



St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Parks & Recreation Department

**MINUTES OF MEETING
RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
COUNTY AUDITORIUM
500 SAN SEBASTIAN VIEW | ST.AUGUSTINE, FL 32084
JUNE 10, 2021 - 1:30 P.M.**

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 1:31 pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Casey Van Rysdam, Chair; Harold Dockings; Brad Long; Marty McEachean; Deb Chapin arrived at 1:41 pm

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jillian McNiff-Villemaire, Vice Chair; Bert Watson

STAFF PRESENT: Doug Bataille, Director, Parks and Recreation; Diane Gorski, Project Specialist; Teddy Meyer, Recreation Facilities Manager, Stacia Cotter, Business Manager; Sydney Lindblad, Natural Resources Manager, Joe Kustra, Facilities Coordinator; Sarah Butler, Assistant to the Deputy County Administrator

BCC LIAISON: Commissioner Paul Waldron, District 3

Motion by Long, seconded by Dockins to approve the May 13, 2021 minutes. 4/0

PUBLIC COMMENTS (For items not on the agenda only. 3 minutes per speaker.)

Sean Bubb, 299 Islesbrook Parkway, 32259 , Florida Elite Soccer (FESA) wanted the RAB to know that they are now involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters of NE Florida and are funding and providing a soccer program at each . He said that he had spoken with Bataille and Meyer about getting into places in Hastings to start programs. He explained that he wanted the RAB to know what contributions FESA makes to the community. He asked the RAB for help in reaching out to people in Hastings so that FESA could offer free programming. Chair asked Bataille for his thoughts on how to move FESA forward. Bataille said if it was a question of field space availability Meyer could address and that Tess Simpson, Community Programs Manager, would be a good contact for community leaders. Chair asked Meyer to take ownership to connecting that group of people together.

REPORTS

CHAIRMAN REPORT

Van Rysdam announced that due to the holiday the July was canceled. He asked McEachean to present on the Northwest Communications Tower Committee's June 21, 2021 meeting at the August RAB meeting. He directed McEachean to present the dollars available, agenda, and opportunity to spend those dollars within the district. He asked Long to provide information about the Park Foundation during his report. He thanked Wes Tucker, Manager, St. Johns Golf course for hosting the site visit on May 27, 2021 and providing additional information relating to the redevelopment of the course and potential disc golf course. Chair stated that the RAB submitted a letter to Chairman Blocker that requested the disc golf development option be added to the BCC agenda and asked Commissioner Waldron if it had been scheduled. Waldron said that it was not

on the June 15 agenda. Van Rysdam to ask BCC Manager to check with Commissioner Blocker to see if he can schedule it on the July 20, 2021 agenda. Chair asked for clarification on the cost of the championship disc golf cost. Bataille stated that the budget was \$450,000 and that amount includes installing baskets, concrete t-pads, signage, benches, boardwalk expansion and mowing. Bataille said that he would speak with Wes to confirm. The chair reminded everyone that the next round of TDC CAT III grant applications would be heard at the November meeting and implored the RAB members to schedule their attendance as voting requires a quorum. He thanked Meyer for the CAT III financials and follow ups on prior tournament financials.

COMMISSIONER REPORT

Commissioner Waldron stated that the BOCC was addressing the TDT 5th cent reallocation at the next board meeting. He mentioned that it will probably result in a little bit more money for recreation since it pulls the beaches from Category III and places it in its own Category (Category V). Waldron revealed that the budget process had started and that compared to years passed everyone on the rec side should be pleased with the direction the board is going and how much growth there will be. Waldron stated that the board would be finalizing the ordinance for LAMP (Land Management Acquisition Program) that can be used for passive recreation if we buy the land and choosing a board at the next meeting. Waldron said that the program had been funded again and that the account was up to about \$1,000,000 to purchase land. Discussion relating to the program and its restrictions and options ensued.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ORCA TDC Category III Grant Application (PXG) Women's Golf Tournaments. Mark Berman, 562 Ponte Vedra Blvd. announced that PXG was the new Title Sponsor and that the tournament had been renamed PXG Women's Match Play Championship. Generation W was collaborating with PXG to celebrate women's initiatives on and off the golf course. Berman recited a list of new sponsors, explained the tournament's purpose and marketing approaches. He stated that the potential economic impact to the area could be \$500-750,000. Dockins asked about if a particular golf bag company would be sponsoring. Berman replied they would not be sponsoring this year due to prior commitments. Chapin asked what role Gen W would be playing and Berman explained that they would host, mentor, network, providing education seminar and entertainment to the players. Chair asked Waldron if it would be wise to use this event as an introduction to Joy Andrews to PXG, Waldron said that it could be. Chair shared that Andrews is the Assistant County Administrator who is in charge of Economic Development. Chair recommended Berman introduce himself to Andrews. He asked how the number of spectators was determined and Berman replied that they divided by days. Discussion relating to the formula and accuracy. Chair asked the status on PGA golf channel involvement and Berman stated that it was unknown at this time. Berman said that they had a streaming golf channel lined up. Chair asked how the marketing dollars would be allocated. Berman stated that digital advertising would receive the largest allocation followed by print advertising in outside markets. Berman stated that his agency would be handling the digital and social advertising. Chair reviewed shared that this request equaled 20% of the total amount of requested Category II funding in FY 22. Meyer mentioned that there are 18 grant applications for FY 22. Chair stated that funding could be separated into seed money not necessarily marketing development. Long stated that the request merited consideration. Chapin agreed but was concerned about the amount. Berman defended the request for \$53,000 stating the women's golf was a big driver in the economic market and provided a lot of exposure to the area. Dockins shared that notwithstanding cost that he thinks the event is unique, novel, something offers diversity, something different and new. Chair asked for a motion. Long replied that he thought something in the range of \$30-35,000 to start and that depending on the results the county could offer stronger funding in the future. Chair shared that is was contingent on

