

June 15, 2022

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Naples, Florida, June 15, 2022

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 P.M. in REGULAR SESSION at Paradise Sports Complex, 3940 City Gate Blvd. S., Naples, Florida, with the following members present:

CHAIRMAN: Edward "Ski" Olesky

VICE CHAIR: Joshua Fruth

Paul DeMarco

Rebecca Gibson-Laemel

Kristina Heuser

Lee Dixon

Jessica Bergel

Donna Fiala (alternate/absent)

ALSO PRESENT: Miguel Rojas Jr., Administrative Assistant, Parks & Recreation
Randy Hopkins, Interim Regional Manager, Parks & Recreation
Dayne Atkinson, Principal Project Manager, Public Services
Derrick "Rick" Garby, Superintendent, Parks & Recreation
James Hanrahan, Supervisor, North Collier Regional Park Rec-Plex
Aaron Hopkins, Regional Manager, Parks & Recreation
Summer Araque, Conservation Collier Program Coordinator
Casey Doyle, Sports & Special Events Coordinator, Parks & Rec
Jeanine McPherson, Parks Manager, Parks & Recreation

Any persons in need of a verbatim record of the meeting may request a copy of the Zoom recording from the Collier County Parks & Recreation Department.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Olesky called the meeting to order at 2 p.m.
A quorum of six was established.

II. Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and an invocation/moment of silence was observed.

III. Approval of Agenda

Rick Garby said Acting Director Olema Edwards was attending to a family emergency and he was taking her place at the meeting today. No changes were made to the agenda and it was approved by the Chairman.

IV. Previous Meeting Minutes

Ms. Gibson-Laemel moved to approve the May 18, 2022, meeting minutes. Second by Ms. Bergel. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

V. Public/Board Comments

Ms. Gibson-Laemel said when she first started, Board members were given an assignment to go to various parks and ask the public for suggestions. She found it difficult to do without an ID, so she asked then-Parks Director Barry Williams for some sort of ID or badge and she was given a magnetic ID badge with her name that identified her as a Parks & Recreation Advisory Board member. You just can't go up to people nowadays without an ID. When she wore it, it was helpful because people came up to her.

Chairman Olesky asked if she wanted to make a motion to do that.

Ms. Gibson Laemel made a motion to ask that all PARAB members be given an ID badge. Ms. Bergel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Rick Garby said the County Parks & Recreation Department could put that into their Standard Operating Procedures to ensure that they don't have to ask for it again.

VI. Capital Projects [Dayne Atkinson – Capital Projects Update]

[Mr. Atkinson showed a PowerPoint on the status of capital projects]

During the presentation and board discussion, the following points were made:

- Big Corkscrew Island Regional Park: The Community Building and Maintenance Building will be completed by the end of the month.
- Big Corkscrew Island Regional Park: The Aquatics Center will be finished by late summer. Concrete is difficult to get, so it's causing a delay.
- The Naples Welcome Center received a temporary CO on April 1, in time for the U.S. Open Pickleball Championships and will receive a final CO by the end of this month.
- The pro shop will sell anything needed for pickleball, including clothing.
- Sun N Fun opened on May 28, with all pools open. It will close again in late October or November for more construction. The island in the family pool will be removed due to safety issues – lifeguards can't see across it.

- Sun N' Fun: Increased ventilation will be provided in the pumphouse and the deck will be redone, stained and resealed.
- Golden Gate Community Park passed inspection yesterday and they're working on the final CO. The pumphouse and competition pool are being renovated.
- Sugden Park is getting donated chess tables. Assembly will take place next week; there will be some shade due to the butterfly gardens.

VII. New Business

a. 17th Annual Iron Joe Turkey Ride

Robert Vigorito, who is on the Board of Directors for the non-profit Naples Pathways Coalition, asked that the Board waive the fee for their annual ride, which takes place at Donna Fiala Eagle Lakes Community Park the weekend after Thanksgiving, on Nov. 27. He also stated that:

- The group wants to support County parks.
- Last year's ride attracted more than 400 riders to Eagle Lakes Community Park, which many residents don't know about.
- Most NPC rides are in North Naples, near Vanderbilt Beach, but Eagle Lakes Community Park is visually more pleasing, is a gem, and it would be less like the Tour de France to ride from there.
- He called Casey Doyle, sports and special events coordinator, and Commissioner Rick LoCastro to ask if they could waive the fees for their event.
- Commissioner LoCastro supported waiving the fees, saying the parks are for taxpayers and they are taxpayers.
- The rides range in distance, from the park's three-mile loop, a family ride, to 5K, 10K and higher.
- Their rides support the promotion of safety and fundraisers to build the Paradise Coast Trail, which will connect parks and trails in Collier County, Lee and other counties, eventually topping 125 miles.
- They've raised \$500,000 for the trail, so far, with \$25,000 raised this year.
- More people are riding bicycles nowadays, with 42,000 miles of routes nationwide.
- Biking promotes health, weight control, helps people stay young and promotes brain health.

