



St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Parks & Recreation Department

RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes – Thursday, October 22, 2020

3:00 PM – St. Johns County Auditorium

500 San Sebastian View | Saint Augustine | FL 32084

Present: Chair Casey Van Rysdam, Brad Long, Harold Dockins, Marty McEachean, Doug Bataille, Parks and Recreation Director, Jamie Baccari, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director, Teddy Meyer, Rec Facilities Manager, Emily Howington, Recording Secretary, Stacia Cotter, Assistant to Deputy Administrator

Present via Conference Call: Vice Chair Dr. Jillian McNiff-Villemaire, Diane Gorski, Project Specialist, Paul Abbatinuzzi, School Board Representative.

Absent: Bert Watson

The meeting began at 11:00am followed by roll call. Chair Casey Van Rysdam welcomed the newly appointed board members, Marty McEachean and Harold Dockins. The September minutes were approved with consensus. There were no public comments.

Paul Abbatinuzzi gave School Board Updates, fall sports have been successful and winter sports are underway. The leagues are continuing the school district's COVID-19 protocols including, reduced capacity to 30% at events, required face masks when not social distancing. Games have been rescheduled or cancelled due to school closures. Abbatinuzzi complimented the athletic directors, coaching staff, parents, volunteers, and spectators on their response to the changes and continued support of the athletes. Harold Dockins asked if the game between Creekside and Fletcher was rescheduled or canceled. Abbatinuzzi replied that the athletic directors were currently coordinating, the decision will be based on Fletcher's availability the rest of the season.

Van Rysdam mentioned Commissioner Paul Waldron's return after being hospitalized with COVID-19, wishing him well and expressing appreciation for Waldron's support to the Recreation Advisory Board.

Van Rysdam spoke of the call-in quorum and location of future board meetings, asking Emily Howington the date, time and location of the November meeting. Howington replied it was the regularly scheduled 2nd Thursday of the month at 3:00pm in the County Auditorium.

Van Rysdam asked to meet with Director Doug Bataille and discuss the FY21 budget in relation to the RAB annual report objectives.

Van Rysdam asked about single rider surcharge at the Golf Course. Bataille clarified, if a golfer has an underlying condition they can ask for a waiver of the single rider charge, which is granted on face value. Bataille stated "If you have a condition, absolutely there's not an extra charge. If you don't have a condition we are asking politely to go back to normal and do standard golf as other courses are." Van Rysdam asked about the numbers of single riders, Bataille replied there were many and there's concern of the golf carts wearing sooner than anticipated.

Van Rysdam asked about using Category 5 TDC dollars for future projects on the Pier. Assistant Director Jamie Baccari said she would follow up with Sydney Lindblad, Bataille agreed it should be possible, but there may be competition.

Bataille discussed the Department Structure for Parks and Recreation. Changes were made to better utilize staff, resources, and better serve the community. The maintenance department was changed to two divisions, Park Maintenance and Natural Resources, which includes beaches, boat launches, and natural areas. The Recreation Facilities Manager position will be adjusted to focus mainly on facilities and events with TDC, tourism operations, and broadening the events held at county facilities. The Natural Resources Program Manager position will no longer be involved with TDC, instead with permitting and grants as relates to Natural Resources. Several empty part time



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positions were combined to a new full time position, Administration and Budget Manager to specialize in budget operations, capital projects, and grants.

Van Rysdam asked how many direct reports Bataille will have under the new structure, Bataille replied one, Asst. Director Baccari. Van Rysdam asked if Sydney Lindblad, Teddy Meyer, and Wes Tucker report to Baccari and if the new Budget Manager could just report directly to Bataille. Bataille stated Baccari will have 6 staff reporting, the issue of the new Budget Manager will be reviewed. Van Rysdam asked about department staff training, Bataille answered there were many opportunities the department wanted to invest in for staff. Examples such as, the National Recreation and Parks Association Executive Directors School for Baccari to attend and maintenance schools training for David Canon and Nathan Otter.

Baccari spoke on behalf of Lindblad, answering Van Rysdam's questions from the previous meeting. The Beach Shuttles are on a 3 yr. contract with Council on Aging with a 2yr renewal awarded in April 2020. The contract began in 2015 with Coastal Transportation, COA won the contract in 2016. Shuttles were a direction was given by admin due to lack of beach parking. TDC pays for the shuttles. The rate is \$35 per bus and is about \$1680 on holiday weekend runs 3 days a week. Shuttles mainly provided on holiday weekends.

Information on Beach passes, FY 19 and FY 20 included in agenda packet. Projected revenue for FY21 is currently \$800k. Chapin asked Baccari if beach passes were needed if riding the shuttle. Baccari said no, beaches passes were only for vehicles driving/parking on the beach. Van Rysdam asked if the assumption was 20% of beach pass purchasers will use their pass next year due to the extension. Baccari replied that the estimated 800k will likely decrease by 20%. The practicality of low shuttle numbers was discussed and will be examined throughout the contract, COVID-19 likely had an impact in shuttle usage.

