

**VERO BEACH RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, February 13, 2018 – 4:00 p.m.**  
**City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida**

**PRESENT:** Chairman, Richard Yemm; Vice Chairman, Sue Dinunno; Members: Bobbi Burdick, and Brooke Malone **Also Present:** Recreation Director, Rob Slezak, Assistant Recreation Director, Patty Howard, Assistant City Attorney, Stefanie Beskovoyne, and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

**Excused Absence:** Greg Holtan

**Unexcused Absence:** Judy Jones

**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) January 9, 2018**

**Mrs. Burdick made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2018 Recreation Commission meeting. Mrs. Dinunno seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairman Yemm invited anyone who would like to make a public comment to come up to the podium. He asked them to give their name for the record.

Mr. Rob Slezak, Recreation Director, announced that he handed out copies of several emails he received from people who are not in support of allowing pickleball to be played on the tennis courts (on file in the City Clerk's office).

Mr. Steve Newman said that speaking for himself and the tennis players they do not have any objections to new pickleball courts being created. They object to the suggestion that striping the tennis courts for pickleball works for both sports. He is not only speaking for himself, but also for Saint Edward's School who has an arrangement with the City of Vero Beach to use the tennis courts several times a week. He explained that he met with the Saint Edward's School Tennis Coach and the School Administrator and they said they will stop using the courts if they are lined for pickleball, because it makes it very difficult to play tennis. He explained that the tennis courts and golf courses bring people to Vero Beach. He and his wife came here over a decade ago and he loves to play tennis. The reduction in courts has already damaged the tennis community. Frequently when the Riverside Park courts were full Mrs. Gabby Dwyer, Riverside Racquet Supervisor, would direct people over to Pocahontas Park. Tennis is part of the economic development, because many of the visitors would not come to Vero Beach if they could not play tennis. The tennis players urge the Recreation Commission to recommend to the City Council that more courts be created. He has walked Riverside Park and he believes there is room for more pickleball and tennis courts.

Mr. Rob Slezak, Recreation Director, asked Mr. Newman if those people who come here for short visits stay in hotels. Mr. Newman replied that some do, but others stay with friends or relatives. Mr. Slezak explained that what is lost when looking at recreation is how many people actually visit Vero Beach for a short amount of time and how much they contribute to the community. People do not realize how much money is being spent here because these activities are available.

Chairman Yemm asked to discuss item 8-A) at this time and they will resume with public comments following the presentation by Mrs. Dinunno.

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **A) Old Dodgertown Golf Course Property – Ms. Deborah Atwell**

This item was pulled from today's agenda and will be rescheduled for a future meeting.

#### **5. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business for discussion.

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

This item was discussed after item 8-A).

##### **A) Increased Recreation Programs and Community Events Maximum Rates**

Mr. Slezak stated that with staff input he put together some fee changes for the future, which are on the rate sheets he handed out (on file in the City Clerk's office). He did not include all the rates, because most of the other maximum rates have already been approved. He wanted to show the Commission the rate changes that will be going to the City Council for consideration.

Mr. Yemm asked what does it actually cost the Recreation Department for processing an event.

Mr. Slezak stated that it varies and it can cost \$40 to \$200 depending on how much time the City staff spends working with the event coordinators for the community events. He is comfortable with the proposed \$160 rate for a brand new event processing fee. Most of the time people hosting a first time event do not realize the amount of times it takes to put on an event, so \$40 is a very low figure. He said that \$60 to \$70 is more in line for a group who has everything in order, because they ran an event in another City or with a service club. The cost will be higher for someone who has never run an event, because the Recreation Department will need to spend a lot more time walking them through everything.

Mr. Yemm asked since the cost can range dramatically should the fees be organization related, or just a general fee. Mr. Slezak replied that it should be a general fee, because the proposed fee should be enough to reimburse their costs.

