Hoskins asked Lauren Bornfriend, Executive Director, Philadelphia Parks Alliance, to speak regarding budget testimony. Ms. Bornfriend stated that the Alliance has launched a campaign to restore \$8 million to the Parks and Recreation budget.

Commissioner Carol Rice, Chair, Communications Committee, encouraged everyone to nominate PaRC Stars and also to "like" the Parks and Recreation Commission on Facebook.

Commissioner Goldenberg opened the meeting to the public to discuss safety issues and offer suggestions. Baba Renfrow of Humanity in Motion asked for further information on the Hunting Park project. Ms. Ott Lovell stated that this is a six phase project which could possibly take five to ten years, depending upon the amount of money raised. The Conservancy has currently raised \$3.7 million and they are actively soliciting donations. Walter Marlin of the Finley Advisory Council, stated that a number of recreation centers have serious safety issues and need better lighting and video cameras. Mr. Marlin suggested the use of solar lighting. Sharon Wells acknowledged that there have been a lot of good changes at Hunting Park but added there is still a long way to go. More signage is needed and there is a problem with rogue vendors and ATVs coming into the Park. Deputy Mayor DiBerardinis stated he is aware of the problems and is meeting with the Police regarding these issues. An unidentified speaker thanked the Commission for their help at Hunting Park. She added that the improvements are a dream come true and neighbors are anxious to work with the City on further improvements. Leroy Fisher asked if there are any plans for increased recycling at Hunting Park. First Deputy Commissioner Mark Focht responded that the Department is working in concert with the Streets Department to establish a new recycling program and they are currently testing the new program in District Four. Allison Weiss questioned why only Department officials can report graffiti. The Deputy Mayor stated that there is no such rule. Ashley Robinson said that her group is holding a fundraiser in Hunting Park on August 4<sup>th</sup> and asked if there is a phone number to call to pick up recyclables. Streets Commissioner Clarena Tolson said she would be happy to assist her.

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Commissioner Goldenberg thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 8:05PM.

The next meeting of the Commission on Parks and Recreation will be held on Wednesday, July 18th at 6:00PM at the Vogt Recreation Center, 4131 Unruh Street..

Respectfully submitted,

Carol J. Roache, Administrative Assistant