MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Naples, Florida

March 20, 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 6 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 (excused due to conflict)

Jessica Bergel

Lee Dixon

Rebecca Gibson-Laemel

Kristina Heuser

Eric Kelly

Donna Fiala (excused/alternate)

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

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

Dayne Atkinson, Principal Project Mgr., Public Services

Said Gomez, Region 2 and 5 Interim Parks Manager

Randi Swinderman, Region 3 and 4 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. 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.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said Ms. Edwards is still out on FMLA so he will lead the meeting today.

**Chairman Olesky** said one of the things that we discussed during the last meeting is making sure the public understands what PARAB is.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said theynow have a statement that we will say at the beginning of each meeting for the public:

*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.*

**Mr. Hanrahan** told the board that Miguel put the statement together.

*[Board members thanked Miguel and asked that it be inserted into their manual.]*

# Approval of the Agenda

***Ms. Dixon moved to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Ms. Laemel. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.***

# Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

**Ms. Heuser** said that at the end of the last meeting, the public was promised that the county would provide them with a written plan the following month, but that’s not reflected in the minutes and it’s important to be recorded so somebody could share that.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said the county is currently working on that plan and he believes they will hold a special meeting for Immokalee to provide that update.

**Ms. Heuser** said that’s great and asked if they had a time frame.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said we’re working on it. The Facilities Department and County Manager’s Office are working on that long term, the fields and other needs. In the short term, we helped get more lights, as Commissioner McDaniel directed, and have quotes ready, if necessary, to get additional lights. Our Emergency Management team helped get us some lights for now.

**Ms. Laemel** asked for an update on equipment, such as the three treadmills, that weren’t working.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said Fitnessmith is coming out and Randi will detail more about that in her report. Fitnessmith is a fitness company that works on equipment. They came out and identified which ones they can do now and the others are on backorder. The ones that they can execute on now, they’re going to do. He, Randi and the RecPlex supervisor went out there to talk to staff to see what new equipment we have. We’ve already requested $80,000 worth of new equipment and are waiting for approval to ensure the contract pricing matches. Then we’ll move forward.

**Ms. Laemel** said at the last meeting, she made a motion to urge the Board of County Commissioners to pay more attention to the needs of Immokalee. What’s the status of that?

**Mr. Hanrahan** said Commissioner McDaniel has been a great supporter of that. During many one-on-one meetings with the commissioners, Immokalee is on the top of the list of conversations, so Commissioner McDaniel is championing that.

**Ms. Laemel** said that’s great because she was wondering if there was anything else we can do individually, whether we need to go to a Board of County Commissioners to support that. She’d do it, if necessary.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said he’ll make them aware through Tanya Williams, Dan Rodriguez and the County Manager’s Office, all the way to the commissioners, that PARAB is willing to help and support in any way necessary.

***Ms. Laemel moved to approve the February 21, 2024, meeting minutes, as amended. Ms. Bergel seconded it. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.***

# New Business

# Appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman

***Ms. Heuser moved to reappoint Ski Olesky as chairman and Josh Fruth as vice chair. Ms. Laemel seconded it. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.***