Mr. Yemm said he is looking at what would be fair, because the group that only cost \$70 will be charged \$160. Mr. Slezak explained that this fee is only for a first time, brand new event, so it is better to have a set fee. The next time the group puts on the same event they might not pay that

same amount. That is where the five (5) different options come into play, which are listed on the handout.

Mrs. Dinunno explained that putting on an event is a huge process with a lot of moving parts.

Mr. Yemm suggested replacing the words “Brand New Event” with “Initial Event”. Mr. Slezak said he would do that.

Mr. Yemm said that he still has an issue with the cost ranging from \$70 to \$200. Mr. Slezak explained that it is unusual for someone to have everything in order for an initial event. Most of the time they have so many questions and ideas of what they want to do that they keep phoning or coming in to work it out. One of the big issues is insurance and additional insurance with endorsement. The time spent on insurance alone is the largest part of the cost.

Mr. Yemm asked if they are raising the rates for the Aerial Antics Circus. Mr. Slezak stated that they are raising the maximum allowed rate for future increases, but they are not changing the rate right now. Mr. Yemm asked if the current rate makes the program pay for itself.

Mr. Slezak went on to explain that they set the rates so that they have full participation, but not go over the top on what people can afford. The programs all pay for themselves if they take out administrative fees and some fulltime employee costs. If people cannot afford the programs they have a scholarship program that will offset those costs. Last year he had over 50 people ask for help with gymnastics and with summer camp. Their goal is to help as many people as they can, because they don’t want to turn anyone away. He stated that they just raised the rates for tennis at Riverside Park last year, but they want to raise the maximum rate for future increases. He explained that when the recession hit they looked at all the programs and the rentals and then a rule was implemented requiring that any new program or event must pay for itself. They kept their core group of items that the Recreation Department does for the community, so the public can still enjoy them. He said that he spoken with the Live Like Cole Foundation and Dr. Val Zudans, City Councilmember, and they are exploring the possibility of something to offset costs at Leisure Square.

Mrs. Rebecca Sovine stated that both of her children utilize all parts of Leisure Square and they are heavily involved with Center Stage. They use the pool, gym, racquetball courts, etc., and Center Stage has been the core of their family. Her daughter currently works there and has been attending Leisure Square since she was six (6) years old.

Mr. Yemm asked Mrs. Sovine if she has seen the new proposed rates. Mrs. Sovine replied not yet. Mr. Slezak handed her a copy of the proposed rates.

Mr. Yemm asked her if she thought the rates were unreasonable. Mrs. Sovine replied no. She went on to explain that her daughter went to Christie’s Fitness for one (1) session, which was one (1) month, and she paid \$300. For an eight (8) week program as Leisure Square she pays \$85 and her daughter gets so much more out of it. She commented that if there were only 50 people who asked for help last year imagine how many people don’t ask. The programs as Leisure Square are so important to the community and they are in demand.

Mr. Robert Sovine said that the demand will leave if they allow a nonprofit group to run it.

Mrs. Malone stated that there is not a plan on the table yet and what the community is hearing is a knee jerk reaction between an individual and a City Councilmember who don't quite get along.

Mrs. Sovine stated that she believes that Dr. Zudans already spoke with the Live Like Cole Foundation and he is looking for other options. She does not know if he has children, but she has raised her children here and she knows the need for Leisure Square. Her need is to protect her children.

Mr. Sovine said that they believe that Dr. Zudans has already made up his mind.

Mrs. Sovine stated that the Leisure Square supporters will be back in force to the City Council meetings to make sure that one (1) City Councilmember does not sway the rest.

Mr. Sovine said that children come from all over the County to enjoy the gymnastics program and the shows they put on. He agrees that the building is run down and needs to be fixed. He stated that Vero Beach has always been a retirement community, but they still have children here that need things to do and Leisure Square is important for all of the children.

