

January 17, 2024

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Naples, Florida, January 17, 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

Vacant

Rebecca Gibson-Laemel

Kristina Heuser

Lee Dixon

Jessica Bergel

Donna Fiala (excused, alternate)

ALSO PRESENT: Olema Edwards, Director, Parks & Recreation  
Miguel Rojas Jr., Admin. Assistant, Parks & Recreation  
Tanya Williams, Dept Head, Public Services Division  
James Hanrahan, Assistant Director, Parks & Recreation  
Dayne Atkinson, Principal Project Mgr., Public Services  
Mike Ossorio, Region 1 Parks Manager  
Said Gomez, Region 2 Interim Parks Manager  
Randi Swinderman, Region 3 and 4 Parks Manager

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- The vast majority of the boardwalk system was completely damaged and will undergo a complete replacement.
- We are about halfway through the design.
- We have some heavy lifting in terms of permitting, so we brought in an architect and Peninsula Engineering to work with us to get the design, engineering and permitting done. We expect to go out to bid later this year.
- That will put us in a position to start construction by the end of this calendar year, with about a yearlong timeline for the construction phase.
- Our intention would be to phase it the best way we can to minimize disruption to the park, which has multiple parking lots. We opened up the north access, the north parking lot by Bonita Beach Road, fairly quickly, about two to three months after Hurricane Ian.
- More recently, late last year, we opened up two of the three parking lots.
- There is still limited beach access and walkways, but there is full beach access.
- Our intention is to do it in phases, with different parking lots at different times.
- We will have some minor closures at the park because we're also doing roadway work.
- We will work toward minimal closures and minimal disruption the best we can, but the construction phase will take us through the rest of the calendar year next year.

***During questioning by the PARAB, the following points were made:***

- All park closures involving restoration and other projects are done in the off-season.
- After we get the design, permits and bid out, we have all of the next calendar year to work on it.
- That's the same with Clam Pass. We have one access and we're doing work on the boardwalk, which closes off Clam Pass. The hotel is focused on that access, so we're trying to minimize that and schedule it off-season.
- There's not much of an off-season anymore since it's very busy year-round, but we'll avoid peak-season time frames.
- We have to coordinate with insurance and FEMA first.
- Design and engineering take a significant amount of time to get it perfect. With many projects, the non-construction timeline is longer than the construction timeline, particularly with a sensitive location like this, where the program takes a bit longer.
- Three of four parking lots and the restroom concession building are open.
- Boardwalks are not accessible, but there are more beach walkout areas.
- Using a shorter timeframe than the larger restoration project, we plan on removing some damaged boardwalks to provide more beach access. We found some gopher tortoises there. We're ready to move one of those in Parking Lot 2, the middle parking lot. We found gopher tortoise burrows underneath it, so we're undergoing a process to find them a new home nearby.
- The design team's documents show we're at 30%, on the way to 60%, about halfway through the design process. At a certain point, we'll start getting the other permitting timeline and get that going as soon as possible because that's one of the longer timelines on the project.
- We'll put a sign there and at other locations to alert the public that we have projects underway, and we also have some non-park projects. We'll provide information and an email address.
- Sometimes people call 311, a commissioner or the newspaper to ask them. We'd love the opportunity to answer the public's questions directly.

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

- Clam Pass Park is another location where we had multi-million dollars' worth of

south side, the final phase.

- We recently received two construction bids. The numbers look good.
- We're also seeking hurricane reimbursement from this because the seawall was damaged by the hurricane, the docks were destroyed and even though we had a pre-planned project before the hurricane, we're seeking some level of reimbursement.
- There will be a replacement of the seawall, floating docks and ramp. A fuel system replacement is being designed that will go out to bid today.
- They're planning on signing the contract next week and we'll take it to the Board of County Commissioners and then begin construction.
- It's an eight-month construction schedule so that puts us near the end of the calendar year and we'll be able to get that wrapped up and reopened to the public.
- For the fuel system, there are some City of Marco Island permitting nuances that could cause delays. We'd like to get the fuel system in place so when the park reopens, there are fueling services there, but that may lag a bit behind.
- Vanderbilt Beach was very affected by Hurricane Ian. All the boardwalk features were damaged, up to the old bathroom building, which was destroyed. The roundabout was pretty much destroyed and parts of the parking garage were damaged or destroyed, so we engaged in a level of work to get it temporarily reopened by the end of 2022. We had it reopened to the public in about 90 days and it provided some level of service.
- The back of the facility and beaches. We're planning on fully restoring that to its former glory and trying to enhance the things that were more resilient from future storms.
- While rebuilding the boardwalk, we're attempting to include a wider, larger ADA-accessible platform for people with mobility issues, people who can't get on the sand to enjoy the sunset or the beach. This way they can. We're trying to work that into our redesign and incorporate it from an ADA perspective.

