



St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Parks & Recreation Department

Recreation Advisory Board Meeting Minutes - April 8, 2021

Chairman Van Rysdam called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

Physically Present: Casey Van Rysdam, Chair, Harold Dockins, Deb Chapin, Brad Long (1:35 pm) Jillian McNiff-Villemaire and Marty McEachean attended via telephone. Bert Watson was absent.

Also physically present: Commissioner Paul Waldron, Doug Bataille, Director; Jamie Baccari, Assistant Director; Managers: Stacia Cotter, Teddy Meyer, Sydney Lindblad; Diane Gorski, Project Specialist. Paul Abbatinozzi, School Board Representative attended via telephone.

Chair called for public comments. There were none.

The Chair reminded everyone that a physical quorum is required to vote and call in members can only vote when there is a quorum. He requested clarification on the transfer of Impact Fees. Commissioner Waldron confirmed that it was possible to transfer Impact Fees from one zone to another if the zones bordered each other and if the project would have a meaningful impact county wide. He said that the Board of County Commissioners would decide if a request meets the criteria. Boat ramps and Regional Parks were given as examples of how a transfer might occur.

Commissioner Waldron stated that the beaches and parks are all open in St. Johns County and that the beaches would have Life Guards starting Memorial Day weekend. He reminded everyone that the FY22 Budget process had started and asked staff to provide a Budget Calendar to the RAB.

Abbatinozzi announced that the 4th and final quarter of the school year was starting and that this past year and had been the most unique of his 31 year career. School Board was starting to look into camp facility use this summer that will need to be compressed due to the short time between the end of and start of the school year. They will be looking into what programs or public usage will be possible this summer. The school system is continuing their commitment to follow Covid-19 protocols and manage capacity. They will be waiting to see if there are any legislative changes that may have to be adopted. A brief discussion related to public school availability for community use and school availability occurred.

Chair asked for a motion to approve the February and March meeting minutes. Dockins motioned, Chapin seconded. 6/0

Chair announced that the RAB annual report was due into the Board of County Commissioners in May. He explained that the report must include the Mission Statement at the top of the page, past year accomplishments & current year expectations which have been provided via report and that a summary budget that Stacia can provide. Add budget piece and narrative and submit. Consensus to move forward for May submittal.

Adam Rogers, American Junior Golf Association (AJGA) discussed three requests for TDC

Category 3 Grant funding for FY21 and FY22 to assist with these tournaments they hold to help raise funds to cover golf scholarships. Brief discussion regarding the purpose of the organization and actual grant requests. Chair asked the members if there were questions. Chapin asked if they had provided an ROI to show impact to the County. Rogers stated that the AFGA would provide an economic fulfillment report. Dockins confirmed that AJGA utilized volunteers. Chair reviewed the request for FY21, event for \$7,500 and FY22, one event for \$7,500 and another later in the year for \$12,500. Long motioned to approve the request. McNiff-Villemaire asked about the FY22 requests. TDC approves or declines the requests so RAB approval can be contingent upon TDC approval. Commissioner Waldron asked why the second FY22 request was \$5,000 more. AJGA explained that the money would be used for caddies and new bibs and that the St. Johns County logo would be on the caddy bibs. Chapin made another motion to approve \$7,500 for FY21 and \$7,500 for FY 22 with the \$12,500 request contingent on the review of the FY21 and FY22 tournament activities. Long agreed to withdraw his motion. Dockins seconded Chapin's motion. 6/0

Angel Natal, Perfect Game (PG) explained that tournaments in St. Johns County are sought after and that their registration for these events continues to grow. He spoke about previous tournaments held in St. Johns County. PG was requesting \$7,500 for two tournament events which will help cover operational and umpire fees. Discussion about the application ensued. Meyer confirmed that the operational fees cover field rental and maintenance over time. Chair asked if we had documentation for prior events and PG and Meyer confirmed that this data was available and would be provided. Natal stated that PG would be able to provide ROI 14 days post event to the County. Long asked for the out-of-town registration percentage and Natal stated around 60%. Dockins questioned the insurance coverage and asked if property coverage was included. PG stated that their coverage was higher than required. Meyer confirmed the insurance was standard and that PG was responsible for covering injury or damage during event. Van Rysdam asked when insurance coverage requirements were determined and updated by and for the County. Meyer discussed coverage nationally. Bataille explained that Risk Management worked with the department to ensure proper coverage. McEachean asked for the ratio of participants and Natal answered 60% visitors/40% local. Motion by McEachean to approve both requests for \$7,500 for the October and November events. Chapin made another motion to approve both requests for \$7,500. Dockins seconded. Motion approved 6/0. Chair asked for last year's information.

Bataille stated the renovation for the golf course was scheduled on the 4/20/2021 Board of County Commission agenda for discussion and that it would include a full funding as well as some alternatives for use other than selling the 9-holes.

