



St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Parks & Recreation Department

Recreation Advisory Board 02.11.2021 Meeting Minutes

Chairman called the meeting to order at 2 PM and roll was taken.

Board members present: Chairman Casey Van Rysdam, Brad Long, Deb Chapin (2:15 pm); Call ins: Vice Chair Jillian McNiff-Villemaire, Ed.D, Harold Dockins, Marty McEachean, Bert Watson

Also present: Commissioner Paul Waldron, Tera Meeks Tourist Development Director
Parks and Recreation Staff: Doug Bataille, Director, Jamie Baccari, Asst. Director, Stacia Cotter, Business Manager, Teddy Meyer, Recreation Facility Manager; Call ins: Sydney Lindblad, Natural Resources Manager, Diane Gorski, Project Specialist

Van Rysdam asked for approval of the 1/14/2021 minutes. Long/Dockins. Minutes approved 6/0. He then called for public comment for non-agenda items only.

Florida Elite Soccer Association's Sean Bubb, 299 Isles Brook Parkway, St. Johns and Steven Mail, 273 Beauclerc Rd., Jacksonville gave an overview of their soccer programs and their benefit to the community and their commitment to St. Johns County. Each spoke at length for their need for additional field space so that they can continue to grow their programs and house all of their players in St. Johns County, their desire to expand their programs throughout the county to include offer programming to kids lesser served communities. Van Rysdam asked for clarification on what bringing kids back into the county meant and Mail stated that FESA registrations continue to increase and due to the growth of the program they have 500 St. Johns County kids playing in Duval. Van Rysdam asked if the RAB could meet in the Veteran's Field House or have a workshop. Bataille stated that a workshop option would be explored. Bataille explained that field space county wide was at capacity. He mentioned that there are new parks on the horizon and that additional facilities are being looked at as potential Capital Improvement Projects. He explained the challenges of paying for these types of facilities. Jillian asked if FESA was looking for more time or more fields and FESA stated they needed more fields. Long asked if we had land pieces that could be done in a more basic way to solve the space problem. Chapin asked if FESA had approached owners of vacant land to expand their access. She asked if the county had incentives for private citizens to allow recreation to use vacant land. Commissioner Waldron stated that green spaces were already taxed at a lower rate and acknowledged field space Issues County wide. He noted that every league provided recreational opportunities and scholarships.

Van Rysdam mentioned that the RAB is receiving calls and emails about the Shore Drive Trail project and clarified that the 2/16/2021 agenda item was for permission to apply to the grant only. He encouraged everyone to take a ride down Shore Drive. He then requested clarification on the RAB meeting space. Baccari explained that we were able to extend the use of the auditorium to March, April and May. She stated that the RAB is required to follow the same meeting rules as the BOCC and that a quorum, 4 in person Board Members is required to attend all future RAB meetings in the auditorium. She stated that the phone lines will still be available for the public or others to use to call in. Van Rysdam asked if we could change the meeting time to 1:30 pm. Brief discussion about time and location. 1:30 pm start time is acceptable to Communications. Baccari will follow up and make sure that all the necessary parties are notified of the time change.

Van Rysdam asked that the Capital Improvement Projects and fees be placed on next month's agenda.

Commissioner Waldron confirmed that the county was starting the Capital Improvement Project and budget process for Fiscal Year 2022. He stated that tourism is picking up. He mentioned the Davis Park expansion and lighting projects currently in the queue and the future Villages project that was currently in the permitting phase. Waldron mentioned that Bartram Trail High School Girls Soccer was number one in the country and that the Pedro Menendez Boys and Girls Soccer teams both won their district championships. Van Rysdam thanked Commissioner Waldron for being present at the meetings and remaining involved with the RAB.

Chair asked Bert Watson for an update on the Park Foundation. Watson explained that it is still in the beginning stages and that a meeting will be scheduled for the end of February. He announced that the Foundation, once established, will be able to bond Capital Improvement Projects which will result in a faster project completion time. Chair asked for notification of the meeting time and date when decided.

The Strategic Dashboard presentation was provided by the Director. He reviewed the Dashboard Summary and referenced the Detail sheets. Bataille encouraged the RAB members to reach out with questions or suggestions after the presentation. Van Rysdam asked the RAB to think about narrowing down the most important things to measure. Van Rysdam mentioned using budget prior year and national benchmark measurements. Long asked for a Parks and Recreation Application that would tag the geographical area visited. Discussion related to tracking users ensued. Chapin asked for clarification on adding private parks to dashboard. Bataille stated that it's important to know how many private parks are serving the public and that GIS is working on an inventory. She asked about the acreage increase. Bataille mentioned McCullough Creek adding 13+ acres to the inventory. Dockins asked for an inventory of facilities and activities. Van Rysdam asked for a ratio of field space to participants. Bataille mentioned using the national standard for comparison. Van Rysdam asked about a review of West Augustine park and recreation spaces.

Bataille reviewed the department reorganization and introduced Stacia Cotter as our new Business Manager, Teddy Meyer as the TDC liaison who is also assigned to sports tourism management, and stated that Sydney Lindblad is responsible for FIND grants and working with Nathan Otter in Natural Resources. He mentioned retraining and reassigning some staff members.