Mr. Yemm said that hopefully they noticed that there has been a lot of money given to the elderly and also to children's programs over the years. About five (5) years ago there was a proposal to close the swimming pool at Leisure Square. When the people heard that the Council Chambers were full and the renovations to the pool were made. He said that when people speak out that is what makes the difference between what is achieved and what is proposed.

Mrs. Burdick asked Mr. Slezak if he was surprised by the outcome of the City Council meeting. Mr. Slezak commented that he thought they were going to be talking about the (Leisure Square) restrooms. He continued by saying that the Live Like Cole Foundation and Dr. Zudans came forward and suggested that the Live Like Cole Foundation might be very supportive at being an enhancement to the Recreation Department. He said he is hoping their idea is much like several of the other groups like the Cal Ripken baseball field, the Buggy Bunch, etc. His approach is if it can help, enhance, and it will continue to allow them to operate with the people that they have then he thinks it is wonderful.

Mrs. Burdick asked if the Live Like Cole Foundation proposal will come back to the Recreation Commission. Mr. Slezak explained that Dr. Zudans said he would present some ideas to the City Council in May. At this point in time they will discuss Leisure Square more at the February 20, 2018 City Council meeting. He said that even with the good intentions there is a possibility that a hot button was pushed.

Mrs. Malone said that she needs to commend Mr. Slezak on him taking the stance of having a little faith in the humanity of it all. In this community they have seen foundations come forward to offer support and pour money into several areas. The thought of someone taking over Leisure Square, dismantling it, and ruining it kind of takes the wind out of the sails of the possibilities of what could happen.

Mr. Slezak commented that he agrees and he is hopeful that it will work out like the other groups have.

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

None

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

### **A) Riverside Park Pickleball Discussion – Mrs. Sue Dinunno**

Mrs. Dinunno stated that she wrote and provided copies of her *Argument for Pickleball at Riverside Park* (on file in the City Clerk's office). She explained that the Pickleball University organization in Vero Beach has about 500 members, so it is huge and it is growing. She continued by reading through her handout.

Mrs. Malone asked what does it cost to build one (1) court. Mr. Slezak stated that the cost to resurface one (1) tennis court was approximately \$8,000. Mrs. Dinunno explained that they make three (3) pickleball courts out of one (1) tennis court, because the courts go the opposite direction.

Mrs. Malone asked Mr. Slezak if he knows how much it would cost to build new pickleball courts. Mr. Slezak replied that he is not sure. However, Pickleball University is researching that, because they are looking to build 16 to 24 courts.

At this time Chairman Yemm opened up the meeting for additional public comments.

Mrs. Rebecca Sovine stated that she would like to voice her concerns about turning Leisure Square into a private entity, or handing it over to a nonprofit group. She said everything is not about the bottom line and profit. The programs at Leisure Square benefit the children who otherwise would not be able to go to the local pool, attend summer camp, use a gym, etc. The gym benefits the children and the older people who cannot afford a gym membership. She said that her daughter has attended Leisure Square since she was six (6) years old and she is now 17. The staff at Leisure Square love the children and proof of that is by the number of them that come back year after year for summer camp, gymnastics, etc. She would like to challenge the Recreation Commission and the City Council to go witness the summer program and see the children and the parent's faces while they watch their children. It is priceless. Before any decision is made for privatization or releasing it to a nonprofit group who would make massive changes she wants everyone to realize that we cannot put a price tag on the children.

Mrs. Mary Collosino, Director of Pickleball University, explained that they are looking into the Dodgertown property and putting in 16 to 20 courts. Two (2) years ago they were allowed to use two (2) courts at Riverside Park that they chalked out and they were thrilled. Three (3) years ago they had 67 members, the following year they had 325, and last year they had 500. Today they currently have 357 members with 110 drop ins, which are people who occasionally come to town and play for a fee while they are here. There is volume and a need, so all the players are almost on top of each other. As a Director of Operations she tries to provide a variety of programs for people to enjoy throughout the day including after school and summer programs for children. This is why they are looking to expand on the Dodgertown property. She would like to encourage the Recreation Commission to recommend that two (2) more courts be available at Riverside Park to free up the congestion. Last year Pickleball University held a tournament and people came here from five (5) states and stayed at hotels, visited restaurants, and spent money here. It is a viable institution and she encourages the Commission to follow through on the

recommendations that Mrs. Dinunno presented and with utilizing the Dodgertown property when that comes about.

