MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

North Collier Regional Park

15000 Livingston Road

Naples, Florida 34109

April 21, 2021

LET IT BE REMEMBERED, the Collier County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in and for the County of Collier, having conducted business herein, met on this date at 2:00 P.M. in REGULAR SESSION via hybrid in-person and video conference attendance at North Collier Regional Park, 15000 Livingston Road

Naples, Florida 34109, with the following members participating:

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Edward “Ski” Olesky

VICE-CHAIRMAN Ms. Mary Bills, Advisory Board Member

Mr. Paul DeMarco, Advisory Board Member

Mr. Joshua Fruth, Advisory Board Member

Ms. Rebecca Gibson-Laemel, Advisory Board Member

Ms. Kristina Heuser, Advisory Board Member

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Barry Williams, Director, Parks and Recreation

Ms. Annie Alvarez, Regional Manager, Parks and Recreation

Mr. Dane Atkinson, Principal Project Manager, Facilities Management

Mr. Miguel Rojas, Jr., Administrative Assistant, Parks and Recreation

Ms. Christie Betancourt

Mr. Frank Nappo, Chairman, Immokalee CRA

Ms. Debrah Forrester

Ms. Norma Garcia

Ms. Andrea Halman

Ms. Maria Jimenez Lara, CEO, Naples Children and Education Foundation

Ms. Gloria Padilla

Mr. Mike Randall, VP, Fallen Officers Foundation

Ms. Lupita Vazquez Reyes

Mr. Manny Touron, Soccer Pit Cobras

Mr. Greg Woods

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**I. Call to Order**

**II. Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation**

 The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and a moment of silence observed.

**III. Approval of the Agenda**

***Ms. Gibson-Laemel entered a motion to allow Advisory Board member, Ms. Mary Bills, voting participation via videoconference. Mr. Fruth seconded the motion. All members were in favor. The motion was carried.***

***Ms. Gibson-Laemel entered a motion to approve the April 21, 2021 meeting agenda. Mr. Fruth seconded the motion. All members were in favor. The motion was carried.***

**IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes –March 17, 2021**

Correction to the March 17, 2021 meeting minutes: Collier County Commissioner William McDaniel, District 5, was in attendance at the March 17, 2021 meeting and was inadvertently left off the list of meeting attendees.

***Ms. Bills entered a motion to approve the March 17, 2021 meeting minutes, with the noted correction. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gibson-Laemel. All members were in favor. The motion was carried.***

**V. Public/Board Comments**

**+** Ms. Maria Jimenez Lara, CEO, Naples Children and Education Foundation, stated that there are approximately 7500 children in Immokalee, comprising 15% of the Collier County public school population, with a graduation rate of 95%. Ms. Lara detailed the many benefits of physical activity and the correlation between organized sports and children’s health. Ms. Lara expressed a desire for PARAB and the Parks and Recreation Division to work with Immokalee leadership to develop a plan to improve and expand recreational and sports facilities in Immokalee.

+Mr. Frank Nappo, Chairman, Immokalee CRA, reiterated his safety concerns related to the location of a utility pole at Dreamland Park; a property which has shared use between the Collier Parks Division and the Collier School Board. Mr. Nappo also noted the support of the Immokalee CRA for additional playing fields, ongoing maintenance, and a long-term plan to meet the needs of a growing population.

+Mr. Williams will research the opportunity for members of the public to virtually attend future PARAB meetings.

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**VI. Capital Projects Update**

It was noted that a single Capital Projects report will be adopted, which will provide project status for Parks and Recreation, Facilities Management, and Public Services Divisions.

**+Immokalee Aquatics Center:** The scope of work has been completed, with fee negotiation underway for design work. The project is fully funded as part of the previously approved debt service package. The pump house renovation is scheduled to begin in January 2022, reopening for the summer, with closure again in the fall for 9-months for completion of work. Mr. Atkinson will be working with Mr. Williams regarding noted drainage issues of the soccer fields. Mr. Williams stated that Capital Projects updates in Immokalee will be shared at the Immokalee CRA meetings.

**+Big Corkscrew Island Regional Park:** Phase I remainstargeted for opening Memorial Day weekend.

**VII. New Business**

1. **Petition to improve Immokalee Sports Complex Fields**

Mr. Manny Touron, President, Soccer Pit Youth Athletic Club addressed PARAB to discuss the overall growth in population in Immokalee, associated increase in team sports participation, available fields, year-round usage, and maintenance concerns, as well as a desire for a level of service in keeping with other County parks. Aerial drone photos of poor field conditions were shared with PARAB. A petition with 350 signatures was presented in support of changing the summer 2020/2021 maintenance schedule at the Immokalee Sports Complex to include leveling and resodding of all three fields, addressing insufficiencies in the stormwater runoff system, providing alternative fields while the Immokalee Sports Complex fields are being renovated, and reprioritizing the development of multipurpose fields in the Immokalee urban area.

+A letter from Mr. Leo Velasques was read by Mr. Williams in Mr. Velasques’ absence. Mr. Valesques expressed his desire for improved field conditions and ongoing maintenance for Immokalee youth athletic programs in keeping with other County parks, as well as consideration for construction of additional fields to support increasing demand.

