

VERO BEACH RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES
Tuesday, September 13, 2016 – 4:00 p.m.
City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida

PRESENT: Chairman, Richard Yemm; Vice-Chairman, Bobbi Burdick; Members: Greg Holtan, Judy Jones (arrived at 4:01), Sue Dinunno, and Alternate Member Christina Pierce **Also Present:** Recreation Director, Rob Slezak; Assistant Recreation Director, Patty Howard; and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called today's meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and the Senior Administrative Assistant performed the roll call.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) June 14, 2016

Mrs. Dinunno made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2016 Recreation Commission meeting. Mrs. Burdick seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

4. NEW BUSINESS

A) Pickleball Courts Presentation – Mr. Ken Roberts

Mr. Ken Roberts, Vero Beach resident, stated that he came before the Recreation Commission about a year ago and he would like to say thank you for the courts they currently have. He has a presentation that will show them how the City's money was used. He continued by showing a video of the new pickleball courts and the Vero Beach pickleball organization. Last year the organization was informed that they would have to start paying rent, but he feels they have a fair arrangement with the City. Last year they had approximately 130 members, but now they have 323 members. They offer different programs including one (1) called "kids on the court" to try to get people involved at a younger age. He worked with the Recreation Department and held summer camps and during the two-day, two-hour camps they taught approximately 100 children how to play pickleball. The age range of their players is from eight (8) to 80 and they have a very active social calendar including holiday parties and events on the courts. Some of their members play in tournaments and it would nice to have tournaments here, but with only six (6) courts that is not enough to hold a tournament. He continued showing on the video what the courts look like now after they made some improvements by adding benches, windscreens, a bulletin board, etc. He continued by showing a Power Point presentation of a survey that they did among 100 of their pickleball participants (on file in the City Clerk's office). He said he came to today's meeting to ask the Recreation Commission to consider converting the other tennis courts to pickleball courts. The good news is that the Vero Beach Pickleball Organization

is willing to pay for it. There will be no cost to the City providing that the bids for the work come back in their acceptable range.

Mr. Holton asked how does the scoring system for pickleball compare to tennis. In tennis you have to beat your opponent by two (2) points and that can take a long time.

Mr. Roberts said the scoring is different from tennis, but they still have to win by two (2) points. They can fit four (4) pickleball courts on one (1) tennis court, so the players run a lot less and that shortens the game.

Mrs. Burdick said that during her visits to the pickleball courts she noticed a sign stating the courts are rented by Dan Branley (spelling may not be correct).

Mr. Roberts stated it is his corporation and that it stands for Daniel, Brandon, and Bradley, LLC. Their group was blocking time on the courts and collecting money, so the City looked at them as running a business and they were required to have insurance. Even though they pay rent to the City they have what they call pickleball 101 on Saturdays at 11:00 a.m. for anyone who wants to try pickleball.

Mrs. Burdick stated that these are public courts, so what happens if someone just shows up and wants to play. She asked do they pay a fee.

Mr. Roberts explained that that the Pickleball Organization only rents the courts Monday through Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Their members pay a \$2.00 monthly membership fee, but if someone shows up during those hours and does not want to become a member then they are charged \$2.00 per day. After 2:00 p.m. and all day on Sundays the courts are open and there is no charge.

Mrs. Burdick commented that she has been going by the courts almost every day for the past two weeks and she noticed that they are always full, except on rainy days. Many people that she has spoken with say it has been a life changing activity for them. She would definitely like to see the sport grow and convert the other tennis courts to pickleball court. She asked when do they give lessons.

Mr. Roberts said that the lessons are on an as needed basis. They send out a weekly newsletter which will let people know when they can sign up for pickleball lessons or clinics.

Mrs. Dinunno asked how many more courts are they wanting to create.

Mr. Roberts explained that they want to convert the other two (2) tennis court, which will give them six (6) more pickleball courts.

Mr. Rob Slezak, Recreation Director, stated that tennis activity will increase slightly when they are in season. If these courts get converted they will make sure there are signs posted directing people to other parks like Charles Park and Riverside Park, which have free tennis.

Mr. Yemm commented that there was a discussion about expanding the tennis courts at Riverside Park.

Mr. Slezak explained that his idea would be something very long term for expanding Riverside Park. He believes that if they were to expand the tennis courts they would first start with Charles Park and utilize the 4-acre extension property.

Mr. Yemm said that when they are in season there is a backup for using the tennis courts at Riverside Park.

Mr. Slezak agreed that there is a backup, so they were looking at either expanding the program and/or raising the fees.

Mrs. Burdick asked how do they regulate the time when people are waiting to play pickleball.

Mr. Roberts explained that when players arrive they line up their paddles in a box. When a court becomes available they pull the next four (4) paddles and those people play. On busy days if they have 24 players on the courts they might have 30 people waiting, which could be a 20-minute wait. This is why they need additional courts.

Mrs. Dinunno asked if their participation is also higher in season. Mr. Roberts replied yes. Last month 89 of their members played, but when in season that figure could be well over 250.

Mr. Slezak reported that on the weekends there are times they are very backed up.

Pickleball member (no name given) stated that she played tennis for 40 years. She explained that with pickleball they play one (1) game and then they let the next set of players have the court. They rotate players a lot quicker than in tennis, so the people waiting know they will get to play within about 15 to 20 minutes.

Mr. Yemm asked Mr. Roberts what would be involved in holding tournaments.

Mr. Roberts explained that to hold a tournament they need at least eight (8) dedicated pickleball courts. He said that no other Florida east coast community has as many dedicated pickleball courts as Vero Beach will have if they get 12. Most communities hold a tournament in the spring and another in the fall.