# Mr. Hanrahan thanked Chairman Olesky for agreeing to again serve as chairman.

# Summer Camp

# *Ms. Swinderman detailed a PowerPoint presentation and reported:*

* Part of her responsibilities is to oversee the summer camp program. This year’s theme is Summer of Games.
* Connect Four is about friendship. They’re making friendship bracelets that week and doing puzzles to show how they’re all connected together.
* With Monopoly, they’ll talk about railroads, trains, the use of money. Those are good life skills they’ll introduce to the kids.
* For Hungry, Hungry Hippos, they’ll talk about animals, the Amazon and zoo. They have a cute game with little boards on wheels and baskets with plastic balls and they have to try to get the balls and bring them back to their side.
* There are themed games. We pushed staff this year to complete all their curriculums by March 1st. There are several games that deal with the theme of crafts and activities.
* For Clue, they’ll go on scavenger hunts and have to figure out mind puzzles.
* For Uno, we’ll introduce Spanish and Latin culture in different games worldwide.
* Battleship is about the Navy, ships and submarines, so they’ll talk about the armed forces and local heroes.
* Operation will be about health and wellness, which is something we strive for. In the game, you’re poking things out, but they’ll learn why it’s important to exercise and have healthy habits.
* Jumanji is an adventure week, so we’ll play color wars. Each group will have a different color and can earn points. At the end of the week, the winner gets a special prize.
* Week 9 is Goodbye. Many campers come every day during the summer, which is what’s special about our summer camps. They see the same kids so we really try to work on relationships and core values while they’re in camp.
* She listed the camp locations. Starred locations are full. Vineyards sold out within one minute of online registration. There were 107 spots. Big Corkscrew is at capacity this year and will have about 205 campers. There are still spots available for preschool camp and sports camp at Big Corkscrew, but we believe they have 54 people on their regular camp waiting list, so they probably will go into sports camp. It’s a new camp and it shows the need in that area, a place for kids to go.
* Ski camp and sail camp sold out. A lot of our camps in Region 4 sold out within hours because we’re very affordable. If you sign up for nine weeks of summer camp, it’s $600 for the summer. Her sister in Ohio might pay that for one week for her two kids, so ours are very affordable. We have aftercare available. That goes from 7 a.m. until camp starts at 9 a.m. and then from 5-6 p.m. and those are filling up.
* We have some new camps this summer that we’re excited about. Immokalee is doing a sports camp. In the past, they had a relationship with the Boys & Girls Club and for two weeks, our staff was in charge of running camp. The Boys & Girls Club decided this year that they didn’t want to continue with that agreement so our staff said they would run their own summer camp.
* We used to have a low ratio at this location. The point of that camp is for kids who need a smaller setting because they may be overstimulated by 200 kids in a camp. They could come to this camp, but it wasn’t being used for that. The kids who were coming here had parents who worked nearby, so it was convenience. We restructured that this year and it’s called AIR2 (adaptive, inclusive recreation transition out of…). That worked because there was another one that used to fill up within minutes and we only took 40 kids. There are 10 spots still open.
* When we have kids who don’t fit in the camp they’re in, we can switch them to this camp so they’ll get more attention.
* (Ms. Laemel asked what the maximum was.) The maximum is 40, but our normal ratio is one counselor for 15 campers and for this one it’s one counselor to 10 campers.
* Big Corkscrew is offering middle school camp for the first time. It’s already full with 30 kids.
* The middle school camp at North Collier has a wait list of about 20 so that’s very full. There’s a huge need for team programming in this area. We don’t offer a lot outside of sports so it’s a great opportunity at five locations this year.
* Eagle Lakes also is offering a new four-week sports camp.
* What do the kids do when they’re here? They go on a lot of field trips. Sports camp is different. They went to Topgolf last year and they’re planning on returning this year. They usually go to Hammond Stadium for a baseball game. The Muscles usually do a summer game and invite all the local camps. There are lots of crafts and themed games. The kids love the food experience, especially teens. They sometimes make food. If they’re studying animals, they’ll make something that looks like a rabbit using food. We’re working with Texas Roadhouse to have our teen groups or sports camps go there. They’re going to volunteer to go on that field trip.
* We’re lucky because other local agencies are willing to come, like Road & Bridge, IFAS or 4-H. They’ll do projects with the kids. She noted a photo of a boy who branded cattle at the Pioneer Museum at Roberts Ranch last year. Immokalee kids are in smaller camps, so we can transport them in vans and they can get around more easily. We’ll also take them to Pepper Ranch and they can go fishing.

# We’re currently hiring. We’re looking for people with high energy, but also some who may not be super outgoing, possibly more reserved, because we want to fit the personalities of the kids and not everybody responds to the same type of personality. They need to be creative and enjoy the outdoors. They’re outside 8-9 hours a day and not everybody realizes that when they sign up for summer camp. For AIR, we want more specialized people who have an interest in working with unique abilities. We need to fill positions in two AIR camps.