**Ms. Laemel** said they did a nice job.

**Chairman Olesky** asked if they'd be done by next year.

**Mr. Barone** said just about everything will be done.

## VI. Old Business

### a. Naples Grande Agreement Update – Olema Edwards

*Ms. Edwards reported that:*

- We took the second amendment into consideration, PARAB's suggestions.
- The overall changes of the amendment is that we went to a 20-year agreement with the Naples Grande.
- They're going to maintain the general maintenance of the facility and we doubled the number of special events. They were doing 12 yearly and now can do up to 24, which helps them build business.
- They left the sunset provision in the agreement, so they won't do any events until after sunset.
- There were concerns about staff parking, but their staff parks elsewhere so it will not affect parking at the Naples Grande. We still keep our parking.
- We went from receiving 12% of alcohol sales down to 10%, a difference of about \$2,000, so it's not much, and we were fine with that.
- This is what was submitted and agreed to.
- The amended agreement is in your agenda packet, so you can also see it.

**Ms. Laemel** asked if staff was happy with it.

**Ms. Edwards** said they were. This is a good partnership with the Naples Grande. They're a fantastic partnership to work with and they want to do more for the parks. They've already

- This is what a sign looks like at the Bonita Beach by the docks. It was easy to use. They do it by the hour, so he got a text on what his hours would be for the day. It texts to say you're confirmed and again within the hour when it's about to expire.
- We need to ensure the public understands and on our end, we have to monitor it with police, etc.
- We've worked with Park Rangers to ensure it makes sense for them.
- T2 systems will be installed at all beach accesses and marinas. We will provide more updates as they come.

***During questioning by Ms. Laemel, the following points were made:***

- Parking tickets will be used as a backup.
- When you have a situation at Barefoot Beach where it fills up, we'd be able to monitor it and let the front gate know. They can say we're full.
- Booth attendants will be stationed at important places.
- The county has digital signs on roadways, such as Vanderbilt Beach Road, that tell the public how many parking spaces are open. Eric Short has done an incredible job of monitoring that and ensuring it's up to date. There were some glitches, but we're working closely with them to ensure the information is accurate.
- It will save the county money because we were paying per transaction. With the meters, it was a charge of cents on the dollar and it added up, so we're saving money with each transaction. It was close to a dollar and this will be less than what we were paying.

**c. Immokalee Sports Complex Update – Dayne Atkinson**

***Mr. Atkinson reported that:***

- We're waiting on a proposal from Stantec.
- The scope of work was initially to redo the pool, but we learned that when the park was designed years ago, it was designed a certain way and it's doing what it was designed to do. He doesn't know why it was designed that way, but that's the way it was, so everything that drains from the parking lot, from the building, is supposed to drain out between the fields.
- When it rains, it's a lake and that's what it was designed to do. That's why the fields always stay wet because the fields don't have anywhere to drain to because the valley is in between that field.
- Before we can do the pool or any project in Immokalee, we have to fix this and that's the proposal we're waiting on.
- It will incorporate both the pool and this so we can fix the drainage, whether it's to dig deeper filtration pipes or find a different way to get the water off site.
- We also learned that all the pipes that lead out there go through the Aquatics Facility, so it wouldn't make sense to build a pool and have to come back and dig everything up to fix the stormwater. The stormwater has to be done at the same time or prior to the pool work.
- There are no plans to work on the soccer fields until this is complete because we could spend \$700,000 re-crowning the field, making it pretty and it would get destroyed immediately due to that issue. It won't drain.
- He expects the proposal by Friday.
- It shouldn't take Stantec long for the design. We're on a shortened time frame for design because they did most of the calculations for what we were doing before when we were doing turf fields, so we need to get that in place and then we'll move forward.

**Ms. Laemel** asked how long ago that was put in. Was that the best technology back then?

They're going to provide an assessment so we'll know what we need to do, whether it's repair or a complete replacement. Inspectors last year said a lot of brackets started to rust due to chlorine leaking over the metal over 15 years.