marketing details and economic follow ups. Chair suggested splitting the funding in two: \$16,000 for marketing and \$10,000 for seed money. Chapin concurred. Chapin motioned to grant \$30,000 to the applicant. Long stated that if the County Logo was going to be included in all of the materials and if the event was successful that it would be beneficial to contribute to their success. Commissioner Waldron expressed his concern with the term seed money in reference to the purpose of grant that is marketing. Chair rebutted. Discussion continued. Commissioner Waldron stated that the marketing amount requested is \$20,000 and that we could get Tera Meeks, TDC Director to clarify what criteria meets the marketing requirement. He stated that the RAB could make their recommendation and that the TDC would ultimately decide. Chapin motioned to contribute \$30,000 contingent upon TDC approval, seconded by Long. Motion passed 4/1

Florida/Georgia Pickleball Classic TDC Category III Grant Application. Anthony Cutright, 627 Wandering Woods Way, Ponte Vedra discussed previous tournaments and shared participation numbers and hotel stays. He then reviewed the marketing plan for the current tournament that includes the tournament in Daytona and encourages participants to stay in St. Johns County to and then attend second half of the tournament in St. Johns County. He mentioned working with the Jay Fund to offer a pickleball tournament in December. Cutright discussed the rapid growth of pickleball throughout the state and the many municipalities that continue to add courts. He announced other ways his organization was getting involved with expanding the sport and encouraging good health through exercise. Chair announced that the RAB approved \$6,000 of the \$10,200 request last year. Cutright interjected that there were two tournaments last time and the RAB granted \$6,000 and \$8,000. Chapin asked about capital improvements to build more pickleball courts. Chair interjected that we are looking at under used basketball courts in Veteran's park. Bataille stated that no decision has been made yet. Chair asked Meyer is site fees are waived for this group and Meyer confirm that they are. Chair asked for top line view of \$12,000 to be spent on marketing. Cutright said they offer an "Encouragement Package" which equates to a gift bag. Chair mentioned that Cutright overstated participation numbers and understated length of hotel stays in his report. Chapin motioned to provide an \$8,000 grant, Dockins seconded. Long supports the recommendation. Motion approved 5/0

TDT 5TH Cent Presentation. Teddy Meyer, Recreation Facilities Manager, provided a PowerPoint Presentation and reviewed the Tourist Development Tax presentation provided by Tera Meeks, Tourist Development Director. He stated that the TDC had approved the 5th cent and added an additional category specifically for all things beach related. He provided the suggested allocations and highlighted the changes in each category. Meyer confirmed that beach items contained in Category III were moved to Category V with the exception of beach renourishment which will remain in Category III. Discussion regarding funding grant amounts followed. Meyers announced that the 5th cent increase was on the BCC's June 15 agenda as Item #2 and that a supermajority of four votes was required to pass it. He shared that he, Jamie Baccari and Tera Meeks had been meeting for the last three months as a sports development team in response to the request to look into a sports commission position on the TDC Board. Meyer explained that they had been meeting, identifying patterns of usage on St. Johns County recreational facilities and finding creative ways to use the facilities without disrupting current schedules. He stated that the grant amount had increased \$38,000. Chapin questioned the VCB budget and asked why the county was increasing their budget \$1,000,000, a private entity? Meyer did not have an answer and suggested watching the previous TDC meeting to get a full view of what's going on. Commissioner Waldron stated that 40% has to be paid for advertising and that VCB provides that service. He stated that their contract was up next year and it would be rebid at that time. Long stated that development and tourism should be managed in a way to lessen the impact on local commuting. Waldron said since 2019 the state allows us to use the tax money towards capital improvements. Chair said that there is an ongoing debate related to trying to rebalance the priorities and vision

of the TDC Board with taking care of residents while decisions are being made to bring more people into the community.