Mrs. Lois Bowman, four (4) year Vero Beach resident, said that this City does it all. They have tennis, pickleball, baseball, dog parks, a Marina, etc. She agrees that pickleball is growing with both the older and the younger generations. Some of the people she used to play tennis with now play both sports. There are only 10 courts at Riverside Park and the only time they are not being used is in the heat of the day. The problem with striping the courts for pickleball is that there are multiple lines and it does not work. When teaching children tennis it is very confusing. She is asking them not to do anything to affect the tennis courts. She said if they want to do anything at Riverside they could use tarps for shade, water fountains, ball trays, etc. The facility is getting run down and striping the courts is no fix.

Mr. Slezak explained that it took three (3) bid processes to get the cabanas and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) money is just starting to trickle in from Hurricane Matthew. They have a bid coming through for the fencing, which was not successful in the past. The windscreens have arrived for the Riverside Park tennis courts and other locations. They are finding it hard to get bidders, because of the number of storms and the growth of the community. Some of the businesses are so overwhelmed that they cannot even bid on the jobs.

Ms. Kathy Champigny, 140 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, explained that she is only in Vero Beach a couple of weeks a year, because she travels extensively for work. This year she was able to take the month of February off and when she is home she is at Riverside Park playing tennis every chance she gets. She has played on public tennis courts in many states, but Riverside Racquet is the nicest public facility she has ever played at in the country. It is the nicest because of all the amenities and not just the courts. She agrees that it needs some cosmetic repairs, but she hopes they will be forthcoming. She believes all the other tennis clubs have clay courts and that Riverside Racquet is the only hard court. She would hate to see them lose a nice public facility by putting pickleball stripes on it. Tennis has been in vogue for hundreds of years, but pickleball is a rather new phenomenon and no one is sure if it will stay as popular. She used to play tennis at Pocahontas Park, but those courts have been given to pickleball. If there are other options for places to build new pickleball courts that is a better solution than taking away the tennis courts at Riverside. She would hate to see the City lose the tennis facility at Riverside Park, because it is a jewel.

Dr. Philip Mercer, retired Family Practice Specialist, said he would like to talk about exercise physiology and the benefits our bodies get from it. He said congratulations everybody in this group who is interested in recreation, promoting it, administrating it, funding it, and coming out to support it. His reason for moving to Vero Beach was because of all the amenities here. He and his wife spent more than two (2) years looking at locations on both coasts of Florida, because they wanted to leave the crowded Miami area. Vero Beach provides a unique opportunity for people on this coast. He is 83 years old and loves to play tennis, which is sometimes six (6) days a week. He hopes the City will keep the Riverside Park facility for tennis.

A Lady, member of the tennis community (no name given), stated that she understands that Mrs. Dinunno is pro pickleball. She explained that they tried lining the tennis courts before without much success. Tennis is a sport of concentration, focus, and timing and it is very distracting to hear the loud noise of people playing pickleball. She asked if any of the other Recreation

Commission members were against putting lines on the tennis courts. Mrs. Burdick said she sees her side, because she used to be a serious tennis player.

The lady asked if the Pickleball University is a non-profit organization. Mrs. Dinunno replied yes.

The lady commented that a multipurpose court is horrible to play on when it looks like a jigsaw puzzle. Multiuse lines are representative of an intercity facility where they have basketball, and tennis lines combined. The City has a gem of a Park that deserves full consideration for pickleball, but not on the tennis courts, or adjacent to the tennis courts because of the noise factor. She hopes that the City considers additional tennis courts in their future plans. She would like to see more tennis courts on the mainland other than the two (2) courts at Charles Park.

