

JOINT SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners and the Spalding County Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission held a Joint Meeting at Wyomia Tyus Olympic Park, Pavilion #2, on Tuesday, May 6, 2008 beginning at 6:00 o'clock p.m. with Commission Chairman Edward Goss, Jr. presiding and Commissioners Eddie Freeman and David Phillips present. Also present were Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission members Richard Dukes, Wilbur Bailey, Earnest Wimbush, Ronnie Perdue, Dan McLean, Kimberly Goldberg, Tony Rakestraw, and Regina Abbott. Also present were County Manager William P. Wilson, Jr., Assistant to the County Manager Paul Van Haute, Executive Secretary Teresa Watson, Parks and Recreation Director Louis Greene, Recreation Superintendent Kelly Leger, Administrative Assistant Pandy Bass, Parks Superintendent T.J. Imberger, Athletic Supervisor Bart Miller, Hal and Sue Fowler, and numerous Parks and Recreation personnel.

Interested personnel were treated to a tour of Ernie's Trail coordinated by Parks Superintendent T.J. Imberger, showing points of interest along the nature trail. Ernie's Trail is anticipated to become a large-draw attraction for science curriculums, scouting groups, school tours, nature outings, and those interested in the area's natural resources. There are identified trails, interpretive areas, outdoor classroom settings, sample habitat areas, flora and fauna observation, and many opportunities for not only spectator activities but also for hands-on interaction with nature. The trail is a collaborative effort of many agencies, some of which include Parks and Recreation, Cooperative Extension Service, the Department of Natural Resources, science curriculum instructors, scouting groups (many of whom performed a great deal of manual labor for eagle projects, etc.), and private enterprise. The meeting participants were then treated to a dinner, after which the meeting was convened.

I. OPENING (CALL TO ORDER) – Chairman Edward Goss, Jr.

II. INVOCATION – Louis Greene

III. PRESENTATION ON WYOMIA TYUS OLYMPIC PARK – Louis Greene

The park property was purchased in a lease-purchase arrangement with Sue Fowler's father, Earnest Atkinson, for whom Ernie's Trail is named. He thanked the Fowlers for her father's dedication and foresight to sell the property to Spalding County for this beautiful park instead of marketing it to the highest bidder.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

Regina Abbot detailed that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission recently reviewed the action that established the Commission in 1995, as well as other amendments and appendices to the document. In review of the documentation, the Advisory Commission arrived at some suggestions for improvement and clarification. She referenced the resolution and detailed for emphasis the bulleted points of the Advisory Commission as follows:

“April 30, 2008

Spalding County Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission currently operates under the filed “Parks and Recreation Resolution, Rules and Regulations.” Upon review of the document the Advisory Commission has made the following recommendations:

- Parks and Recreation is in need of support and assistance with maintaining an accurate and current Rules and Regulations Manual including what to do with appendices and additions to the document.
- Chair of the Advisory Commission is working to develop By-Laws for the Advisory Commission.
- Parks and Recreation needs assistance in developing a Policy and Procedures Manual for operations.
- Clarification of jurisdiction of Advisory Commission is needed and is summarized below.

The following items as stated in bold are current statements of Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission duties, powers and jurisdiction. What follows each are clarifications and comments from the Advisory Commission in regards to what they feel clarifies, describes or defines each.

- (A) To adjudicate complaints, disputes or other grievances from the public arising out of parks and recreation activities and to conduct such review hearings per resolution.** Example: Advisory Commission may hear and resolve coach/parent complaints regarding Youth Association rules after the Association has been unable to resolve it. ie: A coach and parent asked to meet with Advisory Commission to complain about the age control date rule of association to allow their child to play in another age group. Advisory Commission upheld the rule as set by the Association

and made recommendation to the Association to review their rules for future seasons.

- Expressed desire for advisory board members to communicate major issues directly to their County Commissioner. They desire better communication between the two boards.

(B) To adopt by-laws and other rules of procedure to achieve its purpose and function.

- Advisory Commission is working to develop their By-laws.
- Recommend Parks and Recreation develop a Policy and Procedures Manual.
- Advisory Commission would like to enforce and uphold standards and policies approved by County Commission.

(C) To establish rules governing participation in P&R programs and the consequences for failure to follow the aforementioned rules.

- Advisory Commission should have power to adjust participation rules; however, if they deem a policy or regulation is needed, then recommendation should be sent to County Commission and the Advisory Commission will then uphold and enforce it.
- Advisory Commission is reviewing the Association Agreement for facility use including potential additional requirements to be met such as: Require 501C3; Financial reports and minutes as per their meeting schedules; Bonding of Treasurers and those with direct access to association funds. Also to include consequences of not providing required info. Upon completed review the desire is for the County Commission to approve it and then Advisory Commission enforce and uphold it.

(D) Establish rules applicable to youth associations

- Advisory Commission should have power to approve associations programs and use of fields which are not a part of regular recreation season.
- Advisory Commission should have power to uphold established standards as approved by County Commissioners ie: playground standards, sign/banner standards etc.
- Advisory Commission should have power to establish evaluation and approval process for associations to change how they deliver their program ie: what type of rules they play under such as: AAU, USSA, Little League, Dixie Youth, Travel Ball etc. Youth Associations will be required to come before the Advisory Commission to present their plans for the year.
- Desire to improve communication between Youth Associations, Advisory Commission and Parks and Recreation by hosting annual introductions dinner to cultivate lines of communications.
- Any decisions which establish or affect a standard or require alteration of county property will require an Advisory Commission recommendation to the County Commissioners and once adopted the Advisory Commission will uphold and enforce it. ie: Sponsor Sign standards; Concession stand policy on allowable foods etc.

