



## RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

August 9, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM and roll call was taken by the Chair.

Present: Lauren Watkins, Chair, Brad Long, Vice Chair, Casey Van Rysdam, Bill Bowen, Harold Dockins, Marty McEachean, Ryan Kane, Director, Jamie Baccari, Assistant Director, Teddy Meyer, Recreation Facilities Manager, Carrie Miska, Business Manager, Timothy Connor, Project Manager, Robert McFarland, Sports Tourism Development Specialist, Diane Gorski, Project Specialist.

Absent: Deb Chapin

McEachean motioned to approve the July minutes and was seconded by Dockins. Motion passed 6/0.

Chair opened the floor for Public Comments. There was none.

Director Kane spoke to the continued support of the Parks and Recreation Department by the Board of County Commissioners and Administration. He explained that the rapid growth of the county has resulted in requiring additional staffing to support the needs of the community. He announced that he was pleased to introduce two new additions to the department Tim Connor, Project Manager and Robert McFarland, Sports Tourism Development Specialist and provided a brief overview of their background and the job descriptions. He also mentioned the upcoming GIS Analyst Position that was new to the department and the hiring of a Beach Operations Manager, Beach Toll Supervisor and Recreation Facility Coordinator. He then introduced Tim Connor and Robert McFarland who each provided their professional experience and backgrounds.

Watkins welcomed the new employees and asked if there were any questions from the RAB. Dockins asked if McFarland was aware of the Senior Olympics and McFarland answered that he was. Dockins hoped to bring the Senior Games to St. Johns County.

### TDC CATEGORY III GRANT APPLICATIONS - FY24

The Recreation Department changed the submittal window for the grant application request for TDC Category III funding to biannually in an effort to align with the TDC meetings and the online web portal that is currently in the works. The following grant applications were presented and the merits and financial impacts to the county were discussed. The final approved motions for funding are included below.

- A. Florida State CFDA Championship – February 9-11, 2024 Cowboy Fast Draw
  - A motion by Van Rysdam to award \$2,500 was seconded by Long and approved 6/0.
- B. Santa Suits On The Loose 5K (SAYS) December 9, 2023
  - A motion by Van Rysdam to award \$5,000 was seconded by Bowen and approved 6/0.
- C. PRIME Soccer Cup – October 6-8, 2023
  - A Motion by Dockins to award \$10,000 was seconded by Bowen and was approved 5/1 with Van Rysdam dissenting.
- D. Ponte Vedra Beach Triathlon – October 15, 2023
  - A motion by Van Rysdam to award \$6,500 was seconded by McEachean and approved 6/0.

- E. FL GA Pickleball Classic – October 27-29, 2023
  - A motion by McEachean to award \$10,000 was seconded by Long and approved 6/0.
- Pickleball Veritas in the Ancient City – February 23-25, 2024
  - A motion by McEachean to award \$10,000 was seconded by Long and approved 6/0.
- F. St. Augustine Amateur – December 1-3, 2023 (Golf)
  - A motion by Van Rysdam to award \$15,000 was seconded by McEachean and approved 6/0.
- G. Jacksonville Classic – November 18-20, 2023 (College Basketball)
  - A motion by Van Rysdam to award \$20,000 was seconded by Long and approved 6/0.
- H. Perfect Game 9U-18U Fall Sunshine State Championships Oct. 20-22, 2023
  - A motion by Van Rysdam to award \$8,500 was seconded by Long and approved 6/0.
- I. Perfect Game 9U-18U Fall Florida Premier Championships Nov 3-5, 2023
  - A motion by Van Rysdam to award \$8,500 was seconded by Long and approved 6/0.
- J. JFC Soccer Series Tournaments – January, May, September 2024
  - A motion by Long to award \$7,500 was seconded by McEachean and approved 6/0.

Watkins asked the Board if the Phase I grant application review process was acceptable or if they had any suggestions. Van Rysdam stated that he liked the process, but hoped that the technology mishaps would be alleviated before the next meeting. Meyer said that the meeting would be better in the County Auditorium. The group provided a consensus that the grant application reviews would be better presented in the County Auditorium. Watkins asked Kane what the process was to request these meetings be allowed to take place in the County Auditorium. Kane suggested Watkins reach out to Chairman Whitehurst. He said that he would follow up with Whitehurst and Sarah Taylor.

