

BEAUFORT COUNTY PARKS AND LEISURE SERVICES BOARD MINUTES
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2001
COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
3:30 P.M.

Present: Arthur Middleton, Chair
Orethia White, Vice Chair
James Vicar
Allan Stern
Thomas Mobley
Jimmy Mackey
William Brown
Corinne Hagood
John Parker
Michael Manesiotis

Absent: William McDuff

PALS Staff: John Miller, Jr., Acting Director
Joseph Penale, Acting Deputy Director
Jill Shannon, Assistant to the Director
Michael Smith, Recreational Supervisor

Administration: Morris C. Campbell, Deputy Administrator

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Middleton called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 1, 2001 AGENDA

Mr. Mackey motioned to approve the agenda.

Ms. White seconded the motion.

Discussion: None

Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 4, 2001 MINUTES

Mr. Mackey motioned to approve the minutes.

Ms. White seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

Vote: 9 - For, 1 - Abstention

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

UPDATE ON BURTON WELLS:

Mr. Penale stated that the park is still on schedule. The paperwork will be completed toward the end of November, and construction will begin by the first of next year.

EQUALIZATION TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Mr. Miller stated that Beaufort County Council appointed a task force to look at equalization of services for the county in terms of what services the county provided and what the municipalities provided to see if there were equal dollars or equal services provided to the citizens of Beaufort County. The task force prepared some recommendations for the Community Services Committee of County Council. Mr. Miller read over the recommendations that were included in the November Board Packets. The recommendations were: 1.) the County and municipalities reconcile differences among their comprehensive plans in regard to the development of future parks and recreational facilities. 2.) the perceived inequities be dealt with on a case-by-case basis rather than a uniform policy regarding parks and recreation. 3.) a portion of the \$40 million open space land bond proceeds be set aside for parks and recreation facilities. 4.) the County School District be encouraged to allow public use of school recreation facilities.

Mr. Vicar stated that the report cites that all task force recommendations were not unanimous, that some members submitted reports that disagree with certain recommendations of the majority. He would be interested in what the decent was.

Mr. Miller stated that he would do some research to find out what the decent was.

UPDATE ON WEIGHTLIFTING CENTER:

Mr. Mobley stated that Mr. Brown, Mr. Mackey, Mr. Miller and himself had participated in a few meetings since the last Board Meeting, and put together some of the specifics on the weightlifting program, and how it might be set up. In terms of a location, or facility, they concluded that a rental space would be the best alternative at this time. They went so far as to check on some available rental spaces. The old CVS Pharmacy on Ribaut Road is available and has 7,000 square feet, at \$48,000 per year. Mr. Mobley stated that the weightlifting center needed to be about 4,000 square feet so CVS would have more than enough space. He also pointed out that locating rental space, buying equipment and contracting staff would all have to be done under the County purchasing policy. The Committee felt like rental space would be a good way to go, and felt like \$61,000 per year in the budget would be ample enough for staffing. The Committee budgeted \$10,000 as a one-time fee for remodeling of the rental space and the necessary equipment that would be needed would cost about \$92,500.

Mr. Mobley pointed out that the Committee looked at possible uses for the facilities. Any child in the county, who wanted to use the facilities, would be able to do so. Participation on the Beaufort county weightlifting team would be voluntarily, and would cost \$10.00 per year. Beaufort Housing Authority has approximately 100 children who would like to participate in the weightlifting program. Any County employee, firefighters, policemen, senior citizens or military personnel may use the facility for strength training.

Mr. Mobley stated fees were discussed for the usage of the facility, and it was the committees hope that the facility could be used free of charge. They were also hoping that the City of Beaufort and the Town of Port Royal would contribute to the cost of operation.

Mr. Mackey stated that the Town of Port Royal and the City of Beaufort have the figures and are looking at them and have indicated that they will get back with the Committee.

Mr. Mobley indicated that a budget was put together. The first budget is for six months, from January 2002 through the end of June 2002 for \$163,500. The next two years would cost \$122,000 for each year. The total commitment for three years would be \$407,500. The committee recommended to the Board that the committee proposal be approved and submitted to the Community Services Committee of County Council. The proposal is still open-ended because they do not know what the City of Beaufort and the Town of Port Royal are going to do.

Mr. Stern asked if the proposal was to go forward to the Community Services Committee, is the proposal specifically asking them to fund this program.

Mr. Mobley replied that the \$163,500 is not in the budget now, so it would have to be a supplemental appropriation. He then he stated the next budget cycle would start in July and the other funding would need to be in that budget.

Mr. Stern then stated that it would have to be like the swimming pool money when County Council said every child would learn how to swim. He then asked if the City of Beaufort and the Town of Port Royal contributed, would the budget be reduced.

Mr. Mackey and Mr. Mobley replied yes.

Mr. Stern then asked if in light of the fact that every other PALS program requires a participants' fee, how do we justify that this one and this one alone will be free.

Mr. Mobley replied by saying that this program will be available to all children in the County free of charge. Hopefully, the kids that play baseball, football, basketball, etc. will make use of this facility. In addition, there will be children from the Beaufort Housing Authority, and children with special needs that will hopefully make use of this facility. Therefore, he felt that it would be better if we did not charge a fee.

Ms. White added that she hoped if the money is not forthcoming from the particular municipalities, that it would be necessary to tax an individual.

