MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Naples, Florida

April 16, 2025

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 Golden Gate Community Center,

321 N. 1st Street, Immokalee, with the following members present:

CHAIRMAN: Edward “Ski” Olesky

VICE CHAIR: Joshua Fruth

Jessica Bergel

Eric Kelly

Rebecca Gibson-Laemel

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

Miguel Rojas Jr., Admin. Support Specialist II, Parks & Rec

Said Gomez, Region 3 Parks Manager

Ray Coriano, Supervisor – Parks & Recreation

***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.***

**I. Call to Order**

**Chair Olesky** called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

1. **Welcome by the Director**

b. **Roll Call**

The roll call was taken.

c. **Verification of Quorum**

Five were in attendance

**II. Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation**

The board recited the Pledge of Allegiance

**III. Approval of the Agenda**

Joshua Fruth motioned to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Rebecca Gibson-Laemel. The motion passed unanimously and the agenda was approved.

**IV.** **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

***Motion was made by Rebecca Gibson-Laemel to move approval of previous minutes to the next march meeting. Eric Kelly seconded. The motion passed unanimously***

1. **New Business**
2. **Introduction to Golden Gate Community Center**

Ray Coriano, Center supervisor introduced his staff:

* Nick Luviano - Program leader for skating/scootering. It is his 6th year
* Keion Williams - Program leader for sports programs
* Kelsey Puente - Program leader in childcare
* Carly Del Pozo - Program leader in childcare.

Program summer care, after school, all childcare events (5 yrs with parks and 7 yrs with county)

* Alex Arias – Program leader specializing in children with special needs
* Trevor Huey - Recreation Specialist
* Mariah Basetti - Customer Service Specialist, calendar, front desk

**Activities and programs offered in the center**

* Belong to MSTU – Municipal Service Taxing Unit
  + Get a portion of MSTU tax budget
  + All the activities are people from the area
  + Golden Gate Civic Association
  + Beautification board
  + Golden Gate Community Center Advisory Board
* Facility Rentals
  + Organizations
  + Religious Groups
  + Public Use (birthday party) - based on availability / prioritize our own activities in the center
  + Room B medium size, smaller room along with an auditorium
* Childcare Program
  + VPK Program: 10 gators
  + 2 relocating families
  + Mon – Th 9 am – 1 pm Fri – the leader takes a break
* ASA Program:
  + 25 elementary schoolers
  + 2 schools: terrace elementary & golden gate – pick them up and bring them here.
  + After school – snack – homework – fun – go out to activities – always try to do different activities
* Seasonal Breaks & No School Camps
  + Not promising
* Summer Camp
  + 135 Campers
  + Space for 135 – 235 kids
  + Two weeks after registrations we are full – returning parents
  + Still have a waiting list
  + Gratitude from the local families – love it – staff does a great job
  + The Chairman asked about administering a survey for feedback
  + Ray Coriano confirmed that a survey is sent out for feedback and based on feedback they change certain things
* Sports Programs
  + Basketball Open Court (8-11 Youth & Seniors)
  + Only gym besides North Collier – not very big but it is there
  + Basketball Open Court (8-11 Youth & Seniors)
  + Open court for adults and seniors as well
  + Basketball Clinics (Elementary& Middle School)
  + Junior Flag Football
  + Junior Soccer Training
  + Phys Ed Program (for Homeschoolers)
  + Volleyball Skills Clinics
  + Peewee All Sports (4 yrs – 6 yrs old)
* Instructional Programs
  + Judo with Mr. Ruperto Arteaga (only contractual instructor) - does a great job and always leads their group to an achievement – 2 gold medal winners – try out for Pan American games
  + Zumba with Ms. Casta & Ms .Betty (rental agreement) - 2 Zumba classes (dance Zumba and Zumba with Betty)
  + Senior Fit Program (Volunteer) - Tu and Th – collaboration with senior center – they come here to use the auditorium
* Special Events
  + Last Saturday – Spring Fling Festival – Easter egg hunt outside. The attendance was as high as we like to see with 350 people
  + Winter Wonderland Celebration
  + Halloween Bash Event
  + Always try to find something more for the Hispanic community
* Wheels & Skate & BMX Park (Extreme Sports)
  + Skate Park Renovations
  + Mid-Day Skate Clinic
  + Late Skate Events
  + BMX Clinics (Beginners & Advance)
  + Naples BMX Sanctioned Program
  + We are the only county skate park
* **Q&A**

**Community Engagement & Perception**:

* + Rebecca Gibson-Laemel complimented the team, noting they are central to the community.
  + Ray Coriano mentioned they are often confused with the community park.
  + James Hanrahan highlighted that unlike other places requiring a drive, this location is walkable and welcoming, with staff like Ray actively reaching out to families.

**Safety & Support**:

* + Edward Ski asked if the nearby police station has any impact.
  + Ray Coriano responded positively, mentioning collaboration with Dani and his team, occasional support from Park Rangers, and communication with CCSL when needed.

**Survey & Feedback**:

* + Eric Kelly inquired about the survey consistency and response rates.
  + Ray Coriano explained word-of-mouth is the most effective method for spreading the word, rather than email.
  + James Hanrahan noted a discussion in the operations team to revamp the survey process, including possibly using QR codes.

**Programming & Attendance**:

* + Nearly half of participants are expected to return.
  + Ray Coriano shared that families request more frequent programming (twice weekly), but resource limitations prevent this.
  + He emphasized efforts to retain families through direct communication.
  + James Hanrahan added this is one of the few locations with autonomy to run their own programs, and Ray enhances the experience by making it personal.

