



Sonoma County Regional Parks Foundation
La Plaza Building A – Conference Room (Rm. 212)
March 20, 2009 - Minutes

1. Call to Order

Jim Angelo called the meeting to order at 8:06 am.

Present: Ramona Turner, Jim Angelo, Linda Frank, Al Gilmour, Robert Harder, Bill Trowbridge (ex-officio), Melissa Kelley, Jim Gilliam, Ginger Kelly, and Mary Jo Delos (Executive Director)

Absent: Andy Rodgers, Peter Kassebaum, Jim Carruthers and Les Crawford

Others present: Mary Burns, Jim McCray, Mary Clemens and Laura Cordes (recorder)

2. Approval of Minutes

VOTED to approve the minutes of January 9, 2009, as follows:

MOTION:	Melissa Kelley	YES: 8	NOES:
SECOND:	Ramona Turner	ABSENT: 4	ABSTAIN:

3. Announcements/Public Comment

Mary Jo Delos, Executive Director, and Board member Melissa Kelley participated in an event called “Great Buys for a Good Cause”. The garage style sale was a collaboration of different organizations. The Foundation’s share of the sale netted \$143. There is another event planned on May 9 at Wells Fargo Center.

Bill Trowbridge, Foundation Ex-Officio and Parks & Recreation Advisory Commissioner, updated Foundation members about what the Parks & Recreation Advisory Commissioners covered at recent meetings:

- Grant applications - Boating & Waterways for: Doran, Riverfront and Guerneville Parks
- Draft Regional Parks Capital Project Plan for 2009/2014
- Sunset Beach Improvements Update – There are parking issues. Sunset Beach neighbors are unhappy with the public parking across the road outside the parking lot

Supervisor Shirlee Zane has replaced Parks Commissioner, Yancey Forest-Knowles, with Rohnert Park City Council member, Pam Stafford. Commissioner Trowbridge will be inviting Mr. Forest-Knowles to join the Park Foundation Board.

Ms. Burns' report:

Ms. Burns distributed copies of the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department Accomplishments 2008. She stated she is very proud of the Department. Park employees love their jobs and it is reflected in this list of accomplishments.

Jim McCray was promoted to Deputy Director in December. Bert Whitaker has been hired to replace him as the Park Operations Manager. Many of you may remember Bert. He ran the Aquatics Division and served as temporary Ops Manager a number of times in the past when needed. Bert starts employment on April 21.

The Tolay agreement has not yet been finalized. Verbiage in the agreement is being researched.

Melissa Kelley asked if the Tolay trainings would be delayed.

Mary Clemens, Environmental Discovery Center Coordinator, said that trainings would start but the park can't be used until a settlement has been reached.

Ms. Burns announced that Andrea Mackenzie will be leaving the Sonoma County Open Space District for a job in Santa Cruz.

The budget continues to evolve. The 2nd Policy workshop was held March 3rd and the first 5% cuts were approved. The Parks Department will make 19% + in cuts to meet target. This week it was announced that there is now an \$18 million deficit and there will be additional cuts to the department. We are waiting for further direction from the County Administrator and the Board of Supervisors. Mandatory time-off, Voluntary time-off and loss of COLA's are being considered. There is going to be 1-2 more years of even deeper cuts.

Jim Angelo stressed how important it is to educate the public about our local parks and to stay in contact with the Board of Supervisors. He agreed with Ms. Burns that there should be a "presence" of park supporters at upcoming public budget review meetings.

Ms. Burns had asked staff for cost saving and new revenue ideas and she received 248. 16 of these recommendations were presented in the fee package that is due to the County Administrator and will raise significant revenue. The remainder of the ideas will be categorized and prioritized, then studied by division teams to see if they are viable.

Jim Angelo again stated the importance of developing a committee and meeting to get the word out to the public to support our parks.

4. Old Business

a. 2009 Annual Celebration

Ms. Delos said that the Foundation tries to raise money to help with funding the advertising for the Parks Celebration. Mary's Pizza Shack, the Redwood Credit Union, Green Valley Engineers and the Bike Peddler will donate again this year.

Ms. Clemens said that there are 30 events planned in 30 days as part of the April Celebration. They are working on cutting back on staff commitments and getting more volunteers to work the events. Spanish speaking volunteers are needed for the Dia de los Ninos event at Spring Lake on April 26. This event is to get children outdoors to get physical in the parks.

The Press Democrat will no longer sponsor the celebration events. Ms. Clemens said the new trend is to use the website to advertise these events. Parks will launch a new URL and a web campaign. This year, instead of doing an insert in the Press Democrat, a full- page ad will be published on March 29. Strip ads will be bought in all local papers, the Healdsburg Tribune, Argus Courier, etc.

Ramona Turner asked if fliers could be distributed to children.

Ms. Clemens said that she contacted the Office of Education and 43,000 children will receive fliers. One side of the flier advertises the Park Celebration events and the other side will highlight the new Passport Program. This is a web-based program. Children can download a 12-page program asking them to experience 10 different things in our parks such as splashing in water, fishing, swimming and camping. When the program has been completed, the child's name goes into a drawing for a free bike.

b. Regional Parks Dept. Project Matrix

Mr. Angelo asked for round table comments regarding the matrix. He said that he would like the Foundation to raise \$100,000 for the Ragle Ranch Playground. He is also interested in finding funding for the Watson School.

Jim Gilliam is also interested in the Ragle Ranch project and has already spoken to others about fundraising for it.

Review of the matrix will be calendared again on the next Foundation agenda.

c. 2008 Holiday Direct Mail Campaign

Ms. Delos said that the Holiday Campaign was a success and raised \$27,787 by 260 donors. This is an increase of 50 donors over last year. The challenge grant from Board members was a great idea and will be offered up again next year.

5. New Business

a. EDC Fundraising Strategy Discussion

When the Environmental Discovery Center (EDC) was founded, there were various agencies that sponsored the Center. Now, most funders have dropped out due to the bad economy. Ms. Delos will be convening the Fund Development Committee to assist with funding ideas.

Jim Angelo suggested that a meeting to discuss a strategy to support the Regional Parks Department be held first, and then a meeting to discuss EDC fundraising be held in May.

Melissa Kelley and Ginger Kelly volunteered to be on the committee and attend the meeting to support Parks.

6. Adjournment

The regular Board meeting adjourned at 9:26 am.