Mr. Mobley replied by saying that the bill has to be paid somehow, and if the city, the town, and the council will not pay, then it has to be paid by the individual.

Mr. Vicar added that as far as he knew the City of Beaufort and the Town of Port Royal do not fund anything, they just donate land, and help with facilities and not look for funding there. He believed that if the no fee charge were kept in the proposal, it would hurt the motion. His biggest concern is that you cannot sign a three-year lease with a one-year budget. He said the Board needed to make sure of how the proposal is worded before the County Council gets to see it.

Mr. Stern stated that either the municipalities commit in writing to something, or be taken out of the proposal because County Council is going to say the same thing that the Board is saying. Until it is in writing, it does not mean anything. He also stated that he would like something about a nominal fee in the proposal. He said there would be people on County Council who would say no just because there is not a fee.

Mr. Mackey replied by saying that he has no problem with that, but that he would like to hear what Mr. Miller had to say because he was an intricate part in the finished proposal. He also added that he is opposed to taking out the Town of Port Royal and the City of Beaufort because they were there in the beginning and they are still there, and the potential for them to do what they are going to do is still there.

Mr. Miller explained that from the beginning, he stated that in the existing Parks and Leisure Services Department Budget there are no existing dollars for this project, nor is there enough space for this program. He would only implement this program if funding was received for it. He said the County Council would have to appropriate those dollars. The staff has been meeting to accommodate not only weightlifting, but also gymnastics and dance as well. PALS could not do anything in terms of space for two years until moved into the Burton Wells Complex. A three-year deal would fit into that scheme. Once PALS moves into Burton Wells, PALS could reorganize space and do something to accommodate gymnastics, dance weightlifting, and possibly wrestling. However, for right now County Council would have to appropriate the dollars for the program whether it is over a six-month period, over a year, or over a three-year period. In terms of fees, he said if PALS did get support from the City of Beaufort and Town of Port Royal then some provisions to the proposal could be made. Mr. Miller explained that participants using the Savannah weightlifting facility are paying a \$10.00 fee and a nominal fee would be appropriate.

Mr. Vicar explained the County Council would either sink or swim the proposal. He stated that is the job of the Board to advise and make recommendations to the County Council and he believed that if the Board were in favor of the proposal, it would be easier to fund the three-year period at \$407,500. He also believed that if everyone would be charged \$10.00 per person, we would be automatically excluding some of the people that he had hoped to draw in. He believed that fees should not be included in the proposal. He also stated that he did not believe that the program could be started by January of 2002.

Mr. Vicar also explained that he thought we should not propose weightlifting, gymnastics, and dance together for the simple fact that it was denied before because of that reason.

Mr. Mackey wanted everyone to understand that the \$92,500 on the equipment is a one-time deal. The county will then own it outright.

Mr. Middleton stated he would entertain a motion.

Vote: 9-For, 1-Abstention

Motion Carried

SHULTZ PARK:

Mr. Miller updated the Board that the county has taken over maintenance of one of the fields at Shultz Park. Phase II, Part A, bid was awarded to Malphrus Construction. Part B has been awarded to Cleland Construction. Bid numbers are now being certified at this time.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

None.

DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES:

Mr. Miller reported:

Basketball registration began on October 13 and will end on November 9.

PALS is now teaching children in the Learn-to-Swim programs at the various pools.

There will be a meeting within the next week about the Bladen Street Tennis Courts. This project should be ready for bid by the end of this calendar year.

Mr. Miller met with Mark Clancy from LS3P about the Burton Wells project. The bids will go out on November 27.

Camp St. Mary Master Plan implementation is scheduled for 2004.

Coosaw, Dale, Scott, St. Helena Parks will be out for bid by the end of this year.

The contractor has completed the roof at Mink Point Gym, however the roof is still leaking so the contractor will be returning.

The roof at the PALS main office is being worked on now during the weekends only.

Beaufort County will receive \$45,195.08 in PARD (Parks and recreation Department) dollars.

Mr. Miller introduced Jill Shannon, who is acting as a TEMP in the position of Assistant to the Director.

Mr. Miller also introduced Michael Smith. Mr. Smith has been with us for a few years. He is a 20-year veteran of the United States Marine Corp. He has been promoted to Recreation Supervisor in the Sheldon and Dale area.

Mrs. Hagood asked if there were any statistics on the pass/fail ratio of the Learn-to-swim program.

Mr. Miller replied by saying that he could prepare statistics. Generally, what has been happening is all of the second and third graders from the schools have been participating, but it is spread throughout the calendar year. One comment that an observer made was how wonderful it was to see the children at the pools. The program overall has been successful.

Mrs. Hagood then asked if everyone participating in the private sector were paying dues. Mr. Miller replied that Bluffton receives a lot more public swimmers than the other pools at this time, and yes, everyone is paying their dues.

Mr. Vicar stated that he thought that some of the projects have been going on for a long time and it seems that PALS projects seem to take the back burner to everything else in the county.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Vicar stated that the Defuske trip was cancelled, and if people still wanted to go possibly, himself and Mr. Campbell could work something out to make it happen.

Mr. Vicar said he inquired three months ago as to the practicality of installing a plaque at the pool in Bluffton in honor of Mrs. Bremer. Mrs. Bremer worked very hard to get that pool there and she continues to be a very big supporter of the Board and the Board's efforts. He thinks that her efforts are deserving of a plaque.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, December 6, at 3:30 p.m. in the County Council Chambers.