Chairman Olesky asked if the group paid a fee for the event last year.

Mr. Vigorito said they paid \$700 last year, in addition to paying for police presence due to people liking to drink beer afterward, so the total was \$800. They'd rather put that money toward the trail.

Mr. DeMarco asked who sets up and takes down the event and does cleanup.

Mr. Vigorito said they are self-sustaining and do everything, including hiring vendors for tables and chairs, Port-A-Potties, food and drinks. They leave it cleaner than when they came.

Chairman Olesky asked park staff if there were any problems last year.

Rick Garby said he didn't recall any problems. Maintenance staff does pick up trash bags at all parks every day.

Mr. DeMarco noted that this was the first time anyone asked the Board to waive fees.

Vice Chair Fruth said it could set a precedent and most event holders are non-profits.

Ms. Gibson-Laemel agreed and asked who would take responsibility for the Paradise Coast Trail when it's eventually built.

Mr. DeMarco asked if she meant the new build (she did).

Rick Garby said County Transportation Department typically handles trails, but that could change.

Ms. Gibson-Laemel asked if any trails go through the parks.

Mr. Vigorito said the trail will go through Baker Park in Naples, the Paradise Coast Sports Complex, North Collier Regional Park, Marco Island and others. Part of the trail already is here, but we want to connect all the public facilities.

Mr. DeMarco asked if the Board could consider subsidizing the fee, rather than waiving it, so it wouldn't set a precedent.

Ms. Heuser said that would still set a precedent.

Casey Doyle said the County has funds for 5Ks and 10Ks and that's what they typically do for non-profits, give them the non-profit rate set by the Board of County Commissioners. The fee is \$180 for non-profits and \$240 for others.

Mr. Vigorito noted that their event is self-sustaining and they didn't need staff for cleanup, set up or take down.

Vice Chair Fruth noted that it's a weekend and asked who would open the park.

Casey Doyle said the parks are open and the County always has a small staff on holidays and maintenance workers will be there, as well. They had no complaints about this event last year and they'd like it to return. The additional business fees paid for the event last year can be waived under the BCC policy because the group is self-sustaining.

Vice Chair Fruth said the Board should follow the BCC policy for fees and waiving business fees.

Vice Chair Fruth made a motion to allow the 17th Annual Iron Joe Turkey Ride take place using the non-profit BCC event fee structure. Second by Ms. Heuser. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

b. Naples Pickleball Center - User Fees - [Bob Strommen, Naples Pickleball Center managing partner]

Mr. Strommen detailed a PowerPoint presentation.

During the presentation and questioning by Board members, the following points were made:

- NPC took over in December 2020.
- No analytics were available for comparison.
- NPC and the courts are located in the back half of East Naples Community Park.
- The new Welcome Center and Pickleball Pro Shop has been constructed, it's in its home stretch and they will move into it in the future.
- NPC is run like a business and uses "The PickleBall Capital of the World" as its tagline, so they want to run, operate and staff it as the capital.
- Collier County has spent an enormous amount of money on the facility and has approved, but not yet allocated another \$24 million and the Welcome Center was part of that, as well as 10 more courts.
- We have a well-defined vision, mission and purpose: to serve both members and the community; provide a facility people will be proud of; and to protect the County's investment.
- People don't understand why they pay fees and ask if NPC caters to members, but he reminds them their commitment is to the community.
- They're currently holding a free nine-week seminar for 100 kids, which is part of the East Naples Community Center Youth Summer Program. We're paying our pros, we're using our facility, we gave every child a book, "How Pickleball Saved Ollie Otter," written by a member that details the social aspects of pickleball.

