



# St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Parks & Recreation Department

## RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes – Wednesday February 9, 2021

Board Members Present: Casey Van Rysdam, Chair; Brad Long, Vice Chair; Harold Dockins, Marty McEachean, Bill Bowen, and Lauren Watkins

Board Members Absent: Deb Chapin

Also Present: Commissioner Paul Waldron; Deputy County Administrator Sarah Taylor; Parks & Recreation Director Ryan Kane, Assistant Director Jamie Baccari, Recreation Facilities Manager Teddy Meyer, Project Specialist Diane Gorski

Chair called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM and asked for a motion to approve the January meeting minutes. Motion by Long, seconded by Dockins. Approved 6/0.

There were no public comments.

Chair asked staff for updates on Shore Drive grant and Kane answered that there was nothing new to report. He asked for an update on the Nocatee Sports Park RFI and Baccari explained that with the recent reallocation of funding an RFQ would be forthcoming for the design of this project and others. Chair asked who and why decisions relating to park development are made. Kane said that this discussion would be added to a future RAB meeting. Chair asked if residual TDC dollars not spent on Category III would be spent on nets, fences and general repairs. Meyer explained that these funds could be used for facilities that host events if available. The Chair and Meyer exchanged information related to Category III TDC funding.

Deputy County Administrator Taylor announced that departments were drafting their budgets to present to OMB for review starting in March in preparation for the Admin hearings in March.

Commissioner Waldron stated that the possibility of a sales tax will be discussed at the next Board of County Commissioners meeting. He said that some constructions were behind schedule due to the lack of workers and supplies. He said the Vilano Boat Ramp was getting done and that the Golf Course remodel was underway.

Abbatonozzi announced the upcoming spring sports season. He mentioned the progress on the New High School and employee hiring. He said that St. Johns County would not be impacted by School Choice because there was no secondary school with capacity. He explained that new schools are not included in the capacity program for the first few years. He said that he would update the RAB with summer facility availability to the public as the details were finalized. Brief conversation clarifying that High Schools were included in this program because of the amenities and summer staffing.

Meyer provided background for the Sports Fishing Tournament group who then provided a presentation via Zoom. A discussion regarding space, impacts, funding, marketing, graphics and media followed. It was agreed that the RAB was not prepared to make a funding allocation for the festival portion of the request and that the group should request festival funding through the TDC next cycle. Van Rysdam made a motion to allocate \$20,000 - \$10,000 for site fees and \$10,000 for marketing, seconded by Long and approved 6/0.

Meyer introduced the Florida Invitational Rugby Showcase Group who proceeded to give an overview of the organization and details about the event. Discussion relating to the event, impacts, and marketing, diversity and future opportunities followed. The group was excited to share their deal with the Rugby Organization, and the rough draft of their commercial for the nationally televised rugby network, social media and other forms of media. Discussion ensued. Dockins motioned to allocate \$10,000 to the event, seconded by Long, approved 6/0.

Meyer provided some history on Perfect Game tournaments held in St. Johns County. He introduced Tony Von Dolteran who answered questions from the RAB relating to the Battle at the Beach and Sunshine State Championship applications and events. Long made a motion to allocate \$12,500 to the Battle at the Beach Tournament that was seconded by Dockins and approved 6/0. Long made a motion to allocate \$8,000 to the Sunshine Championship Tournament that was seconded by McEachean and approved 6/0. Board discussion on the importance of providing accurate financial information on the TDC CAT III Applications.

Meyer gave a quick overview of the Old School Kingfish Shootout event to be held at the Vilano Beach Pier. He introduced Lauren and Paul,

the event organizers. Paul addressed the RAB, shared that he was the Vice President of the Blue Marlin group in St. Augustine and added his opinion on the Bluewater event that was discussed earlier in the meeting. He went on to provide the history of the Kingfish event and plans for this year's event. The chair questioned the number of competitors listed on the application and explained that the number was intended for an actual person count. He asked for clarification of the data on the application. Lauren shared the marketing plan that included a drone and live feed. Dockins made a motion to allocate \$20,000 that failed for lack of a second. Long motioned to grant \$12,500 to the event, seconded by Dockins and approved 6/0.