# Mr. Kelly asked if staff was a problem. Did you have trouble last year when it was hot?

# Ms. Swinderman said yes and no. We compete with a lot of summer camps at the same time and are working on our hiring process because we were hiring right before camp. We’re working through those issues. Being outside all day as opposed to working inside a Target that pays more also affects our hiring. We’re trying to work with our HR Department to get out and recruit. A lot of camps were very fortunate, such as Veterans, because many counselors are coming back. There were 15 applications for Big Corkscrew and many were returning.

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

# Not many teachers apply, partly due to our lower salary and they want a break from the kids for the summer. But we have hired a few teachers and they were amazing.

# The starting pay is $15.58.

# The day is usually 8-9 hours, with a 40-hour week.

# Ms. Laemel asked her to send the flyer about hiring and the job descriptions to board members so they could give it to others or place it inside HOA flyers.

# Ms. Swinderman said she’d give it to Miguel to send to everyone.

# *Action Item: Miguel will send the summer camp hiring and job description flyer to board members.*

**U.S. Open Pickleball Championships update**

***Mr. Hanrahan provided an update:***

* The championships will be held at East Naples Community Park from April 13-20.
* Since 2016, this has been a tourism event using East Naples park and it’s been amazing over the years.
* This year, they have over 3,000 participants and a long waiting list because it’s an international event involving professionals and amateurs, a great mixture.
* It is not a sanctioned event.
* The current owners, Terri Graham and Chris Evon, sold the event to another group so this will be their last year. It’s been purchased by Mike Dee and Bob Bowman, who have been working with Dan and Tanya to continue that relationship and foster a new relationship with the new owners.
* They come from a professional sports background. Mike Dee used to be in the front office for the Red Sox, the Dolphins and the San Diego Padres, Major League Baseball, as well as the NFL. Bob Bowman was very high up with ESPN Media.
* What they want for the future is to expand on how we interact with the attendees. They understand it’s a tourism event, but we want to focus on the locals, as well, so they’ve had several conversations with us about that.
* They want to do championship court enhancements, extend U.S. Open activities, expand the national broadcast, commence work on a long-term master plan and funding strategy.
* They’re not going to come in and demand money from the county. They want to see what that looks like as a partnership, what it looks like from Spirit Promotions, which owns the U.S. Open, and the county.
* Let him know if you’re interested in watching this event. This is by far one of the most comprehensive events we have and people fly in from all over the world.
* They work with Avalon School next door on the Friday before the event. They teach them and let them watch, so they’re already engaged with the local community.
* Some of the world’s top pickleball players live around here. Kyle Gates from Fort Myers, one of the top five players, interviewed him. He has a large following.
* He and Randi met with a man who wants to provide free lessons during summer camps, and we’ve identified Immokalee as a place to introduce them to the sport because it’s inexpensive and easy to master.
* Kudos to Rick’s team, which does a great job fixing up the facility before the event. Terri and Chris say it’s never looked better leading into a tournament.
* Rain comes through the shade structure and sits and doesn’t dry out, so we’re looking into that and other ways to make the facility better.

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

* There is no room at East Naples to build more courts. We have 66 courts, the most in the nation.
* The parking areas all fill up. We’re working with the concessionaire to ensure their employees park in the right spots.
* The new owners are local and care about the local community.
* We gave up two soccer fields for pickleball and haven’t given them back to the public.
* We have four more new courts.
* We have groups demanding more pickleball courts and others, like Immokalee, that want more fields for soccer, lacrosse and football. We also need more diamonds.
* We’re currently looking at our inventory for traditional sports because we have 20 more courts coming to Pelican Bay Community Park.
* Groups are asking for more space and we’re listening to the community.
* Veterans Community Park has 14 pickleball courts and Big Corkscrew has six.
* Sports tournament promoters want to have everything in one location, which is why Paradise Coast Sports Complex was built.
* The Tourist Development Council (TDC) sent us an email to see if we needed anything. But Rick last year worked on a great budget and was able to save money if additional enhancements were needed. Because he was so frugal last year, we had that available. But the TDC does step in.
* The demand in Immokalee is not for pickleball. They hate it. Their focus is on rectangular fields, baseball and softball fields. The community needs are different. But this group will offer free pickleball lessons to introduce them to it. Immokalee kids can be driven in small vans to Big Corkscrew for an introduction to pickleball.
* We want kids to be exposed to other sports and opportunities, not just football, basketball, soccer and baseball. There’s tennis, pickleball, hockey and golf and there are scholarship opportunities.

