

**VERO BEACH RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, April 5, 2016 – 4:00 p.m.**  
**Leisure Square, 3705 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Vero Beach, Florida**

**PRESENT:** Chairman, Richard Yemm; Members: Greg Holtan, Judy Jones, Sue Dinunno, and Alternate Member Christina Pierce **Also Present:** Recreation Director, Rob Slezak, Assistant Recreation Director, Patty Howard; and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

**Unexcused Absences:** Bobbi Burdick and Angie Schepers

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairman called today's meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. and the Senior Administrative Assistant performed the roll call.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A) March 8, 2016**

**Mr. Holtan made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2016 Recreation Commission meeting. Ms. Jones seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**3. CITIZEN INPUT**

None

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

**A) Recreation Department Staff Input for Budget Discussion**

Mr. Yemm said the purpose of this meeting is to hear the Recreation Department staff's input for the budget.

Mr. Rob Slezak, Recreation Director, stated that he asked the Recreation Department staff to come forward with ideas of what they thought would improve the Recreation Department. He said that several items they previously asked for have been put in the budget, taken care of, or have been placed on the five-year capital plan.

Ms. Shelby Nichelson, Recreation Program Coordinator, stated that something they are working towards over the next few years is a larger parent view room in the Center Stage building. She would also like to see a covering installed over the basketball court. It is very hot during summer camp and it often rains, so a covering would allow them to still use that area for the sports camp instead of forcing everyone inside and disrupting the other camps. An awning at the main entrance of the Center Stage building would also help provide protection from the sun and rain for the children while they wait to be picked up.

Mr. Jeff Matthews, Leisure Square and Facility Manager, explained that when Center Stage was originally designed there were plans to add a cement slab out back and to install a front awning, but that phase never came to fruition.

Mrs. Dinunno stated that they talked about expanding the parent view room last year. She asked if there are any plans for it. Mr. Slezak replied that it is the budget for next year.

Mr. Holtan asked where would a parent viewing room be located.

Mr. Slezak explained that they could expand the Center Stage building, or another option is that the City is trying to acquire an 8,100 square foot building for the Leisure Square property.

Mrs. Patty Howard, Assistant Recreation Director, commented that if they can get the building the current problems with the camps competing for space, the larger parent viewing room, the expansion, storage issues, etc. would all go away.

Mr. Nathan Rieck, Lifeguard Captain, stated that for the near future their request for a new lifeguard tower at Humiston Beach is already in the budget. Another item they would like to request is a storage shed at Jaycee Beach. They had a request for a new all terrain vehicle (ATV), but that was cut from the budget. They were able to acquire an older used ATV, which should last them a couple of years. If they can store it at Jaycee Beach that would provide them with two (2) beaches that could respond to emergencies.

Mr. Slezak commented that Shark Bait Beach Gear Rentals may assist with the cost of a shed for Jaycee Beach.

Mr. Rieck stated that his long terms goals include new lifeguard towers for Jaycee Beach and South Beach. The towers have been out in the elements, but they have served them well. The beach truck has also been out in the elements and will need to be replaced soon. They would also like to add a request for a second ATV to the long-term wish list. An extreme wish list item would be to expand the guarded beaches to cover Sexton Beach or Conn Beach. He said that the lifeguards do not have much down time and they are busy almost all year long.

Mr. Holtan asked what would they do about the parking issue if they started guarding Sexton Beach.

Mr. Rieck replied that the parking would need to be addressed. He said another item for his wish list would include hiring a Lifeguard Supervisor who could handle the daily supervisor duties.

Ms. Jones asked if the lifeguard's radios need to be renewed.

Mr. Rieck explained that the radios are on an annual plan and one (1) is replaced every year, but in four (4) to five (5) years the entire emergency system is going to change and all of their radios will need to be replaced.

Mr. Slezak stated that the major problem with the current Humiston Beach lifeguard tower is that it does not allow the lifeguards to view the water and they are not separated from all the visitors,

which causes many distractions for them. He said that the beach attendance numbers at Humiston Beach have increased 300 to 400 percent due to the new playground, the Art in the Park events, the Farmers Market, and the hotels in the area.

Mr. Rieck explained that the Vero Beach Lifeguard Association (VBLA) submitted their initial plans for the lifeguard tower to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), but they were rejected due to structural issues. They are in the process of resubmitting new plans.

Mr. Slezak said that the type of tower the VBLA was trying to design is more complex than what the City would build. VBLA's design would possibly have an office for the Lifeguard Captain and it might be a two-story building. He would like to get this in the budget for next year and get this project moving. They will not want to do any building of a tower until after turtle nesting season, which is March through October. He explained that there have been a number of items in the budget that have been pulled back out due to the support of nonprofit organizations coming in and handling them. He will need to see where the VBLA is with their efforts and maybe they can still work something out with them.

Ms. Pierce asked if Sexton Beach is City property that needs to be guarded with City lifeguards.

Mr. Rieck explained that Sexton Beach is another unguarded swimming area in the City that is very popular just like Conn Beach. Sexton Beach has a smaller parking area compared to the other beaches, so that would be an issue.

