

**RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSION
FOR THE PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE**
Regular Meeting – 5:00 p.m.
Meeting held through Zoom Meeting App
Meeting ID: 922 528 8157
Commission Minutes
May 28, 2020

Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC) was held through the Zoom meeting app on May 28, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Lloyd H. Benson Jr., Chairman. Chairman Benson explained that the meeting was being held through the Zoom meeting app with the meeting ID 922 528 8157. He further stated that a link to the meeting can be found on the BREC website and that the public could submit comments to public.comment@brec.org or comment through the Zoom app when recognized. Vice Chairman Shelton C. Dixon offered the invocation. Commissioner Rossie Washington, Jr. led the pledge of allegiance. Roll was taken, and a quorum of Commissioners was present including Lloyd H. Benson Jr., Chairman; Shelton C. Dixon, Vice Chairman; William Scheffy, Treasurer; Connie Bernard; Sandra Davis; Davis Rhorer; and Rossie Washington, Jr. Commissioners Jerry Jones Jr. and Kenneth Pointer joined the meeting after roll call. Due to technical difficulties Commissioner Sandra Davis lost contact with the meeting at 5:25 p.m. Staff members present were Corey K. Wilson, Superintendent; Reed Richard, Assistant Superintendent System Planning; Brandon Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Recreation; Aneatra Boykin, Chief Legal Officer; Andrea Roberts, Chief Operating Officer; Rhett Butler; Phil Frost; Angela Harms; Steven Knight; RaHarold Lawson; Cheryl Michelet; Michael Raby; Michael Smith; Stephanie Trim; and Chris Marchiafava. Murphy Foster, legal counsel, was also in attendance. The rest of the audience consisted of other BREC staff, media, and the general public.

Public Comment

Mr. Benson opened the floor for public comment on the agenda action items. He asked if there was anyone who would like to speak on any agenda action item. Ms. Marchiafava stated that four comments had been submitted by email regarding the East Baton Rouge Parish Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. The Chairman recognized Ms. Marchiafava who read the submitted comments. Phillip Lillard submitted a comment in opposition to the plan expressing concern about that local and state funds designated for this project should be directed to more needed uses. He stated that bike paths get limited usage and that the plan is not economically feasible. Karin Gill, Earl Thornton, and Mark E. Martin each submitted comments in favor of the plan some of the things cited were increased safety for cyclists, possible reduction in traffic, and improved health. Chairman Benson recognized Cathy Coates, participating through Zoom, who spoke on behalf of homeowners in the Meadow Lea and Place Duplantier subdivisions. She expressed support for the plan but voiced concern about the portion of the trail which crosses the private property of the homeowners in those subdivisions. Ms. Coates asked for the portion of the trail that crosses their property to be removed from the plan. Ms. Coates also stated that in some cases the trail crosses in the middle of the property and not necessarily at the property borders.

Mr. Benson recognized Commissioner Bernard who asked for clarification on BREC's rules regarding public comment on agenda items. Ms. Marchiafava gave a brief explanation of the public comment practices.

Mr. Scheffy offered additional information regarding the objections of the property owners.

There being no further comments, Mr. Benson closed the floor.

Adoption of Minutes

Resolved, That the reading of the minutes of the Recreation and Park Commission Meeting of April 23, 2020 be dispensed with, and that they be approved as written.

Motion to approve by Ms. Bernard

Second by Mr. Scheffy

Unanimously approved

Consent Calendar

Resolved, That the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge does hereby approve the Consent Calendar items.

Motion to approve by Mr. Dixon

Second by Mr. Washington

Unanimously approved

The following item was approved as part of the Consent Calendar:

Acceptance of Recommendations for the Human Resources Advisory Committee

Resolved, That the Commission approve the Routine Personnel Transactions for the month of May 2020.

Reports of Officers and Standing Committees

Mr. Benson recognized Mr. Wilson for the Superintendent's Report. Mr. Wilson stated that there were a couple of administrative items recommended for approval. Mr. Wilson briefly reviewed the first item and then read the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Commission approve the execution of the "Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire" by the Chairman, Treasurer, and Superintendent and authorize it to be delivered to Postlethwaite and Netterville as required by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor for audit engagements of government entities.

Motion to approve by Mr. Dixon

Mr. Rhorer second

Unanimously approved

The next item was the East Baton Rouge Parish Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. The Superintendent briefly discussed the item and recognized Reed Richard who gave an informational presentation on the item. At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Benson asked if the trail would go through the private property previously mentioned by Ms. Coates during the public comment period. Mr. Richard stated that the portion of the trail mentioned earlier is a vision corridor which may not happen for 20 years or may have to be modified in the future. Mr. Benson recognized Mr. Scheffy who stated that building a trail which involves crossing private property is the most significant problem with the plan. Mr. Benson recognized Mr. Dixon who stated he wanted a yes or no answer from Mr. Richard to the question of whether the trail would cross private property. Mr. Richard answered yes. Mr. Benson recognized Ms. Bernard who stated that she shared the property owners' concerns. Mr. Benson recognized Mr. Rhorer who asked what authority the government has in regard to the Bayou Duplantier watershed. He wanted to know who is responsible to keep it clear of debris. A member of the public participating in the meeting, Holly Carville, spoke up to answer the question from Mr. Rhorer. Ms. Carville stated that the Department of Public Works is responsible for keeping debris from blocking the flow. Mr. Richard then gave examples of different areas of the country that have overcome similar challenges when building trail networks.

Chairman Benson made a motion to postpone the vote on this item until the next Commission meeting to provide time to get a better understanding and explore other alternatives. Mr. Jones seconded and the motion to postpone was approved without objection.