Cotter explained that Impact Fees are one time fees that are collected as part of new construction. The fee is distributed amongst different departments. The Recreation Impact fees are used to assist in funding Capital Improvement Projects, park planning, land acquisition, expansion, site improvements, building and equipment and excludes operation and maintenance. She stated that there are 4 Impact Fee Districts and that the money must stay in the district. Cotter stated that there was an increase to recreation fees in 2018. Waldron stated that the monies could be drawn from all zones for boat ramp improvements. Developer credits were discussed. Dockins wanted to know how to process an exception to the impact fee district transfer funds to another district for a trail. Waldron stated that legal would have to answer this question. Bataille stated that Parks and Recreation needs to be more involved in the development process and that he and Jamie have met with Growth Management to better understand the process and to make sure that we are included in discussions with developers so that needs are met.

Tera Meeks, TDC Director, reviewed the Sports Marketing Tourism program. She explained that the grants program was set up to be reviewed bi-annually at the request of the TDC Board and

that due to the pandemic FY21 has no funding for a Sports Tourism Program, but funding will be restored in FY22. She stated that TDC wants to tie the grant assessment and metrics to the amount of funding that is awarded and that she provided Parks and Recreation with a draft proposal from the TDC that checks off all of boxes for the TDC. Van Rysdam asked about the budget for Category III and Meeks explained that the sports marketing money line in the county budget is what is available. Bataille stated that Stacia and Teddy will track and report the allocations. Van Rysdam asked about a new scoring card and Meeks replied that there is an updated scoring card that will be provided to the RAB. He asked about the criteria for off schedule requests. Meeks stated that the grant deadlines are set. Off schedule requests are not recommended. Van Rysdam asked for clarification for Category 5, Tourism Assets. Meeks said that it is currently being used for PV beach re-nourishment north of Vilano and that it could be used for pier improvements. He asked about the logo, Meeks suggested that the RAB could make a request for a logo change, but highly doubtful of change due to history. McNiff-Villemaire asked for additional clarification on the metric. Chapin suggested that a request for something outside of the grant period that was a benefit to the county should be considered. She felt like updating the logo should be considered. Meeks explained that the RAB could counter the importance of not having a bi-annual grant cycle for consideration by the TDC and further explained that the logo was developed to be used universally and that it is possible to have a secondary logo developed for specific use. Dockins asked about bringing Senior Olympics in St. Johns County. Bataille stated that the Senior Olympic Games locations are chosen through a bidding process. Meyer will look into the option of hosting. McEachean asked how the TDC would notify the community of the available grants. Meeks said that there would be a Sports Development Team that will consist of county staff working collectively with different members of the community to get an inventory of the facilities that are available, and identify the needs to become competitive in the different areas of sports. A TDC study was completed a couple of years ago that found that St. Johns County is well positioned to become a sports tourism destination but that we are lacking in a sufficient number of facilities, that the facilities we have are heavily utilized by residents and that even though our facilities are well maintained, they are scattered far apart and there are too few of them and thus, we are not competitive for tournaments. Meeks said that a staff team will work to come up with the preliminary first steps to get us to a sports commission.

Van Rysdam asked Meyers to speak to the Sports Council mission, organizational ownership, where it sits in the St. Johns County government organizations and the expectations. Meeks interjected and explained that the TDC Division, one current and one past TDC member and county staff will do outreach to key players in the community to start the inventory and fact collection. The TDC will be updated regularly and the findings will eventually be presented to the BOCC. TDC staff was asked to create a CIP wish list and to prioritize small and large projects and bring them back to the TDC board

Meyers said that staff is actively looking into tournament events that fit the model we have in St. Johns County.

He stated that Mark Berman who reps *The Orca Golf Bags Women's Match Play Championship*, would like to present to the RAB next month and apply for a grant next cycle. Van Rysdam approved. Meyers announced that the Veritas Pickleball Tournament is happening at the end of this month and noted that they will also be asking for grant monies in October.

Bataille reviewed the FIND projects on the 2/16/21 agenda. He mentioned that the Golf Course is also on the 2/16/21 agenda and that the clubhouse renovation is excluded from the current process, but has been added to the 5 year plan. He shared the Shore Drive survey results: 815 surveys received. 64% - yes 36% - No. 53% of Residents – yes, 36% of Residents – no. The director stated that 22% of the St. Augustine South residents have responded to the survey and that this is considered a good response.

Jamie reviewed the Construction Project and Deferred Maintenance lists. Villages is in the permitting process. Davis Park expansion is currently out to bid. Davis Park turf out to bid February 16, 2021. A community meeting is scheduled for February 18 to discuss the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and to review the playground extension. Still awaiting permitting to start the Flagler Estates project. Park infrastructure failures have been identified in two locations to include Treaty Park. Staff is working on making adjustments to the Deferred Maintenance Program to include these parks.

Sydney shared that beach season starts March 1 and all 9 beach ramps will be open and staffed. She gave beach improvement updates:

- Mussallem, north of North Beach Park, is open and now provides off beach parking, a crosswalk and beach access.
- Butler Park East is closed for Phase I improvements and is scheduled to reopen in March prior to the start of spring break. Phase II will come later but access won't be affected.
- Spyglass Boardwalk improvement to happen soon.
- Vilano re-nourishment project, tilling and sea oat planting is complete.

Van Rysdam asked about the golf course shut down if BOCC approves the purchase and improvements. Bataille said that it will most likely be a January closure and October reopen. He asked about the Tower Committee appointment. Baccari said that McEachean would be representing the RAB and that Lundquist was working on adding it to a BOCC agenda. He asked about Deferred Maintenance schedules. Baccari stated that everything is on schedule at this time.

The Chair asked for Board member reports. There were none.

Chapin had a question about the fairground septic system and Bataille said that maintenance looked for the problem and found none. The overflow was most likely due to a faucet not being shut off.

McEachean motioned to adjourn, Long seconded, 6/0 in favor.

3:30 pm meeting adjourned.