MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Naples, Florida, August 16, 2023

LET IT BE REMEMBERED, the Collier County Parks & 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 North Collier Regional Park, 15000 Livingston Road, Naples, with the following members present:

CHAIRMAN: Edward “Ski” Olesky

VICE CHAIR: Joshua Fruth

Vacant

Rebecca Gibson-Laemel

Kristina Heuser

Lee Dixon

Jessica Bergel

Donna Fiala (excused, alternate)

ALSO PRESENT: Olema Edwards, Director, Parks & Recreation

Miguel Rojas Jr., Admin. Assistant, Parks & Recreation

Audrey Martinez, Operations Analyst, Parks & Recreation

James Hanrahan, Assistant Director, Parks & Recreation

Dayne Atkinson, Principal Project Mgr., Public Services

Tony Barone, Principal Project Manager, Facilities Mgt.

Mike Ossorio, Region 1 Parks Manager

Said Gomez, Region 2 Interim Parks Manager

Randi Swinderman, Region 3 Parks Manager

David Michel, Region 4 Parks Manager

Sidney Kittila, Region 5 Interim Parks Manager

Rick Garby, Maintenance Superintendent, Parks & Rec

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

# Call to Order

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

# Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation

The board recited the Pledge of Allegiance and observed an invocation/moment of silence.

# Approval of the Agenda

**Ms. Edwards** said there is one change. She’d like to move New Business down to Old Business and Old Business up to New Business. The deputy county manager is here and needs to be at a meeting by 3 p.m. and she wants to make sure he has an opportunity to address what we’re talking about.

***Ms. Laemel moved to approve the agenda, as amended. Ms. Dixon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.***

# Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

***Mr. Dixon moved to approve the June 21, 2023, meeting minutes. Ms. Laemel seconded it. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.***

# Public/Board Comments

(See VI.a below for public comments)

***Ms. Heuser passed out an FBI memo publicized on WikiLeaks and outlined her concerns:***

* A resident alerted her about a memo sent by the FBI about symbols that are considered invitations to pedophiles.
* The one that’s concerning is similar to the sun in the Parks & Recreation logo.
* When the resident brought it to her attention, she agreed there was a disturbing similarity.
* She thought it would be something that could be easily addressed by changing the logo to include a solid sun, as opposed to a swirly line sun.
* She wanted to bring it to the PARAB’s and staff’s attention to see if they shared her concern and wanted to take action.

***A discussion ensued over the blue swirly, triangular sun image.***

**Ms. Edwards** said they researched this and brought it to the communications division director under the County Manager’s Office. The information came from WikiLeaks and there’s nothing to substantiate it. Our sun is a circle and that’s a triangle. The county plans to rebrand, but not yet and not based on that. It will cost $100,000. This isn’t a quick fix.

**Ms. Laemel** noted that the triangular sun is blue. It’s good to know we’re looking at this and we should be more sensitive to any connections we have. She thanked her for bringing it up.

**Ms. Heuser** said now that she’s seen it, it’s hard to unsee it. She wouldn’t want the county to be unwittingly putting an invitation out to people inclined toward that behavior. She wanted to see the board’s general consensus.

**Mr. Fruth** asked who created the current logo.

**Ms. Edwards** said a graphic design company created it in the 1990s.

**Mr. Fruth** said we could be conscious of that in the future design.

**Ms. Heuser** said she discussed the redesign with the county and they said they’re starting the rebranding with the main county logo and would then look at other departments. That’s a process that will take years.

**Ms. Bergel** agreed it was concerning. People moving to the county could see this as an invitation. She also can’t unsee the image. If it’s not under review now, it should be done sooner rather than later.

**Ms. Laemel** asked if the county could expedite the Parks & Rec rebranding once the county begins to rebrand.

**Mr. Rodriguez** said the county can. The process takes time for the county, which is updating its logo due to the centennial. The plan is to probably develop that over the next year. We can take any recommendation the PARAB has. Making it a full sun is simple.

***A discussion ensued and the following points were made:***

* No one has made the connection.
* There have been no complaints.
* This is from an official FBI memo on the FBI website and was publicized by WikiLeaks.
* Ms. Heuser said many see this as a symbol and an invitation. We should protect our children.
* Mr. Fruth noted that it took his company 14 months to rebrand all its logos, so we should make a motion to make this a priority.

**Chairman Olesky** asked if anyone wanted to vote on it.

***Mr. Fruth made a motion to recommend that the county look at the Parks & Rec logo and sun in light of the FBI memo about pedophiles and consider what can be done to make a change a priority. Second by Ms. Bergel. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.***

# Old Business

# Pelican Bay Community Park Pickleball Update (Mike Ruffolo, chairman, Pelican Bay Foundation)

**Ms. Edwards** said they will be taking the management agreement to the Board of County Commissioners.

**Public Speaker:**

***Beth Schultz, a Pelican Bay Property Owners Association board member, said:***

* She’s been a county resident for 25 years and her girls grew up in the public school system and played in the county parks.
* The homeowners association has reservations about what’s happening.
* There have been many changes from the land lease to now, a summary agreement, a management agreement. We don’t understand what’s happening because there haven’t been any open meetings about this proposed change.
* We’ve never seen a rendering of the 6,000-square-foot building and what it entails.
* She and other members are concerned about alcohol sales. Why does Pelican Bay need to sell alcohol? This is now going from pickleball to alcohol. The focus should be a family environment where we can take our kids.
* It looks like softball and an ADA playground with alcohol sales in the middle.
* Why is it necessary? She brought it up to the Pelican Bay Board of Directors and asked them to strike the alcohol provision, but they didn’t and passed it unanimously.
* She’s asking the PARAB to re-look at this for the betterment of all families and children who need a place to go.
* You can buy alcohol anywhere. This should be removed and not passed.
* The Pelican Bay Board of Directors said they want it for special events. There’s already a provision for that now. Alcohol is prohibited in a park, but they can get a permit for a special event.
* This is a 30-year agreement and the board 10 years from now will be different.
* They can sell alcohol every day, according to this agreement.
* Please reconsider this.