- Geothermal system. This heats and cools our pools. A lot of the equipment, especially for the reservoirs, is original equipment from 2006-2008. We're waiting on our current waiver with Symbiont Service, a manufacturer, which was for \$50,000, just maintenance. We need to raise the limits so we can buy and procure the new units that we need. That's supposed to go to the Board of County Commissioners on Jan. 23. When the board approves the waiver increase, then Symbiont is ready to bring in the equipment for the geothermal system.
- Pump repair and placement. The biggest problem we have on our new pump is aged equipment. We've done our best over the years to keep it up and running but some of this is critical failure. This is a multifaceted project in Pump House 1. We're going to start replacing some of these pumps and motors, as much as we can afford. The pumps and motors have done the best they can, for as long as they could.
- We're getting VFDs (Variable Frequency Drives). Ours are start-stop, which is terrible on motors. VFDs will help us ramp on and off, a smoother transition so it lasts longer.
- We're doing electrical upgrades, so that's part of the problem. We have Simmons on board to help us with electrical upgrades. Pump House 3 is the bigger problem. It controls the Lazy River circulation. Those are the biggest pumps we have. We have one 150 horsepower, one 100 hp and three 75 hp. We're waiting on a proposal for a diagnostic and assessment. Worst case scenario will be that we have to replace all the pumps, about \$500,000, with a long lead time because those are huge pumps to replace and are not off-the-shelf pumps. Best case scenario is that they can be refurbished. They'll pull the two biggest ones, the 100 hp and 150 hp, and do an analysis. Hopefully by March 1, we'll know what we need to do.

***During questioning by Ms. Laemel and Mr. Fruth, the following points were made:***

- We don't know yet whether we can fix them or have to replace them. In Mr. Atkinson's opinion, Pump House 3 can't be fixed.
- The initial assessment wasn't very positive. These are no longer manufactured, so we need to see if they can fabricate parts because we can't buy them. If they can fabricate parts, they can be refurbished and rebuilt. If not, we'll have to look at other options.
- Is this in our budget? Do we have to ask the BCC for approval? There is no resistance. There are two funds we're using for this work. A lot of these projects fall under debt service and we still had funding available under debt service. The caveat to debt service is it has to show 15-year life, so with Thompson Motors, I can't use debt service, but we do have Fund 306, our regular funding, to address those issues.
- For the stairs and stair tower, we can use debt service for that because we can get 15-year life. But for pumps and motors, we have to use regular funding and we have Fund 306 for that.
- We're waiting on an Aquatics Technology proposal. Most of it is design, but we don't have a lot of time for design on this because they've already done the design on the pump house and already have specs for the pool. We've designed two new slides because the slides aren't in good shape.
- There's also a compliance issue so we need a safety fence by the pool and *(inaudible. Phone music ringer went off obscuring Mr. Atkinson)*.
- We're also looking to upgrade the geothermal system. It's the original and is about

therapeutic recreation. She's amazing.

- Max Haase Jr. Community Park has had a couple of successful middle-school dances, with 60-70 attending.
- The after-school program has 113 students; 120 is the max, so that's a lot of kids.
- We're in talks with the Little League to see what we can do about the yard sale problem. Our first yard sale is on the 17<sup>th</sup> but Chelsea coordinated the time so we don't take up parking spots for the Little League. We're working on that.