Mr. Yemm asked if a tournament would be considered a special event.

Mr. Slezak replied that it would not be a special event, but it would be part of their rental agreement and they would pay an hourly rate.

Mr. Yemm asked how many people would be involved in a tournament.

Mr. Roberts explained that tournaments typically have 120 to 180 people participating, so 150 players would be a nice size tournament. They want to hold a tournament with about 100 of their own members before they invite people from other areas.

Mr. Slezak explained that they want to keep it fairly simple, but if it becomes something much larger they would need to treat it like a community event.

Mr. Yemm made a motion to convert the two (2) remaining tennis courts at Pocahontas Park to pickleball courts at the expense of the pickleball group. Mrs. Burdick seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

B) Cultural Arts Village Mural Guidelines

Mr. Jim O'Connor, City Manager, said that he has had several discussions about the mural guidelines and he came to the conclusion that fewer regulations are better. The Cultural Arts Village is a different group, because they are dealing with private buildings and not just public buildings. His recommendation would be not to worry about the content of the mural, but more about establishing a process. The process needs to include two (2) public hearings or meetings for the public to speak on the matter. Administratively the application process would start with Mr. Slezak and then it would go to the Recreation Commission. The Recreation Commission would decide if they are in favor of painting that particular wall and look at the design, but not base their recommendation on the content of the design. The most important part is that there is no ownership of the painting by who painted it. If the City determines that the wall needs to be painted then the mural can be painted over at any time. The key is to make sure the artists understands that it is a public building and the City can repaint the wall if they choose to do so, because the City has a responsibility to take care of its buildings. They need to make sure there are enough public meetings where the people in the community can come to speak and air their thoughts on the mural.

Mr. Wayne Coment, City Attorney, explained that when the City starts opening up public buildings for artistic representations of the artist then it becomes protected under the first amendment, because it is a form of expression. They cannot regulate the content if they are opening up these public venues for expression. He agrees that they need to keep it strictly in the discretion of a recommendation from the boards or commissions. It would then go to the City Council where there will be a couple of hearings for public input and then they will decide whether or not they want to paint the wall. He recommends that they keep it simple, unless the City Council wants to create an overall detailed mural program like other cities have.

Mr. O'Connor stated that a motion from the Recreation Commission would be good so they have it in the record that they understand what is required and what the process will be when someone requests to paint a mural.

Mr. Yemm made a motion stating the mural submissions process for artwork on City property is a three (3) step process that will start with Mr. Slezak, it will be passed onto the Recreation Commission to review with a public hearing, and then it will be submitted to the City Council with a public hearing and final approval.

Mrs. Burdick asked if they get many requests to do murals.

Mr. O'Connor replied no, so this gives them a forum by which there will be a dedicated process to handle them administratively.

Mr. O'Connor explained that murals on private property are regulated by zoning ordinances, but they do not regulate the content of them either.

Mrs. Dinunno commented that the murals the Art Club has done have all been gifts to the City. The Art Club did not propose any of the murals and they were all at the request of the City.

Mr. Coment stated that with the murals being gifts to the City it works with the mural submission process they are proposing. City Council ultimately makes the decision to accept those gifts and therefore they have some control on what is painted on a City building.

Mrs. Dinunno seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

5. OLD BUSINESS

None

6. RECREATION DIRECTOR'S MATTERS

Mr. Slezak explained that he received a phone call about a month ago from Saint Edward's school about doing a community service project to clean up a City Park. Today from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. 85 to 90 high school students along with chaperones from Saint Edward's school and himself cleaned up Charles Park and Riverside Park. He thanked Saint Edward's school for doing this community service project. It was a tremendous success, the students worked very hard, and he was really pleased with what they did and how much they accomplished. He also asked to recognize and thank Home Depot for sponsoring this project and providing all the materials and supplies.

A) Recap of Ariel Antics Circus

Mrs. Patty Howard, Assistant Recreation Director, stated that the annual Ariel Antics Circus was held on August 4th, 5th, and 6th at Saint Edward's school. This year they had close to 200 participants and the children did an outstanding job. Mr. Slezak commented that between all three (3) shows they were close to being sold out.

Mr. Yemm stated that he attended the first show. They do a wonderful job every year and they should be applauded for everything they do to put on this show.

Ms. Jones said she was surprised on how many mothers participate in the circus with their children.

Mrs. Howard commented that the Recreation Department has a great staff and the children are amazing. It is very rewarding and she is glad that she has been able to do this for 20 years.

Mrs. Howard announced that the Halloween parade will be October 29th and the Recreation Commission members will be contacted about being judges.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

Mr. Yemm asked for an update on obtaining the building from the Power Plant.

Mr. Slezak explained that they received all the paperwork from the contractor to do an evaluation. It is being signed off by the City so they can assess the property within the next week. The contractor will assess the building and provide them with figures on dismantling it, moving it, and reassembling it at Leisure Square. He is not sure on the time frame, but it all depends on if it is approved based on the figures they receive. There is money in the 5-year capital budget, but the figures have to match in order for it to work. If everything comes back favorably then they can proceed to Phase II in 60 to 90 days.

Mr. Yemm asked if anyone else was looking at the building. Mr. Slezak replied no.

Mr. Yemm stated that the Recreation Commission has one (1) opening for an Alternate member.

Mrs. Tammy Vock, City Clerk, stated that she has not received any applications for the position.

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

None

9. NEXT MEETING DATES

A) Next Recreation Commission Meeting Date– October 11, 2016

The next Recreation Commission meeting is scheduled for October 11, 2016 at 4:00 p.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

/rh