



St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Parks & Recreation Department

RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING AGENDA

1:30 PM, Thursday August 12, 2021

County Auditorium | 500 San Sebastian View | Saint Augustine | FL 32084

Meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM

Members Present: Casey Van Rysdam, Brad Long, Harold Dockins, Deb Chapin
Members Absent: Marty McEachean, Bert Watson; Jillian McNiff-Villemaire
County Liaison Present: Commissioner Paul Waldron
Staff Present: Ryan Kane, Director; Jamie Baccari, Assistant Director; Diane Gorski, Project Specialist; Stacia Cotter, Business Manager; Teddy Meyer, Recreation Facilities Manager

Chair VanRysdam welcomed the new Parks & Recreation Director, Ryan Kane and asked him to share a little about himself. Kane stated that he, his wife Michelle and their two daughters had recently relocated to St. Johns County from the Boston area. Kane has been with Parks and Recreation since 1999 and is very passionate about providing recreation opportunities to citizens. He was the Assistant Parks and Recreation Director in South Windsor Connecticut for 12-14 years and the Director of Parks and Recreation for the Town of Concord Massachusetts for 5 years. He provided highlights of his career.

Chair called for approval of the June 10, 2021 minutes with corrections as requested to Long's report on the Park Foundation. Long/Chapin. 4/0

Chair Report

Chairman Van Rysdam reported that there will be an election at the November member at that it is vital to have a quorum. He stated that his second term was up in October and that he will be re-applying for a third term. He will be requesting that the Board waive the two term rule. He announced that Jillian McNiff-Villemaire had resigned due to availability issues. Voting in November will be for Chair and Vice Chair positions. He reminded everyone of the attendance policy. He shared that the rules state that 3 consecutive meetings missed or 5/12 meetings or workshops missed. Asked for requirements to be added to the minutes.* He mentioned follow up items from last month's meeting needing discussion at today's meeting. He asked Meyer to report on the FESA status in Hastings. Van Rysdam stated that he would like to talk about the seed money vs. marketing money relating to TDC Category funding. He reminded everyone that last meeting it the RAB could bring questions to Jamie about community vs. regional parks, also Dockins questions about FPL and lights under staff reports. Van Rysdam wanted to discuss how to get the finalized Master Plan before the Board of County Commissioners for approval on the BOCC agenda.

School Board Representative Report

Paul Abbatinuzzi, School Board Representative welcomed Ryan Kane to Parks and Recreation and looked forward to meeting with him. He reminded everyone that school starts on August 16, 2021. All fall sports are currently active. He mentioned capacity numbers at sports stadiums are holding at 75% up from 30% allowable capacity last year. The increase in capacity is good for program revenue. He will be bringing monthly student counts back to the RAB in September. Chair asked for an update on the opening up of facilities for summer programs. Abbatinuzzi explained that the curriculum programs and athletic camp

summer camp programs were the only summer program offerings. He said that the athletic season started before the actual school season and that Toco Creek High School will be using other fields for a while. Toco sports are using Mills and other sites. Van Rysdam asked about Middle School Sports even though it is not affiliated with the St. Johns County School system. Abbatinuzzi stated that he and Meyer worked on the school property riders and set schedules at school fields. Chapin asked if all fall sports were being resurrection, Abbatinuzzi answered that all fall sports were in full affect with constant monitoring due to Covid. Dockins asked if the athletic fields or tracks at High Schools were available to the public. Abbatinuzzi stated that they are not open to the high school, nor are they part of the Interlocal Agreement with St. Johns County. He stated that under normal circumstance the school system opens up facilities in the summer. He mentioned that St. Johns County School Athletics fully utilize the school's athletic facilities with no wiggle room often resulting in overlaps of programs. Chapin asked if there were any new schools opening in the fall. Abbatinuzzi mentioned Toco High School and Pine Island Academy with another High School opening in the fall of 2022. There will be 8 traditional High Schools in 2022.

