MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Naples, Florida

May 15, 2024

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

Jessica Bergel

Lee Dixon

Rebecca Gibson-Laemel

Kristina Heuser (excused)

Eric Kelly

Donna Fiala (excused/alternate)

ALSO PRESENT: James Hanrahan, Assistant Director, Parks & Recreation

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

Tami Scott, Project Manager, Bayshore CRA and MSTU

Brian Delony, Project Manager/Supervisor, Facilities Division

Jeanine McPherson, Sr. Ops Analyst, Parks & Rec

Dane Atkinson, Principal Project Manager, Facilities Division

Kory Swinderman, Supervisor, Golden Gate Community Park

Randi Swinderman, Region 3 and 4 Parks Manager

Sidney Kittila, Region 5 Interim Parks Manager

***Anyone who needs a verbatim record of the meeting may request a copy of the 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.

# Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation

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

1. **Welcome by the Director**

**Mr. Hanrahan** read the Parks & Rec mission statement:

*The Parks & Recreation Advisory Board serves as a vital bridge between the community and Collier County’s Parks & Rec division and is dedicated to enhancing local recreation facilities. Working hand-in-hand with staff, our board members actively contribute to programming, fundraising, special events, maintenance, and recommendations for physical improvements. Our primary goal is to continuously elevate recreation services for all residents of Collier County.*

*Through careful evaluation and thoughtful analysis, PARAB provides recommendations to Collier County Parks & Rec, striving to improve, modify or develop services to better meet the diverse needs of our community. As outlined in our ordinance, PARAB’s functions include evaluating park property acquisition, analyzing development of Parks & Recreation facilities, reviewing programs and special events and providing input on the Parks & Recreation Master Plan. We actively seek input from the public to inform our decisions and recommendations.*

*Additionally, PARAB may provide recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners on relevant issues. Public participation is encouraged, with members of the public being allowed three minutes to be heard on any proposition before the board, ensuring that community voices are heard and valued in the decision-making process.*

1. **Roll Call**
2. **Verification of Quorum**

The roll call was taken and a quorum of seven was established.

# Approval of the Agenda

# (No changes)

***Ms. Laemel made a motion to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Mr. Kelly. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.***

# Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

***Vice Chair Fruth made a motion to approve the April 17, 2024, meeting minutes. Ms. Laemel seconded it. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.***

**V**. **New Business**

**Mr. Hanrahan** said Tami Scott with the CRA will provide a presentation on what’s going on in the East Naples and Sugden Park area. We’re very excited about it.

**a. Bayshore Drive Redevelopment Project**

***Ms. Scott detailed a PowerPoint presentation:***

* She’s a project manager with the Bayshore CRA Community Redevelopment Agency and MSTU, a beautification board. She’s been a project manager for them for about seven years.
* The red line indicates the overlay district, which goes down to the Isles of Collier and includes the Botanical Garden and Hamilton Harbor. We refer to that as the triangle. Part of it is adjacent to Sugden Regional Park.
* We became a Community Redevelopment Agency in 2000 and we’ve always embraced arts and culture.
* We purchased two lots in that area as catalyst projects in 2006, a 5-acre parcel at the tip of the triangle, where a tower is now under construction, and a 17-acre parcel, which is what we’ll discuss today.
* We purchased the 17 acres for about $4.6 million and then the market tanked but it was always our intention to create a cultural element and connection to Sugden Park.
* We’ve had numerous developers approach us since then but they wanted to do housing or retail, which didn’t fit our intent. We were hoping they’d build a boardwalk for us so we decided to build it ourselves. The BCC gave us the green light about a year ago to move forward.
* Of the 17 acres, only about 10 acres in the left-hand corner is buildable and it’s been broken down into different tracts. It went through the PUD process in 2010 as a cultural arts center, which is our intention.
* It’s a 3-acre parcel that’s buildable. The tract in the middle on the lower portion is about 4 acres that’s buildable.
* The boardwalk we’re proposing runs through the center, so it won’t impede future development. We still hope we’ll get a developer for that. But now we can dictate the use we want.

**Ms. Laemel** asked who the developer was who didn’t build it.

**Ms. Scott** said the CRA purchased the property and as part of that catalyst project, we wanted a developer to build a boardwalk for us to connect Bayshore Drive to Sugden Park, but that never happened. There were too many developer conditions and none of the projects were right for us so the CRA board decided to move forward and build the boardwalk ourselves. That’s where we’re at now.

***Ms. Scott continued her presentation:***

* Bayshore Drive is shown in pink. The red-arrow line is where the boardwalk goes from Bayshore Drive to Sugden Park, connecting to the park through a pathway.
* Of the 17 acres, about 10 acres are water.
* In the center of the 17 acres, we’ll have a 15-foot hardscaped lighted pathway, with benches and trash cans. Once we get past the 500-foot promenade, it turns into an elevated boardwalk and meanders through wetlands and uplands to connect with Sugden Park.
* This will be a pedestrian-only pathway. The intention is not to allow vehicles. It will allow bicycles and can accommodate an emergency vehicle, if necessary. It will take you to the elevated boardwalk. It’s a walking pedestrian path only and there’s no associated parking.
* It’s intended to be an amenity for the neighboring community, not for people coming from far away.
* We’ve gone through many different processes to here, including the SDP process, the site-development plan process. We went through GMD (Growth Management Department) and were approved.
* We also had an SDPI (SDP insubstantial change), a second application to connect with Sugden Park because it’s a separate parcel outside our district. That was approved.
* We also have approval by the SWFWMD (Southwest Florida Water Management District). We’re awaiting DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) approval.
* The county Procurement Division is now reviewing the package to put it out to bid.
* We’re working with Stantec engineering, which we’ve had great success with. They’ve done a lot of these parks. It will be an asset to Sugden Park and Bayshore residents.
* Currently, it’s coming in at about $3.7 million. We have the funds.
* The intention is that this will be open from dawn to dusk and not in the evening.
* There will be an entrance and exit controlled by gates. After you get to the 500-foot patio stonework area, there will be a locked gate. When you get to Sugden Park, there will be another locked gate.
* The CRA is paying for this and building it but there’s an agreement with the CRA that says once it’s completed, the MSTU Beautification Committee, which takes care of Bayshore, will handle maintenance. It won’t be handled by Parks & Rec.
* *[She showed images of the project.]*
* We’re proposing a leaf pattern for the walkway hardscapes. We’ve partnered with the Naples Botanical Garden for all the landscaping and selected all native plantings. We don’t want a lot of maintenance.
* The boardwalk will have concrete pilings. The frame will be PT (pressure-treated) wood and the decking will be a composite, Trex, or something similar. The retaining wall will be similar to gabions (fenced cages), which are filled with stones.
* We will have full signage, full lighting, full benches and places for art. We have a couple of lookout areas that we’ll propose, as well as fishing.
* There may be an opportunity for the community to use the front hardscape park for a special event or community event but it will be shut down after dark.

