
COMMISSION ON PARKS AND RECREATION

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION MEETING

MARCH 19, 2014

A meeting of the Commission on Parks and Recreation was held at the Vogt Recreation Center, 4131 Unruh St., at 6:00PM.

PRESENT: Commissioner Nancy Goldenberg, Chair
Commissioner Michael DiBerardinis
Commissioner Matthew Perks
Commissioner David Perri
Commissioner Carol Rice
Commissioner James Straw
Commissioner Sarah Clark Stuart
Jeanette Brugger representing Commissioner Gary Jastrzab
Deborah Cahill representing Commissioner Bridget Greenwald
Joanne Dahme representing Commissioner Howard Neukrug

ABSENT: Commissioner Andrew Denison
Commissioner Derrick Ford
Commissioner Debra Wolf Goldstein
Commissioner Jeffrey Hackett
Commissioner Leslie Anne Miller

Commission Chair Nancy Goldenberg called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance. She thanked staff members Ed Fagan, Moria Miller and Carol Roache for their support and the staff of the Vogt Recreation Center for hosting the meeting. Commissioner Goldenberg introduced Susan Buck, Operations Manager and asked her to introduce Vogt staff members. Commissioner Goldenberg then informed everyone of upcoming events. There is a Spring tree giveaway on April 5th, 6th, 12th and 13th. Go to www.treephilly.org for more information. On April 13th, there is a Healthy Trails 5K Run at Tacony Creek Park and the Broad Street Run will be held on May 4th at 8:30AM. The Sheep Shearing Festival is April 26th at Fox Chase Farm. Urban Forestry lectures will be held on Wednesday nights from April 30th to June 4th at the Haverford Library, 5543 Haverford Avenue. For more information, contact Joan Blaustein at joan.blaustein@phila.gov. May 10th through the 17th is Love Your Park week with many activities scheduled throughout the week. Lastly, April 4th is the launch of Philly Tech Week at the Oval. Competitors will have the ability to play Tetris on the Cira Centre building.

Commissioner Carol Rice presented the PaRC Star Award to Carol Piasick for her many contributions to the youth at Vogt Recreation Center. Ms. Piasick has been volunteering at the recreation center for more than thirty-seven years, teaching ceramics classes to both adults and youth.

Commissioner Goldenberg introduced Deputy Mayor Michael DiBerardinis. Commissioner DiBerardinis reminisced about his days as Recreation Commissioner, and how he enjoyed visiting Vogt and working closely with neighborhood groups during his tenure. He stated that a big feature of the work of the Department of Parks and Recreation is taking care of our natural resources in the best way possible, but added that support from citizens and friends groups is needed to achieve that goal. Commissioner Carol Rice spoke about the Community Engagement Leadership Forum on February 1st and the goal of better communications between the Department and community and friends groups. She commended Ed Fagan and Moria Miller for an excellent job in preparation for the forum and stated that Mr. Fagan will post results of

the forum on the PPR website. Moria Miller presented a branding update. "Find Your Path" is the opportunity presented through parks and recreation. She shared the Department's slogan, "We help people grow, that's what we do". Interviews with staff and members of friends groups are currently being filmed and in the coming months, there will be an internal brand launch with shirts, hats and logos for employees. The external launch for friends, partner groups and foundations takes place at the Oval on April 30th. There will also be an external launch on Facebook, Twitter, Tumbler and Instagram. Commissioner Goldenberg suggested that past and present PaRC Stars be interviewed. Harris Steinberg, Director, Penn Praxis, presented the Community Vision and Action Plan for East and West Fairmount Park. Mr. Steinberg stated that this is a long-term vision for investment in the 2,050 acres, not including the rivers. The core themes of this plan deal with public access, information and communication. Existing trail networks are difficult to connect. Future plans include rerouting Belmont Avenue and using historic houses as way stations along the trail. Penn Praxis is hoping to launch a version of the plan on the web in April.

Commissioner Debra Wolf Goldstein, Chair, Land Use, Planning and Design Committee, was unable to attend the meeting, so there was no report from the committee this month.

Commissioner James Straw, Chair of the Revenue Enhancement Committee, stated that the Revenue Enhancement Committee is currently looking for ways to raise funding through public / private partnerships. He added that concessions and food management are big parts of revenue enhancement with money being reinvested into the parks and recreation system.

Commissioner Andrew Denison, Chair, Communications and Public Engagement Committee, was unable to attend the meeting, so there was no report from the committee this month.

Commissioner Matthew Perks, Chair, Public Safety and Maintenance Committee, stated that the Committee is concerned with the issue of amplified sound in picnic areas in residential neighborhoods. Numerous meetings have been held which were productive and progress has been steady.

Commissioner Jeffrey Hackett, Chair, Programming Committee, was unable to attend the meetings, so there was no report from the committee this month.

Commissioner Goldenberg asked Commissioner Perks to report on Art Commission action from their recent meeting. Commissioner Perks stated that the Commission approved improvements to Park Towne Place, including water features and a small park space. Also approved were improvements to Bartram's Mile, adding more landscaping and meadows. Final approval was granted to the DiSilvestri Playground at Broad and Norris Sts. to rebuild the center complete with a library and bike racks. Conceptual approval was given to a new sculpture on the bike path along the Schuylkill River.

Commissioner Goldenberg called for Partners Reports. Kathryn Ott Lovell, Executive Director, Fairmount Park Conservancy, presented an update on the Parkside Edge Plan in the Centennial District. The Conservancy hosted stakeholders meetings and received community feedback. The Parkside Edge Plan features more intimate spaces, a rain garden, creative play areas for children and potential ice skating, trails and picnic groves. Lauren Bornfriend, Executive Director, Philadelphia Parks Alliance, stated that Mayor Nutter has proposed a \$500,000 increase in the Parks and Recreation budget, but the Parks Alliance is pushing for more funding. On Wednesday, April 2nd, Deputy Mayor DiBerardinis will testify before City Council and Ms. Bornfriend asked everyone to attend. The Parks Alliance is meeting individually with every Council member asking for an increase in the budget. The Alliance was awarded a one-year grant from the William Penn Foundation for research in parks and open spaces, looking in depth at other programs and finalizing a survey.

Commissioner Goldenberg then opened the meeting to comments or questions from the public. Joe asked if the City is taking over the fishing pier on the Delaware River. Commissioner DiBerardinis stated that the Department is willing to take the pier and is in the process of negotiations. Keith Freeman, Director of Safety and Operations, expressed his concern regarding public safety in recreation centers. and stated that the Department does regular inspections and audits of recreation centers for safety. Commissioner Sarah Clark

Stuart asked for an update on the Temple Boathouse. Commissioner DiBerardinis responded that the Department is currently in talks with Temple on how they can support youth rowing and they are open to discussions. Temple University and Gerry Lenfest are restoring the East Park Canoe House.

Commissioner Goldenberg thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 7:45PM.

The next meeting of the Commission on Parks and Recreation will be held on Wednesday, May 28th at 6:00PM at the South Philadelphia Older Adult Center, 10th and Dickinson Streets.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol J. Roache
Administrative Assistant