

Minutes
Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Committee
2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, S. E.
Suite 1252 East Tower
Atlanta, GA 30334

March 24, 2009

Attending:

Committee Members

Loyce Turner, Chairman
Earl Barrs
Jenny Lynn Bradley
Joe Hatfield
Walter Hudson
Mabel Jenkins
Phyllis Johnson
Jim Tysinger
Tom Wheeler
Bill Carruth, Board Chairman, ex-officio

Board Members

David Allen
Bill Archer
Gene Bishop
Warren Budd
Ray Lambert
Bob Rutland
Jim Walters
Philip Watt

Visitors

Thomas Farmer, The Nature Conservancy
Shana Udvardy, The Georgia Conservancy
Bettie Sleeth, Home Builders Association of Georgia
Katie Kirkpatrick, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
Andrew Schock, The Conservation Fund
Michelle Cable, The Nature Conservancy
Andy Fleming, Friends of Georgia State Parks
Skin Edge, Allied Golf

Staff Members

Noel Holcomb
Chris Clark
Carol Couch
Susan Shipman
Steve Friedman
Dan Forster
Marlin Gottschalk
Becky Kelley
Ray Luce
Jim Ussery
Karl Burgess
Linda MacGregor
David Crass
Todd Holbrook
Doralyn Kirkland
Wally Woods
Steve Saunders
Connie Buck
John Bowers
John Thompson
Sally Winchester
Paul Nelson
Brad Gane
Sherry Crew-Jay
Emily Hitchcock
Lauren Curry
Sarah Dearman
Mary Ann Evans
Hellen Harris

Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Committee – Minutes

March 24, 2009

Page 2

Jim Scarbrough, Gwinnett County Water

Phil Zinsmeister, Sierra Club

Ronny Just, Georgia Power Company

Graham Holden, Jones Day

Bryan Tolar, Georgia Agribusiness Council

Nathaniel Hunt, Southern Environmental Law Center

The March 24, 2009 meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Committee was called to order by Board Chairman Bill Carruth.

Chairman Carruth called on Loyce Turner, Chairman of the Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Committee.

Dr. Turner stated that two briefings would be presented and called on Becky Kelley, Director, Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division (PRHSD), to give a briefing on Proposed Park Pass Rule Change to Section (3) of Rule 391-5-1-.03.

Mrs. Kelley stated that current budget challenges have heavily impacted capital outlay for operation, maintenance and repair of park facilities, and that these challenges require adjustments to manage expenses and find ways to present affordability to facility guests and patrons. She further stated that in 1991, the Georgia General Assembly approved legislation to give the Board of Natural Resources the ability to establish a ParkPass fee and that proceeds from the fee would be used by PRHSD for park maintenance, rehabilitation projects and their related expenses.

She stated that PRHSD is proposing a rule change that would increase the daily parking pass rate from \$3 or \$4 to \$5 and the annual parking pass rate from \$30 to \$50 for any motor vehicle with a capacity of 12 or fewer passengers, including the driver. She further stated that daily and annual parking fees would also be adjusted for larger capacity vehicles. She added that the proposed amendments would include adjustments to discounts for seniors 62 and older and for veterans, that discounts would be offered to Georgia's certified active military, and that annual discounted rates would be offered to large groups and organizations for distribution to their members, employees and associates. She further added that school groups and others currently exempt from the parking pass requirement would continue to be exempt.

Mrs. Kelley stated that the proposed amendments would be posted and advertised for a 30-day public comment period, and that a public hearing would be held on April 6, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. to noon in the Board of Natural Resources boardroom. She further stated that the proposed changes would be presented to the Board for consideration at the April 2009 Board meeting.

Discussion ensued.

Mrs. Kelley stated that legislative leaders have been alerted to the necessity of increasing ParkPass fees. She further stated that it would be hard to project how the current economy and increase in ParkPass fees would impact attendance and revenue. She added that in the past every dollar in ParkPass fee has generated nearly \$1 million in revenue and that a \$5 ParkPass fee could generate nearly \$5 million but involves many unpredictable factors that could impact that amount. In response to a question regarding ParkPasses at public libraries, she stated that two ParkPasses are available

for free check-out at all Georgia public libraries for the same amount of time allotted to check out a book. She further added that the free Wednesday program would continue.

Discussion ensued.

Mrs. Kelley stated that the ParkPass increase is scheduled to take effect May 20, 2009, to include Memorial Day weekend and the summer. She further stated that the best value for park attendees would be to purchase a Friends of Georgia State Parks membership which offers several discounts and benefits.

Mrs. Kelley called on Steve Saunders, Facilities and Properties Manager, DNR, to present a briefing on Proposed Amendments to Rule 391-5-12, Permitting Boat Docks at High Falls State Park.

Mr. Saunders stated that the 650-acre lake and 1050 acres at High Falls State Park came under the stewardship of PRHSD in 1966, and that dock rules affecting private landowners adjacent to the lake were established in 1994. He further stated that PRHSD staff is responsible for enforcing dock standards, issuing revocable permits for construction and maintenance, and inspection of docks on the lake. He added that the proposed amendments would clarify existing dock permit rules, enhance dock safety and permit enforcement.

He explained that the proposed amendments would include shoreline protection, clarify property owner permit responsibilities, establish renewal period, fees and transfers, set up a time table for dock approval and construction; and allow the PRHSD Director to appoint a designee to establish procedures. He added that the proposed changes would also provide for revocable permit penalties, new standards for construction of docks and bulkheads and clarify repair work and timetables.

He stated that the proposed amendments were first presented to the Board in October 2006, but that due to the buffer zone issue, rule changes were postponed until the buffer zone issue could be settled. He explained that the 2008 Legislative session approved a resolution to resolve the buffer zone issue by using boundary line dispute agreements with each landowner adjacent to the lake. He further stated that after the buffer zone issue was resolved, the proposed amendments were mailed to adjacent landowners with notice of public meetings in October 2008. He added that the proposed amendments were also presented to the Board and posted on the web site in October 2008, that a public meeting was held in November 2008, and stakeholder meetings were held in December 2008 and March 2009 at High Falls State Park. He further added that the proposed amendments would be presented to the Board for consideration at the April 2009 Board meeting.

He stated that the proposed amendments relate to private docks adjacent to the lake at High Falls State Park only and that the approved rules would be added to a

manual developed for the lake-front property owners. He further stated that the property owners and High Falls State Park would benefit from the proposed changes.

There being no further questions, the meeting was adjourned.