**Audience member Tom Despard** asked if bikes will be allowed.

**Ms. Scott** said we discussed bicycles with Parks & Rec. We’ll monitor it and they should be riding 10 mph or less. The boardwalk is planned for 12 feet, wide enough to accommodate two-way traffic, but there’s probably not enough room for a designated bike lane. We always intended it to be for bicycles, baby carriages, etc.

**Chairman Olesky** asked if golf carts would be allowed.

**Ms. Scott** said she doubted they’d allow that. Golf carts would be too wide.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said they aren’t allowed on the boardwalk in North Collier Regional Park. It’s just for walkers and cyclists. We don’t want it to be wide enough for golf carts.

**Ms. Scott** said she promised it wouldn’t be a burden to the parks.

**Ms. Laemel** said it’s wise not to do golf carts. They’re getting out of control at her HOA. They require a driver’s license but kids ignore that. We should stay away from that. We don’t want to introduce something that Parks & Rec isn’t already doing.

***Ms. Scott continued her presentation:***

* We’re going to have osprey poles and fishing but no real kayak launch because there’s really nowhere to go once you get in the water, just in circles.
* The boardwalk is elevated so kayaks can go under it and we can maintain it.
* If we need to get a boat in there to maintain the other side or the connection to Sugden Park, we can do that, but we won’t be encouraging kayak launching.

**Ms. Laemel** said electric scooters/e-bikes also are going crazy.

**Ms. Scott** said she believes they won’t be allowed.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said people bring those to the parks so we monitor it. At North Collier Regional park, we discourage it if it’s close to the fields. That could be a PARAB recommendation. We had a meeting with the Facilities Division and Tami a week ago and discussed these issues. That’s why we wanted her to present this, so if the board makes a recommendation to post signs that say only non-motorized bicycles, we can do that. He agrees with that because he also was concerned about having enough room. If we allow cyclists there, he will defer to the board for its recommendations.

**Tom Despard** said the e-bikers are reckless. It just takes one accident.

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

* They could allow special events in the evenings.
* Now is the time to set rules because they’re easier to enforce if they’re there at the start.
* The hours would match Sugden Park’s hours of operation, dusk to dawn.
* Parks & Rec can monitor the park to ensure rules are enforced.
* Sugden has only three staff members, but we can make sure the Park Rangers monitor it with CRA and MSTU partners.

***Ms. Scott continued her presentation:***

* The park won’t be open after dusk. It will have pathway lightings in the boardwalk. The underside of the handrails will be lit.
* There will be trash cans and benches.
* If there’s a special event that Sugden or others want to have, it can be open in the evening.
* We’ve gone through all the approval processes.
* We’re in procurement now with Collier County and that takes about six months.
* She anticipates going out to bid and selecting a contractor by September or October and starting soon after that.
* It’s not a complicated project, but it probably will take about a year.
* There are a lot of exotics that have to be removed first, so that’s probably the lengthiest part. It needs to be cleared to get in there and start building.
* When we started about seven months ago, the cost was estimated at about $2.7 million and it will probably come in at about $3.3 million now, or more, but we have the funds.
* We’re ready to go and hope we’ll get somebody interested in the two outparcels. There are some rumors now about a cultural group that’s considering purchasing the two parcels, so she hopes that comes to fruition.

**Mr. Kelly** said he’s from Miami and Coral Gables has archways that many people use as a place to take photos. They pull over and take pictures and it becomes a mess of people and traffic. If this ends up being something pretty and people want to take wedding and engagement photos, what’s the thought process?

**Ms. Scott** said there will be no parking associated with the boardwalk and it’s not required by GMD. We have a 0.6-acre vacant lot on Jeepers Drive that we could use if it gets out of control. We hope they enjoy Sugden Park, as well as this boardwalk, and they don’t pull over on Bayshore Drive to unload equipment. This is for the nearby community. We’re hoping that if we get a developer who’s interested, parking will be provided as part of that project.

***Mr. Hanrahan told the PARAB:***

* He wanted the PARAB to hear this presentation so they can be aware of park plans and if they have recommendations, such as prohibiting motorized bikes, he’d appreciate their input because this project is moving forward.
* When he first became assistant parks director, we hashed out many details, such as what it would look like, who would be financially responsible and what that relationship looks like.
* The CRA will own it all.
* All that Parks & Rec has to do is make sure our gate is locked, which we do.
* This will be a beautiful asset. We get to reap the benefits without having to put any money forward.