***Susan O’Brien, who participated via Zoom, submitted written questions:***

* How can the public view the management agreement for the BCC to vote on this project on 8-22? The agenda is not posted yet.
* Will a Neighborhood Informational Meeting (NIM) be held before the BCC vote? When will the NIM be held?
* Members of the surrounding community need details about how the Pelican Bay Foundation will manage public access to the pickleball courts.
* The foundation was asked for this information at the NIM on 5-10 and would not give specifics then. The public must have this information before the BCC votes.

***Mr. Rodriguez told the audience and the PARAB:***

* He can answer the question and Jim Hoppensteadt from Pelican Bay is here.
* The agreement contemplates selling alcohol at the park because of the events, which is similar to other events that offer alcohol.
* Our experience with the Paradise Coast Sports Complex has been very positive and well received by the public at The Cove.
* Pelican Bay requested the opportunity and wants to open a concession stand with food and drinks, etc., as part of the pro shop, which also will have public restroom facilities, maintenance and storage facilities.
* Pickleball is one of the nation’s fastest growing sports and there’s been a tremendous demand here for additional courts in all our parks.
* As part of the management agreement, Pelican Bay will manage the facility and will invest $6 million of capital improvements that the county probably wouldn’t see for 25-30 years. The county has that much of a backlog in pools that need to be refurbished and parks that need to be built, especially in Immokalee, and other parks that need to be refurbished.
* It’s an opportunity for Pelican Bay as they manage courts to help offset their costs.
* The park racket center management plan was contracted out to another vendor before and these costs are similar. They total about $160,000, with another $200,000 for maintenance costs. It’s very expensive and that’s why we look at this as a good opportunity to partner and see how it goes.
* The foundation needs to get a license and to build the facility.
* The county does not relinquish its right to manage the property or facilities. As with any of our other parks, it’s a contract we closely manage.
* We believe it has merit because there are more people than those with families, but they also have family members who enjoy a beverage. If alcohol is sold on the site, it will be kept within the concession area. They won’t be allowed to take it outside that area. They must drink it there and it won’t be allowed on the courts.
* They plan to manage the area using a controlled entry and exit.
* An important part of the agreement is to preserve the large green space. Residents surrounding the park, especially in Naples Park, want to make sure we don’t detract from the green space, one of North Naples’ last large green spaces.
* Under the contract, the partnership and requirements for funding, we thought this was a good opportunity.
* The record shows we have done many Neighborhood Information Meetings (NIMs), not only the county, under Olema’s leadership, but with the PARAB and a Neighborhood Information Meeting, where about 90 people showed up, with only a handful who not in favor of pickleball. That was probably because we didn’t give them enough detail because it was in the planning stages.
* Pelican Bay Foundation also had many meetings for Pelican Bay residents and surrounding areas to get their opinions. There was a large turnout, and the majority approved the park enhancements.

***A discussion ensued and the following points were made:***

* Paradise Coast Sports Complex sells alcohol daily but it’s under the Tourism Department, not Parks & Rec.
* Clam Pass Park sells alcohol daily.
* When there are events at other parks, they seek approval from the PARAB.
* The PARAB voted to change that rule so groups that hold events at parks can use the PARAB’s approval if that’s a continuing event.

***Mr. Fruth told the PARAB:***

* The county is entering an agreement with a trusted partner that’s investing a lot of capital in our parks program.
* This agreement is more binding than this board giving approval to a group to provide alcohol at an event.
* Collier County still retains the rights to the property. The ask is simply for the opportunity, if they do obtain a liquor license, to have a secured alcohol sales area.
* The park hasn’t been designed yet. This is conceptual. Everything that’s been presented at NIMs here or at Pelican Bay involves conceptual plans.
* That’s why it’s back here with us. The agreement goes to the Board of County Commissioners on Tuesday. At that point, they would move forward with a design pending comments at the board meeting.
* [He described the renderings on the PowerPoint.] The intent is to secure the racket facilities, tennis and pickleball, within the operations building. That’s the secure entrance. It would not overflow into green space, the soccer pitch or baseball and softball areas.
* For racket facilities, you must check in the same way that you would check in to reserve a court. You would have to stay within those facilities to drink beer. It would not spill into playground areas or other areas.

***Mr. Dixon told the PARAB:***

* He’s in a quandary and doesn’t have an issue with alcohol. We bring our kids to football games, baseball games and there’s alcohol there.
* But we don’t allow alcohol in any other county park. When Pelican Bay came before us, they didn’t say we want an opportunity to build pickleball courts for our community and to sell alcohol. They said we want to build 20 pickleball courts so Pelican Bay can have 10 and we’ll let the community use 10.
* Their ability to recoup costs is not his concern. They’re taking the expense, they brought this forward, so that’s up to them.
* He’s not saying yes or no. He’s in a quandary because alcohol isn’t allowed at other parks.

