February 22, 2013

3 p.m.

**Meeting Minutes for the February 21, 2013 Metro and Urban Parks Ad Hoc Committee**

**Topic:** Report on Metropolitan Park revenues and expenditures

Report on other parks and amphitheater rules

**Location:** Conference Room A, Suite 425, City Hall, 117 West Duval Street

**In Attendance:** Chair CM E. Denise Lee, CM Don Redman, CM Dr. Johnny Gaffney, CM Lori Boyer, Kelley Boree; Parks & Recreation director, Robert S. Pace, EQD; Kevin Meerschaert, WJCT; J. Richardson, EPB; Jeannine Balanky, citizen; Katherine Moore, citizen; Paige Johnston, OGC; Vince Seibold, EQD; Jeff Clements, Council Research; Tonisha Gaines, Special Events manager; James Nealis, ECA District 5; Leeann Summerford, ECA District 4 At-Large; Max Marbot, Daily Record; Sean Costigan, CAO; Mike Yokan, DWP; Mark Harley, Parks & Recreation; Daryl Joseph, Parks & Recreation; Jim Bailey, Daily Record; Richard Robinson, EQD; Janice Billy, CAO; and Dan Macdonald, ECA District 8.

Meeting convened at 11:09 a.m. The committee was present except for Council Member Bill Gulliford who had an excused absence.

Jeff Clements presented information concerning amphitheaters and similar parks around the nation. Most have similar noise ordinances and curfews. Weather plays a roll on volume and noise that impacts on neighborhoods. Bass sound levels are the common culprit. Promoters report that concert goers want to “feel” as well as hear the music. Other amphitheaters and parks impose a ticket surcharge for facility maintenance and improvements. He did find one amphitheater that went out of business. Located in Columbus Ohio, it closed in 2007 but he did not know why.

Chair Lee told Clements that she wanted 10 parks, not so much amphitheaters and wanted similar facilities located in Florida. She also asked how noise ordinances in other locals compared to the Jacksonville ordinance.

Clements reported that he knew of one facility that provided its own sound board but did not know where this was. The Chair asked that he have that information for the next meeting.

Tonisha Gaines spoke on curfews. The show curfew is 11 p.m. and the park closes at 11:59 p.m.

Council Member Redman asked if the curfew could be set back to 10 p.m. on Sundays. He said that in earlier discussions with promoters, they were amiable to the idea.

Ms. Gaines continued her report saying that there is a 75 cent ticket concessions surcharge that is determined by turnstile numbers, not tickets sold.

Robert Pace of the Environmental Quality Division spoke about the city’s sound ordinance and sound measurement at concert venues. He said that the city has trained people in his department as well as two JSO officers on how to measure sound to apply findings to the ordinance.

He reiterated that the volume heard in neighbor’s homes depends on weather, topography and even crowd size. It’s not unheard of for decibel readings to be 55 DB(a) 2.500 feet from the concert venue. He said the city can set rules governing both the volume levels as measured at the soundboard and downrange. “Circuit” speakers, set up by a certified sound consultant, could help decrease volumes heard by neighbors. However he does not support constructing barriers because other environmental variables may defeat the purpose.

The Chair asked Mr. Pace for a written report outlining his statements.

Kathy Moore, who lives across the river from Metropolitan Park, said the noise is most pervasive when there is more than one stage set up in the park.

Promoter Mike Yokan suggested that the city think about using property that was once the Kids Kampus for a place for a second stage. He also said that if the standard was 55 DB(a) that it would preclude rock and rap shows.

CM Redman asked if most bands owned their sound equipment. Mr. Yokan said most bands rent the equipment. The Chair asked if it would be prudent for the city to consider purchasing a sound board for Metropolitan Park. Mr. Yokan said most bands want state-of-the-art equipment and that most acts would balk at having to use one provided by the city. The Chair also asked about the use of “circuit” speakers. Daryl Joseph of the Parks & Recreation department said the speakers would have to be permanently installed.

The Chair asked Ms. Gaines and Mr. Clements to look into what it would take to install “circuit” speakers.

Janice Billy gave a report on expenses and expenditures concerning the park’s trust fund. (Report is included in the minutes package.) The trust fund contains $753,074. The chair asked about the money spent on aluminum plates and credit card fees.

Yokan spoke of the problems that promoters face when they use the park. Issues include having to rent dressing room and parking facilities from WJCT. There are no shower facilities. The lighting grid under the pavilion is out dated. There isn’t a properly equipped catering area. Because it is not a “turnkey” facility, promoters have to spend extra money to put on shows at the park.

The Chair these problems are good to know because the park should be a money generator for the city.

CM Redman said he met with other promoters and would like to get their views as well.

The Chair asked that Michael Boylan, WJCT president and CEO, be invited to future meetings. She also wanted to know about the number of noise complaints that have come from concerts and events in Metropolitan Park over the last five years.

Jim Bailey spoke saying that while making improvements to the park is a good goal, the meeting seems to have shifted away from its initial purpose, which was to solve the problem of noise drifting from the park into the neighborhoods across the river.

Mr. Yokan said that for an upcoming concert in April, he is taking on a self-imposed 10 p.m. Sunday curfew and promised that there would be no sound checks before 9 a.m.

Foul language continues to be a concern for CM Redman. Paige Johnston said language is difficult to regulate.

The Chair thanked Mr. Bailey for his comments and assured him that CM Redman’s concerns are a priority but that the committee is looking at a wide variety of issues and is compiling information. She asked that Mr. Bailey suggest someone from the Downtown Investment Authority to regularly attend these meetings. Bailey suggested that Tony Allegretti, the chair of the DIA Experience Committee. The Chair asked that he be invited to the next meeting.

Mr. Joseph gave a partial report on repairs and upgrades made the park. The Chair wanted a full report in writing and asked that he have it prepared for the next meeting.

CM Boyer brought up the fact that Metropolitan Park is not in the city’s “entertainment district” and that this is a concern when discussing the noise ordinance and how it applies to this facility. Ms. Johnston prepared a packet of information concerning the district and it is included in the minutes package.

Assignments for the next meeting to be turned in to Dan Macdonald by end of business day on March 5:

* Jeff Clements
  + Provide information about Florida parks similar to Metropolitan Park.
    - Are any of these facilities on a river or other body of water?
  + Provide information about the reason that similar parks and amphitheaters around the nation have closed.
  + What city has its own sound system (sound board and/or amplifiers)
  + Work with Tonisha Gaines to find out about the practicality of installing “circuit “ speakers.
  + Provide information about where money set aside during the Peyton administration for Metropolitan Park improvements was spent?
* Robert Pace
  + Asked to give a written report of what he presented at the meeting.
* Daryl Joseph
  + Present a written report listing repairs and improvements made to the Metropolitan Park facility.
* Tonisha Gaines
  + Explain what the aluminum plates and credit card fees are that were listed in Janice Billy’s report.
  + List of the number of Metropolitan Park noise complaints JSO has received over the last five years.
  + Provide a parking map (requested by CM Lori Boyer)
* Mike Yokan
  + Prepare a written report of the promoter needs that he listed at the meeting.
* Paige Johnston
  + Prepare a report on the regulations regarding vulgar language used by performers in the park.

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Dan Macdonald, ECA District 8

Included:

Meeting Notice

Agenda

Minutes

CM Gulliford Excused Absence

Attendance Sheet

Revenue/Expenditure History of the Metropolitan Park Maintenance and Improvements Trust Fund spreadsheet

Entertainment District Package

Email from Katherine Moore expanding on her comments about noise

Audio CD