

Allegheny County Council

*County of Allegheny
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Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

4:00 PM

Conference Room I

Committee on Parks

Nick Futules, Chair; Jim Burn, Joan Cleary, Matt Drozd, Jim Ellenbogen, Mike Finnerty, Bob Macey, and Jan Rea - Members

I. Call to Order

Summary: *Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.*

Invited Guests:

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Andy Baechle, Director, Parks

Summary: *Invited Guests Present: Jim Flynn, County Manager; Andy Baechle, Director, Parks Department*

Recognized Attendees: Clarence Hopson, Deputy Director, Parks Department

Council Staff Present: Jared Barker; Jennifer Liptak; Stephanie Buka

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Jim Burn, Matt Drozd, Michael Finnerty, Bob Macey, Jan Rea, Chair Nick Futules, Council Member Chuck Martoni, and Council Member Rich Fitzgerald
Absent: Joan Cleary, and Jim Ellenbogen

III. Approval of Minutes

4141-08 Motion to approve the Minutes of the May 13, 2008 Parks Committee Meeting.

Action: **A motion was made by Macey, seconded by Finnerty, that this matter be Passed. The motion carried unanimously.**

IV. Agenda Items**Ordinances**

3994-08 An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, amending Ordinance No. 07-06, the existing schedule of facility and recreational rates and fees for the use of County recreational and park facilities.

Sponsors: Nick Futules and Bob Macey

Summary: *Chairman Futules told the group that he amended the bill to exclude Hartwood Acres Celebration of Lights since it is a fundraiser and he also pulled golfing out of the legislation because it makes a significant amount of money for the Parks Department.*

Director Baechle commented that he felt the County pools and ice skating rinks would be applicable to this discount program, but it may negatively affect snow tubing and golfing, financially speaking.

President Fitzgerald asked Director Baechle if there may be certain times that are amenable to this type of program and Deputy Director Hopson said 1 to 4 pm, Monday through Thursday for golfing may work, but Director Baechle stated that there isn't a good time because it would be hurtful to their revenues from golf.

President Fitzgerald asked when the last time fees for golf were increased and Mr.

Hopson said 1993-94.

Manager Flynn mentioned that Councilman Robinson has already introduced a bill that would review all County fees, and this would include reviewing the Parks fee schedule.

President Fitzgerald asked whether or not the County is competitive in the fee structure, compared to other golf courses. Director Baechle said they are competitive with other golf courses in the area, but the senior citizen fees are out of line.

Councilwoman Rea suggested that they consider raising golf fees and Councilman Macey said that since they are using golf carts that run on gasoline, they should raise fees.

Councilman Finnerty asked Chairman Futules to explain the details of the legislation. Chairman Futules said the Fire Chief of each fire company would be responsible for submitting the names of their volunteer firefighters. The passes would be issued in the individual firefighter's name. The name of the firefighter and spouse name and number of children would be included on the pass.

Councilman Finnerty asked Director Baechle if the workers at the gates were going to have a problem administering this new program. Director Baechle said a driver's license could be required to help identify the pass holder.

Chairman Futules said this bill would help increase attendance and revenue to the Parks Department.

Councilman Drozd said this could serve to recruit and retain firefighters and it is an investment in our future. He asked to be a co-sponsor of the bill.

Manager Flynn said they served over 18,000 people in a two-day period, so for a clerk to verify residency, etc., it would burden those checkpoints. He suggested holding a "Public Safety Day" this summer before implementing this program. He added that there are many other worthy groups that deserve this type of benefit.

President Fitzgerald said they need to be fiscally responsible and make sure they aren't incurring costs that can't be offset. Councilman Drozd said he was willing to explore raising fees, but he would like statistics from the Parks Department.

Action: **Held in Committee**

Discussion Topic:

Update on Security in County Parks

Summary: *Director Baechle said the County Police are continuing to investigate thefts that occurred at the Settler's Cabin Wave Pool on Monday, June 10. He added that the crime was premeditated. As a result, at least one uniformed County police officer will be stationed at each County pool from 11:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. every day. Director Baechle stated the thefts did not hurt attendance.*

Update on South Park Mining Proposal

Summary: *Director Baechle said a company called Green Vue Systems, owner of the mineral rights, is interested in strip mining 100-acres in the Sleepy Hollow section of South Park. The company must first have permission to take core samples to determine if there is enough coal to make it worth their while. After mining Green Vue Systems said they would reclaim the land and build a number of soccer, baseball, and football fields.*

Director Baechle said there was overwhelming support against the strip mining at a recent Public Hearing. He said the Chief Executive said because of the residents opposition they will not proceed with strip mining.

Manager Flynn said the Public Hearing was a fact-finding meeting and no proposals were submitted to the County. There have been no serious discussions or agreements for mining in any of our Parks.

Councilman Drozd asked if the ballfields would have enhanced South Park, and Director Baechle said it could be argued either way.

V. Adjournment

Summary: *The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.*