

Santa Barbara County Park Commission

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SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PARK COMMISSION Regular Meeting of April 23, 2009

MINUTES

The Santa Barbara County Park Commission met at the Cachuma Lake Recreation Hall, Highway 154, Santa Barbara, California.

Call to Order: Chairperson Darlene Chirman called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

1. Roll Call

Present: Commissioners: Suzanne Perkins, Gene Petersen, Bailey Hudson, Darlene Chirman

Position Vacant: Third District

County Staff in Attendance: Jeff Stone, Deputy Director, North County; Erik Axelson, Deputy Director, South County; Juan Beltranena, Project Manager; Sonia Thompson, Administrative Professional

2. Action

A. Minutes from the March 26, 2009 meeting:

A motion was made by Commissioner Hudson, seconded by Commissioner Perkins to approve the minutes of March 26, as amended.

Minutes amended as follows:

The correct spelling of Mr. Trautwein's name is, "Trautwein".

Agenda Item #7A – Director's report Quagga item: second to the last sentence; change "they" to "County Parks". This clarifies who will have to offset the loss.

Agenda Item #7 – Capital Projects report; change "leech" to "leach".

Motion passed.

3. Public Comment Period

No members of the public addressed the Commission.

4. Park Host Program

Mr. Axelson presented an update about the Park Host program (copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes). In summary, this program is being expanded from camping parks to day use parks as a cost-effective way to improve cleanliness and public safety in certain day use parks. Park hosts can stay rent-free in a recreational vehicle in parks in exchange for 20 hours of cleaning and maintenance service. This assistance frees up park rangers for more complex and value-added assignments, and improves customer service. South County is currently expanding the host program by increasing the number of hosts and adding parks as host sites. Commissioner Hudson asked if there is a written agreement for this program. Mr. Axelson responded that a new day use agreement has just been prepared, in addition to the existing host agreement used for camping parks (copies of agreements are attached to the minutes).

Commissioner Perkins inquired about a park host program at Live Oak. Deputy Director Stone replied that Live Oak was one of the first park host sites. The original park host program was established at Cachuma Lake, and then expanded to Jalama Beach. The host program then largely replaced the Resident Ranger program in North County. In the North County there are 5 locations: the two camping parks, Nojoqui, Miguelito, and Los Alamos. Commissioner Hudson asked if there was a performance measurement to measure the effectiveness of the program. Mr. Axelson gave an approximation of the cost of the program. Mr. Axelson stated that the cost of a ranger (including salary and benefits) is about \$75K to \$85K. The cost, on average, of developing a concrete pad plus utilities is less than \$5K and there are ongoing administrative costs (management and utilities). So at a very minimal cost on an annual basis after the one time installation of the host pad there is a substantial expansion in workforce at a vast cost reduction. Commissioner Petersen inquired about what percentage of a ranger the host fulfills. Mr. Axelson responded somewhat less than 50%; the host is basically taking away 20 hours of work from the ranger, but the experience factor makes this less than a straight 50% replacement.

Mr. Axelson noted that many park visitors have commended the host program, and that it has received positive publicity, referring to an article published in a January issue of the *Independent*.

5. Reports – Park Operation Reports

A. Director's Report

The County Parks DVD was screened for the Park Commissioners. The video can be viewed on the County website at www.countyofsb.org. The video was created by Santa Barbara County GATV. Mr. Axelson stated that this is the first production of the video. The purpose of the video is to provide an overview of the County park system. The video will be updated to showcase other parks such as Jalama Beach and other parks in the North County. Mr. Axelson also stated that there may be a focus on the partnership between County Parks and the Park Foundation and the video will be used as a recruitment tool for the Park Foundation. Commissioner Petersen inquired about access on county property to Pt. Sal; Mr. Axelson

responded that there is not direct access; Commissioner Petersen commented that this should be clarified in the video. Commissioner Petersen also commented that the video is heavily weighted to the South County and that there should be more parks from the North County featured in the video. Commissioner Perkins stated that if there is going to be product out that represents County Parks it needs to encompass all of the major parks.

