

City of Newport
Parks and Recreation Committee
Minutes 06-17-2009

I. ROLL CALL: Members present: Committee Chair Paul Reed, Susan Boehlert, Roger Holstein, Karen Smith, and Sarah Follett. Sandra Surber, Ed Simon, and City Council Liaison Lon Brusselback were not able to attend.

Also present representing staff: Parks and Recreation Department Head Jim Protiva and Administrative Assistant Bob Fuller.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Committee Chair Paul Reed called the meeting to order at 8:30 A.M. Roger Holstein moved to approve the May 20, 2009 minutes. Motion was seconded by Susan Boehlert and approved on a unanimous voice vote.

III. CONCERNS OR COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS: Darryl McKeel, a resident of Newport and a regular user of the pool facilities, offered several issues for consideration/discussion:

- A. Vehicle parking is an issue, especially during water exercise classes. McKeel requested Parks and Rec staff talk to administration at Sam Case Elementary School to help alleviate parking issues; often school staff will park on the street rather than their lot area and this prevents pool patrons from using these parking spots. Protiva will have Parks and Rec staff contact school administration to develop a more cooperative parking arrangement.
- B. McKeel advises a noticeable lack of maintenance at the pool over the past six months to a year. Sand and grit are accumulating in the pool as well as the locker room floor area, and areas do not appear to be getting hosed down as often as in the past. This appears to be particularly bad after a rental period. Reed commented he has observed similar issues at the pool. Protiva advised he will research and correct as needed.
- C. McKeel says he has noticed a significant negative change in staff morale at the pool; it appears to be suffering possibly due to talk of lay-offs and similar issues. He further stated staff schedule changes appear to be sudden and arbitrary, and has noticed guards often appear fatigued and will be at their post with eyes closed. Protiva advised there are some guards who had been working over their allotted hours and schedules had to be re-arranged to meet the part-time guidelines. This appears to have been corrected recently and should not be an issue. He further stated guards should never be at their post with their eyes closed.
- D. McKeel further stated he has noticed a laxness among staff, especially regarding placement of lane dividers at lanes 5 and 6. This becomes an issue when swim club members are practicing and speed training and they are sharing this lane area with another patron. McKeel also advises

water walkers appear to be coming in before their allotted times and are using multiple lanes and interfering with lap swimmers; end effect is lap swimmers have reduced lane availability. McKeel further stated the pool staff appear to be reluctant to enforce the schedules for water walkers. Protiva advised the older patrons, who make up most of the water walkers, often intimidate the younger staff members when it comes to enforcement. He will contact supervisory staff about these issues.

IV. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR:

A. Director Jim Protiva reported the budget was approved Monday night. One of the outcomes may be drastic reductions in part-time staff, which makes up most of the staffing at both the Rec Center and the pool. The Department has been mandated to develop a business plan, and the city is funding a fee study with an eye to increasing fees on a regular basis; both actions will address increasing revenues to alleviate the need for subsidies from the general fund. Currently there is a \$179,000 contingency fund which will be used to subsidize the Department's funding shortfall. For example, the pool pays about 27% of its operating costs; the rest is from budget outlays from taxes. The Department has been directed to not cut services; however, our staffing costs are very low and the majority of our costs are fixed, such as utilities. Sarah Follet asked if the City is comparable to similar communities regarding costs and fees; Jim said we are a bit high on the subsidy side and raising rates will help alleviate this. Committee members expressed some concern about the cost of the fee study; Protiva advised them to contact City Councilman Lon Brusselback for details about the study that could be presented at the July meeting. At this time it appears rates may double as they have not been adjusted for some time. It does not appear that pool hours will be reduced. Karen Smith suggested committee members attend council meetings as a group to get more information about the fee study.

B. Trail work continues in South Beach with EE Northwest. Additionally, there is a wetlands study taking place today in South Beach near the aquarium in an area that may be proposed for the new aquatic center. Protiva advised the Friends of the Newport Aquatic Center are working closely with the city about their intentions and plans. The committee discussed the aquatic center's impact on the community and related costs vs. upgrading the existing pool. Sarah thought it would be a good idea to have at least one committee member on the aquatic center group. Jim suggested it would be beneficial to focus on the operating costs of a proposed aquatic center since construction costs will be borne by grants and similar non-municipal sources.

C. Protiva reports last week there was a meeting of interested architects regarding the Senior Center Expansion project. Representatives of about 15 firms attended the meeting. The RFP is due the end of June; there is about \$800,000 involved in this project.

D. Protiva reports he went to Sunriver last week to make the presentation for the Coast Park grant application. He was accompanied by grant writer Bobbi Nyhus and Dave Dougherty, an architect who is assisting with drawings and plans. The presentation went very well and Protiva is optimistic about the Department's chances on receiving the grant funding; final decision will be around the end of July.

E. The Rec Center's summer activities have started and there are many kids' programs this year. An especially exciting one is at the library and thanks to Rebecca Cohen for all her work on this.

F. Protiva advises the city has two new hires: a new city manager, Jim Voetberg, and a new city attorney, Penelope McCarthy.

V. FACILITIES: The gym curtain is failing due to cable and support hardware failure. It will cost about \$5000 to repair.

VI. NEW BUSINESS: None.

VII. OLD BUSINESS:

VIII. OTHER: Roger commended the parks staff for their maintenance of various grounds around the city, especially the island by the post office.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chair Paul Reed at 9:40 AM. The next meeting is scheduled for July 15, 2009, at 8:30 AM.

Signed:

Paul Reed, Committee Chair