



RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

January 10, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m. by Chair Lauren Watkins who then called the roll. Members present were Lauren Watkins, Brad Long, Casey Van Rysdam, Bill Bowen, and Marty McEachean. Harold Dockins and Marithza Ross arrived at 1:11 p.m.

Also present was Commissioner Christian Whitehurst and Parks and Recreation Staff: Ryan Kane, Director, Jamie Baccari, Assistant Director, Teddy Meyer, Recreation Facilities Manager, Bobby McFarland, Sports Tourism Development Specialist and Diane Gorski, Project Specialist.

Reports

Commissioner Christian Whitehurst wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Watkins shared that David Simpkins, St. Johns County School District liaison was unable to attend the meeting but that he had provided an email with district sports updates that was given to all RAB members and staff.

Watkins called for public comments for non-agenda items only. She said that speakers would be given 3 minutes to speak.

Ms. Suzanne Clulow, 109 Laurel Wood Way, St. Augustine thanked the RAB for their dedication to the community and Parks and Recreation and spoke in support of the Parks and Recreation Department and the Shore Drives Trail project. She stated that the trail will provided a much needed ADA Accessible surface and a safe place for families and residents to walk and enjoy the beautiful views.

The Chair introduced Teddy Meyer and explained that he would be introducing Sports Event Funding Category III Recreation & Leisure Sport Marketing Grant Applicants. Meyer gave a brief overview and introduction for each applicant who then provided a presentation that was followed by a question and answer period and discussion. RAB members used the Grant Application Scoring Sheet that is included in the Grant Application Packet, to rank the application for economic impact and determine the grant amount awarded. The RAB requested that all applicants embed a video on their website to help market St. Johns County as a tourism destination.

1. National Wrestling Coaching Association - Motion to award \$10,000, by Van Rysdam, seconded by Long and approved 7/0.
2. American Junior Golf Association - Motion to award \$10,000 as requested by Watkins, seconded by Dockins and approved 7/0.
3. Florida Elite – Motion to award \$15,000 by Dockins, seconded by McEachean and approved 7/0.
4. Old School King Fish – Motion to award \$20,000 by Van Rysdam, seconded by Bowen and approved 7/0.
5. River City Wrestling Convention – Motion to award \$12,500 by Dockins, seconded by Van Rysdam and approved 7/0.
6. Ancient City Road Runners – Motion by Watkins to award \$15,000, seconded by Bowen approved 6/0 with Dockins abstaining as he is a member of the group.
7. Ancient City Karate – Motion by Dockins to award \$13,432, seconded by Watkins and approved 7/0.
8. Perfect Game – Motion by Van Rysdam to award \$40,000 for all 4 events, seconded by Long and approved 7/0.
9. JFC Soccer – Motion by Van Rysdam to award \$15,000 for both events, seconded by Dockins and approved 7/0.
10. First Coast Sailing Association (St. Augustine Race Week) – Motion by Watkins to award \$10,000, seconded by McEachean and approved 7/0.

11. Ancient City Game Fish Association – Motion by Van Rysdam to award \$25,000 for both events, seconded by Dockins and approved 7/0.

Discussion relating to the TDC Category III Tourism Grant Application included the RAB requesting post event reporting data be provided to them and that staff track the information. Van Rysdam and Watkins concurred that math on numbers and expenses be correctly entered in the pdf that is provided in the grant application. Watkins mentioned the grant application process moving into an online portal and asked Meyer if he wanted to add anything. Meyer said that the department is working with the Cultural Council and the licensing for the Sports Tourism Grant Program Application piece. He said that the goal is to have everything uploaded and data available for review in August. He said that staff will change the vernacular between page 7 on the competitors and spectators to line up with page 4. Van Rysdam asked staff to work on the P & L with grant applicants to ensure accuracy. Long stated that the portal will build an archive and this will help RAB members make educated decisions in the long term.

Kane provided a playground update and shared the county press release. He credited Jamie Baccari's vision for enhancing the playgrounds and making them a better product for the community and recognized the support from the Board of County Commissioners (BCC). He gave an update on the Shore Drive Project. He said that the contract is anticipated to be brought back to the BCC, most likely at a meeting in February. It will be a presentation to the BCC and will be the last opportunity for people to speak on the item. He said that the department will communicate this to everyone who has communicated both positively and negatively to us so that they are aware of this coming forward to the Board. He shared that the department was hiring a GIS person to help with the implementation of CityWorks creating and combining a data base of all our resources. This will allow us to better maintain our properties and manage our resources. He said that we have a weekend Maintenance Supervisor starting soon who will work Friday through Monday. This will help the department provide much better service to the community. The Maintenance Supervisor will have 2 part-time weekend employees to assist. Kane shared that the Mills fields light project is 95% complete. This project included moving to LED lights and lighting 2 non-lighted fields. The additional lighted fields will provide more field access and this benefits JCB. He mentioned the importance of working with local athletic organizations who provide sports opportunities for residents in the county. He mentioned the value of local organizations hosting tournaments. He said that local tournaments gave the local players a chance to engage at home instead of having to travel to compete. He stated that the department is trying to development more of these opportunities and the additional regional parks will help with this.