***A discussion ensued and the following points were made:***

* This could open it up to other concessionaires.
* We wouldn’t have a legal leg to stand on to deny alcohol sales at other parks.
* The agreement says, “The foundation and its members shall at all times abide by and observe the county park rules and regulations to the extent that county rules and regulations do not conflict with the terms of this agreement.”
* County rules and regulations should supersede terms of this agreement. If there’s conflict, county rules and regulations govern.

**Ms. Schultz** said this plan was sprung on us two weeks ago and she immediately called the County Manager’s Office and Ms. Williams called her back. She didn’t think they were aware, and Pelican Bay residents were not aware. She just received this information after putting in a 119 public information request, which showed staff has reservations. You can get alcohol anywhere. Wouldn’t it be nice to provide a sacred place for children and not harm those with alcohol addictions?

***Mr. Hoppensteadt told the PARAB:***

* When we came before PARAB two meetings ago, we said we were going to run this facility consistent with our facilities. We sell alcohol at our facilities. If that wasn’t made clear, that was an oversight.
* We’re investing over $6 million in this facility. We completely enclosed it and the responsible sale of alcohol is something we have now. We sell alcohol at our restaurants. This isn’t unusual for us.
* This gives us the ability to include it as part of our business plan.
* We don’t have a liquor license yet. If somebody wanted to oppose it with the state liquor board, they could do that.
* We sell alcohol in our facilities, but it’s a very small consumption.
* There’s a more intense usage at events that the PARAB approves than what’s involved in daily *a la carte* service. It’s much less of a problem. He’s been doing this for over 40 years and has overseen 140 restaurants. Event alcohol sales are much more intensive than daily alcohol sales.
* He wouldn’t take that out of the contract. The county has the ability under the contract to come to us and say discontinue it.
* The county already set a precedent. There are parks that sell alcohol, so this won’t set a precedent.
* What sets us apart is we’re coming to the county as an investor, As a significant investor, we want a business plan that gives us the flexibility to do what we think is best.
* The county retains the ultimate ability to say this isn’t working or it seems to be working fine.

***A discussion ensued and the following points were made:***

* This would involve beer and wine.
* Pelican Bay would apply for a retail liquor license.
* This would involve pre-packaged, canned alcohol and possibly hard seltzers that are popular, such as cider or hard seltzer.
* There would be no bartender.
* Different licenses require different lines of control.
* If this turns out to be intensive, Pelican Bay would come back to the county for a special-use permit.
* This won’t set a precedent but could set one if a concessionaire wants to invest $6 million in another park and sell alcohol.
* We need to be more open-minded than how we looked at things 20 years ago.
* It’s not a rock concert. If someone has a beer, that’s not an issue.

***Mr. Hoppensteadt told the PARAB:***

* Historically, this park wouldn’t exist if it wasn’t for Pelican Bay, which deeded the park land to the county and built the park years ago.
* Since then, the county has not been able to invest money into it. That’s because they have several million dollars in the capital budget to spend on 71 parks.
* This type of improvement to a facility that needs it has prompted a lot of demand and positive comments from Pelican Bay and surrounding areas. They don’t believe Veterans Park is the type of facility that this will be. They think North Naples deserves something more in line with East Naples Community Park.
* This can be checked yearly or monthly. If something goes wrong, it can be discontinued.
* The last thing we want is for this not to be a resounding success.
* He works hard to stay out of the Naples Daily News and WINK.
* Even when we did the COVID vaccine program, we got chastised for being an elite community when we were doing a public event. We opened it up to every NGO in Collier County, the surrounding communities and businesses.
* He appreciates the comments about trust. We’ve earned it.

***Mr. Rodriguez told the PARAB and audience:***

* The county isn’t forfeiting its rights to manage the property. They’d be under contract.
* There’s a clause in the contract that says it can be canceled with 30 days’ notice.
* The county would have to reimburse Pelican Bay for its capital improvements, but we still have control. PARAB governs the activities in the park and gives recommendations to the BCC for parks.
* With the new administration, and Olema and her Parks & Recreation staff and James and his group, there’s a lot more focus than we’ve ever had on county parks. The County Manager’s Office, in particular Amy Patterson, has made it a priority to infuse more money into parks.
* The PARAB knows his position with 2½ years ago, bringing in $1.7 million. We plan to continue that with the support of the BCC, as well as the PARAB.

**Ms. Heuser** asked whether staff had a position on the alcohol provision.

***Mr. Rodriguez told the PARAB:***

* Olema sent him an email that says she and staff have some concerns. He understands that, but this is a new and different contract from any others we’ve seen in Collier County.
* Except for Waste Management, which infused $8.5 million to build a gas-to-energy facility at the county’s landfill, he doesn’t know of any other private-public partnership that’s bringing this kind of money to the table that meets the strategic plan of parks.
* Parks & Rec always wanted pickleball courts there, so we have a vested interest in the success for both parties.
* When they added pickleball at East Naples, the county built a welcome center for about $5½ million dollars. They raided Parks & Rec’s capital budget to help build that and we handed it to a vendor. What we get in return is great participation by residents. They have a beautiful facility and a national award-winning tournament.
* Financially, it costs us money to help manage, maintain and take care of those courts. The vendor is responsible for court maintenance and refurbishing courts.
* Clay courts that are played on every day must be graded, cleaned and irrigated.
* The county hasn’t put any money into Pelican Bay Community Park, except for a weir/emergency berm there after a storm.