Mr. Yemm suggested that they concentrate on Conn Beach as their next guarded area. The parking issue at Sexton Beach has been brought up many times to the City Council.

Mrs. Angie Holshouser, Center Stage Supervisor, said that it has been a huge help to her since they filled the Recreation Program Coordinator position. Now she feels like she can get back on track. She would like to request that a playground be considered for Leisure Square. It would provide something else for the children to do during camp time and when parents bring other siblings with them.

Mrs. Dinunno asked if they could talk with GoPayVero about installing a playground.

Mr. Slezak explained that GoPlayVero is voting on whether to select Charles Park or Troy Moody Park for their next playground project. He is not sure how many more projects they will take on after that. Leisure Square was mentioned to GoPlayVero, but their challenge is that the playground would be at a designated site and not at a Park that is open to the public. He stated that he added a playground for Leisure Square in the five-year capital plan.

Mr. Matthews said that the City was required to remarcite the pool this year, which was completed about three weeks ago. They also applied a cool coat finish to the entire deck to make it look uniform. They have been receiving a lot of great comments about it. The roof on the main building at Leisure Square was replaced in December, but the City's Building Maintenance Department is still finishing up with some final details. He talked about several other maintenance projects that have been completed or will be done in the near future. His wish list request would be to hire a full-time maintenance employee for Leisure Square. They are also

trying to update some of their computer software in order to be able track their registrations and attendance. They are working towards providing on-line registration. He would also like the Recreation Department to have their own website, so that all the classes, events, etc. are easy to find and kept updated.

The group discussed the participation and registration for the summer camps, gymnastics, and cheer camp.

Mrs. Laurie Lee, Community Event & Rental Facility Supervisor, said that her wish list includes a reservation system. It would give customers the ability to find out about classes and camps, to see what dates the rental facilities are available, and they can track the number of memberships they have. There is software available, but it would cost about \$10,000.

Mr. Matthews explained that when they researched companies for this type of system they found out about all the software and programs they would need, so they are taking a slower approach. They would need to update four (4) computer systems before they could proceed. He would really like them to have the ability to book a rental facility without shuffling through papers and calendars.

Mrs. Lee said that she would also like to see a gazebo built on the property south of the Bethel Creek House. She feels it would enhance and add value to the building along with giving it curb appeal. Another recommendation would be to purchase better outdoor furniture to be used when they rent the gazebo at Leisure Square and some for the pool area. Corn hole is a game that all ages can play and she thought it might be an activity they could add at Leisure Square.

Mrs. Gabby Dwyer, Riverside Racquet Supervisor, said that she has several items on her wish list which include new dry fit uniform shirts for the staff. She would also like the City to raise the pay for the Recreation Department's on call employees. They are currently paid \$50 and she does not feel it is worth it, because it disrupts their entire weekend. She would like to request a clerical assistant for Riverside Racquet and possible raises for the part time staff. Future wish list items include two (2) more tennis courts, new doors on the Pro Shop as well as new window coverings and some shelving. She would like to see the racquetball courts converted into something new by expanding them and making them into pickleball courts, enclosing them to make a gym, or construct locker rooms and showers. She suggested installing a sign for Riverside Racquet near the parking area, so that people know where they are located.

Mrs. Howard stated that she also would like to see pay increases. Even though there was a pay increase last year the insurance rates also went up.

Mr. Yemm commented that one thing they need to think about is what will happen if the City goes into a budget crisis like before. He asked if they will be better prepared for cutbacks.

The Recreation Department staff all commented that they are a frugal bunch. They look to donations, volunteers, etc. Mr. Slezak stated that he thinks about it and he does have a plan. Everything they have been trying to do up to this point has been slow and incremental and they adjust the areas that show economic weakness.

Mr. Yemm stated that the first place the City will make cuts will be in the Recreation Department, so having some back-up plans will benefit them.

Mr. Matthews commented that people move to Vero Beach for a reason and he feels that the Recreation Department plays a big part in that. In his travels he has not found anywhere else in Florida that has Parks and beaches like those that we have in Vero Beach.

Mr. Yemm said that there is no question there is a need for expansion and improvements, but do they have the ability to sustain it.

Mr. Slezak ran through a list of projects that are in the five-year capital plan. He said that the Charles Park playground and the four-acre expansion are in the long-term budget goals.

The group discussed the program participation levels of City residents versus County residents, the number of events and functions supported by the Recreation Department, and the number of rentals and rental rates for the Bethel Creek House, Community Center, Riverhouse, etc.

## **5. OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **6. RECREATION DIRECTOR'S MATTERS**

None

## **7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS**

None

## **8. MEMBER'S MATTERS**

None

## **9. NEXT MEETING DATES**

### **A) Joint Marine Commission/Recreation Commission Meeting Date – May 9, 2016**

The next meeting will be a joint meeting with the Marine Commission on Monday May 9, 2016 at 9:30 a.m. in the Training Room at City Hall.

### **B) Next Regular Recreation Commission Meeting Date– May 10, 2016**

The next regular Recreation Commission meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. in the City Hall, Council Chambers

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

Today's meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

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