# Aquatic Facilities Update [Dayne Atkinson]

# *Mr. Atkinson detailed a PowerPoint presentation on pending projects:*

* The main focus is Sun-N-Fun Lagoon, Immokalee and Golden Gate.
* Sun-N-Fun’s Splash Pad is the main project. The drains have to be redone. It’s a compliance issue with the BBG Act, which regulates that with DOH. It prevents people from being sucked down into the drain. The structure has to be rebuilt with something like a safety cage underneath it. We’re in the design process, which should be completed by the end of the month. Construction will start in the fall. We’re not out of compliance, but this will enhance compliance.
* NCRP’s tower has rusting issues. It’s 16 years old and some braces and bolts are rusted so we had an engineer there in February who will provide a report at the end of this month on the structure’s integrity. The report will show us how to proceed. This was brought up in our last inspection and it’s something that we needed to address.
* The pumps and motors run the park and are the heart of the park. A lot of pumps are past their use and are 15-16 years old. We just had all five pumps pulled out of Pump House 3, which controls the Lazy River. All are now being rehabbed and they should be back by the end of April.
* Pump House 1, the filtration, has a DOH compliance issue. There’s a certain throughput we need in gallons to maintain compliance so we’re ordering seven new pumps that we hope to install by June 1. There’s a long lead time on pumps.
* The Pump House 3 pumps are the big pumps, 75, 100 and 150 horsepower. We’re getting new pumps. The cost of a new pump is at least $150,000 each.
* The pumps in Pump House 1 are cheaper, $20,000 each and we ordered seven.

**Mr. Dixon** asked if we can double the speed of the Lazy River.

**Mr. Darby** said we can.

**Mr. Atkinson** said the pumps there now are 50 HP pumps, which meet the minimum requirement. We’re replacing those with 60 HP pumps with 75 horsepower VFDs, which should give us a little more push in the Lazy River, making it a little less lazy.

# *Mr. Atkinson continued his presentation:*

* Golden Gate aquatics. The big push here is we did the design and then looked at the slides, which were old and don’t look good. We just got the engineer’s proposal back and it adds construction of new slides. The infrastructure underneath the slides looked old and had a lot of leaks, rusting stairs, brackets and bolts. The proposal is in and we’re working with the engineer to get a PO for design.
* We “marcited” the pool and added a new diving board, so it will look like a new facility when we’re done.
* This is the conceptual design and we’re working with the engineer on his work order. This is tied to the fields, so a final decision on how to proceed with the soccer fields probably won’t move forward until that’s done. The pool filtration system is tied to stormwater, which is tied to what we do with the turf fields. They’re all interconnected because the site is technically out of compliance with the current code.
* We won’t get fined because it’s grandfathered in, but as we make upgrades, we have to bring this item into compliance, which ties into the stormwater being upgraded. Once we decide what we’re doing with the turf fields, that will bring everything all together.
* The red circle indicates what we’re currently permitted for. Every time it rains, this area gets flooded between the fields and it holds water. That’s why the fields don’t drain properly. That’s how it was designed 50 years ago. It’s a bad design now but it was designed to do that 50 years ago. We have to change this so our stormwater is treated differently.