**Ms. Heuser** said she also has concerns about alcohol sales there. She doesn’t like that it’s being presented during the 11th hour after we’ve had so many meetings where residents had an opportunity to opine on both sides of the issue. They never got to speak about this because it was never discussed and she finds that troubling.

***A discussion ensued and the following points were made:***

* Alcohol isn’t allowed at this park.
* No one considers Paradise Coast Sports Complex or Clam Pass a park, so this is a precedent.
* What happens when the next person asks for alcohol sales?
* This is a managed contract and it’s covered.
* It’s still contradictory.
* It’s managed by a vendor, whether it’s boat ramps or another commodity.
* Perception is reality. That’s the way it will be perceived.
* If the county says no to alcohol, will Pelican Bay invest $6 million in the park?

***Mr. Hoppensteadt told the PARAB:***

* It’s being presented as a package.
* It’s not an apples-to-apples comparison, all fully operated by the county. This is a facility that’s wholly owned by the county that will be built and managed by an outside entity.
* As the county starts looking at how to bring more services and value to a community that’s continuing to grow at a pace that outpaces resources, the county will have to continue looking at different ways of doing business. This is one.
* There’s no other environment that’s more family oriented than a beach and Pelican Bay serves alcohol at its beach. Collier County serves alcohol at a beach. A concessionaire serves it.

***A discussion ensued and the following points were made:***

* Alcohol and beaches are synonymous. Right or wrong, it’s reality. Most people would like to drink beer at a beach. County parks are different. It’s the perception.
* What will happen at every county park if others challenge this rule?
* The alcohol serving area would be completely fenced in and segregated from the park.
* The county doesn’t have an opinion from the Sheriff’s Office on this.
* Maybe we can table this item. Give the public, the residents who are most impacted and who use the park, the opportunity to review this contract and provide feedback.
* The county has the ability to revoke that part of the contract later. The contract says, “The county shall have the right to require the foundation to discontinue the sale of alcohol should it deem the sale no longer in the public interest, provided the decision to discontinue the sale of alcohol is made at a public hearing at which the foundation is given a minimum of 30 days’ written notice.”
* They would have to advertise a public hearing, hold it and make a finding that it’s no longer in the public’s interest.
* This can be fixed with an amendment to the contract.
* That’s a faster process than we’ve taken to get to this point.
* The county can make a contract amendment.

***Ms. Heuser made a motion to recommend that the Board of County Commissioners table the Pelican Bay Community Park pickleball management contract with the Pelican Bay Foundation until the county can obtain a legal opinion from the Collier County Sheriff’s Office and give the public an opportunity to opine on this recently added provision regarding the sale of alcohol. Second by Ms. Bergel. The motion passed 3-2; Chairman Olesky and Ms. Laemel voted nay; Mr. Fruth recused himself, citing his past conflict of interest (Peninsula Engineering is doing the work for the Pelican Bay Foundation.)***

**Ms. Edwards** noted that it’s up to the County Manager’s Office whether to table it.

***A discussion ensued over whether they were to discuss the entire agreement, which Ms. Edwards gave the board.***

**Ms. Edwards** said this update was just informational and that’s the only update they had.

# New Business

1. **Mobile Parking App**

**Ms. Edwards** introduced Audrey Martinez, an operations analyst, who will do a presentation on a mobile parking app. We’re trying eventually go to pay-by-phone parking. When there are hurricanes, etc., and if meters go down, we have no way to collect fees, so Parks & Rec is looking into a pay-by-phone app, which is what the City of Naples does.

***Ms. Martinez reported that:***

* She conducted comparisons of four different parking mobile apps.
* The T2 is the most favorable for us. It provides the option of paying by phone, calling up the number, scanning the QR code or accessing the T2 website to make payments.
* There is no app to download, so if you’re a visitor, you’re not required to have an additional app on your phone.
* You don’t have to create an account if you don’t want to.
* It’s paid by license plate, so we can track who paid for parking.
* It’s compatible with many mobile phones and providers.
* It offers map navigation to help find your car and parking spot.
* You can sign in as a guest.
* The good thing with T2 versus the others is we get our park’s branding, not the vendor’s. It’s customized to us and we own the design.
* Reporting on our end would be real-time data. When Park Rangers check to see who paid, they can run a report by zone or license plate number versus looking at each ticket.
* It’s electronic, so they won’t have a receipt to put on the dashboard.
* One of the benefits is continued revenue, so if we have a storm and our master meters are down, we can still collect revenue. There’s no interruption.
* The county uses a multitude of payment processors. There already is a T2 county contract that we can piggyback on, so that helps with the cost.
* There’s no equipment to purchase and nothing to maintain.
* Those are the benefits, but we’re still looking into it. We’re working through a few things and want more benefits and options.
* [She provided a comparison with the other three mobile app companies showing that T2 came out on top.]

