

**SOLANO COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
January 27, 2022**

**County Administration Center – Conference Room 5015
675 Texas Street, 5th Floor, Fairfield
10:00 a.m.**

Members Present: Chair Robin Leong, Vice-Chair Michael Whited,
Commissioner Mike Alvarez
Members Excused: Commissioner Terry Riddle
Commissioner Donta Kendrick
Staff Present: Parks Manager Chris Drake
Clerk Melissa Catron

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Leong called the meeting to order at 10:05am. A quorum was confirmed.

2. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of September 9, 2021 were approved as prepared.

3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved unanimously.

4. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Robin Leong was re-elected as Chair and Michael Whited was re-elected as Vice-Chair.

5. Chair and Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Alvarez inquired after the Solano County Annual Report, he asked if Chris would be able to provide a copy of the report to the Commissioners. Chris confirmed that he would provide them a copy of the report when it was available.

6. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

7. Selection of Fish & Wildlife Evaluation Committee Members

Vice Chair Whited and Commissioner Alvarez volunteered to be the members for the Fish & Wildlife Evaluation Committee.

8. Staff Report

A. Park Status Updates

Attendance and revenues continue to show progress towards pre-COVID and LNU Fire levels in the campgrounds, boat launch areas, day use areas, and a continuing increase in annual pass purchases. An update to the CAMAVA reservation system is in progress, this update will allow better tracking of attendance within the parks and provide budgetary information that can be more readily disseminated to the Commissioners.

Chris reported that he anticipates an overall reduction in attendance and revenues for this fiscal year as compared to a fiscal year without COVID-19; however, it will be an increase over prior COVID-19 years' attendance and revenues. The projected reduction to attendance and revenues is due to the reservation-only restrictions within the campgrounds, the continuing fire-recovery efforts at Lake Solano, and the staffing shortages since Fall of 2021.

The storms of October 2021 and December 2021 severely impacted the Parks and created multiple challenges for Parks staff within the parks. At Lake Solano, failed tree limbs damaged the roof in multiple areas over Restroom #4, causing a large water leak. Also, in Lake Solano, there was incidental localized flooding in the campground due to the low elevation in a handful of campsites. When the rains stopped, and the excess groundwater evaporated/absorbed into the soil, the campsites were available for use. At Lynch Canyon, soil saturation from the storms caused flooding to all public access areas beyond the parking lot, Parks staff had to close public access for safety reasons.

B. Campfire restrictions in surrounding agencies study results

Wood-burning campfires have become a sensitive issue in recent years as the result of increased wildfire activity throughout the state. Solano County Parks operates with restrictions at Lake Solano Park rooted in the Red Flag system established by the National Weather Service. In the event of Red Flag conditions being declared by the National Weather Service the used of ash producing fire is strictly prohibited.

Commissioner Alvarez asked if local Fire Districts could issue a red flag condition outside the National Weather Service. Chris responded that if, for example, the Fire Captain from Vacaville Fire Protection District had a concern, they could contact Solano Parks and make Parks aware of whatever the situation was that concerned them, such as low staffing levels or other resources being low along with the elevated fire risk for that day. The Fire Captain could request Solano Parks upgrade the flag warning that day to a red flag condition. Chris stated that Ranger staff also could make those determinations in the field and contact Chris directly with their observations of the current condition; Chris then makes the final determination of what action to take. If Chris is unavailable, the Ranger can make that safety determination themselves. Public safety is the priority within the Parks.

Similar policies and practices are becoming the norm for nearby parks and public lands; Sonoma County, Napa County, Bureau of Reclamation, National Forests and Bureau of Land Management.

9. Confirm date of next regular meeting on March 10, 2022 and Adjourn

The next Commission meeting was confirmed for March 10, 2022. Since there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:41am.