Mr. Gerry Carmichael, new resident, stated that he moved here from the St. Augustine, Florida area. He said that he volunteers with the pickleball community, particularly at the Intergenerational (IG) Recreation Center. This past Monday they had 80 players wanting to play on the six (6) courts at the IG Center, so someone needs to manage them. They are multi striped for basketball, but they manage to make it work. He is not advocating striping over tennis courts just to expand pickleball. He reported that he recently attended a meeting of the national governing body that manages pickleball for the United States. The meeting was held at Club Med in Port Saint Lucie. Every two (2) years they have a gathering of the group of volunteers that help manage the organization and for the last two (2) meetings they chose a location in Florida. Florida was selected because pickleball is such a rapidly growing sport here. Club Med already converted some of their tennis courts to pickleball courts and they will be converting more. Converting tennis courts to pickle ball courts is happening all over the country.

Ms. Holly (no last name given), resident on Indian River Boulevard, said that when she first came to Vero Beach and she saw the courts at Riverside Park she was mesmerized on how nice they were. The exercise she receives from playing tennis keeps her healthy, sane, and wise. She feels that putting additional lines on a tennis court totally derails the purpose of tennis, which requires focus and concentration. She feels that they need to expand the recreation facilities and not put pickleball on the tennis courts. She believes there is land in Riverside Park to develop additional tennis and pickleball courts.

Mr. Nathan Polackwich, 515 Iris Lane, stated that he live three (3) houses away from Riverside Park and his biggest concern is that while sitting in his back yard he will be hearing the continuous loud popping of the ball while people are playing pickleball. He said using those courts for pickleball is not the best solution. It will be irritating to the people who live near the Park and those who are using the exercise trails. He feels a better option is to look at property away from residential neighborhoods or at Dodgertown.

Mr. California Bill, 8775 20<sup>th</sup> Street, said that he would like to compliment all the tennis and pickleball players for getting out and exercising. It is great to see the number of children getting involved in pickleball and they are starting to see them at the national level. He said that people can go on line and look at the world renowned Bobby Riggs Tennis Club at [www.pickleballchannel.com/iheartpickleball-Bobby-Riggs-Tennis-Club](http://www.pickleballchannel.com/iheartpickleball-Bobby-Riggs-Tennis-Club) and read how they introduced pickleball. They started off with about 10 people that marked the lines on a couple of tennis courts and now they have over 550 players.

Mr. Tim Curbin, 5455 Barbados Square, said that he has been a nine (9) year seasonal resident. He explained that he had the opportunity to hear the City Council proceedings and what he got from that meeting was the enunciation of the principles of what the City wanted for its recreational facilities. The viewpoint of the City Council was one of inclusiveness and having it for all people. There is room for all, it can be done with the facilities being jointly used, and it will continue to be done in the future. The City Council's second proposition was to be able to maximize the utilization of all of the facilities. The other principal they talked about was the notion of economic development and these amenities are for the residents, visitors, and the public. The City Council also discussed at length a type of partnership with organizations that will aid them in the conduct and the operation of the recreational facilities. He advocates that the Recreation Commission takes the step to line the tennis courts for pickleball. A court can be striped for about \$300 to make it joint use for maximum use. He asked them to come to Pocahontas Park at noon and they will see the courts are being used. Pickleball University is a proven entity and it performs, it pays, it meets its obligations, it governs itself and its members, and it runs a tight operation. If the City is looking for a good partner, then Pickleball University is it. When things need to be taken care of at Pocahontas Park they do not call the City. They send out an email to the group asking them to get out there and it gets done.