***A discussion ensued and the following points were made:***

* The current contract rate is 27 cents per transaction.
* The processing fee with each transaction is 82 cents for each $10/day to park, a lot less than what we’re paying now with master meters.
* This will be just for parking, beach parking and launch parking.
* She didn’t have the cost for one meter.
* The county lost a lot of parking meters during Hurricane Ian and must pay $150,000 for replacements.
* There’s a separate vendor involved with meter parking. They charge $1 per transaction.
* This net would be less and gives us the ability to not have our revenue stream interrupted during a hurricane.
* We still have equipment down and we’ve been losing revenue because we can’t collect it.
* We’d be going from 10% to 8.2%.

**Mr. Fruth** said he’dmake a motion to approve it. He’s been at many locations this summer that have something like this. You don’t need a receipt, it sends a text, the city has it, and it works really well. He saw Park Rangers looking at plates. It’s cheap and Naples uses it.

***Mr. Fruth made a motion to approve using the T2 parking app to collect parking fees. Second by Ms. Laemel. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.***

# Manager Updates

**Parks Director Edwards** said we have a new assistant parks director, James Hanrahan, and also have two interim positions. Aaron Hopkins left the county and is now parks superintendent for the City of Naples, so James was promoted and we now have two interim managers, Sidney Kittila, who will be taking over East Naples and Eagle Lakes, and Said Gomez, who will be taking over at Golden Gate Park and Golden Gate Senior Center and Max Hasse. James started as parks director in Naples on Monday.

She introduced Tony Barone, who handles nearly all of the parks projects outside aquatics.

***Tony Barone, Non-Aquatics Capital Updates***

* Big Corkscrew Island Regional Park has an aquatic facility, ball fields, concessions, a stage and event lawn, pickleball courts, basketball and tennis.
* Everything has been open for a good period of time inside the aquatic facility and we’ll be opening imminently. We have a few final things to go through to ensure we’re getting a completed, quality product and are doing due diligence. Once we sign off, Olema and the parks team can open it to the public.
* All beach parks were affected by Hurricane Ian. Our team is working with parks and other divisions to utilize an emergency period to get parks safe and reopened, even with partial capacity.
* Many parks, except one, Barefoot Beach, opened, either fully or partially.
* Barefoot Beach’s north parking lot for beach access is open. The larger Barefoot Beach Park is closed. We notified the public that it’s not expected to reopen until early 2024.
* There’s an opportunity to partially reopen it earlier. We’re going to do our best to see if we can get a part of the larger park open, in addition to the north parking lot.
* Of other locations – Clam Pass, Bluebill, Vanderbilt, Caxambas – are open or partially open. We’re working on a longer insurance and FEMA-coordinated project to design, permit and completely restore parks back to their previous glory.
* It’s longer than the typical process because we want to ensure that everything will get reimbursed to the greatest extent possible by our insurance company and FEMA.
* We have a great FEMA team working with us. Our insurance reps have been very accommodating, and we’ll do our best to ensure we get insurance and FEMA reimbursement, so it doesn’t come out of taxpayers’ pockets.

*[Moved from after Mr. Atkinson’s presentation]*

***Mr. Barone continued his PowerPoint presentation:***

* He showed photos of the completion of the nearly $50 million Big Corkscrew Island Regional Park, where the north phase was just completed.
* Everything going to the canal, the diagonal line, will eventually extend down through our property and tie down to Oilwell Road.
* Our road, coming north from Oilwell, bisects the larger commercial property. On the west side of our road will be the Publix, outbuildings and commercial buildings.
* On the east side will be the apartment complex and a commercial area along Loyola Road. That access will feed that, as well as our park.
* On the north side, a roundabout will be a west entrance into the community. We’ve received bids, are working on contract negotiations and plan to get it underway. We had a commitment to the developer and an interest in moving it forward to get the work underway as we design the rest of the park.
* A signalized intersection on Oilwell Road will handle traffic.
* The private developer intends to open the Publix in 2025. Our goal is to have the road done.
* Phase 1 north and south portions include ball fields, a concession area, hard courts, a large event lawn with a stage/small amphitheater, a community center and the aquatic facility that’s about to open.
* Phase 2 will include the access road, an additional park road through it, pavilions, a dog park, walking paths and eventually, in one of the final phases, a rec plex, a gymnasium-fitness center.
* The park is already getting a lot of use from the local community.