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

* The Immokalee community was promised afinalized, written plan within 30 days of the February 21 meeting and tomorrow is a month.
* Mr. Hanrahan will talk to Tanya and Dan to check the status. There were larger discussions with the County Manager’s Office and our team will be briefed when they have that information.
* For now, we’ve been tasked with getting the lights and ensuring that the Sports Complex is up to par. Rick’s team did a great job.
* He’ll ask Tanya if there’s an update and Miguel will provide it to the PARAB.
* TheCRA and the Dreamland initiative are tied into this. They’re trying to tie everything together into one comprehensive plan.
* It’s important that the Immokalee community knows action is ongoing.
* We’ll reach out to the big players in the community to tell them the status.
* Commissioner McDaniel needs to be in the loop because he takes the brunt of the heat. He was completely kept out of the discussions when the funding for the last plan was yanked and was caught off guard. That’s not fair.
* Mr. Hanrahan isn’t involved in the one-on-ones with the County Manager’s Office and the commissioners, but he believes they’re making sure they’re communicating with Immokalee. They have one-on-ones on Mondays before the Tuesday BCC meetings. After this meeting, he will ask Tanya about the status.
* Where do you direct the angry people? Some heard PARAB shouldn’t be a target, but some had already made decisions to vent at us. They were told that this board advises the BCC.
* PARAB should be taken more seriously by staff and the BCC. Some of our recommendations are heard and others are ignored because they made their decision.
* We asked Naples Grande to bring the agreement back to us first, but it went to the BCC for a final decision. That was a slap in the face to this board. That has to stop.

***Action Item: When the finalized, written plan for the Immokalee community is completed, Miguel will send it to the PARAB.***

# Meeting Calendar Approval

***Mr. Rojas reported that:***

* Last year’s schedule ends next month, when we’ll be at Vineyards Community Park.
* He created a new schedule and provided it in the agenda packet.
* Are board members still interested in meeting at a different park every other month? We haven’t visited a majority of these parks, so that’s why they’re on the list.
* All Immokalee meetings are set for 6 p.m., at their request.
* We can make changes. Once we approve the schedule, he’ll forward it to all the supervisors to ensure the rooms are booked for the year.

**Chairman Olesky** asked for a motion and noted that we often haven’t met in December.

**Ms. Laemel** said it’s close to the holidays and when the time comes, we can cancel if we decide to.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said it’s good to have it there in case there are any major issues we need to address as a team.

***Ms. Laemel moved to approve the 2024-2025 PARAB meeting schedule. Mr. Kelly seconded it. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.***

# Public Comments

(None)

# Staff Reports

# Mr. Hanrahan said he’s proud of Randi and Said because they’re both handling two regions for now due to vacancies.

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

(No report)

***Region 2 – Said Gomez***

(see 5 below)