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- A two-day event, a Tribute to Veterans, turns over 100% of fees, \$7,000, to Collier County Wounded Warrior organizations; this was originally a one-day event.
- We're having our first Community Free Day, which allows the community to see what pickleball is about, play games and take lessons to experience what's available. That's part of their community outreach activities.
- Community non-members still have access to the facility because our contract says that we are responsible for running the facility from 8 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday and from 5-8 p.m. Monday through Friday, with adjustments for summer hours (11 a.m. closing in summer).
- Veterans Park pickleball hours are 6 a.m. to noon, with an adjustment for summer.
- For all other times, facility is available for community play without any fees or restrictions, but we still maintain our staff with all the payments associated with a 24/7 facility.
- They maintain and repair nets and clean up after weekends at their expense, using no County money.
- Two staff members, handymen, are trained in maintenance and other staff members are trained in the fee structure, how to play the game, inventory and customer service.
- NPC created analytics to understand the demand, who the users are, where they come from, whether they're residents, and what times courts are used.
- During season, which is now October through the U.S. Pickleball Open Championships in mid-April, 64 courts are used by four people at all times, with rotation to ensure everyone plays, but not everyone stays for four hours each morning.
- With all courts in use and 256 players, about 40 players are waiting at each court skill level, a total of 140. Turnover in the morning totals 792, in addition to evening play.
- It's difficult to track all visitors because the walking path around the park provides access to courts and there are five other different access points, so staff can't catch everyone.
- Someone wrote a guide on how to beat the system and get in without paying a visitor or membership fee and posted it.
- Visitors must fill out a questionnaire that asks if they live in Naples or Collier County, if they own property there, etc.
- Members have a membership card; visitors are given a wrist band and the band color changes daily.
- User analytics don't take into account everyone due to people sneaking in, but staff is trained to watch and ask people if they have a pass or membership card.
- 700-800 people play daily during the time the NPC is staffed.
- If fees are charged, they should capture everyone who enters the courts.
- An NPC study showed that 92% of 1,047 respondents played more than 50 hours a year, a low number considering there are many who play two hours daily or once or twice weekly.
- Higher fees would help with the 10 new courts, the pro shop, capital and operating costs, point-of-sale expenditures, and increases in emergency services.
- There are one to two emergency calls weekly for heart attacks, possible heart attacks and heat stroke.
- A retired Naples Police officer was hired to maintain civility on the courts in the evenings.
- Salaries have increased due to inflation.
- There have been no fee increases and NPC is shut down for three weeks every year due to the U.S. Open Pickleball Championships, which causes the courts to take a beating with gouges, sticky things, repainting, relining and striping needed afterward.
- User fees are dramatically lower than other counties and other facilities, such as YMCAs.

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- Lee County charges \$20 per hour per court, plus \$10 additional for lights; this would equate to \$500+ for 97% of Collier County's membership, if NPC adopted that fee structure.
- NPC lost \$124,000 last year and Strommen put \$63,009 of his own money into NPC for the facility and maintenance services; he does not take a salary; only \$11,000 of his payments have been reimbursed in the past 1½ years.
- There is additional income from the pro shop and tournaments, but not as much as you'd think.
- Mr. Strommen writes checks for 32 employees every two weeks during season.
- Private lesson fees go through NPC, so the County gets its share, which was \$115,000 last year; it's calculated by gross revenues multiplied by 15%.
- NPC also must pay credit card fees.
- Money from the U.S. Open does go to repairing courts, if damaged, but that group is asking for assistance from the TDC.
- There's been a huge increase in costs and the standards for the U.S. Open are higher than for NPC.
- Could a portion of ticket sales be put aside for maintenance?

Mr. Strommen said the NPC is asking for:

- A two-tier NPC fee structure to maintain current services and recognize that Veterans Community Park is different from East Naples Community Park for pickleball.
- A membership fee for premium high-demand time periods, with free usage during afternoons and all day on weekends.
- A \$190 annual fee at ENCP and \$171 for County residents.
- A \$100 fee at VCP, with a discount to \$90 for County residents.
- \$2 of each day pass's collected fee would be escrowed to be used for capital improvements.
- Monthly fees of \$17 at ENCP for a single player and \$10 at VCP.
- A \$145 seasonal membership, or \$75 for County residents.
- A \$10 drop-in/day pass for residents and first responders at both parks, with \$1 of each to be escrowed for capital improvements as determined by NPC.
- They do provide member benefits and discounts, which include a 10% discount for County residents; an additional 5% discount to first responders and veterans; a local business discount program that includes the Naples Botanical Garden, Ankorlab, Culver's, Foxboro, Jimmy Johns, Market360/Celebration Park, Wicked Pizza; and a free pass for kids under age 15, with some play time limitations.
- The new fee structure could start once approved or be phased in over two years.

A discussion ensued and the following points were made:

- Could a portion of U.S. Open ticket sales be put aside for maintenance?
- The Board needs to know what the exact revenues and expenditures are.
- How much is actually being lost that warrants an increase in user fees?
- The County needs to learn a lesson from Sun-N-Fun Lagoon and set aside more money for maintenance.
- What NPC is asking for is a 342% increase; an increase from \$50 to \$171 would equate to \$1 million in revenues (Strommen disputed this).
- The County isn't doing enough to capture the user fees it should be capturing (people sneaking in).