# *Capital Projects – [Dayne Atkinson]*

* He handles all aquatics and smaller, park-related projects.
* The Immokalee project has been 100% designed for stormwater, pool and turf fields. It’s been submitted to Procurement to begin the procurement process and put it out to bid. Engineers’ estimates are coming in higher than anticipated, so we want to put it out to bid to see the numbers.
* Golden Gate is in the permitting stage. We already have our SwiftBunk permit and we’re working on the building permit for the additional bathroom and SDPA (Site Development Plan Amendment) permitting. We received our first round of comments and that package probably will go to Procurement tomorrow and go out to bid. That involves the competition pool, pool house, slide stairs and the fence. We have to put a fence between the slide pool and baby pool. It’s a code requirement that wasn’t in place when we originally permitted the baby pool.
* Lazy River. We have a 100% design and renovation at Sun-N-Fun Lagoon. That number is high, so we’ll be submitting for permits and sending it to Procurement to get real numbers so we can make an informed decision on how to move forward with these projects for budgeting.
* Daily aquatics maintenance. We’ve had issues with heaters and chillers over the summer, our ability to heat and cool pools – mainly cool the pools. We’re working through those issues for a solution. More rain would help.
* We made a list of future projects needed at Sun-N-Fun, mostly in pump houses. We have aged equipment that’s past its useful life that we need to start changing. We’re doing assessments on pump houses, with recommendations from engineers on how to move forward. The goal is for Collier to be a Top 5 aquatic facility in Florida.
* There are pumps and water valves that are 15 years old or older.
* Other projects include resurfacing pathways. Veterans is complete and Golden Gate finished last week. They were completely resurfaced.
* We’re currently doing a softball concession conversion for storage.
* The Sun-N-Fun family pool was completed on July 14th and is open.
* Court resurfacing. We’ll start resurfacing all courts at Veterans next week. It’s being mobilized. Golden Gate is out to bid. Sugden is next for resurfacing pathways. We’re meeting with the vendor tomorrow or Monday to get a quote.
* Tony’s group has been instrumental in helping us with hurricane recovery and is leading all permanent hurricane and rain repairs. He’s doing a fantastic job.

**Ms. Laemel** askedwhat the percentage of increase was for the work

**Mr. Atkinson** said it was about 40% higher than what we originally thought it would cost. That’s the percentage of increase in construction last year.

**Mr. Fruth** said it’s been going up 32-35% for the last three years in construction. What was the estimate just for one field?

**Mr. Atkinson** said he didn’t’ have that here, but overall numbers were $11 million, which includes everything at Immokalee Park. It was budgeted at $7 million. That’s not a hard bid, so we’re hoping it comes back lower.

*[Mr. Barone returned to complete his PowerPoint presentation – moved to the section above.]*

***Region 1 [Mike Ossorio]***

* He introduced Eric Short, the new Park Ranger supervisor. He’s been with the county for many years, and he (Ossorio) hired him three times. He was a Code Enforcement property maintenance specialist, a supervisor in Code Enforcement and now he’s a Park Ranger supervisor. He knows code and you’ll see a big difference in how the Park Ranger section operates.
* You’re going to see new Park Ranger uniforms. He wanted a huge hat, but it wasn’t approved. We got money to better show our uniforms when we present cases to the special magistrate for the Code Enforcement Board. We represent the Parks Department. He’ll bring the uniforms next month so you can see.
* Blue Water, the new vendor that took over the marinas, finally took possession of most marinas, Cocohatchee, Goodland, Port of the Islands, etc. That was a lot of heavy lifting for himself, James and Olema. After months of work, we turned that over and the gas pumps also got turned over.
* That frees up 20% of our Park Rangers. For four months, 20% of our resources involved manning marinas to ensure we had the bare minimum for gas and security services. We got the great news in an email yesterday. We walked through the marinas with Blue Water and expect great things.
* We had a 2021 presentation on the Paradise Coast Blueway Trail and we finally got it back from the DEP. We had to do editing and he finished last week. With Olema’s help, we’ll probably send it back to the DEP and take it to the Board of County Commissioners. The trail will be nationally recognized and will be good for the parks.
* Before it goes to the BCC, he’ll bring it to the PARAB to ensure they like it.
* We had issues in the Isles of Capri with some of the industry and advocate kayakers. The kayak industry is all about eco and self-imposes restrictions. They want to work with people who want to explore and be weekend warriors as kayakers. Self-imposing restrictions makes them stand out, so we solved the issue quickly and efficiently.
* Parks & Rec is doing a great job and ensuring we have a good first impression, which is important to him and the Parks Department.

**Mr. Dixon** read in the newspaper about the new concessionaire at Caxambas. Did he miss that at a PARAB meeting?

***A discussion ensued over the vendor contract meetings.***

**Mr. Ossorio** said it was brought up during the meeting at the Headquarters Library. We were going to rebid the contract after finding loopholes, but worked on it and got it signed.

**Mr. Dixon** said he wasn’t at that meeting and is grateful the contract was signed. He doesn’t believe the county should hire contractors. We should make more money by hiring our own staff to handle the work.

***Region 2 [Said Gomez]***

* Max Hasse had a successful summer camp with 117 participants and 113 overall weekly participants. Those are great numbers. Their fitness center thrived in June through August, with an increase of 54%, 222 members, signing up throughout the summer. They also collaborated with the library for a reading program.
* Golden Gate Community Center had a successful camp with 135 kids from elementary to middle school. Carly went with her on a retreat to Emergent Leaders, along with Kelsey. They did a great job there. They’re also working with the BMX, which is Trevor, Mario and Nick. They put on a successful sports program with skateboards and BMX because they have a BMX track.
* Golden Gate Community Park is working on sealing and coating the racquetball courts and repaving and resurfacing sidewalks with issues.
* AIR (Adaptive-Inclusive Recreation) camp, which is for therapeutic and special-needs children, had 15 kids. They worked with Golisano Children’s Museum and had people working with them from WINK, Naples Soccer Academy and Naples Therapeutic Riding Center and did a lot with the kids. They’re currently working on buddy sports, recycling art, an adult social club and getting ready for Boo-Tacular here in October.