**Ms. Scott** said we’re going to have to have a full-time employee on our end monitoring this.

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

* The gate is past the promenade, which is in front of Bayshore. It’s a hardscape, paved and patterned area.
* There will be a gate after the hardscaped pathway.
* It would be nice to have 12-car parking in the future at the trailhead. The county owns a parcel at the corner of Bayshore and Jeepers drives and we have a design for a parking area that can fit 20-23 spaces. Sugden also offers parking.
* We’re hoping an arts and cultural organization wants to buy this parcel.
* The CRA is building the boardwalk with its own funds. The reason is because for the past 10 years everything proposed has been developers who either want to saturate it with just residential or something not compatible with what we want, an arts and cultural area.
* The Luciano Pavarotti Foundation has been to several of our meetings and is preparing to submit a proposal to us. We believe they will come through.
* The lighter green shaded area is considered uplands and the darker green is lowlands. You can build on it, but it would be challenging and require pilings.
* The boardwalk coming off Bayshore will split the properties down the middle, but won’t compromise it.
* If we don’t get the right fit and developer, we still get a wonderful boardwalk.
* It will be open all day, every day.

***Ms. Scott told the board:***

* She’s hoping the PARAB provides us with some direction.
* Whatever amenities Sugden Park has should be the same as what we do on the boardwalk so there are no issues.
* The $2.7 million estimate was about six months ago. The current estimate is $3.3 million.
* All funds will come from the CRA, which is funded by property owners in that area. Instead of taxes going to the general fund, they go to the CRA and that money goes to projects, specifically in the Bayshore area.
* When they created the Community Redevelopment Agency in 2000, it was a Catch-22. Not everybody wants to be designated in a blighted area that needs help.
* She’s been with the CRA for about seven years and in that time we’ve done many projects, such as the $6 million Thomasson Drive roundabout, which we funded.
* We paid $6 million for the 1.84-acre property where Del’s 24-hour Food Store was, Del’s Corner at the corner of Bayshore and Thomasson drives. We tore it down. It was pretty bad and we paid $2.3 million.
* We did all of Hamilton Harbor with the help of Parks & Recreation.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said moving forward, as we get closer to this project, he will add it to “Old Business” in the agenda to get PARAB signage recommendations for the boardwalk.

1. **Immokalee Sports Complex Update**

***Mr. Delony reported:***

* We have three large capital projects. The first is the compressor-control area. Our previous lead is tied in with the pumping.
* Currently we’re in design procurement and we’re working with the engineers to finalize their proposal and submit that to procurement for a PO request. Once we have the PO, we’ll start design and move through the permitting, construction procurement, and final construction.
* Based on procurement and construction timelines, we’re looking at mid-2027. It takes an average of eight months to procure something. That’s our average for the last four weeks, so construction will begin after eight months.

**Chairman Olesky** asked if this will fix the stormwater drainage.

**Mr. Delony** said it won’t fix any of that but the next project will, the fields.

***Mr. Delony continued his presentation:***

* The fields will address the stormwater. Like all turf fields, they have a sub-base of rock, and around the fields there are trenches filled with rocks, like a big refrigerator drain. That also will address the stormwater.
* Part of the problem is how the stormwater system was designed. There are wet areas in between fields that were designed to fill up and overflow. There’s no structure or control that lets it discharge below ground, so trenches will be added to allow controlled discharge.
* We’re awaiting the budget. Management is scheduled to take this to the board at the next meeting, May 28.
* Once we have a budget assigned to this officially, then we can start with design procurement and move through the process, procurement of the design, the design, the permitting.

**Ms. Laemel** asked if he believes the Board of County Commissioners will pass this.

**Mr. Delony** said he believes they will. The board is looking for areas to find available funding so they have to decide whether it’s a priority.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said Commissioner McDaniel is a champion for this project and he’ll probably try to convince other commissioners that this is a priority. Brian, Dane and Ed have done an incredible job of being honest about what it looks like and how we get there, but the final say will come from the five commissioners.

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

* This is the fastest path to solve the problem for Immokalee’s fields. If the BCC wants to do something else, it’s going to take longer.
* The third field was never part of the plan. It remains a grass field.
* If the board votes no, he has another proposal, but it will cost more.
* Although it’s not recommended, we have the funds to fix the stormwater problems and make improvements.
* The fields are integral to the stormwater, so you either do the fields or stormwater. If you do one, you’ve wasted that money if you come back and do the fields.
* Stantec was already permitted through South Florida Water Management District. Even if this moves forward, they’re not starting construction until November 2025.
* Our average timeline for getting through construction procurement, getting a contract and PO in hand to start work is 8½ months. Some projects took 12 months and that was for the lowest-cost bidder.
* We need to show the community what to expect.
* We still need a variance for this.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said he and Brian had a good meeting with Manny Turon, the soccer club president, and we showed him what to realistically expect. He understands and appreciated hearing that standpoint, including what areas we’re struggling with for procurement. He said that’s the first time he’s heard it from that standpoint.

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

* Manny knows we’re shutting down this field and there will be no fields there for this entire construction period because the county needs that land to stage the construction. Manny needs to start programming for that now. We discussed that and he understands.
* Parks & Rec is doing the legwork and reached out to Ave Maria but they didn’t have fields available. But they said once we know our schedule, to reach out to them again.
* Big Corkscrew isn’t the best or most-liked option, but making it available is an option.
* We’re looking at other options to accommodate sports when it’s closed.
* The CRA, other organizations and churches are being asked for options. The Boys & Girls Club is using a county Emergency Management System light on its field.
* We’re looking at putting a field in at Immokalee South Park as an easy solution and we’re working with several agencies to find a solution.
* Even if we acquired land, it would take about five years before we even broke ground. We had all the permitting to do it, so it’s this schedule, plus more permitting.
* The public doesn’t realize that it’s tough and there are many layers to projects. We’re working on providing full transparency for what that takes.
* We’ve put projects out for bid two, three and four times and no one bids and that continues to delay the construction process.
* Once you get past construction, this is an awesome project.
* We’ll also have some minor projects going on, such as utilities and an increase in the maintenance facility, which most likely won’t be adjacent to this.