STAFF REPORTS

Doug Bataille, Director, Parks and Recreation provided a budget recap and mentioned that the two summaries included in the agenda documents provided the nuts and bolts highlights of the process. Bataille shared infrastructure need to be closely watched. He stated that the department was working with Facilities Maintenance to identify what needs to be replaced and that the budget has grown from \$1.7 million in projects and \$1 million recommended budget to \$6.9 million in projects to a proposed \$2.4 million dollars in the budget. He explained that that left several million dollars in unfunded maintenance needs in the park systems. He explained that the department is working with Facilities Maintenance to look at the entire park system to include improvements to things that haven't been historically included like replacing synthetic turf fields, parking and infrastructure. He mentioned that larger projects would be added as Capital Improvements projects and that we have parks that are pushing thirty to forty years old and as they get aged out things like power, electrical and lighting systems will need to be replaced. Replacement lighting for existing ballfields costs approximately \$250,000. There will be financial challenges in the future as we try to replace the lighting in on over 80 ballfields as they age out. He mentioned the need and cost for adding parks to the system to meet the growing needs of the community. He said that we have over 400 acres of land and about 12 parcels are undeveloped. He shared that there will be some funding available to develop some of the parcels. Bataille mention having the RAB review the Request for Information regarding a public/private partnership document included in the agenda packet with the hopes of moving this forward with the support of County Administration. He mentioned the Silverleaf park property, 40 acres, excellent access, rectangular in shape, being used as a sod farm right now, would cost \$15 million to drop 10-15 athletic fields. Bataille said that the bidding for the development of the Villages Regional Park should be soon and will add 2 softball fields, 2 baseball fields and 1 multipurpose field. He stated that keeping up with the pace of growth was a challenge nationwide and that as residents are added the level of service is affected. He reminded everyone that the new field at Davis Park was under construction and that the fifth field at the soccer complex was in the process of having lighting installed. Bataille stated that it will continue to be a big challenge to meet population growth with athletic facility needs.

Chair questions the payroll portion of the Parks and Recreation budget. Cotter mentioned additional positions added this year and next year. The middle of the year additional positions are being reflected differently in the budget and she is working with Budget to clarify. Bataille mentioned two new positions being added in FY22 budget. Chair requested a reconciliation of the difference in payroll expenses. Discussion continued.

Chair asked the Director about the Nocatee property. Bataille stated that the Nocatee property would be a good option for an RFI for a public/private partnership. The partnership would enable a private entity to develop a facility on County owned property. The County would facilitate a lease and rent payment or percentage of revenue as well as perhaps, certain weekends for the County to host large events. He explained that the RFI is a creative way to develop parks. Chair asked about the community app. Bataille said that it was an automated system for work orders and inspections. The app streamlines the internal work orders, inspections and facilities maintenance work orders. The downloadable app has an option to add a citizen's option with GPS tracking that helps locate the problem. The app identifies duplicate requests and provides the status of the work order or inspection.

Chair wanted to discuss Community vs. Regional parks. He directed the RAB members to review the handout provided by Jamie Baccari, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director and be prepared to review and ask questions at August meeting. Bataille stated that the handout came directly from the Comprehensive Plan. Chapin announced her support of public/private partnerships and asked what was different about the Amphitheatre's private/public partnerships and the proposed partnerships with Parks and Recreation. Bataille stated that Parks and Recreation's agreement would include the development of a parcel and lease whereas the Amphitheatre was a sponsorship opportunity of sorts. Chair stated it was more naming and sponsorship for Amphitheatre. Dockins asked about reaching out to FPL to replace lights. Bataille did not think that FPL would be willing to replace athletic facility lights as it was more of a commercial model and not a residential model. He said that staff would look into it. Chapin stated that she thinks FPL would work with us to give us a discount. Bataille said that the athletic lights and poles would be replaced as they wore out.

BOARD REPORTS

Long reviewed last month's Park Foundation meeting. He shared that the officer positions had been filled, and that he was working with legal counsel to finalize and submit the necessary documentation to become a registered not-for-profit organization. Bataille stated that the Park Foundation Board members would ask the Board of County Commissioners for funding. Chair asked for clarification on the process. Waldron explained that this type of funding would come from general funds if approved.

Motion to adjourn by Chapin, seconded by Long. 5/0