Chair introduced the three requests for beach access on Easter morning. Baccari explained that these Major Impact Special Events needed to be reviewed by the RAB and if approved, their recommendation for approval would be given to the Board of County Commissioners. These Easter Sunday sunrise services have been an annual event for many years and staff had made the decision to approve, however, policy dictates vetting and recommendation from the RAB. The requests meet all County and Beach Code requirements and have arranged coordination with the SJSO. The Beaches and Natural Resources staff will coordinate with each Church and ensure that the events are successful. Motion by McEachean, seconded by Long and approved 6/0.

Baccari gave an update on the Dashboard information. Chair asked for clarification. Kane explained that the Parks and Recreation expense budget does not align with the revenue budget. The expense budget is designed to maximize, utilize and go the full end of service to be provided. The revenues are typically conservative and expenses are designed around the highest capacity. Chair asked about the number of participants and how they are counted. Baccari explained that someone was counted for each program they registered for with the exception of afterschool programs that are done in quarters. Chair asked for ratio to population. Baccari replied that the department reaches less than 1% are impacted. Additional staff and community centers would be needed to provide more programming. Chair asked why the department could not use public school facilities and Baccari explained that schools do not support the use of indoor facilities and staffing continues to be an issue. The department leases Ketterlinus so its use is different than other school facilities. Discussion relating to services and programming provided ensued.

Meyer provided an overview of the required post event reporting by the TDC. Chair wants to know how many actual vs. estimated hotel nights occurred. There was a discussion on the expectations, formatting and information desired for review by the RAB. Taylor mentioned the stay to play requirement where a % of participants must stay in the organizations reserved hotels and are given a discount.

Meyer explained that the scoring sheets were worksheets only and not required documentation. The Chair explained that the sheets were used to force the RAB members to think about the applications. Watkins covered the changes and edits to the scoring sheet. The RAB members discussed the changes at great length. Chair said that he felt staff should do a better job vetting the applications so that there are no errors. Baccari suggested requiring the application is accurate and complete and adding that to the worksheet. Chair requested a check box be added for staff to sign off on that ensures facilities requested are available. Watkins said that she would redraft the recommendations and incorporate them into a new document and present it to the members at the next RAB meeting. Kane explained that staff was working with the partners to set schedules and set aside specific dates for availability of athletic facilities for tournaments. Dockins left the meeting.

Meyer provided an overview of the Youth Sports partnership review. Staff suggests having partners present annually during the summer months and give an update on their participation, programming, demographics and goals. McEachean stated the he thinks partnership should have community benefits and investment in facilities that can be measured. Kane stated that a rubric would be provided so that the expectations are known and groups are given the opportunity to meet the criteria. Chair asked to revisit the fee schedule. Kane offered for staff to create a check list to the RAB for input. McEachean asked if additional partners will be added. He said he believes there is not enough green space. Chair stated that a partnership request would need to be vetted by the RAB.

Kane explained that the special event permits were added to the agenda so that they were in sync with how the beach code policy is written. He said that staff would be evaluating the code to determine the best path to move forward. He mentioned the youth sports partner meeting and exchange of ideas. He mentioned that staff was in the process of identifying public space availability. He shared that the paving project was underway at Vilano Landing Boat Ramp and that the Surfside Pavilion had been replaced using the Deferred Maintenance Program. He shared that the bid proposal for turf field replacement at Veterans Park and Gamble Middle School would be going out soon with the hope that the work will be completed this summer. He said that the three (3) big regional parks: Northwest Park(Greenbriar), Silverleaf/Shearwater Parks and Nocatee Regional Park will be going out to RFQ (Request for Qualifications) for design teams and the selection team includes three (3) Parks and Recreation staff members. He said the design group will hold public meetings to obtain input before designing the parks.

Long shared that the next Park Foundation meeting was Tuesday and they hoped to finalize the Director Job Description at that time.

McEachean shared that he toured locations with Jaya from the Visitor Convention Center to establish tournament locations and that he would like to present ideas at the March meeting.

Motion to adjourn by Long, seconded by Bowen and approved 5/0.