Watkins asked if the department had received the cost of pervious vs impervious surfacing of the Shore Drive Trail project. Kane replied that staff would forward an email with the information to the RAB. Van Rysdam asked if the Shore Drive Trail item was still on the January 16th meeting and if it was going to be added as a consent or regular item. Kane replied that it was his understanding that the Shore Drive Trail contract would be added to a February BCC agenda as a presentation to the BCC which would be a regular agenda item. Van Rysdam asked if there was potential to name the trail after Commissioner Paul Waldron. Kane answered that the naming of the trail is not going to part of the presentation. He said that naming something after Commissioner Waldron was a priority and that the BCC would be considering this.

Baccari reminded everyone of the MLK Breakfast and Basketball Tournament in Hastings this Saturday (January 13th). She said the department wrapped up phone calls from Santa who made over 200 calls to local children. She shared that the 2-day Winter Break Camp was well attended. Baccari read the email Tim Connor provided with the details relating to the pervious vs. impervious surface questions posed by the RAB during the December 2023 meeting. The information provided is below.

1. Pervious vs. Impervious surface
 - a. Industry norms provide that installation of pervious materials vs. imperious increase the total project cost by +/- 30%.

- i. With a revision of material type we could potentially expect a cost increase of +/- \$540k.
 - b. Does not account for increased cost of maintenance or other factors.
- 2. Percentage of park parcel to be impacted by the project.
 - a. The below calculation accounts for the +/- 55 acre project area (Boat Ramp to Boat Ramp); not the entire 92.2 acre Shore Drive Waterfront Park property.
 - i. Important to note that +/- 37 acres of park land will remain untouched.
 - b. With some assumptions utilized, in general +/- 10% of the project area will be impacted.
 - i. Assumptions: 17,000 linear ft. project area; 75ft. average width of property; 8ft. wide trail.
 - ii. $17,000 \times 75 = 1,275,000$ SF project area; $17,000 \times 8 = 136,000$ SF of paved trail.
 - iii. $136,000 / 1,275,000 = 0.10666 \times 100 = 10.6\%$ impact.

She stated that staff would forward this information to the RAB. Watkins clarified that approximately 5.5 acres would be impervious in total. Van Rysdam wanted to know if the trail can be built using both surfaces, with the pervious surface in areas of flooding. Discussion relating to the trail ensued.

McEachean asked how community service was being addressed in the grant application. Watkins explained that it was included in the Scoring Sheet. Meyer reminded everyone that this was scheduled to be brought back at the February 14th meeting where the RAB will decide how the community service requirement will be stated and scored. Van Rysdam questioned whether or not formalizing this requirement was in conflict with the tourism goals. Watson reminded everyone that this will be discussed in February.

Bowen stated that he hoped that the residents supported the Shore Drive Trail Project. He mentioned the Fairgrounds being a mud field after the Jimmy Jam event. Kane stated that staff was assessing the condition of the grounds and moving towards putting a plan in place for future events.

Long provided updates on the Foundation Board. He said that Robbins resigned and that he is now the President. Rhonda Levitt remains Vice President. Stefan Salzbrunn is now the Secretary/Treasurer. He said that they were vetting two potential board members next Tuesday. The Foundation is looking forward to holding future events. He thanked the BCC for the continued support and stated that the Foundation was looking to the future and working on streamlining the organization.

Ross asked for clarification on how the TDT Category III Grant funding opportunity is advertised. Meyer provided a quick overview that included staff reaching out to groups in the community, repeat events, use of the HuddleUp Application that creates a Sports Tourism index and the VCB. He mentioned working to have more access to the Convention Center for events and reaching out to high school and college sports groups to hold competitions during the weekday daytime hours in our facilities.

Van Rysdam wants the policy on site fees on the agenda for the future. He wants to know how fees are calculated historically and what factors are considered. Kane responded that staff is working with a consultant and fees are a portion of the conversation. He said that staff would report the findings to the RAB.

Bowen asked for an update on the Disc Golf Course. Baccari said there are issues with the established golf course design and staff is working on mitigating the issues so that the Disc Golf Course project can move forward.

Watkins motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by McEachean and approved 7/0.