Mrs. Meghan Hoots, 1001 Royal Palm Boulevard, said as a community, they need to reflect on how Vero Beach provides its quality of life and for whom. She would like to encourage everyone to move outside of their own self interest of pickleball and tennis and consider the dire circumstances that the whole Recreation Department is experiencing. There is no money in the budget to build tennis or pickleball courts. The public entities are being privatized and the City Council is only interested in eliminating recreation as far as they can. This will continue until they can convince the City Council that recreation is an essential part of government. She would hope that everyone who attended today's meeting could also voice their support for Leisure Square to continue to operate at a service to the community. Right now Leisure Square is underfunded and underserved for the community. She is pleased that everyone showed up for this topic, but there is a bigger conversation on the entire Recreation Department that was missed. She encouraged them to look at the City budget to see how they are trying to downsize the budget. She hopes they will fight to protect recreation as a whole to provide safe spaces for everyone to enjoy for all sports and recreation.

Ms. Ruth (no last name given), resident on Robalo Drive, said that she is predominantly a tennis player, but she has played pickleball on occasion. She believes pickle ball deserves more and they should not be using part of a facility that is designated for tennis. She thinks that it is wonderful how pickleball is up and coming and she believes that more facilities are necessary to accommodate the sport. She said there are 10 courts at Riverside Park and that can accommodate 40 players at a time. There is no question that the facility is being used.

Tennis supporter, no name given, said that her point for not supporting the multi-purpose courts is one of appreciation for not having to share the facility. Vero Beach is fortunate to have a gem like Riverside Park.

Mr. Dave Caswell, resident on 53rd Avenue, explained that the Pickleball University group approached the City last year about the courts at Pocahontas Park. The City gave them the courts and the Pickleball University paid \$16,000 to resurface the courts to make them into a pickleball facility. He said he does not find it confusing to play on a multiuse court, because tennis uses white lines and pickleball uses blue or green lines.

Mr. Ken Daige, City resident, commented that it is interesting to see so many people hear speaking on both sports. He asked after the Recreation Commission hears all the public comments, and they have their own discussion, will the Recreation Commission be making a recommendation to the City Council. Mr. Yemm replied not necessarily at this meeting, but no later than next month.

Mr. Daige said what he is hearing from both the tennis and pickleball groups is that they are looking for a solution. He really likes the idea of doing something with the old golf course at Dodgertown, because now the land sits vacant. He explained that quite a bit of money was paid for that land, but with the downturn in the market the value of the property fell. The City tried to sell the property recently, but that did not go over well with the community. It is a big piece of land where they could have both tennis and pickleball courts. He likes that both sports pull in children and these sports are a great draw to this community. He hopes that in their recommendation they take into consideration the Dodgertown property, because he feels that is a workable solution. He announced that there are plans to build a new hotel near the Vero Beach Airport. It is being built for the Riverside Theater to house their out of town performers, but in the off-season the hotel rooms can be used by other visitors. This will bring people to this community and create economic growth.

Mrs. Burdick said she is a big supporter of pickleball, but she used to be a serious tennis player. Putting pickleball on a court next to tennis will not work unless there is a sound barrier in between them. Although pickleball is much like tennis it is much different and much louder. Pickleball is a social sport and she agrees that more courts are needed and they should look at the beautiful piece of land at Dodgertown.

Mrs. Malone stated that it is amazing to see everyone who showed up here today and to hear how much they care about a play space. There is some real unfortunate reality about the shortage of funds in the City. There is no money and it is very discouraging, especially when people have ideas. She urged them all to get creative and come together, because it sounds like they are strong groups. They need to look outside the box, because there is a lot of space and a lot of amazing people that work in the Recreation Department. No one wants to see the City fall behind and not be current, especially in the playing fields.

Mr. Yemm commented that this discussion is similar to the process they went through with the Dog Park. They had the Dog Park competing with the Youth Sailing Foundation and the Vero Beach Rowing Club for the land at MacWilliam Park. The issues came before the Recreation Commission for about a year before it was resolved. In reality it sounds like pickleball needs a facility of their own and they are talking about utilizing some of the land at Dodgertown. To do that, the pickleball group needs to make a presentation to the City Council indicating they want to take responsibility for developing some of that land.