Bataille provided updates for the Parks Foundation, all legal documents are ready and they are working on compiling initial board members for the foundation beginning in November.

Bataille addressed the benefits of RAB meeting the County Auditorium, being more space, GTV broadcasting providing information to the public and continuing to follow COVID-19 social distancing requirements.

Bataille spoke on projects in St Augustine South, including playground installation and boat launch improvements. Specifically addressing the Shore Drive passive park property, home owners along Shore Drive will be notified of maintenance changes to the property. The county with Road & Bridge, has traditionally mowed the property 2-3x per year. Previously 70-80 out of 130 home owners have been mowing the park property across from them in between the scheduled times. This created inconsistencies in mowing and more recently illegal trees cutting. Bataille's concern is this being a legal liability for the home owner and the county. Commissioner Waldron took part in the discussions last year. The department has budgeted about \$36k for a contractor to mow 3.5 miles of the park averaging 60ft wide. This is classified as a passive park and will be mowed 25x per year as opposed to the current 3-4x. This will reduce concern and liability for the homeowners and the county. Homeowners will have the 2 waiver options to conduct additional manicuring if they choose. The first being to pick up trash from the property, the second to trim around trees. If the homeowners wish to mow in addition to the county's mowing, they can sign another waiver and provide additional insurance to the county to cover the homeowner and the county.

A full ADA review of all county parks was conducted this year, one park in focus is Butler East to increase parking and provide ADA access. Parks and Recreation is working with PAL to increase sports programming near Collier-Blocker-Puryear Park and Hastings. Grants for a trail along Shore Drive are being researched.

Chapin asked for clarification on the Shore drive additional liability policy. Bataille stated that to do more detailed manicuring the homeowner would need additional liability insurance and name the county as additional insured. Long agreed with rectifying the issue of consistence with the county taking over the majority of mowing. He also voiced his recommendation to continue RAB meetings in the County Auditorium.



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Van Rysdam asked how Bataille would gain insight on West Augustine. Bataille replied he and Baccari have discussed methods on social media as well as paper surveys during the Christmas in the Park event.

Van Rysdam asked if more details on the standing committees of the Park Foundation be included in November's agenda as well as several objectives. Bataille's response explained much of the objectives will be up to the Park Foundation board to decide.

Van Rysdam asked for an update on the Alpine Groves Barn destruction and signage. Bataille and Baccari stated there were non-profit groups requesting to salvage material from this site. This will require board approval. \$6,200 is allotted for signage, the department is waiting on 3 quotes for cost of approximately 4 signs.

Baccari provided updates for both Beach Services and Community Programs. A Mobi-Mat was installed at Nocatee Kayak Launch, allowing ADA access to the waterway. The YMCA contract was finalized, cost was reduced from 350k to about 325k and costs split scenario of funding raised to 50/50. Movie in the Park was launched as a socially distanced alternative trick-or-treating option for families. A Drive-Thru Thanksgiving food giveaway will take place at the Fairgrounds in November. Early voting was held at the Solomon Calhoun Center for the first time, a significant event for the West Augustine community. Flagler College has worked with Park Naturalist Kelly Ussia on a planting project around Solomon Calhoun Center, bringing many native plants to the property.

Dr. McNiff-Villemaire asked about the details of the YMCA contract. Baccari stated it is a contract with YMCA to manage the pool at Solomon Calhoun. Chapin asked about the date and location of the Movie in the Park location.

Van Rysdam asked where kickball will take place, Baccari replied at Treaty Park. Van Rysdam asked if there were any other updates from Lindblad. Baccari stated only that the Vilano Renourishment Project had some weather delays. Van Rysdam and Baccari continued previous discussions regarding the TDC, event applications and Category 5 dollars in relation to the Pier.

Teddy Meyer spoke on the construction projects/deferred maintenance in county facilities. Most deferred maintenance projects began with the start of the fiscal year and are going out to bid. The progression of these projects will be updated to the RAB.

Chapin asked about project improvements to Palm Valley West Boat Launch and West Intercostal Boat Launch. Bataille replied the proposal for Palm Valley West was to create a concrete boat launch and increase parking. Coast Guard requested a survey of waterway traffic, the department conducted a 2 week study. Coast Guard results requested a long term study, this would be expensive and the department is looking into alternative methods.

Van Rysdam asked about design costs for Mussallem Beachfront Park. Meyer replied the project was through construction services and some design cost went to the Hawkeye System for crosswalks. Van Rysdam asked about previously proposed updates to Ron Parker Park. Meyer stated the Friends of Ron Parker group has not had contact with Parks and Recreation in over 10 months.

There was brief discussion on the expiring of McNiff-Villemaire & Watson's terms in November. The RAB will select two candidates at the November meeting. The recommendations will be presented to BCC.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:10pm.