Continuing with the Communications section of the Superintendent's Report, Mr. Wilson noted that the Communications Department completed the stylized 2019 Annual Report and encouraged the Commission members to review the report.

The Superintendent updated the Commission on COVID-19 issues. He stated that another BREC staff member had tested positive for the virus bringing the total to six. Most of those employees were back to work. He stated that BREC was currently in Phase 1 reopening and when BREC moves into Phase 2 BREC summer camps would be offered. Mr. Wilson noted that BREC has been participating in several partnerships during the pandemic crisis which has allowed over a half million meals to be served at BREC parks. Other BREC parks will be used for drive through testing sites.

Commissioner Washington asked if there was additional news the Superintendent would like to share. The Superintendent announced that BREC had been selected as a Gold Medal Finalist for the fifth year in a row. Mr. Washington congratulated the staff for all their efforts that led to being selected again. Chairman Benson added his congratulations.

The Chairman recognized Mr. Scheffy who asked what kind of coordination was involved regarding traffic control when partnering with outside agencies. The Superintendent explained that traffic issues were taken into consideration when discussing site selection.

Mr. Benson recognized Mr. Scheffy to give the Finance Advisory Committee report and announced that Mr. Scheffy would chair the rest of the meeting. Mr. Benson and Mr. Dixon had to leave the meeting.

Mr. Scheffy confirmed that a quorum was still present. Mr. Scheffy stated he would like to get biographical information on Finance Committee members to have more information about the member's backgrounds. Mr. Scheffy noted that the committee had viewed a presentation on the audit which is due on June 30. He also stated that the budget will be introduced to the Finance Committee and Commission in November and will be approved by the Commission in December. Mr. Scheffy recognized Michael Smith, Finance Director, who reviewed the April financial statements executive summary. Mr. Smith then read the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Commission accept the unaudited financial statements for the four (4) months ending April 30, 2020 (fiscal year-to-date period January 1 – April 30, 2020), as presented.

Motion to approve by Mr. Rhorer

Second by Ms. Bernard

Unanimously approved

Mr. Scheffy recognized Stephanie Trim, Human Resources Director, to review the Human Resources Advisory Committee action items and answer questions. Ms. Trim read the following resolutions:

Resolved, That the Commission approve revisions to BREC Rules & Regulations – Chapter 5: Pay Plan – to comply with new Performance Review Guidelines.

Section 5 (d) Rate of Pay Upon Promotion: Change review period from 6 months to 12 months.

Section 6 – Rate of Pay Upon Demotion: Remove “The demoted employee will not be eligible for a six-month probationary increase.”

Section 10 (a) – Merit Increases: Change merit increase period from 6 months to 12 months.

Resolved, That the Commission approve the revisions to BREC Rules & Regulations – Chapter 6: Service Ratings to comply with new Performance Review Guidelines.

Section 2 (a) The Completion of Service Rating: add part-time employee specific completion period.

Section 4 Employee’s Right to Copy of Service Rating: remove items a and b and add as items a and b under Section 5 – Right of appeal of Service Rating. Update appeal period from 15 days to 10 days.

Section 8 – Effect of "Needs Improvement" Rating – add “during the review year”.

Section 9 – Effect of “Satisfactory” Rating – remove second review period.

Section 11 – Absence of Official Service Rating: Add statement that supervisor is ineligible for a merit increase if their employee’s review is not submitted in a timely manner.

These changes would be effective June 1, 2020 and not impact an employee currently under review.

Resolved, That the Commission approve the revisions to BREC Rules & Regulations – Chapter 8: Probationary Period – to comply with new Performance Review Guidelines.

Section 1 – Probationary Period: Add item (f) “An employee who receives Needs Improvement shall be placed on a 90-day probationary period.”

Motion to approve the three items by Mr. Pointer

Second by Mr. Rhorer

Unanimously approved.

Special Orders

Mr. Scheffy then took up the appointments to standing committees as follows:

Lloyd H. Benson Jr.

Dwayne Murray / Communications & IT

Barbee Pipes / Finance

Harry Dunston / Human Resources

Donald Green / Planning & Park Resources

Earl Doomes / Recreation & Special Facilities

Mazie Doomes / Zoo

Connie Bernard

Scott Wilfong / Golf

Kenyetta Nelson-Smith / Human Resources

Renita Marshall / Zoo

Sandra Davis

Todd Cooper / Communications & I.T.

Cody Jackson / Finance

Austin Lindsay / Golf

John B. Firmin / Human Resources

Tim Gaines / Planning & Park Resources

André Prejean / Recreation & Special Facilities

Barry Heil / Zoo

Kenneth Pointer

Bruce Walker / Finance

Kirt Guerin / Golf
Audrey Nabors-Jackson / Human Resources
Anthony Lewis / Recreation & Special Facilities
Frederick Boutte / Zoo

Rossie Washington, Jr.
Calvin Mills / Communications & I.T.
Donnie Miller / Finance
Devin Harrison / Golf
Matthew Valliere / Human Resources
A. Brock Avery / Planning & Park Resources
Kenneth Holmes / Recreation & Special Facilities
Reggie Abraham / Zoo

David Barrow, Mayor of Central
Mike Longmire / Communications & IT
Wayne Messina / Finance
Robert "Buddy" Wicker / Golf
Ricky McKnight / Human Resources
Suzonne Cowart / Planning & Park Resources
Norman Shiflett / Recreation & Special Facilities
John Butle / Zoo

Motion to approve by Mr. Washington
Second by Mr. Rhorer
Unanimously approved

Adjournment

Mr. Washington made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Scheffy adjourned the meeting without objection at 6:38 p.m.

Corey K. Wilson, Superintendent
and Ex-Officio Secretary

Lloyd H. Benson Jr., Chairman

William Scheffy, Treasurer