

Lawrence restructures Jesse Owens Park board

By Clyde L. Stancil

DAILY Staff Writer

cstancil@decaturdaily.com • 340-2443

MOULTON — A restructured Jesse Owens Memorial Park and Museum board means the park's future is in the hands of people from across Lawrence County.

County commissioners hope that will mean increased activity at the park at Oakville, birthplace of the site's Olympian namesake.

Gone from the board are original members Thurman White and James Pinin. White sub-

mitted his resignation in July, and none of the commissioners renamined Pinin.

None of the commissioners voted against the restructuring Monday, but Commissioner Mose Jones said he didn't like the idea of appointing board members from outside the Oakville-Speake community.

"I haven't appointed anyone to serve on the board at (Veterans Memorial Park), so why should people from outside that community serve on the Jesse Owens Park board?" he said.

Jesse Owens Park is one of three county-owned parks. The others are Veterans Memorial Park in East Lawrence and Red Bank in Jones' District 1. Both have board members solely from their respective communities, as did Owens Park until Monday.

"They're always saying it's totally different than the other two parks," said District 2 Commissioner Hutson Parker, who made the motion to restructure the Owens Park board.

That also was the response to questions about why the county paid utility bills at the Owens

Park museum while the Veterans Park board paid its own utilities.

"My only reason was to get something working out there," Parker said after the meeting. "You have a few people doing all the work."

During the meeting, Parker said the existing board was not working.

"I'd like to see something get going out there," he said. "It's a beautiful park, and it can grow."

The Owens Park is in Chairman Randall LouAllen's Dis-

trict 5. He said things will begin to happen when construction crews finish the lighted baseball fields in about two months.

LouAllen said the fields will spark parental interest.

"I wish we could have one board to do it instead of an advisory board," he said. "If you have two, I think you will get into conflict."

The board is comprised of nine members. The five commissioners each recommend one member, while four at-large members from the Oakville-Speake community make up an

advisory board.

At LouAllen's suggestion, Jones appointed Kenneth Brackins. The commission also named Brackins the interim chairman. Parker re-appointed former board member Rosemary Lewey. District 3 Commissioner Bradley Cross appointed Carolyn Clayborn. LouAllen appointed Kenny Gillespie. And District 4 Commissioner Barkley Lentz appointed Becky Holland.

The four at-large members are Linda Griffin, Gary Taylor, Jake Nelson and Johnny White.