Mr. Axelson gave a brief overview of the Director's report. The Orcutt Community Park officially opened on Saturday, March 28. The event was attended by Commissioners Petersen and Hudson. Commissioner Hudson asked if the park was open for reservations. Mr. Stone replied that the fee resolution for rentals of the field has not gone to the BOS. Mr. Stone added that he is working with the Orcutt Youth Soccer to finalize a seasonal use agreement. Once schedules are received they will be posted to show when the fields will be blocked during the game times and will not be available. Commissioner Petersen asked if these agreements will be provided to the commissioners. Mr. Stone replied that the seasonal agreement is a use agreement and not a concession agreement; the purpose of the use agreement is generally to provide insurance requirement. Mr. Stone also added that the use agreement was sent out with the proposed park guidelines. Mr. Petersen stated that he would like to see the agreements.

Mr. Axelson concluded the Director's report with a summary of the Trout Derby at Cachuma Lake. Mr. Axelson reported that the trout derby was a successful event and it was also the location of the first outdoor movie for 2009. The movie was screened at Dakota Plains, and about 140 people watched the film -- "Gone Fishin'," a goofy comedy about a fishing trip. Mr. Stone added that the derby was won by a 13-year old boy, also adding that 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place were all taken by kids.

B. South County Division

The County Park Foundation of Santa Barbara -- On April 16 the County Park Foundation again held a successful board meeting, the first meeting conducted by new president Frances Romero. The Foundation continues to expand the board of directors and they are expecting to have an additional member. Currently the Foundation is actively trying to secure private funding to subsidize planned outdoor films series this year. Mr. Axelson will be coming back to the Park Commissioners to seek assistance with ideas and introductions to seek funding. National Trail Days is set for June 6, 2009, and the Foundation is planning a hike at Pt. Sal Reserve.

Lookout Park -- Lookout Park recently renovated the central landscape overlooking the ocean. You will see the area just as you drive into Lookout Park. The second phase of this will be to introduce native plants on the slope to replace removed *Arundo donax*.

Wedding Events -- South County is working on a proposal to regulate and derive a monetary benefit from wedding events. This proposal should be complete by the end of June. Commissioner Hudson inquired about the current revenue that is lost to the county by not having a wedding program. Mr. Axelson responded that a conservative estimate would be about \$25K-\$50K/annually. Mr. Axelson also added that the proposal will focus on weddings with attendance of greater than 15 people which take up a wider portion of the

grounds, restricting this area from public use. Weddings of 15 or fewer people would continue to be free and located in several designated areas. Mr. Axelson also commended Jackie Finnegan, Reservations, and Rangers Sue Spencer, Guili Villasana, and Holly Redmond, who have worked hard to set up the program and to coordinate with General Services. Great teamwork.

C. North County Division

Jeff Stone, Deputy Director-North County gave an overview of his report. Mr. Stone added a few recent developments.

Cuyama Pool -- Cuyama Pool is on target and on budget. Grand opening is scheduled for July 1. Some of the maintenance staff will be attending training to become Certified Pool Operators. There is a new position that is funded for the pool; the funding will not be available until the next fiscal year in July. In the interim, they will use other employees to backfill this position. The lifeguard recruitment is in progress.

Quagga Fees -- Mr. Stone clarified the fee structure for the boat wash fees at Cachuma. The fee for the boat is now “optional”. Fee details are posted on the County of Santa Barbara – Parks Department website located at www.sbparcs.org. Commissioner Petersen stated that it would have been appreciated if the Park Commissioners were involved in the Quagga Fee discussion prior to the item going to the BOS hearing.

Mr. Stone discussed briefly the accident at Pt. Sal. He stated that there was tragic accident of a young boy swept off the rocks out to sea. This is very tragic and unfortunate that the boy has not been found. Mr. Stone stated that this is a very dangerous portion of the beach.