***A discussion ensued about parking-lot restoration and the following points were made:***

* There are several Immokalee parking lots that are part of a restoration of parking lots capital project.
* The bid was put out and we’re waiting.
* It involves removal of many trees. Oak tree roots weren’t considered when the parking lots were built, so many parking spots are now raised up by roots.
* There’s a process to limit roots.
* The design is completed. It’s out for construction solicitation. This is the first step.
* There will be root barriers, but we’ll probably use palm trees, not oak trees.
* People value the shade from the oak trees.
* Native vegetation requires less maintenance and helps with the budget.
* Projects like this cost $600,000-$1 million and if you have to pull out oaks every 10 to 15 years, from a facilities and maintenance perspective, palm trees are better.
* Root barriers work somewhat well, but eventually they’re overcome. If you can offset the oaks 30-40 feet away from the parking lot, outside the span of the drip line, you can have pretty good success with root barriers.
* Root barriers do work inside a parking lot or a parking island.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said he will ensure that PARAB members get an update prior to the June meeting in Immokalee. He’ll speak to Ed and Dan to see who will be there.

**Ms. Laemel** requested a copy of the PowerPoint presentation.

***Action Item: Staff will provide the PARAB with an update before the June meeting and will send PARAB members the PPT from this presentation.***

1. **Parks & Recreation Logo**

# Mr. Hanrahan noted that Kristina Heuser, who brought this up, isn’t here today.

# *Ms. McPherson told the board:*

* Collier County finalized its new county logo.
* During the August 2023 PARAB meeting we talked about the logos and said we had to wait until the county redid its logo, which was a long process.
* The Collier County Parks & Recreation logo was developed in the mid-1990s and there were specific reasons for choosing the design and features.
* The parks logo is used to identify the Parks Division on entrance signs, literature, uniforms, etc., and the logo has good brand recognition
* Oour logo stacks up well within the parks and rec industry and has served us well.
* Unfortunately, it came to our attention that anything that we need to consider anything that impacts our mission. In 2007, WikiLeaks published a document showing that a triangular, blue, spiral-shape is used to represent boy pedophilia, which is not something we want associated with parks.
* A board member (Ms. Heuser) was concerned because it could be compared to our (yellow swirl) sun. Our logo predated the pedophilia logo but we have to have a message that represents our mission.
* We’re going to continue to investigate whether our logo should be updated and work with county agencies to develop possible action steps and costs.
* It would be fairly costly for us to completely adopt a new logo, but we’re going to determine if there are other things we can do because this is a great parks and recreation agency and the last thing we need is pedophile messaging.

# Pickleball Contract

# *Mr. Hanrahan reported:*

* This was directed by Commissioner McDaniel during the BCC meeting.
* Before Olema left Parks & Recreation, she decided to move forward on terminating the contract with our concessionaire, Naples Pickleball Center, NPC.
* All board members, except Eric, were here and had concerns about NPC’s presentation but it never came back to the PARAB. At the time, Parks & Rec didn’t want to terminate it yet because we didn’t know if the parks team could handle a facility that size so we wanted to work on the relationship and review the contract.
* This contract was written and signed in 2017 and had amendments. The original concessionaire, Jim Ludwig, (who organized the U.S. Open Pickleball Championships) sold it to Bob Strommen.
* The board wanted to look at the contract to see if it needs to be updated.
* If you have thoughts on the contract, clarity on gray areas or duties you feel a concessionaire should be doing, please give us your feedback.
* If there’s anything substantial, the County Attorney’s Office may say it can’t be added to the contract, or if the board feels strongly, we may need to go back out for bid.
* Your concerns can be as small as changing hours of operation or as big as changing the financial split, so he wants the PARAB to review it because you all come from different backgrounds.
* We’ve already had meetings and received recommendations from the community at Veterans Park and East Naples Park.
* County commissioners want to hear from the PARAB. He knows Mr. Dixon and others had concerns when we reviewed the Naples Grande contract, so commissioners want your input.
* If you need more time, email Miguel with your input, or we can discuss it now. We’re seeking your assistance.

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

* The biggest complaint from the public is that they can’t use the courts until after 12 p.m. daily, so why not change the schedule to allow the public to use the courts two days a week from 8 a.m. to noon?
* The public can use them from noon to 5 p.m.
* The board received a compilation of contracts since 2017.
* When this contract was signed, we did not have a $4 million Welcome Center. We’ve also had a substantial increase in FPL costs. The agreement listed it at $100 monthly.
* James and Sid will be meeting monthly about day-to-day operations to ensure we’re on the same page.
* Some of the community concerns we’ve heard are that someone was banned for speaking up.
* We ask the public to work with the concessionaire, but sometimes it escalates. Now we recommend that if someone is banned that they notify us and tell us the justification.
* There was some confusion and the County Attorney’s Office had to get involved when people thought they were trespassed from the park. Only the director of Parks & Recreation can trespass someone.
* We told them they were welcome to use the park from noon to 5 p.m. and on weekends but at this time, we had no say over other times because they’re not an NPC member.
* Another well-documented problem is late payments and bounced checks. They now use ACH direct deposit and no one can write checks. That’s worked out well.
* Cabana Dan has been a Vanderbilt Park concessionaire for over 20 years without any issues. The relationship works well, so we’re trying to make sure that when you represent the county, it’s in a way staff agrees with because it reflects on us. The public doesn’t differentiate who it is. They think it’s East Naples or the Pickleball Capital of the World, Parks & Rec.
* The concessionaire has an agreement to operate the park from 8 a.m. to noon and 5-8 p.m., Monday through Friday. Noon to 5 p.m. is county time for the public.
* The contract has an 85-15% split, with NPC getting 85%. The county wants to us to look at that.
* The alternative would be not to have a contract, the county would manage it and the public could play any time.
* We did that at Veterans Park and it’s working, but there are only 14 courts. This is a multi-million dollar business operation and our staff is limited so we felt a concessionaire was necessary and has the ability to do things staff can’t do.
* You don’t have to be a member, or you can pay fees to use the courts during organized activity play in the mornings.
* If there’s organized activity, that means the public doesn’t have a place to play. From noon to 5 p.m., the public can play, so it’s all open and accessible to the public.
* One of the biggest problems is that East Naples Park used to be a regional park for East Naples but since it became a world-class facility, the entire county and even people outside the county travel there to play.
* Pelican Bay Community Park’s upcoming improvements will help, but it’s only 20 courts, with 10 open to the public.
* There are many communities that can’t get pickleball because they’re built out so they have lawsuits and they’re trying to get them in.

