



## St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Parks & Recreation Department

### RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

County Auditorium | 1:30 PM | Wednesday, May 11, 2022

Chair called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Members Present: Casey Van Rysdam, Brad Long, Bill Bowen, Marty McEachean

RAB member Deb Chapin arrived at 1:34 p.m. after the approval of the minutes.

Members Absent: Dockins and Watkins

Also Present: Commissioner Paul Waldron; Assistant County Administrator Sarah Taylor

Staff Present: Director Ryan Kane, Assistant Director Jamie Baccari; Recreation Facilities Manager Teddy Meyer; Natural Resources Program Manager Sydney Lindblad; Project Specialist Diane Gorski

Motion by Long, seconded by McEachean to approve the April minutes. Motion passed 4/0.

Chair asked Jamie Baccari, Assistant Director if she had any updates as she had to leave for a meeting. She shared that the Parks and Recreation Department would be celebrating 50 years of service and that there would be Proclamation read at the June 21<sup>st</sup> Board of County Commissioners meeting. She stated that staff was preparing programming for the months of June, July and August specific to recognizing the 50 year milestone.

Chair called for Public Comments for non-agenda items reminding all of the 3 minutes per speaker policy.

Noreen Rice, 3 month resident of St. Augustine, stated that she and her husband John were originally from Annapolis, Maryland. She shared their passion for professional level croquet and requested to be placed on the July Recreation Advisory Board to present their request for the county to provide the acreage and build a professional croquet facility for them to develop a croquet program. She introduced Ron Huxtable from the Hammock Dunes Croquet Facility. Chair asked staff to add Mrs. Rice to the July agenda.

Commissioner Waldron shared that the county has received approximately 61 million dollars in funding from the Army Corps of Engineers for the Vilano Beach repair and sand renourishment project. He reminded everyone of the Budget Hearings May 23-25, 2022 and that Recreation was scheduled for May 24. He mentioned the Disc Golf course Design and artificial turf replacement for Gamble Rogers and Veterans Park were scheduled on the Consent Agenda for the Board of County Commissioners meeting on May 17. He stated that the county golf course revamp was progressing nicely and that the county is in the process of selling the old golf carts.

The Chair shared that Paul Abbatinuzzi, School Board liaison, would be providing staff with a summer use flyer in the next of couple of weeks and that the RAB members would be receiving a copy.

Kane asked the St. Johns Golf staff to introduce themselves and share a little about themselves.

Tommy Aycock stated that he was married with two cats and has spent the majority of his life in NE Florida. He said that he is the Head Golf Professional for the golf course and is a graduate of NE FL University with a degree in Marketing. He has worked at the golf course for 9 years and is active in the PGA of America and is the Community Outreach Chairman. He mentioned his involvement in the current six week golf clinic for retired veterans in Jacksonville Beach. He stated that he was looking forward to the re-opening of the golf course and the tournaments, clinics and lessons.

Bea Mauricio, Assistant Golf Professional shared that she was originally from Barcelona, Spain and that she came to the United States in 2010 on a Golf Scholarship from Emery Riddle where she obtained a degree in Business Administration in with a minor in Air Traffic Control. She stated that she was married and had a little boy. She mentioned that she was looking forward giving back to the community and that she was super excited for the re-opening of the golf course and the tournaments and providing clinics and lessons. She stated that staff would be actively involved in First Tee programs.

Anthony Baur, Golf Course Superintendent for the last 8 years shared that he was born in Detroit, Michigan and his family moved to Zephyr Hills, FL when he was 10 years old. He said that he has been working on golf courses since he was 16 years old. He was able to do two golf club internships while in college. He has experience in small and large courses and became a

Golf Course Supervisor at age 25. He shared that he is married with a son and daughter and that they live on the river in St. Johns County and have been residents for 5 ½ years. Baur said that he is excited for the newly renovated golf course to open.

Meyer provided an overview of the Jacksonville, FC Labor Day Shootout TDC Cat III Grant Application and introduced Pat Cannon, JFC Executive Director who provided background and statistics for the organization, tournament history and tournament details to the Board. Discussion relating to the participation, growth, programming and impact of this type of tournament has to St. Johns County ensured. Chair requested additional marketing information. Cannon assured the Board that St. Johns County would be highlighted and local hotels and businesses would be promoted. Chapin asked if Labor Day was a good time for a tournament and Meyer ensured that it was and that the VCB supported it. Chair stated that staff needed to better vet the applications to ensure that they are filled out correctly and the numbers add up. Meyers responded that revisions to the application would meet that goal. Bowen stated that there was more income than expense, he suggested that the grant money was to help the club who ultimately help the community. Meyer explained that site fees, marketing, operations were the intended use for the grant money. Motion by Long to award \$7,500 to this applicant, seconded by McEachean. Motion approved 5/0.

The Importance & Economic Impact of Sports in SJC PowerPoint Presentation by Marty McEachean, Recreation Advisory Board Member, CEO/Owner of McEachean Enterprises and McEachean Family Foundation. He provided examples of sports revenue streams. He shared his vision to make St. Johns County a destination using data gathered from the addition of the Jaguars football team in Jacksonville, Sports Tourism and the development of national caliber sports arenas and Sports Foundations in Orlando and Charlotte. Chair asked about public financing for privately controlled facilities. Public/Private Partnership options were debated. Discussion ensued. Chair explained that the RAB generally follows the TDC guidelines and that this discussion should be had with them. McEachean stated that he would follow up on that. Chapin asked about the Players Championship impact. Commission Waldron replied the tournament provided a substantial economic impact. She offered her thoughts that having four Players size tournaments a year versus many tournaments with lesser impacts year round be considered as they would have less impact to the facilities and residents and volunteered to be involved in the process. Waldron mentioned the negative economic impacts on cities when major/minor leagues pull out or the economy slows. Kane announced that leadership has approved a sizable portion of TDC dollars be used on recreation improvements and enhancements. He suggested looking into other counties that have successful Sports Tourism Programs such as Panama City and Seminole County. He mentioned the development of four regional parks and the budget request for a Special Event Coordinator to work with Teddy and the TDC. Meyer said that the department has purchased a subscription to Huddle Up, an application that helps match facilities with tournaments and that once St. Johns County Parks & Recreation inventory has been added, it will be a useful tool in engaging events that will provide positive economic impacts.