The Commission approved Quimby Funds for a play structure at Waller Park. Mr. Stone stated that they are in progress of putting together the contracts to move this project forward. The Friends of Waller Park is hosting their “Arbor Day” event on Saturday, April 25 at 11a.m. Commissioner Hudson will be honored at this event.

D. Capital Projects Report

Mr. Beltranena provided highlights to the Capital Projects report.

Goleta Beach – The Parks Department received a verbal notice of determination from the Coastal Commission that the application is complete. The Parks Department is waiting for the written confirmation of the Notice of Completion as well as the date the project will be heard before the Coastal Commission. Once received, Mr. Beltranena will forward all meeting details to the Park Commission. The video for Goleta Beach is complete. The purpose of the video is to inform the public and the Coastal Commissioners about the Goleta Beach Permeable Pier project, the CARE project and the long-term goals of the project.

Proposition 12 Funds – The Parks Department received notice that there is no longer a freeze on the Proposition 12 funds. This is particularly good news for Parks because there are a couple of projects that were in line for Quimby funds as well as other funds; however now

that Proposition 12 funds are available these projects will be switched back to Proposition 12 Funds and Parks will not need to use Quimby Funds.

Rincon – there has been a delay in this project. The maintenance truck that services the host trailer came to service the trailer and drove over the concrete pad. The project needed a few extra days to take care of this item. Once this is complete there should be no other delays.

6. Receive and File Reports

- A. Trails Planning & Development Report
- B. Capital Projects Report
- C. Project Status Report
- D. Park Donations
- E. Park Mitigation Fee Status Report
- F. Monthly Concession Report
- G. Park Visitor Customer Survey Report

7. Annual Attendance Awards

The Annual Attendance Awards were handed out at the annual barbecue held at Apache Pines, immediately following the meeting. Mr. Axelson presented the awards to the following:

List of Award Recipients for 2009:

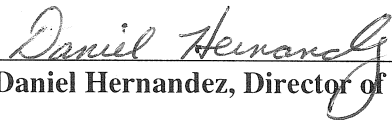
- Rita Ferri, Visual Arts Coordinator (2nd consecutive year)**
- Terry Briggs, Park Ranger III (5th non-consecutive year)**
- Melissa Kelly, Assistant Naturalist (1st year)**
- Ronald Middleton, Maintenance Plumber (7th non-consecutive year)**
- Francisco Ortiz, Park Ranger II (17th non-consecutive year)**
- Guli Villasana, Park Ranger II (10th non-consecutive year)**

Commissioners' Non-agenda Items

Commissioner Perkins brought forward the Front Country Trails item. Commissioner Perkins stated that the user groups need to come to the Task Force group meetings for direction on where this is going adding that there needs to be a clear line of responsibility so the elected officials are the primary force on this and the Task Force position is represented. She noted some concerns expressed by Jim Childress from the Sierra Club. Currently it appears that there is another lead being followed and not the Task Force. Mr. Axelson responded that County Parks, US Forest Service, and City of Santa Barbara are committed to carrying out the recommendation of the Front Country Trails Task Force. Mr. Axelson noted that the issues that Mr. Childress raises regarding establishing a database for trail standards are pertinent, and that all stakeholders agree that there is a need for an objective database of that information. County Parks has begun training of staff in the UTAP process as one method to accomplish this task. However, the UTAP process is more cumbersome than originally anticipated. County Parks is continuing to proceed with this project. Mr. Axelson apologized if there was any misunderstanding that the trail assessment process was being abandoned, which is categorically not the case. Mr. Axelson

looks forward to having a discussion with the Task Force at its next scheduled meeting on May 6 and explaining how the staff is continuing to implement the recommendations that have been made by Front Country Trails Task Force.

Motion to adjourn: Commissioner Chirman moved to adjourn; Commissioner Perkins seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:34 a.m.



Daniel Hernandez, Director of Parks