Commissioner Report

Commissioner Paul Waldron wondered if Abbatinuzzi remembered when there was only "The" St. Augustine High School and he responded that he did. Van Rysdam interjected and asked for a LAMP update. Waldron stated that the County was gathering applications for the new LAMP Board and that the members could be chosen in September. Waldron offered to speak to the TDT 5th Cent and was encouraged to do so. Waldron explained that an extra .4 of a penny was allocated to recreation resulting in \$1.8 million dollars for Recreation. Chair stated that the change resulted in a \$600,000 increase, Waldron concurred. Waldron mentioned that the Board set the Tentative Millage Rates for FY 2022 at the August 3, 2021 meeting and that the first Public Hearing to adopt the proposed millage and FY 2022 Budget was scheduled for the September 17, 2021 Board meeting. He spoke to the ongoing and new projects going on in Parks and Recreation and Beaches. Van Rysdam circled back to the 5th cent and questioned the Category V allocation. Waldron stated that all beach services would be solely funded out of the Category V including beach renourishment. Chair asked about the pier. Waldron stated that the pier replacement would probably need to be financed through a Bond Project. Discussion relating to the pier ensued. Baccari stated that Parks and Recreation works with Facilities Maintenance and that the pier had just been evaluated. She mentioned that the pier had been re-decked last year and that the pilings are evaluated annually. She stated that there was ongoing discussions with Facilities Maintenance to work on a long term maintenance plan for the pier. The Chair explained that he was interested in potential new revenue sources to ensure that the pier remains viable as it is crucial to beach tourism. Dockins asked if the 5th could be used for Fort Moses boardwalk. Waldron replied that the boardwalk was not under county jurisdiction. Baccari stated that based on the MOU that the state actually maintains the property and that it was purchased with an FCT grant. Van Rysdam encouraged everyone to visit Fort Mose'.

The Chair announced that the Northeast Florida Under the Lights Sports withdrew their youth partnership request.

Chair received a consensus of the Board and Commissioner Waldron to move the RAB meetings to Wednesday beginning December 8, 2021 to accommodate scheduling requirements for Parks and Recreation Staff. Long pointed out the November date needed to be corrected to reflect November 10, 2021.

Van Rysdam stated that he had sent a request to Chairman Blocker to add the Disc Golf Course to a BCC meeting agenda and has not heard back in over a month. He asked for guidance from the RAB and

Commissioner Waldron if he should attend the August 17 BCC meeting and request this be added to the agenda for discussion and approval in public comment. Baccari explained that when the Board voted to move forward with the golf course no direction was given in regards to the usage of the acreage that would not be used in the golf course. She stated that we needed direction from the County Commission Board as to whether or not to move forward with the Disk Golf Course as a good use of the property. Chapin asked if anything else was being considered for the available property and Baccari said that the local HOA has asked about trails and other amenities. If directed, staff can provide options for the land. Van Rysdam asked if there was synergy in construction to be able to do the disk golf course and golf course renovation simultaneously. Baccari said no, there was no incentive to give the Board to make the process more efficient as the golf course scope is already out to bid and any change would delay the golf course renovation. Waldron said that he would bring it up under Commissioner Comments at the next meeting to see if he can gain consensus to add it to a BCC agenda for discussion. Dockins asked if there was a less expensive options. The chair stated that the RAB voted with a majority to support the Championship Disk Golf Course and Long concurred. The three disk golf course options include:

- 18 targets with natural surface walking trails for three (3) miles estimated \$64,000
- 18 targets with paved walking trails \$1 million
- 40 targets (fee based) no walking trails \$543,000

Chairman asked Meyer to give the RAB approved TDC funding update. Meyer provided a handout with the RAB approved requests to the RAB and Commissioner Waldron. Meyer explained that the TDC would not award funding retroactively which affected the award given to the American Junior Golf Association request that occurs in FY 2021. Meyer said that he was working with the VCB to see if they would be eligible for VCB grants. Meyer explained that TDC grant money could not be paid retroactively. Van Rysdam expressed his displeasure in the process. There was discussion regarding funding, funding amounts and process. Meyer stated that TDC does not meet in July, August, November and December and that the TDC approved bringing funding requests to them 3x annually instead of 2. The Chair asked Meyer to meet with Meeks to find a solution to the loss of retroactive funding. Meyer said that he would work with staff but the county's financial process was contained within specific dates making for a fiscal year. Long said he thought there might be a communication issue. Meyer replied that he has been in contact with grant application submitters and has urged them to reapply after October 1, FY 2022. More discussion related to funding ensued. Meyer reviewed the TDC grant recipient's events. He mentioned a large wrestling event that may come to St. Johns County and coordinating with the VCB. He discussed the possibility of bringing a spike ball event and opportunities to bring other types of sports events to the County.