1. **Purrs and Paddles Pickleball Event**

* **Organization Background**:
  + Jan Rich spoke on behalf of a cat-focused nonprofit, “For the Love of Cats”.
  + The organization formed 22 years ago, born out of a need to humanely manage the cat population, which had been out of control 30 years prior. At that time, cats invading homes and yards led to inhumane responses from the community.
  + For the Love of Cats has since become an essential part of community and county efforts to manage the feline population through **f**ostering programs and humane trapping services.
  + Department of Animal Services (DAS) often relies on this organization to trap cats, as DAS itself does not handle trapping directly.
* **Events & Community Engagement**:
  + The organization hosts two events annually.
  + One upcoming event is a Pickleball Tournament at East Naples Park, scheduled for May 17–18.
    - The event includes food, music, light entertainment, and **“Purr-secco”** (a themed drink for the event).
    - It’s designed as a community celebration with fundraising at its core.
  + Permits are required for food service and event presence at the park. Coordination is underway with the relevant department.
* **Partnerships & Operations**:
  + The tournament’s operational aspects are being handled by Bob’s Team in collaboration with National Pickleball.
  + James Hanrahan noted that this partnership signals a positive shift, showing the organization’s willingness to collaborate and grow.
* **Community Value**:
  + James Hanrahan highlighted the importance of continuing collaboration, especially given the limited number of Animal Control Officers.
  + The nonprofit fills a crucial gap in community service by responding to cat-related needs when county resources are stretched thin.

1. **Board/ Public Comments**

**No public speakers today**

**Board:**

* Joshua Fruth inquired about the status of a current board member vacancy.
* Miguel Rojas reported that only one application has been received so far, and they are waiting for more before proceeding.
* Rebecca Gibson-Laemel expressed concern about the board member’s absenteeism.
* James Hanrahan outlined two possible options for addressing the absenteeism:

1. Initiate a conversation with the member to see if they are willing to voluntarily step down.
2. If not, a formal recommendation for removal can be made, but this must go to the Board of County Commissioners—something they prefer to avoid.

* Miguel clarified that if the board recommends it, the director will speak with the individual, and ideally, they would submit a letter of resignation.
* James Hanrahan volunteered to have the conversation if needed.
* He also mentioned the Paradise Coast Complex, noting that the land has been purchased and there may be another upcoming vacancy. He emphasized the value of having someone with experience in tourism, engineering, or related fields for that role.
* A motion was made by James Hanrahan to initiate the conversation with the absentee board member. ***Rebecca Gibson-Laemel seconded. Motion was approved***

1. **Manager Updates**

(none)

1. **Director’s Report**

***Mr. Hanrahan addressed the board:***

**Paradise Coast Sports Complex Update**

* James Hanrahan provided updates on the Paradise Coast Complex, noting that:
  + Two months ago, Growth Management and Parks & Recreation departments became involved in overseeing maintenance and development.
  + FC Naples, the area’s first professional soccer team, has hosted several games there. The team is working closely with the complex to ensure events run smoothly.
  + The complex team plans to reach out to board members with opportunities to attend games.
* Joshua Fruth and James Hanrahan have both served on the committee related to the complex's development.
* **Discussion Points**:
  + Rebecca Gibson-Laemel asked for clarification on the purpose of the recent developments.
  + Joshua Fruth explained that the committee is reviewing the viability of future expansions, particularly around field types.
  + James Hanrahan mentioned ongoing discussions about whether to prioritize rectangular fields (e.g., for soccer, lacrosse) or diamond fields (e.g., for baseball, softball).
* **Fieldhouse and Facilities**:
  + The proposed fieldhouse would support volleyball, basketball, graduations, and conferences.
  + Currently, the proposed fieldhouse site is being used as additional parking, but it's part of a broader expansion plan.
* **Current Field Layout**:
  + There are plans for 22 total fields, with 9 existing.
  + 11 fields are already programmed for future use, with:
    - 5 for Little League
    - 6 for lacrosse, football, softball, and possibly collegiate-level sports
  + Fields are being strategically designed to allow for multiple sporting events to occur simultaneously over a single weekend.
* James Hanrahan explained that this multi-sport layout and design reduces the impact of weather-related closures.
* **SUN-N-FUN Lagoon** Over 11,350 people visited the facility during the two weeks it was open.
* Randi Swinderman was recognized for her efforts in scheduling staff across all locations, ensuring that no facility remained closed due to staffing issues, including maintaining weekend operations.
* **Operational Documentation:**
* Eric Kelly confirmed that all relevant activities and performance were documented.
* **Facility Functionality:**
* Eric Kelly asked about the status of the geothermal systems.
* James Hanrahan replied that the lazy rivers should be operational.
* Randi Swinderman clarified that everything is functioning, except for the slides and the lazy river, which are still down.
* **Summer Planning:**
* James Hanrahan confirmed that plans are underway for summer programming, with more certainty about operations moving forward.
* Eric Kelly inquired about the lake.
* James Hanrahan responded that the lake is part of the plan, and they are looking to add additional wells to support operations.

**Easter Egg Hunt Events Recap**

* Said Gomez reported on the Easter Egg Hunt event:
  + 200 participants
  + 500 eggs distributed
  + Event was a success and provided a fun experience for families.
  + The event also highlighted the museum and the library, drawing attention to local resources.
* RandiSwinderman mentioned a separateunderwater-themed Easter event that has been held for several years.
  + Approximately 100 people attended this year's event.
* James Harahan praised Said Gomez’s efforts and expressed interest in replicating the Immokalee event model in other areas to promote greater collaboration.

1. **Adjournment**

**There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was**

**adjourned by order of the chairman at 3:15 p.m.**

**COLLIER COUNTY**

**PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD**

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**Edward Olesky, Chairman**

These minutes were approved by the board on , (check one) as

presented, \_\_ or as amended \_\_\_.