
COMMISSION ON PARKS AND RECREATION

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION MEETING

NOVEMBER 14, 2012

A meeting of the Commission on Parks and Recreation was held at Hawthorne Recreation Center, 1200 Carpenter Street at 6:00PM.

PRESENT: Commissioner Nancy Goldenberg, Chair
Commissioner Andy Denison
Commissioner Michael DiBerardinis
Commissioner Derrick Ford
Commissioner Debra Wolf Goldstein
Commissioner Jeffrey Hackett
Commissioner Gary Jastrzab
Commissioner Matthew Perks
Commissioner Carol Rice
Commissioner Sarah Clark Stuart
Commissioner Clarena Tolson

ABSENT: Commissioner Bridget Greenwald
Commissioner Leslie Anne Miller
Commissioner Howard Neukrug
Commissioner James Straw

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Slawson, First Deputy Commissioner
Carol Roache, Administrative Assistant

Commission Chair Nancy Goldenberg called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Commissioner Goldenberg announced two new pieces of legislation. The first was a City Council Budget Transfer Ordinance, giving the Department of Parks and Recreation a \$2.6 million dollar increase in their capital budget. The second piece of legislation proposed to reduce the 50-foot buffer on rivers and streams within the City on a number of properties. The Bill was approved with a compromise amendment allowing for marine, utility and City facilities. Recent departmental activities included the inaugural Boxer's Run hosted and sponsored by the Fairmount Park Conservancy and a ribbon-cutting ceremony opening the Schuylkill River Park Bridge. Commissioner Goldenberg thanked Commissioner Sarah Clark Stuart for her tireless dedication to the opening of the bridge. Saturday, November 17th is Fall for Your Park Day and Commissioner Goldenberg encouraged everyone to come out and help clean-up their local park. Lastly, on December 2nd, the Philadelphia Parks Alliance will hold a benefit honoring Commissioner Howard Neukrug. Several new programs have been initiated including Grow Up Green, at Sheppard and Ramp Recreation Centers, which focuses on heightening children's awareness of the outdoor world. The Art and Artists program has begun at five recreation centers with artists leading workshops for children. There was a groundbreaking at Franklin Paine Skatepark, and a rededication at the Tarken Ice Rink. Bartram's Mile was launched at Bartram's Garden.

Commissioners Andy Denison and Carol Rice presented the PaRC Star Awards to Michael Athay and Patricia Buchanan. Both individuals were recognized for their dedication and commitment to Hawthorne Park and the surrounding community.

Commissioner Goldenberg stressed the Commission's focus on safety in both parks and recreation centers and spoke regarding the features of a safe environment and how can we work together to achieve greater safety.

Commissioner Michael DiBerardinis presented a report from the Department of Parks and Recreation. He stressed that he listened to the public's comments and concerns at previous Commission meetings and the Department is currently addressing these issues. There will be more programs and better lighting at recreation centers and in the coming months, 35 facilities will be equipped with video cameras and the Department is committed to add more. With the additional \$2.6 million restored to the Department's budget, the focus will be the maintenance of facilities and hopefully, many new hires. Four ice rinks have been refurbished and they are now open seven days a week. Attendance at the ice rinks has increased dramatically. Commissioner DiBerardinis invited everyone to visit these facilities. The Department is partnering with corporate sponsors for new and varied programs at the centers. There are preliminary talks underway with additional corporate sponsors. New ATV legislation was approved by City Council in the beginning of October, and Police can not only confiscate illegal ATVs, but also dispose of them if forfeiture is awarded.. Lastly, Bartram's Mile, a one mile Lower Schuylkill riverfront expansion trail, will bring new life into the Bartram's area.

Commissioner Debra Wolf Goldstein, Chair, Land Use and Planning Committee, spoke briefly on the Committee's purpose to research and recommend guidelines on land usage in the City, with the focus being on zoning code matters. The Committee's recommendations will be given to the full Commission and then to City Council. The Committee is currently reviewing Temple's submission to build a boathouse on Kelly Drive, near the St. Joseph's University's Boathouse. The Committee previously concentrated on a bill in the Pennsylvania legislature to sell parkland without court approval. The House of Representatives approved the bill, but thanks to a grassroots effort, the bill died in the Senate.

Commissioner Leslie Anne Miller, Chair, Revenue Enhancement Committee, was unable to attend tonight's meeting and will present her Committee's report in January.

Commissioner Andy Denison, Chair, Communications and Public Engagement Committee, relayed the Committee's purpose to develop highly effective ways to interact with the public. The Committee is currently working with the Land Use and Planning Committee to add information about the Temple Boathouse to the Commission's website.

Commissioner Matthew Parks, Chair, Public Safety Committee, was recently appointed by Mayor Nutter as the Mayor's representative on the Art Commission. Among items discussed at the Art Commission were the Mormon Temple next to Family Court, plans to rebuild the bridge at Venice Island and the new mural to be placed on the train side of the Philadelphia Zoo. The Committee is currently sorting through a tremendous amount of data on public safety.

Commissioner Jeffrey Hackett, Chair, Programming Committee, stated that Committee members are currently reviewing the Committee's purpose statement and future programming such as tree giveaways.

Commissioner Goldenberg opened the meeting to the public to discuss safety issues and offer suggestions.. A local community member, who did not give his name, said that he lives across the street from Hawthorne Park and was concerned with numerous issues such as the lack of trash pick-up and the stealing of electrical panels. Commissioner DiBerardinis offered to meet with the local Friends group to address these issues. Katie Perin, USTA, is interested in bringing winter tennis to recreation centers and possibly obtaining grants from the USTA. Commissioner Goldenberg responded that the Commission would be interested in working with the USTA. A woman, identified only as Susan, asked that more attention be paid to Ridgeway Park, especially the sidewalks and tree maintenance. Commissioner DiBerardinis said that the pool at Ridgeway is run very effectively and is well used by the community. He stated that it is difficult to find additional money in the Department's capital budget.

Commissioner Goldenberg thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 7:25PM.

The next meeting of the Commission on Parks and Recreation will be held on Wednesday, January 16th at Lloyd Hall, #1 Boathouse Row..

Respectfully submitted,

Carol J. Roache, Administrative Assistant