RAB meetings will take place in the County Auditorium at 1:30 PM on Thursday, September 9; Wednesday, October 20, 2021; Wednesday, November 10, 2021; Wednesday, December 8, 2021

Staff Reports

Director Ryan Kane provided operations updates. He mentioned that the department was able to resolve the issues we had with a trash contractor and ballfield treatment company and now have new vendors in place. Kane stated that the department was experiencing a large number of washouts due to the continuing rain and that staff was working on repairs. Field closures due to heavy rains continue to be a challenge. He announced that Davis Park turf field replacement is complete, the Vilano Boat Ramp Dredge Project is ongoing and that the FEMA berm project was ramping up with the contractor using Cornerstone as a staging site, there will be lots of activity in the area in September and October. He restated that the

golf course project was going out to bid August 20. He shared that the Flagler Estates bid closed Wednesday and came in under budget. He said that we're waiting for the ACOE permit for the Doug Crane Boat Ramp, Palm Valley East and West projects to get started. Once all departments have provided data, a public meeting will be set to discuss the Palm Valley West project. Kane said that he will provide the board with an update on grant projects once he's completed his review of the projects.

Van Rysdam asked for questions for Kane. Dockins asked why the restroom soap dispensers in the men's rooms weren't filled at specific locations. Kane said he would look into it. Chapin asked for renderings of the boat ramps in Palm Valley. Kane replied that he would provide the information to the RAB. Chair asked Kane to talk about the concept of pay for play, where he sees opportunities in St. Johns County and how a transition could be made from the current model to the pay for play model. Kane responded that both the pier and golf course were special revenue departments and models that could be used to create other special revenue funds. Conversation followed.

Assistant Director Jamie Baccari offered an update on Beach Services. She shared that August will be the last month for daily staffed tolls and that after Labor Day toll booths would only be staffed on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. She said that Beach Shuttles would run from Cornerstone Park to Mickler's Beachfront and from City Hall to the Pier Labor Day weekend. Beach Services has collected \$731,900 in revenue to date and that \$915,000 was collected in Fiscal year 2020 and \$813,000 in Fiscal Year 2019. Chair asked if there was a way to reconcile the pass break given to the public by the Board of County Commissioners due to Covid closures and Baccari replied that the totals were based on Fiscal Year dates. A discussion relating to the difference in revenue collections factoring in the pass extension and beach pass purchases for Fiscal Year 2021. Baccari shared the revenue collected at the pier: FY 2021 - \$478,000, FY 20 - 237,000 and FY19 - \$368,000. Dockins asked if the organization that uses the pier parking lot on Wednesday paid rental for the entire park. Baccari clarified that there is a contractual agreement with the group and that she will have to find out what the financial impact is and what the group generates by next meeting.

Baccari provided an overview of the request for funding Phase II of the Field of Dreams. The Northwest Tower Committee meeting agreed to fund the full cost of the Phase II and the County has also allocated funding to complete Phase II. The cost to complete Phases II is \$180,000 and includes a poured rubber surface for better mobility, ADA playground equipment and shade structures. She asked the RAB for a consensus giving approval to ask the Board of County Commissioners for approval to apply for a Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program FRDAP grant to complete the Field of Dreams by adding ADA restrooms, concession stand and parking. Chair asked for the purpose and amount of the grant. Baccari explained the procedure for applying for a FRDAP grant. Discussion followed. Chair asked for a consensus of the RAB to allow Parks and Recreation to ask the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) for permission to apply for a FRDAP grant. Long motioned, Chapin interjected and asked for clarification on the application date, and the grant. Discussion related to the grant submittal process ensued. Motion seconded by Dockins, where he also announced that he would be on vacation during the September RAB meeting. Approved unanimously.

Baccari covered the park amenities project, reviewed the handout and explained the park categories. A brief discussion followed. Baccari stated staff was working on collecting the data for this project anticipating that it would be available for discussion at next month's meeting.

Chair asked about FPL giving us a discount as suggested by Dockins at the last RAB meeting. Baccari replied that Meyer called FPL and confirmed that there is not currently an FPL program for replacement lighting

on athletic fields. She explained that the majority of our athletic lighting was installed by and is managed by Musco Lighting a private company. Chair asked for status of Nocatee RFI. Baccari stated that she did not know, but would follow up. Chair reminded everyone that the RFI would be for ideas and potential concepts for a private public partnership to development an athletic complex on the 60 acres in Nocatee. She stated that Kane would discuss with Administration and that they would bring it back next month. Chair asked if FESA had gotten what they need from Recreation Staff to develop programs in Hastings. Meyer confirmed that FESA was able to run some summer programs and these programs would act as a springboard to future programs in Hastings and Flagler Estates. He explained that Tess Simpson, Program Manager was working with FESA to assist as needed.

Board Reports

Long provided an update on the Park Foundation.

Dockins motioned to adjourn, Chapin seconded. 4/0 Meeting Adjourned.