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

* Lights at the Community Park and Sports Complex are on until 10 p.m. every night.
* We need to replace all six treadmills. They have a deck in them and you can flip it once and we’ve already flipped them and still have continuous problems, so we want to get rid of them.
* We have two sprinter machines and think people would prefer a treadmill over the sprinter so we’ll now have eight new treadmills that we’re looking into purchasing, as well as a new hack-squat machine. This fitness equipment is the newest equipment we have in Collier County and we are looking at doing upgrades.
* Fitnessmith is doing repairs this week and some items are on back order.
* Kyle Price, our supervisor there, contacted two additional fitness equipment companies to look at them to see if they can be fixed.
* Dayne mentioned the CRA Field of Dreams initiative. Christie Betancourt, who oversees the Immokalee CRA, is working not only with organizations within Collier County, but nonprofits like Boys & Girls Club, RCMA, and local churches. She’s working with Dan Rodriguez, and they meet weekly to discuss the progress, so it’s not falling by the wayside. Christie is on top of it. Unfortunately, she did not get to give her presentation at the last meeting.
* One of the quickest solutions we’re going to move on involves a field next to Immokalee South Park. We plan to put in a 7v7 soccer field with lights. It’s our cheapest solution at about $300,000, with irrigation. That’s one of the first things we’re looking into.
* They mentioned Dreamland, which is next to an elementary school. We need to get the right of first refusal from the school district because they own the property, not the county, so we’re looking into that.
* We meet with the CRA once a month and she sees Christie an additional two or three times monthly. We’re in constant communication with the CRA, which is working with us.
* Manny’s soccer club is using the Boys & Girls Club field. We supplied them with our emergency response/EOC lighting. We delivered one or two more light towers yesterday. The CRA will probably pay for that because it’s going to hit the park’s budget.
* Said, James and I did a walkthrough at Immokalee Parks, with our Facilities director, James Williams, to identify issues that need to be changed.
* We’re looking into redoing all the locker rooms at Immokalee Sports Complex. They’re in dire need. They haven’t had updates in about 50 years and need to be more ADA compliant.
* We can provide better lighting in the locker room areas, and possibly redo the gymnasium.
* We have a grant for a hardening project, but we need other support for it, so that’s still tabled.
* The Facilities Department redid the community center meeting room and will redo the after-school room. Someone thought putting carpet on the walls in the 90s was a good idea, and it’s at a lot of our parks, so we took it all down. We’ve got one more room at that location to finish.
* They’re now renovating all the restrooms at Immokalee Community Park. They’re working on the women’s room first, then the men’s room and then the outdoor restrooms. We’ve had problems with the outdoor restrooms’ drainage and flow and they’re supposed to fix that.
* We confirmed with FDOT that Airport Park will be taking out the property we manage due to the new loop road going in. The road will be a benefit to the community, less traffic on Main Street, so we’ll lose that area.
* Another thing they brought up was that the concession stand had a lot of stuff in it. They cleaned it up and got rid of items that were there a long time. We also worked with the schools, which are getting a new ice machine for the stand. We moved our old one out because it wasn’t working.
* We own the baseball/softball fields behind Community Park, but the schools use them as high school fields and we share the concession stand. We did a deep spring cleaning on the concession stand, which looks really good.
* We’ve been on a hiring freeze due to budget restrictions but we’ve calculated where we need to be next year. We received good news that we’ll be hiring our Program Leader II of Aquatics at Immokalee Sports Complex. It’s posted and is open for one more week.
* Our fitness program leader position is posted and that ends Friday. There are three others posted, athletic program leaders at NCRP and Big Corkscrew, and an aquatics program leader at Big Corkscrew. We’re short-staffed so that’s a struggle. She tries to keep a high level of quality service even when they’re not fully staffed.
* We probably will have two full-time lifeguard positions released soon so we can get fully staffed at that facility. Last week, her team (three supervisors in Immokalee) met with a sponsor that’s interested in sponsoring Week 10 of summer camp for any kid who signs up for Week 10. They also want to do activities with the kids, so we’re excited about that opportunity.
* The Easter Egg-Stravaganza at Roberts Ranch is teaming up with the libraries and museums for the event. We used to have three separate events. It’s now one big event and all our resources are put into that. Nobody else does this in Collier County, working with sister organizations and public service.
* We were supposed to have Big Corkscrew’s on the 8th but realized it was the same time day as the fair, which causes traffic jams, so we changed it to an earlier date. They had about 1,500 people, so that shows the community’s need for that park.
* At Big Corkscrew, we’re in the process of replacing the basketball hoops because they installed residential hoops instead of commercial hoops. There are tons of grown men and teenagers hanging on the basketball hoops every night and the hoops are not built for that.

**Chairman Olesky** said he had a CRA question and he’s on the board.

**Ms. Swinderman** said she’d see him at the next meeting.

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

* This weekend, one of our sister public services, UF’s IFAS extension services is having an orchid show from Friday through Sunday. It’s an amazing event and they take up the exhibit hall and have outdoor displays. They couldn’t wait for voting to end yesterday, so they could move in.
* Sun-N-Fun Lagoon staff has been helping out at Big Corkscrew because we’re short-staffed there. We’re about to deploy their front desk staff to other locations. We have a closed facility, but they are working, not sitting at a closed facility.
* Next week, the RecPlex will be home to a farm show that David Michel booked. It’s for Collier County students and is in conjunction with the extension office. They will have animals there and will teach kids what it’s like to live on a farm.
* Nothing new with Vineyards.
* Veterans Community Park’s pickleball committee meets once a month, the first Friday at 10 a.m. Shannon meets listens to their concerns. James and I try and make it when we can.
* We just put stanchions in due to pickleball players hanging possessions on the roller hockey rink. There was a lot of congestion so we’re trying to divide it so pickleball people aren’t backing up into roller hockey people.
* We added additional shade tents in the first section of pickleball courts last week.