Chair reviewed the purpose of discussing updating the TDC Category III Grant Application and previous Scoring Sheet revision exercise. He stated that there are three perspectives to the revision: 1.) The process itself whether it be creation of an electronic version or web portal; staffs role in vetting and editing prior to submission ensuring accuracy, facility availability and adding a reviewed by staff signature line 2.) The application itself, first draft provided herein 3.) Post event score sheet referring to KPI, dates etcetera. He asked each Board Member to weigh in on what they wanted to see and change on the application. Long supported developing an electronic application with access for the entire process. He wanted to see more auditing and vetting for accuracy of the application by staff. He would like clearer and more concise information from the applicant such as the number of people being brought into the county and the ratio of dollars being spent per person. Create some type of calculation to help make funding decisions. He stated that having county representation on marketing materials was important and that the effect of the event on the residents of the community should also be factored in. McEachean agreed with Longs view on technology. He supports rewarding organizations that can prove they have a positive economic impact on the county. Chair suggests maintaining all data so that event history can be reviewed. Chapin also supports the use of technology for the application and process. She would like the Parks & Recreation staff to vet the organizations before accepting applications. She wants members to attend events and ask questions of the attendees, participants and organizations. She would like to create partnerships. She agrees with more stringent auditing. Bowen also supports technology for application and follow up. Chair wants staff to sign off on ensuring that there are no conflicts with local groups or facility location, infrastructure and capacity. Meyer explained that we obtain data from the VCB and that the ADR may be able to be provided to the RAB annually. He offered some scenarios for revisions. Chair wants a standardized template for the applicants marketing program that ties to section 2 B. He shares that he would like to see the County partner with events in their marketing plans. He suggests the applicants meeting with the VCB prior to submitting the application. Chair wants the template for the marketing plan to be directional. Staff to rework the draft application, include a template for their marketing plan for St. Johns County and provide

it to the RAB for further discussion at the June meeting. Waldron suggests guidelines in the template and application to ensure accuracy as well as including St. Johns County (County, TDC, Chamber or the like) links in their branding and a county designed ad for live feeds. Discussion continued. Staff to rework the draft application with a Q&A section, create a marketing template, post event application and instruction sheet and provide it to the RAB for further discussion at the June meeting.

Sydney Lindblad, Natural Resources Programs Manager provided an update on Beach Services Operations. She stated that beach toll revenues from Thanksgiving to present is \$677,000. Revenues are the highest they've ever been. There is no slow time at the beach. Attendance is at record numbers. Discussion relating to expenses vs. revenues followed. Lindblad gave an update on turtle nesting season with 20 nests so far. She shared that Leatherback Turtle nests were counted biannually and that there are currently 5. She provided information on upcoming Special Events. She announced that the Beaches Division will offer holiday beach shuttles Memorial Day weekends at Mickler's in Ponte Vedra Beach and City Hall in the City of St. Augustine Beach. She said that 70 walkovers have been replaced with recyclable materials. She mentioned the current storm system moving towards St. Augustine that may cause vehicle beach access issues, tidal flooding and erosion over the next few days. She gave an update on Pier Operations stating that sales were over last year's sales during the same time frame. She said that inventory has had to be increased due to need as well as increased ticket sales for pier access. Discussion relating to beach capacity and closures followed. It was noted that lifeguards were staffed through the Sheriff's Office. Chapin questioned whether having vendors at Mickler's Landing Beachfront Park would be better than visitors lugging their goods and Lindblad responded that the Park Ordinance does not permit vendors to operate on public property. Chair asked for another beach update during the October RAB meeting.

Kane provided a summary of parks project updates. Turnbull Park is out to bid. Rivertown II Sports Lighting will be installed this June and the artificial turf field replacement at Gamble and Veterans are scheduled for this summer. The Twin Creeks developer is in the process of building 4 multipurpose fields and the department is creating a CIP for FY23 to build restrooms and a parking lot to complete the facility. A Design Firm is in negotiations for building the four regional parks. Flagler Estates Community Center construction is ongoing. The Disc Golf Course design team has been selected and negotiations are underway. Kane explained that he was working on a strategic plan with the Chair. He spoke to the department wide meeting that will result in short and long term goals for the department. He provided the Bend, Oregon strategic plan as a model. Chair spoke to the Recreation Master Plan that had been completed in February of 2019 as being a good foundation moving forward. McEachean gave kudos to Kane for involving and listening to staff. Kane provided the Shore Drive Trail budget and explained that we were still waiting for the grant contract before moving forward. He provided a tentative timeline for the project. Kane said that staff was evaluating conservation areas for a potential BMX biking trail location.

Long provided a Park Foundation update. He mentioned that they are still waiting on the IRS 501(c)3 designation and once that is received they will set up a bank account and actively look for an Executive Director and additional Board Members.

Bowen announced that the Disc Golf Club was having a tournament at the end of the month. He shared his belief that once the new course was built the economic impact would be felt. He said that National Tournaments will put "heads in beds". He said that the newly built Aragon Park Disc Golf course located in St. Augustine Shores, was being heavily utilized by young and old and suggested the department consider placing these in neighborhood parks.

Motion by Long, seconded by Bowen to adjourn. Approved 5/0. Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.