It was noted by Mr. Williams that the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) had approved the Parks and Recreation Master Plan which addressed several of the stated concerns in Immokalee. Ongoing recommendations from PARAB would continue to be presented to the BCC for consideration. Mr. Williams acknowledged field maintenance issues and concerns, which may be addressed, however will remain an ongoing issue due to overuse and the need for additional fields.

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Fields across the Parks system are repaired with sod replacement; however, are not typically completely re-sodded during routine summer maintenance. Mr. Garby noted the inability for appropriate field maintenance in Immokalee due to demand and the associated inadequate amount of time allowed for field closures during the summer months. Consideration is being given to conversion of a field at the Immokalee Sports Complex from grass to artificial turf, which will expand capacity and help to maintain natural grass capacity. A cost benefit analysis of grass versus artificial turf fields is currently being done by Parks Staff. Design, permitting and installation of artificial turf would require one year for completion.

Mr. Williams further noted the negative impact on field conditions related to the pandemic due to the closure of Park facilities, with an increase in outdoor activities, as well as the discontinuation by the School District of rental of their facilities during this time, which also increased demand at park locations.

Ms. Bills expressed support for potential diversion of funds from other Park locations for improvements in Immokalee. Mr. Williams noted that a budget is currently being drafted, with an interest in applying funds in support of the stated issues in Immokalee, potentially to perform renovations and repairs during the normal summer closure of fields. Mr. Williams emphasized the opportunity to vocalize support at the BCC meeting during the final budget presentation.

The identification of land for construction of additional fields is a long-term project. Mr. DeMarco inquired as to the possibility of use of alternative fields outside of Immokalee. It was clarified that daily usage of local regional parks by Immokalee residents remains a challenge due to transportation issues. Local green space areas, such as Dreamland Park, Immokalee Airport Park, and Eden Elementary School are properties under consideration as alternatives for use while long-term solutions are being explored. The use of Pepper Ranch was briefly discussed; however, it was clarified that this property is governed by a Land Management Plan which restricts public usage, focusing on conservation and preservation versus recreation.

The need for additional restroom facilities at the Immokalee Sports Complex was discussed, which is a long-term project due to funding. It was noted that design engineers have identified the need for correction of field drainage issues, in conjunction with the Immokalee aquatics facility renovation.

These topics will be discussed at a Town Hall meeting, which is to be held in Immokalee on April 21, 2021.

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+A request was made for more attentive maintenance of the fitness center at the Immokalee Sports Complex, with replacement of damaged mats and the installation of mirrors in the weight room. It was clarified that the mats will be replaced within the week, however the installation of mirrors in the fitness center is a long-term project due to budget constraints.

+The Immokalee Civic Association is planned to be reinstated, which will function as a voice for the community.

***Mr. Fruth entered a motion for Parks Staff to prepare a high-level plan, to include deliverables and milestones, which address the three points of concern identified in the community petition. Ms. Gibson-Laemel seconded the motion. All members were in favor. The motion was carried.***

1. **Petition to expand fitness hours at North Collier Regional Park**

Mr. Woods addressed PARAB for consideration of changing the opening hour of the North Collier Regional Park fitness center back to 5:30 a.m. to accommodate members who utilize the facilities before work. It was clarified that fitness center hours are standardized across all county parks. Staffing costs associated with an earlier opening time at all county fitness centers will be researched. A possible compromise of an earlier opening time on a Monday-Wednesday-Friday basis will be considered as well.

**VIII. Old Business**

1. **Future Advisory Board Selection Process**

Mr. Williams consulted with several Collier County Advisory Boards in consideration of potential modification of the PARAB Advisory Board member selection process. It was noted that a similar process is followed by the Advisory Boards consulted. A suggestion was made for the potential creation of supplemental questions for candidates to better determine interest in Board membership. There is currently no requirement for applicants to be present at the vote, which may be an additional area of modification.

1. **Legends Concert Series**

Mr. Mike Randall addressed PARAB to express his thanks for approval of the Legends Concert Series, which have proven to be successful events. He also expressed thanks for the assistance of Parks and Recreation at the events, as well as the attendance and support of Commissioner LoCastro. The events are held in honor of the sacrifice of fallen officers in Collier County. 29 college scholarships will be awarded at the July 2, 2021 concert, with Governor DeSantis and Senator Rick Scott scheduled to attend the event.

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Mr. Randall expressed a desire for the installation of a memorial for fallen officers of Collier County at Sugden Park.

**IX. Directors Highlights**

+The US Open Pickleball Championship will be held 04/17 - 04/24/2021 at East Naples Community Park, which will be broadcast live on CBS. 2300 participants are registered to compete.

+Golden Gate Activity Pool: A contractor has been recommended to the BCC, with renovation of the activity pool and decking, and restroom upgrades planned. The slide pool will be closed during construction due to its proximity to the activity pool. Upgrades to the competition pool is in the design phase.

+A concessionaire has been recommended for Tigertail Beach, who is currently working through permitting, with a plan to open in the near future.

**X. 311**

Parks and Recreation related 311 requests for the previous month were summarized. Members of the public in attendance were encouraged to utilize 311 to report any issues or concerns noted at County Parks.

**XI. Adjournment**

There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was adjourned.

**Parks and Recreation Advisory Board**

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**Edward “Ski” Olesky, Chairman**

These minutes approved by the Board/Committee on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as presented, or as amended.

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