**Ms. Laemel** asked how the committee was working after the problems there.

***Ms. Swinderman responded:***

* The committee is going really well.
* A core 10-15 people are in constant contact with Shannon.
* Anybody can come to the open-forum meetings. Attendance depends on the subject matter. Two months ago it was rentals and a lot of people want to rent courts. Another group is opposed to that so we had a large turnout. It’s consistently 10-15 people.
* They’re good at being our eyes and ears. If they hear there’s an issue, they’ll reach out to Shannon directly and they’ll talk to that person.
* As far as rules of who’s supposed to play where and making sure people rotate, we have volunteers during the week who are our pickleball ambassadors. They help us since we don’t have a staff person there on a regular basis, so that’s working well. It’s a matter of them coming to a consensus on what they want.

**Ms. Laemel** asked how communication is going with roller hockey.

***Ms. Bergel replied:***

* That was an issue. It varies depending on who’s there.
* We had the biggest issue a couple weeks ago with Pelican Bay and that’s what prompted the stanchions.
* We have a good rapport with the regulars. We communicate very well.
* The main problem is when we have regular league and they have something going on. She had an interaction with a man who parked himself right outside the kids’ bench and she asked him to move because the kids were coming out. He refused, saying he’d move when necessary. The kids couldn’t leave the bench to get water. When the buzzer went off, he asked if that was his bell. The kids were literally trapped and he would not move, despite several men asking him to please move. He stuck to his guns and sat there, so we waited and he finally left. There’s one like that every once in a while.
* Communication is much better. They came to the snack shop to ask if we’d sell water to pickleball players. Of course, we would.
* It’s a much calmer atmosphere.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said he’s happy to hear that because Shannon has been proactive with it. Please keep us in the loop because we have to be a good neighbor with all our organizations, not just roller hockey. We have Cal Ripkin there, so let’s make sure we’re playing nice.

**Ms. Bergel** thanked him and said the only issue now is where you put the tent on the rocks, where there are drainage issues. There used to be an issue with older people who would trip on the rocks. That’s the last issue we have between the two spaces. Everyone was surprised when we saw the things up. They asked what she’d done. She was excited to see something there.

**Ms. Swinderman** said we’ll work with Rick’s team and monitor how the drainage affects the tents because it’s going to rain this weekend.

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

* Shannon handles the calendar of space usage to ensure there isn’t a conflict with two big events the same day.
* It’s not so much about events, but the number of people coming to play pickleball. There’s a high demand.
* When Becky looks at pickleball rentals, she’s also considering hockey usage.
* We look at our full calendar at the beginning of season.
* If someone wants to do a tournament and is turned down, that doesn’t stop diehard pickleball players from coming.
* There’s a big drop in numbers in pickleball players after Easter and the U.S. Open Pickleball Championships.
* Some people are staying longer now while others are leaving in mid-April, instead of waiting for Mother’s Day because the weather has been nice up north.
* Attendance was down with other clubs because more things are open post-COVID and Ian. People are venturing out and traveling.