**Mr. Hanrahan** introduced the audience member, Tom Despard, to the PARAB. He spoke before the BCC on Tuesday to cite some concerns with East Naples pathways. We just redid some pathways and some areas have an edge drop, which concerned him and it’s more than what’s allowed. The staff project management team and maintenance are working on it. Deputy County Manager Dan Rodriguez suggested that Mr. Despard come to the PARAB meeting to present his concerns and solutions. Once we finish this item, we’ll allow him to make his presentation.

**Mr. Hanrahan** encouraged the PARAB to make recommendations, such as changing public-use time, possibly allowing one day from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

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

* The contract involves an 85/15 split, with 85% of fees going to the concessionaire.
* The concessionaire is responsible for the nets, windscreens, etc.
* The county handles resurfacing. We paid almost $600,000 and in three years, our 15% share has only been $500,000 so we haven’t even covered what we spent on resurfacing courts.
* The county also takes care of landscaping, trash removal and everything else.
* NPC has exclusive access to the courts from 8 a.m. to noon. If NPC wants to do something from noon to 5 p.m., they’d have to rent from the county.
* If they want food and beverages, they’d have to have a health code inspection. They currently do not sell food or beverages, but have approved food trucks that staff vetted.
* Members want to see more of a food and coffee bar, especially in the mornings. Bob mentioned wanting to do that but if we get that approved, it has to go through the proper steps.
* It could operate out of the Welcome Center.
* The County Attorney believes the contract is good but Bob Strommen believes there are gray areas.
* Mr. Hanrahan had to go to the County Attorney’s Office or Olema to ask questions about public-use time. If you have your certification and want to teach pickleball, technically you should be able to do it just like someone coaching baseball so we need to ensure that’s addressed in the contract. Bob Strommen says that’s direct competition.
* We’re still a public park and when we had a basketball program, we rented the park out to others. Technically, they might be direct competition, but it’s a public space available for rent and it’s the same thing here, from noon to 5 p.m., so if you have your certificate of insurance and certifications, we have 66 courts available.
* We need to be good stewards of the assets rented out to the community because there’s a need and a demand. This is paid for by public funds. That’s the key.
* There are times now where there are 40-50 courts available so why not rent them out?
* They’re probably open because it’s too hot now.
* We need to make a list of the repairs and exactly what the county and NPC are responsible for because it’s a gray area.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said they’re taking this to the BCC on May 28. If the PARAB can send suggestions to Miguel, he could compile them, send them back to everyone and ask if you all agree. We’re going to take this to the County Attorney’s Office and the County Manager’s Office and tell them these are our initial thoughts, but we need time to dive into this.

***A discussion ensued between Vice Chair Fruth and Mr. Hanrahan and the following points were made:***

* The county pays for all of the court maintenance and isn’t setting aside money for maintenance.
* We need to resurface 20 courts every seven years and setting aside money isn’t happening now. NPC is reaping all the benefits on that side.
* The U.S. Open is separate from the day-to-day operations concessionaire.
* The U.S. Open contract was only extended one year so if we want to look at that, we can provide input. That’s a tourism-CVB (Convention & Visitors Bureau) contractor that uses our facility.
* It’s good that the CVB and Deputy County Manager Dan Rodriguez are allowing us to provide more input to say there are things we’d like to see in the contract.
* The county should at least break even on the resurfacing because HOAs do. Every 20 years, we know we have to pave the roads. There’s a feasibility study that proves that. It sets the cost and escalating costs, so the same should be done for courts.
* It depends on use, but they need to be redone every five to eight years.
* This isn’t like a community of about 100 people.
* Mr. Atkinson said they recommend resurfacing courts every three to five years.
* The county needs to have a fund set aside for X amount.

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

* Mr. Kelly’s club redoes the court every three years.
* The PARAB found that NPC’s financials didn’t line up.
* That’s on the OVS (Office of Veterans Services) side, and they’re keeping up with that. When Olema came in that was one of the first things she asked about.
* Jeannine rewrote that section. She said it was every month.
* The U.S. Open contract with Terri Graham and Chris Evon ends in a year, but the contract for Bob Bowman and Mike Dee (Pickleball4America, which merged with Terry’s and Chris’s company) ends in 2025.
* They’re working with the Tourism Division and the County Manager’s Office and allowing the parks director to provide input.
* If the PARAB has contract recommendations, please give them to Mr. Hanrahan.

***Mr. Hanrahan told the PARAB:***

* We can prioritize your recommendations.
* He’s going to use Eric’s, Josh’s and Lee’s professional expertise.
* This has been put together piecemeal, with a Welcome Center recently added.
* What does the Pickleball Capital of the World look like in five years, 10 years?
* Maybe we’ve been short sighted because pickleball centers are popping up everywhere.
* We want to stay relevant.
* What money and construction capital do we need and what engineering is needed?