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

- Winter events. We had three. We did Christmas Around the World in collaboration with the Immokalee Chamber. A wonderful lady, Cheryl Thomas, who led it for 30 years, did it for the last time. Going forward it will be the Cheryl Thomas Christmas Around the World Parade. We're sad to see her leave, but they're going to have some good people who are taking her place and we'll continue that collaboration. We also work with the Immokalee CRA, which provides a lot of support. They do the tree lighting in Immokalee and they had the same great Santa Claus (Chairman Olesky) that we had for Christmas Around the World.
- This year, due to Tiburon having a big event, CCSO was not able to help Mrs. Thomas, so the Florida Highway Patrol guided the parade, and they used clickers, which we hadn't used before. They captured about 5,000 people at the parade, probably more than we've had before. This was the first year at Community Park and she estimates there were at least 2,000 attendees. It went really well. We learned a lot having it there the first year. We're trying to decide if we want to keep it there or move it back to the Sports Complex. We're starting to plan for next year.
- Our other signature winter event is Snowfest, which drew 5,000 people. We partnered with Paradise Coast Sports Complex and held it there. We learned a lot last year from having it there the first time, so we changed the setup this year. We had more slides. We also learned this year that we need better slides or tubes because Floridians don't know how to go down slides, and how to dress appropriately.
- We used 80,000 tons of snow, and it wasn't enough because it was warmer this year and a lot melted. It was still a really successful event, with more people attending this year. It started at Golden Gate Community Center and has grown more at PCSC.
- Smaller winter events. Grinchmas at Big Corkscrew Island Regional Park is held indoors because events there grow really large, and we already have one really large event for that. It sold out and had 150 spots for each time frame, 6 p.m., 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. Attendees were kept on schedule. We had Santa and the Grinch, and it was fun.
- Big Corkscrew. We're adding AIR (Adaptive Inclusive Recreation) programs. With the pools, we've started Hydrotone and some other water aerobics classes in the pool. Sun-N-Fun is now assisting Big Corkscrew full time with staffing. Unfortunately, somebody left so we're replacing them with Sun-N-Fun staff. We're excited to have that staff there.
- South Park is waiting on the third and final stages of getting a new playground. Isle of Capri had a couple of pieces they weren't going to use, so we had to add that to the permit. That's why it's taking longer. In about a month, they'll be transferring that equipment to South Park.
- Eden Park. Leonore is starting her adult soccer league at Eden Park. She has 22 teams and she actually has to turn people away. That's why she was at 300% of her revenue goal last year. She's small but feisty.
- Community Park. They're going to be doing bathroom renovations inside and out. We currently have nice carpet on the walls from the 1970s, but it was built in the 80s or 90s. That carpeting is coming down. They're putting up a replacement. It'll

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- East Naples. Pickleball is in full effect. They have over 1,000 people playing there daily. The extension for the U.S. Open has been approved or is on the BCC agenda.

**Ms. Williams** clarified that the Spirit Promotions contract was amended and extended for one year. The BCC provided very specific directives for us to address within the next year to bring something else back to them.

**Mr. Hanrahan continued the Region 5 presentation:**

- It's a contract with the Tourism Division and Parks & Rec works with them.
- Eagle Lakes. A lot of aquatics programming has moved over to Eagle Lakes, so it's been wonderful seeing the collaboration between all our aquatics teams.

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

- There have been a lot of staff changes, with staff stepping up to interim roles due to vacancies. It's been awesome to see how the staff is united and coming together. It's a tough time and we're being mindful. We know the BCC is looking at what it looks like from a potentially zero-based budget.
- Staff is being proactive. Said, Sid, Mike and Randi have done an incredible job.
- Because of that, we've created internal subcommittees to empower supervisors and program leaders to help make decisions in their area of expertise. That traditionally came from the regional managers on down, but now regional managers will provide oversight. We want supervisors to help make those decisions because they're the ones who do it daily.
- We have summer camp, fitness, athletics, aquatics and childcare, which includes VPK and our after-school program. We started removing silos with aquatics and now we got rid of all the silos so park staff is working with each other.
- Sun-N-Fun is at Big Cork School because we're closed. They providing a lot of insight and oversight for that location.
- Day-to-day operations are beginning to gel and become a cohesive unit.

**VIII. Director Highlights [Olema Edwards]**

**Ms. Edwards reported that:**

- She's had a lot of changes from the leadership team on down, and we're doing what we can with what we have. We know it's not perfect. We're working to get perfection, but it will take time.
- We're working on a PARAB manual and will bring it back to the PARAB. Miguel is working on it and she's tasked everybody in her leadership team by giving them an assignment. We're going through final reviews before we bring it back to the PARAB. We hope to complete it and have it to you by March.
- Do you want to continue with the hybrid Zoom meetings? Do you think it's effective or do you want us to cancel the Zoom calls?

**Ms. Heuser** said she didn't think it was necessary.

**Mr. Fruth** noted that the Zoom numbers have dropped off, so you could use it for a special event or hot-topic items and advertise it then.

**Ms. Edwards** said OK, we'll do away with it. We're getting a lot of "asks" from Immokalee, where we meet twice a year. They've asked us to move the meeting to 6 p.m. in February because most people work during the day. We should do it because we owe it to them.

**Ms. Laemel** agreed they deserve it, but we can't carpool.

**Ms. Heuser** said that's not true.

**Mr. Dixon** said that under the Sunshine Act, they could carpool but can't talk about what