# *Region 2 and 5 [Said Gomez]*

* He commended everyone for being at the Immokalee meeting last month. It was brutal but necessary.
* Golden Gate Community Park resurfaced the walking path, finished the tennis courts and are working on the basketball courts.
* They have an Easter event this weekend, an Easter egg hunt and a swim at Eagle Lakes, which is partnering with Golden Gate Community Park. Both aquatic facilities are partnering to hold one event at Eagle Lakes.
* AIR therapeutic recreation had a successful spring break camp with seven kids, a lower ratio because the kids have unique abilities. They’re going to be participating in the egg hunt this weekend. We have a few vendors, including Earth, Wind, and Fryer. Low Ratio, which was formerly known as Low Ratio and is now AIR2, will be there and they capped their spots but have a few spots available.
* Golden Gate Community Center had a state qualifier for BMX on wheels, with over 2,000 people. They had over 150 riders, from amateurs to some semi-pros, many tents and people parking outside the gates.
* Golden Gate Community Center also will have an Easter egg hunt this weekend and had a successful spring break camp, with over 20 kids.
* Max Hasse Community Park, which has childcare and after-school programs, is seeing over 100 kids and capped off with their kids for summer.
* Eagle Lakes’ gazebo needed staining and that was completed. Now people can view off the perch from the gazebo onto the lakes, and there’s another past the walking trail.
* Kudos to Valentina, who is active in her fitness program there. She sees 30-60 people a day in her Total Body program. These are technically senior citizens, a demographic we normally don’t hit, but we’re trying to reach the community as a whole, not just the kids demographic.
* The Senior Expo was held at the NCRP RecPlex last month. They had the most vendors they’ve ever had and well over 300 patrons.
* East Naples is preparing for the U.S. Open Pickleball Championships.
* Sugden had a successful regatta two weekends ago helping kids with unique abilities sail. They have adaptive boats for kids with cerebral palsy that allow them to use their chins. Patricia Rosen is the program head and there are three volunteers who do an amazing job.
* We’re trying to hit all demographics, from people who need some assistance to parents and the elderly, as well as youth.

**Mr. Dixon** said he’s intimately familiar with the sailing program because his son did it. If anyone knows any special-needs kids, recommend that family program. It’s great.

**Ms. Laemel** said absolutely. She hopes none of them retire any time soon.

**Mr. Hanrahan** said that when he was their regional manager, he and Patricia worked on a succession plan and Patricia and Barbara are working on it now.

**Ms. Laemel** said she’sglad to hear that because her grandkids were involved in a lot of those programs with Michel and it was amazing. It fills up in about two minutes.

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

* There’s a definite need for those programs. They got calls after they filled up and there’s a waiting list. They can only take 15 in the sailing program.
* People say they can see the basketball resurfacing at Golden Gate Community Park from Santa Barbara because it’s bright and shiny. The tennis courts also are vibrant.
* If there’s an influx of pickleball players, they can go to the Vineyards because there are plenty of courts.
* We’re working on more court resurfacing. All Immokalee locations are prioritized at the top of the list. We received a grant that Dayne helped with and are waiting on that.
* We’re waiting for an update on when the grant paperwork will be signed. We also got a $400,000 grant that’s a 55/45 percentage and are waiting for the final paperwork to be signed. That grant will take care of all county courts, except for East Naples pickleball courts, which are funded separately.

**Mr. Gomez** said the PARAB may feel disrespected after the Immokalee meeting, but he appreciates what they did. Many people don’t know about PARAB so he wanted the community to be aware so they could voice their opinions. We do things internally, but it helps when we have a panel where residents can voice their opinions so they don’t think closed-door meetings and decisions are being made for them without them having a voice. They appreciate what you’re doing. With that many people in a room, it spoke volumes. The numbers alone sent the right message.

**Ms. Laemel** said she believed the opportunity for them to speak up was huge.

# Director’s Report [James Hanrahan]

**Mr. Hanrahan** said they hope Olema will return on Monday. She’s taking care of her mother. What she needs now is to feed off this energy and she’ll hit the ground running when she returns. She’s very thankful for all of you. We need to prepare for summer camp now. Randi is always at Immokalee and Said used to run the Sports Complex and has been instrumental in helping us.

# IX. Adjournment

# Next Meeting Date:

# April 17, 2024, 2 p.m. – Vineyards Community Park

**There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was adjourned by order of the chairman at 3:22 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 \_\_\_.