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- The Board can't justify asking taxpayers to pay more unless more information is provided by NPC.
- Lifetime repairs/replacements should be calculated.
- A needs-analysis review should be pursued, including the percentage for maintenance based on passes and the U.S. Open.

Vice Chair Fruth made a motion to require a needs analysis review on imposing user fees at the Naples Pickleball Center and Veterans Community Park. Second by Mr. Dixon. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

c. PARAB Updated Calendar

Board members reviewed the calendar, which listed various park locations for meetings to be held every other month, alternating with North Naples Regional Park.

Ms. Gibson-Laemel suggested visiting East Naples Community Park earlier in light of the NPC pickleball discussion.

Mr. Rojas said he'd send a reminder email to Board members that notes each meeting's location.

d. Staff Updates

Ms. Araque detailed a PowerPoint presentation, "Conservation Collier Update"

Mr. Dixon said that many years ago, there was an uproar because Conservation Collier wasn't using the money to maintain its properties, but using it to purchase new properties. Can I assume we actually have a maintenance budget for these properties?

Ms. Araque said yes, that he was probably talking about 2017. It used to be that 15% of what came in was used for management, but they found out that it wasn't enough, so it was increased to 25%. The first 10 years' money was collected, \$32 million, and that's what they're using now. They realized they would be at a point where revenues would equal expenses, but revenues are now mostly from interest, which is growing. We don't dip into that. We were going to take \$17 million to purchase properties in 2018, but the Board of County Commissioners decided not to. We work very closely with the County Budget Office to ensure we have projected to have enough money for the future and continue to evolve that interest.

[She continued her PowerPoint presentation]

Ms. Heuser asked how Conservation Collier determines what an appropriate purchase price is for the parcels they purchase.

Ms. Araque said it's based on Conservation Collier's purchase policy, which uses the appraised value. If the estimated price is over \$500,000, we automatically get two appraisals and hire a state-certified appraiser.

Ms. Gibson-Laemel asked if the information in her presentation was on the website.

Ms. Araque said it is, but she could email the presentation to her.

Mr. Dixon asked what the reason for the slow process was in the past.

Ms. Araque said he's probably talking about Cycle 10, which was 2021. They have 40 properties and

need to get appraisals for each. They're short-staffed and she was tasked with doing that, but they did hire one other person who will be dedicated to acquisitions, which should speed up the process. The quarterly process also will help.

Ms. Heuser asked what happens if Conservation Collier doesn't have an adequate number of properties to purchase. What happens with that revenue?

Ms. Araque said they would go to the BCC and tell them where they're at and how much they have. They'd probably continue to use the money to purchase properties to preserve areas, such as the Horsepen Strand in Golden Gate Estates, to acquire multi-property areas and preservation expansion areas. The Horsepen Strand area totals several hundred parcels and they sent out a few hundred letters last year and received just 20 applications back. That's an area that will take a long time to acquire and it's important for water management.

Ms. Gibson-Laemel asked exactly where it was.

Ms. Araque said it's in North Golden Gate Estates. If anyone has any questions, they can call her.

Mr. Garby provided a briefing on ball field maintenance and repairs

Mr. Dixon said he'd received a lot of complaints about Max A. Hasse Community Park. It's useless.

Mr. Garby said it floods. The drainage is a capital project, not a maintenance project.

Mr. Atkinson said they're looking into several options.

[Mr. Garby continued his briefing.]

Mr. DeMarco asked if they notify organizations that use the parks when they're going to be shut down.

Mr. Garby said all organizations are notified.

Mr. Garby also provided an update on turtle activity, which is off the charts, with 904 nests as of Monday, compared with 692 last year.

Ms. Jeannine McPherson detailed a PowerPoint presentation on Park Operations, Serious Operations Support, SOS (their new brand)

Ms. Gibson-Laemel asked her to explain what AUIR is.

Ms. McPherson said it's an Annual Update & Inventory Report, which used to be required by the state, but is no longer required. It details demographics and other information related to County government.

Mr. Aaron Hopkins provided a report on summer camp activities and registration numbers.

Ms. Gibson-Laemel asked if there was any way to expand the water-skiing program since it fills up so fast.