**Mr. Kelly** said in racket sports, padel is starting to pick up. It’s like pickleball. We’ve got to think about tennis, which will always be here after pickleball. They keep wanting to cover tennis courts but it’s got to stop. We need to keep an eye on all racquet sports because pickleball is still popular, but it’s probably not going to be forever once people realize how bad pickleball is for their knees, the orthopedics needs and ambulances coming daily.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said this is still growing. If you want to play professional basketball, you have the NBA and some minor and major leagues with sanctioned tours and tournaments. Some aren’t sanctioned, some have pros, others don’t. This is still growing to where there isn’t one body overseeing this, like NCAA requirements. You’re seeing more structure but there are still many hands and a lot of money tapping into because it can still be molded.

***A discussion ensued and Mr. Hanrahan said Jim Ludlow trademarked Pickleball Capital of the World for Collier County and that was once a Jeopardy question.***

**Mr. Hanrahan** said the PARAB is encouraged to look at this from a standpoint of what makes sense for our community and the government and to use your expertise to determine what fits.

***The PARAB agreed to provide Miguel with suggestions by Tuesday, May 21, and Mr. Hanrahan said he’d email Kristina Heuser and Lee Dixon for their suggestions.***

**Mr. Hanrahan** said that in 2017, this was just starting and growing. There weren’t as many courts. We had 20 and kept adding and converting the tennis courts, the rink, soccer fields, a parking lot and now we have 66.

# Public Comments

**Tom Despard, a civil engineer from Isles of Capri, told the PARAB:**

* He’s a biker and appreciates Collier County’s parks and what Parks & Rec is doing.
* When they put three to four inches of paving over existing paving, it raised it up and caused edges that affect wheelchairs, baby carriages, walkers, joggers and bikers.
* He’s had bike accidents and doesn’t want another going off the edge, so he brought this issue to several staff members and commissioners.
* He just spoke to the Board of County Commissioners during public comments and it appears that parks personnel will try to put sand around it. That helps but it’s not a lot of sand. He assumes they’ll put some soil or sod in. The same thing happened at East Naples Park.
* He recommends that the edges be milled down. He’s a civil engineer and has been a builder all his life so he’s dealt with many paving and paving issues.
* This is too much paving. Then you have to put through the sides because it’s not structural. You need a smooth surface.
* If a park trail is shot, we used to take up the paving and put new paving down so you didn’t have that issue.
* You can patch, you can scarify (mill) and patch it and put a warning sign on it.
* He spoke to Dan Rodriguez about it after the meeting and Dan suggested that he address the PARAB. He can answer any questions for the PARAB.
* He doesn’t recommend putting that much paving on top of existing paving.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said Parks & Rec appreciates the feedback. We have staff working on it and the project manager is moving forward so that can be part of the scope when we put it out to bid.

**Mr. Despard** said if a contractor does the work, it can be done all at once.

**Mr. Hanrahan** introduced him to Dane Atkinson and said he’s a project manager. We were looking to save money on the front end but hadn’t considered that.

**Mr. Despard** said he’s ridden that trail for seven years and doesn’t remember it being in such bad shape before.

***A discussion ensued and Mr. Hanrahan mentioned a few projects and introduced Mr. Despard to Ms. Scott.***

# Staff Reports

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

(No report)

***Region 2 – Kory Swinderman***

* He’s filling in for Said Gomez, who is on vacation.
* We’re wrapping up our swim central lessons changes with VPK schools and some county sites, so aquatic staff is working with the children. We served over 100 VPK participants in April and May.
* We currently have swim lessons on Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays, with about 55 participants for May. We’re getting ready to end that.
* We just finished our Pool Fiesta, a special event that partnered with Eagle Lakes Community Park. There were over 200 participants there on Sunday, May 6.
* We have a lifeguard class because we’re in desperate need of lifeguards. They will be held on Saturdays and Sundays, May 11-12 and May 18-19. We have eight participants and will finish next week so we have summer pool staff.
* In athletics, we have soccer tournaments on Tuesday nights in May and had over 35 participants.
* We have two Friday night baseball clinics that have been a huge success.
* We had 8-10 participants for PeeWee basketball this session. He runs that and we’re getting ready to wrap up.
* We start All Stars next month and in June and July, the fields will close for soccer, softball and baseball.
* Public schools start to come next week, May 20, so we’ll start having different schools visit our parks throughout the day and we’ll be well-staffed.
* Some improvements we’re working on include our pool, well, chillers and heaters. They’re currently down, but we’re getting them fixed so we will have cool water for the summer. Without those, it would be very hot and that was a concern.
* At Golden Gate Community Center, Ray just completed his youth basketball for ages 8-11 in April. He’s getting ready to start his new volleyball clinic in for May for kids ages 8-11. The Peewee All Star session, which he’s running, will be for kids 4-6.
* He’s got some contracted evening classes for judo, karate and Zumba.
* He’s getting ready for summer camp, so he’s been working hard at getting all the counselors and getting them prepped for the summer.
* At Max Hasse Park, they just had their 5th grade dance and it was their largest group ever, with 75 kids.
* They’re preparing for the yard sale on May 18 and are prepping for summer camp.
* Their dance classes will be on May 17. They will run from noon to 7 p.m.
* After-school programs are getting ready to end on May 31 and that leads us into the summer. Field maintenance is coming up soon.
* The AIR program across from Golden Gate Community Park partnered with 20 local organizations and did their Easter Eggs-Travaganza event, which served over 200 families with special needs.
* They expanded the AIR program to Big Corkscrew Regional Park and held their first class on April 12, the Recycle Art Class, one of our current programs. Current programs include bike sports, parent-toddler fun, drawing and painting.
* In May, they’re preparing for summer. They’ve expanded into NCRP, where the AIR2 Camp focuses on inclusive therapeutic recreation. Programs in May include parent-toddler fun.

