



St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Parks & Recreation Department

RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, July 13, 2022

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

RAB Members present: Casey Van Rysdam, Brad Long, Lauren Watkins, Marty McEachean, Deb Chapin, Bill Bowen, and Harold Dockins

Also present: District 3 Commissioner Paul Waldron; Parks & Recreation staff: Ryan Kane, Director; Jamie Baccari, Assistant Director; Teddy Meyer, Recreation Facilities Manager; Sydney Lindblad, Natural Resources Program Manager; Diane Gorski, Project Specialist

Dockins motioned to approve the minutes, Chapin, and approved 7/0.

There were no Public Comments

Chair asked the RAB members to review the FY21 RAB Annual Report and requested a motion for approval. Motion by Long, seconded by McEachean to approve the FY21 RAB Annual Report provided by the Chair and approved 7/0. Van Rysdam asked for the status of the Bert Watson memorial. Baccari stated that she would reach out to Marci Skinner for an update and report back next month.

Commissioner Waldron provided an update on the public use of county boat ramps.

Kane introduced Carrie Miska, Business Manager and provided an overview of her career. He then introduced the Recreation Facilities Supervisory Team.

Mike Harayda, Construction Project Supervisor, gave an overview of his responsibilities that includes oversight on Recreation Facilities Maintenance construction projects such as installation of new turf fields, athletic lighting and other improvements. Harayda has worked for Parks and Recreation for over 23 years and has had a variety of positions. He is a lifelong resident of St. Johns County. He is married and has an adult daughter and son.

Brian Eccleston, Recreation Maintenance Supervisor, said the he has worked for the SJC Recreation Maintenance Department for over 17 years. He provided an overview of his current and past positions within the Parks and Recreation Department. He shared that he oversees the maintenance crew that tends to the outdoor property for facilities in south, southeast and central St. Johns County and this includes Al Wilke Community Center, Armstrong Park, BMX property, Collier Blocker Puryear Community Center, Cora Harrison, Eddie Vickers, Equestrian Center, Fairgrounds, WE Harris Community Center, Oliver Park, Solomon Calhoun Community Center, Treaty Park, just to name a few. Eccleston is married and he and his wife maintain several acres of land and are dedicated to rescuing abused and abandoned animals.

Eddie Jimmerson, Recreation Maintenance Supervisor, shared that he has worked for the Parks and Recreation Department for 26 years. He oversees the maintenance crew for the outdoor areas of Parks and Recreation facilities in the northeast portion of the county to include Bird Island Park, Davis Park, Deleon Shores, Landrum Middle School Athletic fields, Nocatee Community Park, Palencia, Pacetti Bay, and North Shores Park. He is married and is a father.

Austin Pettigrew, Recreation Maintenance Supervisor, mentioned that he was born and raised in St. Johns County and that he has worked for the Parks Department for 13 years. He is married and is a father. He is responsible for the outdoor maintenance of Parks and Recreation properties in the northwest portion of the county. These properties include: Durbin Park, Aberdeen Park, Mills Fields, Plantation Park, Rivertown and Rivertown II, Veterans Park, Fruit Cove and Swiss Point.

Sydney Lindblad, Natural Resources Program Manager, provided historical information about previous Game On Triathlon events in the county. She presented the current request for the event to be held at Mickler's Landing in October. Discussion that included event participation, safety, security, time frame and impact ensued. Motion by Chapin, seconded by Dockins to recommend approval of the event. Motion passed 7/0. Staff will prepare the item for consideration by the Board of County Commissioners.

Baccari explained that the Parks and Recreation Departments internal Commemorative Policy had been updated to add the pier, beach property, beach walkovers and waterways. Sections 1 and 6 were the only one's affected. Discussion followed. There was a consensus of the board to approve the updates.

Meyer spoke to the changes to TDC Category III Grant Application and supporting documentation revisions that included RAB recommendations. He explained staff was in the process of finalizing the application and that once it is complete it will be shared with RAB members. Discussion ensued. Staff is investigating the possibility of creating an online application process and approval portal. Meyer said that he plans on working with the TDC to see if the department can partner with them in some way. There was a consensus of the Board to accept the revised version of the application. The group discussed the many ways available to promote St. Johns County tourism.

Ryan Kane, Parks & Recreation Director, provided an update on the Parks Projects. He explained how each project was chosen, the proposed funding options and grant opportunities. He mentioned prioritizing the 4 new Regional Parks through discussion and public outreach. He stated that the department would be meeting with stakeholders and setting up an open house and presenting the master plan for each regional park

Baccari announced that the golf course renovation was continue and that the seeding and sodding continues. She mentioned that the 50th Anniversary celebration of St. Johns County Parks and Recreation continues and that upcoming events include a Disc Golf Clinic, Pier Fishing Tournament, Porch Talk at Alpine Groves Park and a movie at the Nocatee Community Park.

Van Rysdam commented on the outstanding job the county did with recognizing Red Cox as the father of Parks and Recreation in St. Johns County. He said the family really appreciated the recognition and that it was an honor for Cox to be the first Hall of Fame inductee.

Long announced that the Park Foundation decided to become a member of the Chamber of Commerce. He said that Park Foundation Board Member Rhonda Lovett had been awarded the Mother Earth Award from the Stetson Kennedy Foundation. He said that the board was ready to start actively searching for an Executive Director.

Bowen updated the group on the upcoming Disc Golf event. He shared that last weekend's Disc Golf Tournament was successful. He spoke to the value of the St. Johns County Parks Foundation to the county.

Chapin spoke about the Mickler's Wharf. Kane stated that it was scheduled for the June 21 BOCC meeting.

Dockins mentioned working as a liaison for Senior Games and hoping to meet with Kane to see if the Recreation Department would be able to host Senior Games in St. Johns County.

McEachean mentioned that he was working to set up a committee to share information to the public about the 1 cent Sales Tax that was going to be on the upcoming ballot. He also stated that he was looking into creating a Hastings Youth Athletic Association.

Motion to adjourn by Dockins, seconded by Chapin, approved 7/0. Meeting ended at 3:10 PM.