***Region 3 [Randi Swinderman]***

* She oversees eastern Collier County,
* We had some of our largest camps that we’ve had in a while.
* Community Park had over 45 kids. They averaged 35-40 for the last couple of years.
* We went from 80 kids at Big Corkscrew last summer to 180 kids this year. With the addition of the community center, we could expand numbers. We offered sports camp, preschool camp and traditional camp.
* Immokalee South Park had about 25 kids, higher than their normal high, about 20 kids. They also had 10 kids in the preschool camp.
* This summer, we focused on partnering with other agencies. Road maintenance and bridges came out, kids went to the recycling plant, IFAS came out, 4-H taught them how to make ice cream and they learned about plants. We tried to reach out to internal resources. The libraries came twice. We want to highlight how much we communicate with other divisions and use them as resources to give kids an opportunity to learn.
* Chris Harmon was our interim Region 1 manager. He’s now replacing her at Big Corkscrew as park supervisor. He’s doing a great job.
* We recently promoted our athletic program leader, Cassandra Jimmie, to program leader II for athletics there.
* We just started Christmas Around the World planning. It’s been at Paradise Coast Sports Complex, but due to the renovations we’re hope to kick off in fall, we’ve moved it to Immokalee Community Park this year and are working with the chamber. They put together the parade and we have the final event at the end of the night.
* In October, a week before Boo-Tacular, we’ll be doing Trunk-or-Treat, which will be a regional event this year. About 1,500 people came last year, so she needs to recruit more staff. We’re expecting more. We’ll have community members hand out candy in the trunks of cars and will have bounce houses and other events.
* When we finish Big Corkscrew Phase 1, we’ll have a grand opening to celebrate those completions and make sure PARAB members are invited.

**Region 4 [David Michel]**

* Sun and Fun. Thanks to Dane and his team for getting it ready. We opened July 1st. We had a great summer with camps and over 50,000 patrons since July 1.
* We’ve gone back to weekends only now until October 1, with school going back in session. Many lifeguards that we need returned to school and college.
* Athletics. We just finished our second year of our Wiffleball League, which was a big success, and our second year of our Dodge Ball League. Those are two programs we started last year and they were very successful this year.
* Tournament season is about to kick off at North Collier Regional Park in September. We have a tournament almost every weekend in September at. We have softball, soccer, baseball, field hockey and lacrosse.
* We have a soccer league with over 1,000 participants that will kick off in September, as well as a softball league with over 600 participants and our kickball league.
* The RecPlex just finished its summer league, our youth program. Last fall, the league was canceled due to the hurricane and the shelter was there. We offered a makeup league for those participants this summer, which we normally don’t offer due to summer camps. We wanted to serve those kids and just finished. It was a huge success.
* We have a futsal league, which is like indoor soccer in the gymnasium. They have two more weeks at the Rec-Plex.
* At Veterans Park, pathways were all re-asphalted and it looks beautiful. It really helped the park. Court resurfacing starts August 21. We’re going to redo all courts. New courts and pathways will spruce up the park and it will look great. It’s asphalt.
* Our VPK program starts next week. Veterans had over 130 weekly summer camp participants.
* Vineyards’ VPK program starts next week. We have over 40 kids in our after-school program and over 130 kids at summer camp.

**Ms. Laemel** asked if the pickleball courts resurfacing will be a cushion surface.

**Mr. Michel** said it will be the same surface we have now. We picked the same colors.

**Mr. Fruth** saidthe answer is no. It probably will be asphalt.

**Ms. Laemel** said she’d heard different theories on that and was curious.

**Mr. Michel** said we’re using the same red and blue colors that we have there now for tennis courts. They’re blue right now, but we’re changing them to be consistent across the board at all our tennis facilities. It will be a lighter green and a dark green on the outside. It’s the same with the basketball courts, we’re going to have light green on the inside, dark on the outside. We’re trying to unify it across our parks.

**Mr. Dixon** asked if they’re taking one inch off the surface, or are they doing a full mill?

**Mr. Michel** said he wasn’t sure. That’s a question for Dane. We’ll get an answer.

*[Moved from the section below]*

**Mr. Atkinson** said they’d be doing a mill for some courts. Not all are asphalt. The racquetball court is concrete, so we’re smoothing the surface to ensure proper friction. The bocce ball court is turf and is being completely redone. The basketball court is pretty bad and needs to be redone and the pickleball courts aren’t that bad. They’d involve a mill and re-laying asphalt and painting.

**Mr. Dixon** asked if it was a 1-inch mill.

**Mr. Atkins**on said it wasn’t that much, probably half an inch.

**Mr. Dixon** said that’s pretty thin.

**Ms. Bergel** asked if there were any projects for the hockey rink.

**Mr. Atkinson** said there were no active projects and asked what was needed.

**Ms. Bergel** said no improvements have been made in a long time.

**Mr. Michel** said he can speak with her after the meeting.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said they can bring that up at their capital projects meeting as a team. They’re prioritizing projects by region based on available funding.

**Ms. Bergel** said it’s been a bad summer for ice.

**Region 5 [James Hanrahan]**

* Sid started Monday and she will be providing updates after this meeting.
* The summer skiing and sailing program was amazing. He and Olema visited during the ski show, the final show of the summer, and to see and talk to the kids. Some of them couldn’t get on a board before the classes and they were doing a show.