(E) To establish rules governing hours of operation and use of county parks and facilities.

- Advisory Commission should have power to approve facility use requests from Griffin/Spalding School system and Cities of Griffin, Orchard Hill and Sunny Side.
- Advisory Commission should make recommendation to County Commissioners any requests that come from organizations outside of geographical area of Spalding County
- Advisory Commission should have power to approve annual requests from organizations which have provided the same programs on annual basis such as: Heritage Festival, Community Wide Bible School, Fairmont Reunion, May Fling etc.
- Advisory Commission reserves the right to approve and/or make recommendation to County Commission any requests for facility use.
- Advisory Commission may consider developing needed criteria to be met in order to be considered for complimentary facility use including but not limited to requestor presenting their need in person to Advisory Commission.
- Comment: Requests for sports facility use should go before the sports association for consensus and then come to Advisory board for approval. Any requests outside of set guide lines should be recommended to County Commission.

(F) To evaluate programs and activities which are offered year to year

- o Advisory Commission requests the power to recommend to Parks and Recreation ways programs/facilities may be improved or strengthened.

(G) To file an annual report with the Spalding County Board of Commissioners relative to program accomplishments for the preceding fiscal year

- o The Advisory Commission desires to produce an annual report due annually in September for the prior fiscal year.

Other notes:

Consideration of grant applications should continue to be as recommendations to County Commissioners.

Revise Section 4-A and strike the requirement of having one member of the Advisory Commission be a resident of Orchard Hill.

Appendix A

Section 1: Update number 2 (and entire document where applicable) to reflect current tobacco policy.

Section 3: Restate as: The Association is responsible for providing playing time and fields for the number of games allotted. The Commission reserves the right to adjust schedules based on conditions as needed.”

Parks and Recreation is in need of support and assistance with maintaining an accurate and current Rules and Regulations Manual, including what to do with appendices and additions to the document. The Chair of the Advisory Commission is working to develop By-Laws for the Advisory Commission. Some discussion followed regarding removal of the stipulation in the By-Laws that one member be from the City of Orchard Hill since no accommodation is made for representatives from other municipalities, probably due to some historical perspective at the time the By-Laws were drawn. It was the consensus of the group to remove that stipulation from the section pertaining to appointment of members to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission by the Board of Commissioners. Parks and Recreation needs assistance, also, in developing a Policy and Procedures Manual for operations.

These recommendations will hopefully result in a better communicative and collaborative relationship between the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission and the Board of Commissioners. Advisory Commission Chairperson Regina Abbot identified the current process of the Advisory Commission recommending policy or regulation adjustments to the Board of Commissioners for action and stated that support for the Advisory Commission’s enforcing policies and procedures needs to be affirmed. It was her opinion that problems can be averted and issues bottlenecking the Board of Commissioners’ agenda avoided with some careful realignment of powers and jurisdictions of the Advisory Commission.

Commissioner Freeman felt that greater responsibility should be delegated to Parks and Recreation staff and Advisory Commission, resulting in a more streamlined process and one in which the Board of Commissioners played a much less active role.

Ms. Abbott noted that grant proposals and requests will continue to come before the Board of Commissioners. She concluded that by next season, these issues should be resolved and result in a more efficient and proficient Parks and Recreation Department. While the widespread turmoil with youth baseball in Spalding County brought this issue to the forefront, this is something that needed to have been accomplished anyway.

Louis Greene provided an update on Little League with its new board. Parental input has been good, and they appear to love the program. Parents comment that it is being run well. The only downside appears to be that the new Board is very hands-on and does not delegate much authority, which ensures control and quality but it wears out board members. They are each putting in a great deal of work to get the system going. However, it should be noted that the new Little League Board only had a month to put the program together. Once this season is over, they should have ample time to regroup and be better prepared for next year.

Ms. Abbott stated that these recommendations were the result of comments and intensive work by the entire Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, who worked for two days to put them together, with the assistance of staff. Most of these notations are based on trial and error and don’t intend to take anything away from the Board of Commissioners but rather to protect them from becoming mired in the mundane or the controversial, while ensuring proficiency and uniformity in the application of policies and procedures.

Mr. Wilson said he would forward the recommendations to Mr. Fortune for review, after which it would be brought before the Board of Commissioners on a future agenda. Commissioners in attendance received the recommendations favorably, with Chairman Goss stating that commissioners, while not

averse to dealing with the tough issues, really had enough on their plates. He voiced the Board's appreciation for the Advisory Commission and for Parks and Recreation Staff.

Dan McLean stated he regretted the fiasco that was baseball this year, and noted that it got so badly out of hand mainly because communication was poor. Each of the Advisory Commission members is working to develop better open communication with his/her commissioner and with the Board in general. That, he felt, is key to improving the department's operations and programs.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Chairman

County Clerk

.....