



Washoe County COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

COMMISSION MEETING DATE: April 7, 2015

DATE: April 3, 2015

TO: Open Space and Regional Parks Commission

FROM: Jennifer Budge, CPRP, Park Operations Superintendent

THROUGH: Dave Solaro, Director, Community Services Department

SUBJECT: Overview of proposed changes to Washoe County Code Chapter 95 and possible recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners.

SUMMARY

Washoe County Code Chapter 95-Parks and Recreation is specific to Washoe County's Regional Parks and Open Space functions, the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission and the County's park facilities and parklands. Throughout the years there have been minor changes to Chapter 95; however, the last major update was done in 1987. The code has become outdated and lacks cohesive organization, making it difficult for the public to understand and for staff to enforce. The Board of County Commissioners directed staff in July 2014 to evaluate the existing code. Staff has spent a significant amount of time evaluating the code and researching best practices throughout the nation in an effort to assure the County's park facilities provide a safe and enjoyable experience for the public. Also, with the changing environment, and the creation of the Community Services Department, other changes to Chapter 95 are needed.

The purpose of this item is to allow for discussion and input from the public as well as the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission, with possible recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners for future consideration.

PREVIOUS ACTION

July 1, 2009- Open Space and Regional Parks Commission recommended to the Board of County Commissioners approval of the changes to Washoe County code, Chapter 95 – Parks and Recreation

June 2, 2009 – The Open Space and Regional Parks Commission provided input on proposed changes to Washoe County Code Chapter 95 – Parks and Recreation (no action taken)

2004 – The Board of County Commissioners amended code to reflect the department name to Regional Parks and Open Space

2003 – The Board of County Commissioners amended code to reflect the commission name change to Open Space and Regional Parks Commission

2002 – The Board of County Commissioners amended the section of code regarding the collection of fees

1987 – The Board of County Commissioners approved updates to several sections of the code

BACKGROUND

Many staff were involved in reviewing and recommending changes to the Code, based on best practices throughout the nation. The recommended changes to the Code include reorganization from three general areas into two general areas with sub-categories to make it easier to research and understand. The original areas were:

- Open Space and Regional Parks Commission
- Department of Regional Parks and Open Space
- Use of County Park System Facilities

The proposed General Headings and Sub-categories are:

- Purpose and General Provisions
[Definitions, Parks Commission, Financial Support]
- Regulations of Regional Parks and Open Space Facilities
[General Regulations, Motor Vehicles, Non- Motor Vehicles, Domestic Animals, Visitor Conduct, Overnight Use, Cultural, Historic, Natural and Wildlife Resource, Enforcement]

The ordinance is arranged first by itemizing the sections to be repealed, then the new sections to be included, and finally the sections to be amended.

The proposed deleted sections are as follows:

- Definitions were found in two areas so they were combined and expanded upon in section 95.010
- Open Space and Regional Parks Commission, sections 95.030-95.100 were condensed and included in section 95.020 in the new Purpose and General Provisions category
- 95.260 regarding abusive language was revised and included in the Enforcement category
- Names of Parks and Recreation Facilities are no longer included in County Code

The proposed new sections include:

- A section on electrically-powered, gasoline-powered and remote/radio controlled devices as Code was silent on these issues.
- A section on the use of food storage lockers to address the issue of bears and other animals in the campground.

There were several sections with proposed changes. Major changes proposed include:

- Powers of the Parks Commission. Currently, the Parks Commission is only advisory in nature. Proposed changes would authorize the Parks Commission to have the final approval on :
 1. Fee schedule establishment and fee waivers
 2. Park District Plans
 3. Park Master Plans

4. Park Design
5. Special Event and Concession Agreements
6. Park Policies and Guidelines
7. Discretionary Permits
8. Resolutions

- Number of Parks Commissioners would reduce from 9 to 5 and numbers of meetings would be at least four meetings annually.
- Groups in excess of 25 must have a valid group use permit for functions. This change will address the use of community parks and non-reservable areas in the regional parks for activities not compatible with those areas.
- The section on bicycles is expanded to address unsafe activities in the parks
- Enforcement authority is proposed for park staff to issue warnings and notices of violation, which would address administrative, civil and criminal activities. These sections would mirror the language in Animal Services Code Chapter 55. Regional Parks and Open Space staff is already defined as an “Enforcement Official” in Chapter 125 of County Code, but it is not currently addressed in Chapter 95 specific to parks.
- Changing the name of the Department of Regional Parks and Open Space to Community Services (CSD) to comply with Chapter 130, that established the CSD
- Provision for designating off-leash areas in parks
- Provision for use of remote control devices in parks
- Provisions for use of food storage lockers in parks

We have included two redlined copies of the ordinance and are looking for input from the public and the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission, with possible direction.