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

* She oversees eastern Collier County, which is Corkscrew Island Regional Park, Immokalee South Park, Immokalee Community Park and Immokalee Sports Complex.
* We’ve made a lot of progress in Immokalee. Sidewalk repairs were completed at Immokalee South Park and the Sports Complex, which needed repairs due to several trip hazards identified by our Risk Department.
* We’re in the final stages of completing the Immokalee South Park playground. We’re waiting on a final CO (certificate of occupancy) and everything’s installed. Once we get the final permit, we’ll have a brand new playground.
* The Facilities Department has been diligently working on the new multipurpose room. The carpet was removed from the walls, they completed the indoor women’s restroom and they’re about to complete the indoor men’s room and will move on to the outdoor restrooms. They’ll be fixing some plumbing issues and adding updates. Kory’s Park, Vets and Vineyards were redone recently.
* Fitness has been a big concern. We fixed the mirror at the Sports Complex.
* We’re waiting on two pieces of equipment, parts of the Smith Machine.
* A cable machine broke last week so someone will arrive to look at that tomorrow. We hope we can repair the cable.
* We’re in the process of a major purchase order for new equipment to replace the 18 treadmills. The treadmills have a deck you can flip once. They’ve all been flipped and we always have problems with those terminals.
* Our staff and facilities staff have been doing a lot of painting in the fitness center, so it looks really nice. They’ve also been redoing all the tiles.
* We had a great conversation with Manny, the soccer coach, last week. He’s happy with how things have been going. They just ended their season and the fields are closing, so all of our youth sports agreements are in the final stages, except for baseball. Those fields are usually open a bit longer than our multi-purpose fields. Soccer and football are pretty much done across the county now.
* We are hoping to get our new sports agreement finalized by the BCC on May 28 so it will be a big day for parks, so please watch the board meeting. Then we’ll be meeting to talk about the new contract.
* Big Corkscrew is getting a new fitness pad. It was recently put out to bid, but we only got one bid so we’re putting it out again to get a better idea on whether it was a realistic bid. They’re hoping to have that in by January.
* We’re moving forward on plans for Phase 2 at Corkscrew. They started construction on the road from Oil Well Road to the back side of the park. We’ve been in design for the dog park and the nature trails that are part of Phase 2. We’re in the final stages of getting those in design so we’ll be able to start to work.
* We have community mini libraries that look like a giant bird box. One was installed recently near the Big Corkscrew playground. Veterans Community Park had a similar project that was put in this spring, so those mini libraries are popping up more.

***Region 4 [Randi Swinderman]***

* Region 4 is Vineyards, Veterans, and North Collier Regional Park.
* We’ve seen a decline in pickleball at Veterans Park. It’s starting to slow down mostly due to heat. Many people have already moved and they suspended their pickleball committee meetings until September or October. Many returned home and said there wasn’t much to talk about. Shannon will be starting those meetings again this fall.
* At Vineyards, they fixed the pump for the splash pad, which kids had missed.
* We’re doing a survey now, so tell people to visit the park to see what they would like, if they’d still like to continue having a splash pad, or if they’d rather have a bigger playground or another amenity. We’re looking for community feedback.
* North Collier athletics are finishing up their major tournaments for the season. They have several camps renting space there for the summer, so they shift from being a nighttime place to a daytime place for the summer.
* They’re running a sports camp that’s full. They’ve booked 25 kids each week.
* Big Corkscrew is running a summer sports camp. They have a big baseball tournament and we’re already booking for next tournament season and have dates for April.
* We’re excited about the utilization. We’re looking at redoing some scheduling to ensure that staff has enough time to get prepared for Friday night tournaments.
* Friday Night Lights is crazy. There are about 4,000 people on the fields. We’re moving back to Monday and Thursday nights so hopefully we’ll have better scheduling for staff on our fields, rather than that quick turnover from Friday to Saturday.
* RecPlex is offering evening fitness classes. That’s been a public demand we’ve tried to address recently. Pretty much every night we offer at least one class there.
* We’re in the process of getting basketball hoops.
* They started a Saturday program for volleyball on Saturdays. They have great turnout. It’s open volleyball and you can just stop in. They’ve had great demand for that.
* Sun-N-Fun staff has been helping out at Big Corkscrew. They’re offering Hydro Tone Water Aerobics there.
* We’re having some staffing changing so they’ve assisted with bringing staff up to speed and helping out where needed. We appreciate having them at that location.
* The front desk staff also has been helping at Big Corkscrew and probably will be helping at Eagle Lakes.

**Ms. Laemel** asked about redoing the walkways. Are there issues there like (Mr. Despard) brought up?

**Ms. Swinderman** said a bit but our maintenance department has been diligently working there to try to level things out, so we appreciate him making us aware of that. We noticed that on some paths, so our maintenance team is trying to address it.

**Mr. Despard** said another issue is that it sometimes affects erosion. If it gets too high, then the water can’t get from here to there so keep it down if you can.

**Chairman Olesky** asked how long it would take for the new equipment to arrive.

**Ms. Swinderman** said it’s in procurement now. We are trying to get a PO. That moves slowly.

**Chairman Olesky** asked about the poles being torn down at the high school for Dreamland.

**Ms. Swinderman** said the CRA has taken over Dreamland planning and Parks & Rec is working with them. They’re supposed to contact the school. It’s a 1994 agreement so we’re looking at redoing that but we need their permission. They agreed to move the pole. She can ask Christie where they are. She thought it was done, but they are looking into it.