Mr. Hopkins said the County follows national rules for U.S. Sailing and U.S. Water Ski & Wake Sports, which require a low ratio due to safety reasons. The No. 1 goal is safety and it's a different story when you're out on the water. We'd love to offer more and do try to get in as many kids as we can. We also offer private lessons.

Ms. Gibson-Laemel said people would appreciate it if they did.

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Mr. Hopkins said Collier County is one of the only Parks & Rec agencies in the country that offers sailing and water skiing.

Mr. Dixon asked how long the water skiing class is offered for.

Mr. Hopkins said eight weeks.

Mr. Dixon said if there's such demand, why can't you offer two four-week programs?

Mr. Hopkins said sailing and water skiing are weekly programs and they offer them both for eight different weeks.

Ms. Bergel noted that the fans at the hockey rink are running all the time.

Mr. Hopkins said they're getting a timer that will fix that.

Ms. Bergel said he'd talked about replacing the fencing on the hockey rink. Is that still on?

Mr. Atkinson said they still plan on it.

Ms. Bergel asked about the rocks between the pickleball courts and the hockey rink, noting that area floods whenever it rains.

Mr. Atkinson said they're looking into that.

Ms. Gibson-Laemel asked if anyone could use the hockey rink.

Mr. Hopkins said yes.

Ms. Bergel agreed, noting that the County has the rink from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and typically, it's rented out after that. We (Naples Roller Hockey) personally have not been able to get in for upkeep and maintenance. There's gum, sticky stuff and junk everywhere from summer camps. It's a big problem.

Mr. Hopkins said they need to know when Naples Roller Hockey wants to go in.

Ms. Bergel said they clean everything out.

Ms. Randi Hopkins provided an update on Region 3 parks.

Ms. Gibson-Laemel asked if they were OK with the number of lifeguards they have.

Mr. Hanrahan said that's part of his presentation.

Mr. James Hanrahan provided an update on Region 4 parks.

Mr. Hanrahan said there's a lifeguard shortage nationwide, but we are at full capacity and have not had to shut down any areas. We're still hiring lifeguards and there were approved today. We've done outreach and recertified some of our staff. It's still an issue, so we're holding another lifeguard class.

Ms. Gibson-Laemel asked what they pay lifeguards.

Mr. Hanrahan said \$15.58 and they automatically get \$16 after two years.

Mr. Dixon said why \$15.58? Why not \$15.60?

Mr. Hanrahan said he asked that, too. We actually match the suggested salary from a County salary study to raise the entry rate. The study said \$15.58007.

[Mr. Hanrahan began his presentation on numbers at Sun-N-Fun Lagoon.]

Mr. Dixon said if 18,000 people have been there since it reopened, what's the maximum capacity?

Mr. Hanrahan said 2,500, and the average is 850 daily, but the average during the week is a little quieter, from 750 up to 1,000 or 1,250 to 2,000. Last year, they did hit capacity while one pool was closed, but they haven't hit 2,500 before.

Mr. Dixon asked what the fire marshal capacity was.

Mr. Hanrahan said 2,500, which also is what lifeguards feel comfortable with.

[Mr. Hanrahan continued his presentation]

Vice Chair Fruth said before Sun-N-Fun shut down for repairs, what were the numbers?

Mr. Hanrahan said he'd need to check the numbers, but believes it's been consistent and goes in waves. We're going to see more because people still think we're closed. We're seeing a rise again.

Ms. Gibson-Laemel asked how many therapeutic-recreation specialists they have on staff.

Mr. Hanrahan said they have a full-time supervisor, a full-time KeyStaff employee, and one program leader at Golden Gate Community Park. There are 15 kids in the camp, with autism, ADHD, anger issues and other diagnoses. If that's anyone's passion, we can use the help.

VIII. Director's Highlights

Submitted

IX. 311

Submitted

X. Adjournment

Future Meeting Dates

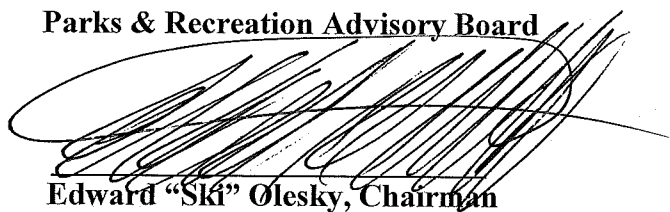
Aug. 17, 2022, 2 p.m.

Sept. 21, 2022, 2 p.m.

Oct. 19, 2022, 2 p.m.

There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was adjourned by order of the Chair at 4:31 p.m.

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board



Edward "Ski" Olesky, Chairman

These minutes were approved by the Board on _____, (check one) as presented, _____ or as amended _____.