*[Mr. Atkinson returned and provided the answer for Mr. Dixon – moved to the section above.]*

***Mr. Hanrahan continued his presentation.***

* What he loves about the Sugden camp is that many kids who learned how to sail there during the program are now counselors. They’re not starting programming until October. Thanks to Dane’s and Rick’s teams, we’re doing much-needed work on the two docks on the ski side. Humberto, our internal carpenter, will handle that.
* East Naples had an amazing summer camp for teenagers and youth. That staff is now transitioning and getting ready for season and pickleball. Although pickleball is operated by a concessionaire, when October-November hits, that becomes our staff’s priority, along with the after-school program.
* We’re working with NPC (Naples Pickleball Center) to make sure we’re getting what we need based on the contract moving forward to FY24. There have been meetings and questions, so he and Sid are monitoring the contract to work through the questions.
* In comparison to Sun-N-Fun, where 50,000 people attended in less than 1½ months after it reopened, Eagle Lakes from January 1 until now has seen about 48,000 people in nine months. That’s one of the biggest years Eagle Lakes has had because Sun-N-Fun wasn’t able to hold school-year parties. That accounts for a lot of schools coming to Eagle Lakes, which put it on the map. Many North Collier residents didn’t know it was here.
* We filled the athletics program leader position with someone from the East Coast. He’s excited to come here and we’re excited to have him.
* Britt, the NCRP supervisor, is working to bring some senior softball over to use Eagle Lakes fields during the mornings, when they often sit unused until youth programming comes in the afternoons. That’s a wonderful collaboration between Region 5 and Region 4.

**Mr. Dixon said** the Special Olympics State Paddleboard Games are on Saturday so the season’s over. He missed the last meeting and there wasn’t one in July. By the first pavilion where the foot wash station is, we used to have two picnic tables to handle the number of people we bring to paddleboard practice on Thursday afternoons. We only had one.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said the county’s carpenter, Humberto, is taking the picnic tables here, to North Collier, where he has a carpentry shop. They’re redoing the boards on the tables, putting new treated lumber on them and returning them.

**Mr. Dixon** said that for the number of kids at the Special Olympics, we need two picnic tables.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said they can email that request about the need.

***Assistant Director’s Report [James Hanrahan]***

* He and Olema have had many discussions and her directive is that he will handle day-to-day operations internally. They’d already had discussions about what they were looking for in this position with David, Randi and Sid and Said.
* We want to provide more staff training and opportunities for staff to be mentored and understand what a succession plan looks like. They’ve seen him, Olema, David, Randi and now Said and Sid move up, so when you get a call for a promotion, you must be ready to move up. We want to continue that for Program Leaders I and II.
* We’re working on our communications and interactions with the public to ensure they’re consistent and standard at all parks. Like Disney, when you’re at a park, you will get the same greeting, the same expectations and the same excitement from staff, the County Manager’s Office and Olema. Statements like, “We don’t have the money,” won’t be made to the community. We will say it’s a great question and we’ll get back to you with an answer.
* One of his main goals in the first 90 days will be strengthening relationships within county divisions. For Procurement, how are we getting our Pcards, how are we getting our POs (Purchase Orders) and understanding what it looks like to ensure we’re in compliance with the County Clerk’s Office and Risk Management?
* We had a meeting today with Risk Management to understand best practices, how we can ensure maintenance staff are safe and protected.
* Michael Ossorio has been instrumental in the relationship with Blue Water and getting marinas going.
* He understands how Mr. Dixon feels, but we’re making sure they’re running and vendors are doing what the county expects.
* If the PARAB has expectation or requests for him, please tell him.

*[PARAB members congratulated him]*

**Maintenance Report [Rick Garby, Parks Superintendent]**

(None)

# Director Highlights (Olema Edwards)

**Ms. Edwards** said that the county’sPark Rangers do more than just enforcement. Christina “Chris” Carson, has been doing a program called “Reel with a Ranger.” It allows kids who might not have the means to go fishing or are learning how to fish to come to parks and learn. (ABC) News featured the program so we’re getting the message out to the community. Our Park Rangers take pride in what they do.

*[The* [*July 19 ABC News*](https://abc-7.com/news/2023/07/19/reel-with-a-ranger-in-collier-county/) *segment was played – go to: bit.ly/ReelWithARanger.]*

**Ms. Edwards** saidshe wants the world to know that we have a community that really enjoys what they do and we’re here to serve the public and are doing our best we can within the boundaries we have. It won’t always be perfect, but we appreciate you trusting us and being patient. When she feels defeated, she has a great staff that lifts her up, a team, a family. She’s thankful.

**Ms. Laemel s**aid that with the new staff promotions, could the PARAB get an updated Parks & Rec directory?

**Ms. Edwards** said they could update those and provide them.

**Chairman Olesky** said he wants Randi to go to the Immokalee Chamber of Commerce monthly breakfast meeting to provide updates.

**Ms. Swinderman** said she will do that as long as he returns as Santa Claus this year.

**Chairman Olesky** agreed to return as Santa Claus.

**Ms. Edwards** thanked everyone for giving up their time and busy day to provide feedback.

**Ms. Laemel** said if there is anything she needs PARAB members to do, please reach out to us. For example, collating projects.

# X. Adjournment

# Next Meeting Date:

# September 20, 2023, 2 p.m. – Immokalee Sports Complex

**There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was adjourned by order of the chairman at 3:42 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 \_\_\_.