



St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Parks & Recreation Department

RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes – April, 2020

3:00 PM – St. Johns BCC Auditorium

500 San Sebastian View | Saint Augustine | FL 32084

Present: Chair Casey Van Rysdam, Commissioner Paul Waldron, Doug Bataille Parks and Recreation Director, Emily Howington, Recording Secretary, Sydney Lindblad, Natural Resources Manager

Present via Conference Call: Vice Chair Dr. Jillian McNiff-Villemaire, Bert Watson, Bo Brown, Brad Long, Deb Chapin, Paul Abbatinuzzi SJC School Board. Teddy Meyer, Rec Facilities Supervisor

Chair Casey Van Rysdam stated the county's Covid-19 pandemic procedures and strategies to holding meetings with members, staff, and the public who participate remotely.

A roll call of board members and county staff on conference call followed.

The meeting was called to order at 11:02 am. The first agenda item was to review the March minutes which were approved with a consensus.

Chair then called for public comment regarding non-agenda items. There were none.

Sydney Lindblad provided a TDC Sports Marketing update. The TDC was budgeted for \$189,300 for this fiscal year of which \$112,500 had been committed.

A decrease in local state revenue such as tourism tax occurred due to Covid-19.

Remaining funds will be swept into a reserve to keep the budget intact. All grant applications for the rest of the fiscal year are frozen.

Events scheduled before the fiscal year ended (Sept. 30th 2020) that had to be postponed due to Covid-19 are still eligible for reimbursement.

Events scheduled after the Sept. 30th deadline are not be eligible for reimbursement.

The board addressed cancellation of RAB May meeting due to the Covid-19 precautions.

The April 30th meeting stood in place of the May meeting, the June meeting remains in effect.

RAB will to confer its mission statement and annual report at the June meeting.

Board members were asked to review the BCC calendar for available dates to visit various parks for unofficial meetings. Vice Chair Dr. Jillian McNiff-Villemaire asked if gathering at an offsite location would they be unable to conduct a regular meeting.

Chair stated offsite board meetings were previously held but Sunshine law must be followed.

Director Bataille responded it would be educational for the board to meet staff and view parks sites and maintenance procedures. Al Guido advised these meetings be scheduled as workshops, therefore would not require a quorum, agenda, or public comment.



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Commissioner Waldron thanked the board members and staff for phoning in the meeting. He stated that the partial reopening of the beaches had gone well and there would likely be a policy update the next day Friday, 5/1/2020. Mr. Waldron said that many businesses would be opening back up Monday 5/4/2020 as per Gov. DeSantis orders.

Next was the approval to rename Plantation Park Synthetic Turf Field to Keith Martin Field. RAB was asked by BCC to hold this interim meeting to vote on the matter. Mr. Bataille gave a brief history on the item, the original request was to rename Field of Dreams Keith Martin field by a group of citizens involved in youth athletics. Creeks Athletics responded others preferred to keep the name Field of Dreams. The RAB then asked for the two groups to meet and discuss an agreeable alternative. Joy Andrews, Asst. County Administrator facilitated a conference call between the groups. The consensus was to instead rename Plantation Park Synthetic Turf Field to Keith Martin Field due to Mr. Martin's involvement in Middle School Sports.

Public comment on the item included a call-in from Kim Kendall who presented the original item, thanking Joy Andrews, Doug Bataille, and the Recreation Advisory Board.

Bo Browne asked for clarification on the naming policy and which field would be renamed. Mr. responded that the 1 year policy was waived and that the Synthetic Turf Field would be renamed Keith Martin Field.

Chair called for a motion. Deb Chapin made the motion and Bert Watson seconded. The motion was passed unanimously. A letter from the board in support of the motion was provided to the BCC for their May 5th 2020 consent agenda.

New Business included Beach Project Updates by Ms. Lindblad, as of the 4/30/2020 meeting the SJC Beaches were open from 6 am to 12 noon daily for physical activity only. SJC asks that beach visitors continue to follow the CDC social distancing guidelines. The 2020 beach parking passes will be valid for the year 2021 as well.

Teddy Meyer provided Contraction Project/Deferred Maintenance Updates, including the sports facilities at Plantation Park, Gamble Rogers, and Davis Park ADA sidewalks located by the baseball fields. The list of completed projects is available on the Parks and Recreation website.

Mr. Bataille discussed the Armstrong Park redesign that intended to shift the playground to the front of the park for easy access, instead will be next to the pavilion to save the empty green space for potential community sports and events. A concrete slab had been poured in the first suggested location which was later removed.

Chair inquired on prioritizing deferred maintenance projects to best utilize Parks and Recreation reserve fund as the county's economy is further affected by covid-19. Commissioner Waldron anticipated the county was waiting to observe the income considering the decrease in sales tax revenue. A process for budget preparation will begin in May.



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Chair questioned whether to reprioritize deferred maintenance projects. Mr. Bataille stated Parks and Recreation works closely with Facility Maintenance and can revisit projecting cost and prioritize by available funding.

Ms. Chapin asked about social distancing on the beaches. Ms. Lindblad responded that the Sheriff's Office and City of St. Augustine Beach Police reports state that everyone at the beach was following CDC guidelines and utilizing the beach for only physical activities. Chapin asked where citizens can access updated information. Lindblad stated the county's main, Parks and Recreation, and Beaches websites and social media accounts are updated regularly.

Chapin also asked about employees temporarily laid off due to covid-19. Director Bataille stated any Parks and Recreation employee home due to either age or preexisting conditions was covered by sick and annual leave as well as federal guidelines. Commissioner Waldron noted several employees were reallocated to work other areas of the county, no county employees had been laid off or furloughed.

Mr. Bataille provided Golf Course updates, which is open and following CDC guidelines. County workers from other facilities replaced the staffing workers over 65 who chose to remain home. Number of course players were down about 5% from average.

Mr. Bataille addressed the Unanticipated Revenue and F.I.N.D. Grant items to be on the BCC agenda May 5th. The first, a donation from Ponte Vedra Baseball to replace the chain link fence at Davis Park and one from Creeks Softball for sod replacement in Aberdeen Park. The FIND Grant refers to the Vilano Dredging project and the match funding. Commissioner Waldron thanked Ponte Vedra Baseball and Creeks Softball for their donation in this time of need.

Mr. Bataille said a draft Public/Private Partnership plan was included in the agenda package with a Sponsorship/Memorial proposal for discussion next month. He also complimented county staff for their flexibility in working different locations and creative program solutions. An example was Park Naturalist Kelly Ussia, and the "Kelly and Auggie" virtual education program on the Parks and Recreation Facebook page, which had participant/viewer increase of about 400%.

Messrs. Bataille and Watson wrote draft documents for the Parks Foundation which await review by the County Attorney's office. The department has updated SOPs for the Maintenance Department. Mr. Bataille addressed food trucks parked illegally on county property and stated forming a new RFP's could be beneficial to residents under certain conditions and would also promote local small businesses. Opportunities for an outfitter in locations such as Nocatee Landing Kayak Launch was discussed.

Paul Abbatinuzzi, School Board Rep. stating the schools were still closed and utilizing virtual learning while awaiting guidance to open their facilities for community usage. After final roll call Chair Van Rysdam thanked the county technical staff for their assistance in broadcasting the meeting. Bert made the motion to adjourn, seconded by several board members.

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 pm.