Mrs. Collosino explained that Pickleball University is currently preparing a presentation for the Dodgertown property. They have everything in play and they are working diligently on putting it all together in a timely manner.

Mrs. Burdick asked Mrs. Collosino if the City grants them use of the land do they have people in their organization that can fundraise and write grants. Mrs. Collosino stated that they would love to lease the land and the Pickleball University is prepared to put sums of money into it to

produce 16 to 20 courts. They feel like the Dodgertown property is the perfect environment. She explained that they are in the process of finding someone to help them write grants.

Mr. Yemm asked if it would be acceptable with everyone here to move this forward with the understanding that the pickleball group will come back and present their proposal about Dodgertown to the Recreation Commission. Based on what he is hearing, the pickleball group's proposal should be endorsed by the Recreation Commission to move forward.

Mr. Slezak explained that Mr. Daige has been working diligently with the pickleball group to make sure they have everything in order. The group will meet with the City Manager and some of the department heads to go over their plans and then they will come back before the Recreation Commission. After their meeting with the Recreation Commission hopefully it will go to the City Council. These are good core groups and we love that they came here today to share their opinions. He explained that there might be other indoor/outdoor options that he is not aware of yet. There are private businesses that might have places where they can play indoors. He also wants to go back to the City facilities and look at other areas that they might be able to share the space.

Mrs. Burdick informed Mrs. Collosino that Mrs. Ruth Stanbridge, Historical Society, is a professional grant writer, so she might want to contact her.

Ms. Kathy Charist, City resident, stated that her daughter has been part of the Performing Arts program at Leisure Square for the past nine (9) years. She attended summer camp there, was a Junior Staff volunteer, and has been a part time employee for two (2) years. If something happens to Leisure Square not only will her daughter be out of a job that she loves with her whole heart and soul, but all those children who attend the summer camp will be hurt as well. This year will be the the 44<sup>th</sup> annual Areal Antics Circus and she cannot imagine Vero Beach without it. She is afraid that if the summer camp goes away there will be more kids on the streets, which will lead to more crime. The City does such a phenomenal job with their summer camp and without that program they will be asking for trouble.

Mr. Robert Sovine, resident on 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue, stated that he has lived here his entire life. Leisure Square used to be the YMCA when he was growing up. He said both of his children participated in the gymnastics program and his son went on to become a Cheerleading Coach. The Leisure Square programs benefit people of all ages. His daughter also volunteered at Leisure Square and now she works there. To turn Leisure Square over to a private or non-profit group would be ridiculous, because they will jack the prices way up and that will hurt the community for those who cannot afford other places. A private company will charge as much for one (1) session as they pay for a whole year at Leisure Square. The community benefits from Leisure Square, so they need to find another way than privatizing it.

Mr. Daige stated that a lot of people were concerned about the Leisure Square discussion at the last City Council meeting. What happened at the meeting is that they had a discussion about some repairs at Leisure Square and why the repairs should be put off. There are a lot of people who use Leisure Square and it is a diverse group. The City Council held off approving the repairs to bathrooms, but he asked the City Council to reconsider their decision. It was put out to bid, but it has been hard to find properly bonded and licensed businesses to do the work and at the right price. The City Council chose to postpone the repairs, but later on down the road the bids may come back even higher. The renovations have been needed for a long time. Recreation

is what brings people to Vero Beach and it reaches people who are not overly wealthy. The City reaches out to those people and welcomes them. He explained that he recently spoke with a high-end retirement facility and the reason people are coming to that facility is because of Leisure Square's pool. The retirement facility does not have a pool, but people are coming here because of what the City has to offer.

## **9. NEXT MEETING DATE**

### **A) Next Recreation Commission Meeting Date – March 13, 2018**

The next Recreation Commission meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2018.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

Today's meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

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