***Action Item: Ms. Swinderman will ask staff what the status is with pole removal at the high school and provide that information to Chairman Olesky.***

# *Region 5 [Sidney Kittila]*

* Region 5 covers Donna Fiala Eagle Lakes Park, East Naples Community Park and Southern Regional.
* The Pool Fiesta was on May 5th and Eagle Lakes Aquatics worked with Golden Gate Aquatics and over 62 people attended.
* VPK graduations will be at the end of the month, but Eagle Lakes’ graduation is May 23rd and all the kids will be done. Our VPK teacher recently scored very high. You get graded yearly and she got 6.58 out of 7. We gave Rebeca and Yudi kudos and thanked them for a job well done.
* Waves of Strength Aquatic class started at Eagle Lakes and they’ve got eight participants. They had two or three and so that’s exciting because Eagle Lakes is hard to program for at times to get people in so they’re doing an event with Golden Gate again. We try to do a lot of collaborations because they work out well.
* They’re going to have a fun event where EMS will come out and show how to do CPR and other things. They’ll have different safety stations for kids and parents.
* It helps when we collaborate with other parks on events.
* They’re also getting ready for summer camp. All the parks are getting ready.
* The Mentos U.S. Open was just held from April 14-20. It’s called the Tournament for the People and all 50 states were represented, in addition to 31 countries. We had people from as far as Zimbabwe and France. She hadn’t realized how much of an impact the tournament has. Ages ranged from 8 to 88 years old. About 50,000 people watched and it also was televised.
* We have new organizers coming on board, Bob and Mike. Terry and Chris, who run it, do an excellent job and this was their last year. The courts were beaten to death, some more than others because they’re used so much.
* They had adaptive sailing and skiing on Saturdays and are getting ready to wrap up because of summer camp. That program is also for veterans in the Wounded Warriors program on Wednesdays. Everybody is helpful, and veterans are helping veterans.
* We used Sugden park during the U.S. Open so there was a lot of coordination. There’s a back gate people at East Naples can use to get to Sugden. We parked 1,500-2,000 cars at Sugden because that’s how much extra parking was needed. We had to coordinate and drive, a lot of coordination.
* We’re still doing skiing and sailing private lessons, but they’re focusing on the 42 sailboats and two ski boats that they’re getting ready and cleaning for summer programs, which are pretty full. They have amazing volunteers who help when needed. There are only three on staff now because we lost one, Phillip, who left for a career with EMS. His last day is Friday and we wish him well.

**Operations Report**

***Ms. McPherson reported:***

* We’re very busy and there aren’t many of us so we’re always working on something.
* We’re excited to work with the Junior Leader program and get them onboarded so they can use the skills they learned in the training program. Because it’s a leadership program, we give them the opportunity to volunteer as unpaid summer interns through our summer program. Her team is responsible for onboarding them and getting all the necessary forms filled out.
* The AUIR (Annual Update & Inventory Report) is coming up and we’re working on that. It’s a concurrency report where we ensure we’re following level of service standards that we agreed to in our Growth Management Plan.
* We’re working on accreditation and other issues.

**Mr. Hanrahan** asked if anyone had questions for Jeanine.

**Ms. Laemel** said she’s trying to find a home for a grand piano so if anyone knows someone who needs one, or a community center that does, please contact her.

# Director’s Report [James Hanrahan]

***Mr. Hanrahan reported:***

* We posted Rick Garby’s superintendent of maintenance position, so he will keep the PARAB posted on the status. If you know anyone who might be interested, please encourage them to apply.
* They haven’t posted Olema’s position. He’s now officially interim director and is managing with the help of his team. Everyone has stepped up to help.
* He and Miguel are looking at vacant positions. We need approval to get them posted. We’ve been able to get approval for all the maintenance positions because that involves health, safety and beautification of the parks.
* We just got approved to fill all the summer aquatics positions.
* He’s making sure that upper management is aware that Great Wolf Lodge is opening in September. That will be direct competition for staff so we need to be thinking creatively on what that looks like. We don’t have to immediately raise rates and pay to combat it, but we do need to be creative about what that looks like. Great Wolf Lodge is an indoor, air-conditioned water park and last year was one of the hottest summers, so we need to be proactive here.
* He, Brian and Dane made a presentation to the County Manager’s Office about Sun-N-Fun’s needs. We don’t have a final decision, but there’s a lot of procurement and construction going on. He will update the PARAB once he gets more information.
* If Sun-N-Fun does open this summer it will be a delayed opening. Brian and Dane are doing the best they can under the circumstances. Our messaging now is that it’s closed until further notice. We’re pushing people to visit Big Corkscrew. Staff will be prepared to take on an increase in patrons at other parks.
* We held a two-day workshop offsite. He took the regional managers and Jeanine to take a deep dive to determine what Parks & Rec’s core services are. What are the things we’re doing? Do we have employees in the right place to be successful? We’re still working through it. Miguel is putting together pages of notes of ideas that will be put into action and practice. He will present that to the PARAB.
* The BCC is working on zero-based budgeting. What does that look like for parks? How does that impact programming? How does that impact how we partner with outside groups? Does the 85-15% split still make sense for contracts we’ve had in place for 10-15 years? We took a holistic, in-depth look at what we do and had honest conversations about what operations provides, what regional managers do, etc. He’ll provide the PARAB with more information on that later.
* We talked about what makes sense for the division and moving forward. He’s proud of the team. We’re down a significant number of people but you can’t tell. We’re tired, but we keep moving. He tells them that work-life balance is important. That’s why Said was able to go to Greece.
* We can only be as good to the community as we are to ourselves so we’re making sure we take care of each other.
* As we move forward, he needs input from the PARAB and for you to report any concerns you see, including whether you see problems when visiting parks, as you have reported in the past. He needs their expertise. There are going to be tough conversations about the future of the parks.

# IX. Adjournment

# Next Meeting Date:

# June 19, 2024, 6 p.m. – Immokalee South Park 418 School Drive, Immokalee

**There being no further business for the good of the county, the meeting was adjourned by order of the chairman at 4:01 p.m.**

**COLLIER COUNTY**

**PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Edward “Ski” Olesky, Chairman**

These minutes were approved by the board on , (check one) as presented, \_\_ or as amended \_\_\_.