Tucker gave an overview of the FY20 financials and rounds of golf played and FY22 year to date financials. He announced a 14.78% increase in play so far this year and an increase in revenue of over 15.97%. The Chair asked what the sustainability of growth rates was compared to national trends. Tucker stated that St. Johns County was in line with other clubs in the region and that sustainability was something that the industry and each course has to work on. He mentioned that St. Johns Golf Club was working very hard on this with their growth of the game initiatives. He said that beginner clinics are being offered three times a week and that we worked with the First Tee regularly. St. Johns also offers women's clinics three times a week. Conversation regarding usage of the golf course and confirmation that more families, women and children were playing golf this year followed. Tucker explained that the pandemic affected tournament play but anticipated an increase in the future. He mentioned that tournaments had little effect on the course budget. He also mentioned that the course no longer offered summer passes but that annual passes were still available. McEachean asked about First Tee programs. Tucker stated that

children ages 6-18 were able to enroll and that they are operating in three counties and most schools. Van Rysdam reminded everyone of the 5/27/2021 Golf Course site visit at 4 PM.

Waldron asked Tucker which awards he had received this year and Tucker replied North Florida PGA Chapter 21 Professional of the Year Patriot Leader of the Year and Public Golf Merchandiser of the Year.

Bataille explained that the Board of County Commissioners had directed Administration to come up with alternate uses for the 9-hole golf course. He provided a quick history of the golf course. He pointed out that maintaining a disc golf course was inexpensive and that it was a fast growing sport and very popular. He brought up the public meeting he attended with Tucker and Commissioner Waldron and said that the residents seem supportive of this as an option. He described visit to New World Disc Golf Course in Jacksonville that he and staff had toured with the owner who gave them feedback on the business model and potential for building a sports tourism venue, a destination disc golf course utilizing the extra acreage in a positive way emphasizing the potential for revenue.

Sean Buyer St Augustine Disc Golf President offered his support to the new course. He shared that there are 64 members and growing.

Chuck Horton addressed the Board and shared that he is looking forward to another disc golf course in St. Johns County and that the golf club property would allow for a world class course and bring players from all over to the County.

Bataille said that if BOCC approves golf course renovation, the golf club would be closed for 10 months. The disc golf course could be built prior to the renovation which would allow the course to remain open. Bataille explained that building a disc golf course would not require the golf course being shut down and that there would be new mowing patterns and other improvements for around 100k for a basic course. \$400,000.00 would give the County an elite level course. Disc Golf is revenue positive and it is the fastest growing sport in the Country right now. Disc Golf is inexpensive to play and operations costs are low. A high end course would be a place for people to compete nationally. Van Rysdam asked for confirmation that the County could start building a course tomorrow as it's not connected to the strategy of redeveloping golf course. Waldron clarified that the BOCC would have to vote to release the money from another source. Van Rysdam said that he wants wider community feedback to be considered to make sure that it's in line with other recreation opportunities. He also said that he wants staff to provide the RAB with an operating budget to submission to the BOCC.

Bataille shared that the Jacksonville Disc Golf course charges \$6 to play and \$10 to rent cart and that St. John County fees would be in that range. If a basic course is built operational costs would come from the general maintenance operations fund. RAB members voiced their support of the project.

Staff reports

Doug Bataille, Director:

- Director position will be advertised this Friday on the County Website and there will also be a Professional Job Search through the Florida Recreation and Parks Association website that will be open for at least 30 days.
- Park Foundation meeting April 26. Startup funding and transition plan proposal are included in the FY22 budget request. Jamie Baccari will take the lead upon his retirement.

Chair interjected about getting together for agenda development and reminded everyone of the 4/22 site visit to Veteran's Park and 5/27 site visit to the golf course. Both visits start at 4 pm. Staff will contact FESA to make sure they are present at Veteran's. Long congratulated Bataille on his retirement and wished him well.

Jamie Baccari, Assistant Director:

- Davis Park expansion contract in legal. Once signed, communication with contractor will open up and a timeline for the project will be provided.
- Davis Park replacement turf project came in under budget. Staff is working with Facilities Maintenance to identify unfunded projects that can be completed with the left over monies.
- Butler East parking and landscaping are completed, however the bathrooms are not finished so a portion of the parking lot remains closed.
- Vilano Beach Park Design Company has been chosen and Staff is waiting for them to provide a cost package.
- Vilano dredge project came in over bid which was expected due to having found arsenic in the sand. Staff will go to the St. Augustine Port, Waterways and Beaches to request additional funding.
- Treaty Park sports light replacement has been fully funded.

Stacia Cotter, Business Manager:

- Quarter 2 Parks and Recreation Operations review.
- Strategic Dashboard will be updated annually. An update will be provided bi-annually. Cotter stated that she would provide an update next month.

Van Rysdam asked about parking fees at pier. Waldron said no discussion planned. Parking at pier is challenging due to the city allowing businesses to build and open without adequate parking.

Chapin asked for shuttle schedules. Lindblad stated shuttles offered Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends at Micklers Beach and St. Augustine Beach. Lindblad provided the information.

Sydney Lindblad, Natural Resources Manager:

- Reviewed the SJSO and COSAB Police spring break data sheet in packet. Attendance, tolls, incidents identified by SJSO and COSAB Police Beach all increased.
- Currently there are specific locations that are 4-wheel drive only due to soft sand. The Reach the Beach App updates beach and driving conditions regularly.

Meeting adjourned.