Van Rysdam stated that there should be better post auditing reporting. He said that the impacts to hotels and tourism details of the prior year should be made available to the RAB to assist in deciding future allocations. Meyers said that the TDC had all of the post event figures and that they were not easy to access. He suggested the RAB make a recommendation to improve the reporting method and update the reporting data collection process post event. There was a consensus to support whatever efforts are necessary to change the post event report accounting policy and procedure to allow for more access to the RAB and Recreation and Parks staff.

#### STAFF REPORT

Director Kane introduced Dr. Jaya Dillard, Sales & Services Manager, CDMP, CGMP for the St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches Visitors & Convention Bureau (VCB). She explained that she specifically goes out to solicit more sports programs to St. Johns County. She provides destination experience, hotel, transportation, and letters from government officials, brochures and other support to groups bringing their programs to the county. She said that the VCB had a destination video that encompasses all of St. Johns County but not a sports specific video and that she will provide the link to Meyer. She said that St. Johns County is being marketed as the “Historic Coast”. There was a discussion relating to the need for additional hotels in the northern part of the county.

Kane provided the following updates:

- Millcreek Athletic Park to break ground soon. This park design is a wagon wheel with two softball and two baseball fields and multipurpose artificial turf field. The project is estimated to take 14 months to complete.
- Four Regional Parks has a lot of momentum with the Board of County Commissioners.

There is a discussion for bonding one or more of the parks. He said that OSports was proceeding to Phase 2 of the design of the four regional parks.

- Palm Valley West is getting to close to a Grand Opening.
- Mills Field lighting of the two fields currently without lights will begin sometime in November.
- Vandalism is still a problem across the board in County Parks. Athletic groups are helping us keep track of the vandalism and are reporting it whenever they see it happening. He said that Parks and Recreation was working with the Sheriff's office to come up with a marketing campaign to encourage community involvement. He explained that the department would continue to request funding for security cameras throughout the county.
- 200<sup>th</sup> Year Celebration of the signing of Treaty of Moultrie Creek is scheduled for Monday, September 18, 2023 at Treaty Park. Staff is working on the details and will send an invitation to the RAB once finalized.
- Youth Sports Partnership meeting will be scheduled once the status of the funding for the four regional parks has been determined.
- FY23 Budget updates have been compiled and will be presented at a future meeting. The update will include the FY23 budget goals (what's been accomplished and what is still being worked on).

Watkins reminded everyone that the Dashboard and presentation on the Level of Service/Land Development Code is expected to be added to the September meeting agenda. She asked if there were any questions. Van Rysdam asked for an update on the Shore Drive Trail. Tim Connor, Project Manager shared that we were currently going through a Cultural Resources Assessment Survey, a requirement of the grant and Army Corps permitting which should wrap up in 90 days and construction will follow. Van Rysdam asked if staff was working with the community and Kane stated that most all residents were in favor of the trail. Van Rysdam asked why the private/public soccer group bypassed the RAB and took their presentation to the BOCC. Kane replied that the group went directly to the Chairman. He then asked if the county had heat protocols in place to keep the players safe on the field. Discussion ensued. Kane told the team to work with Health Department to get their recommendation and then share the information with athletic groups. Van Rysdam felt it was important to be proactive. Watkins asked for the BCC budget dates. Staff said that meetings were on the first and third Tuesday of the month and that the September 5<sup>th</sup> meeting would be at 5 p.m. Watkins asked that the RAB members try to attend the BOCC meetings.

#### BOARD REPORTS

Watkins asked for Board member reports. Long shared that the Park Foundation has had two strategic planning meetings and that they have materials to share as presentations are being made. He said they have a strategy for how to connect with potential board members for the foundation. He shared that a lot of meaningful progress was being made and that they are hiring a part-time administrative assistant to help with some of the paperwork and arranging of events. He mentioned they were working on a large fund raising event for the foundation to be held in the spring with details yet to be determined. He stated that there would be smaller regional events leading up to the spring fundraiser with the District Commissioner being invited to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m.