

VERO BEACH RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES
Tuesday, March 12, 2019 – 4:00 p.m.
City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida

PRESENT: Chairman, Richard Yemm; Vice Chairman, Sue Dinunno; Members: Judy Jones, Bobbi Burdick, and Alternate Member #1, Greg Holtan **Also Present** Recreation Director, Rob Slezak; Assistant Recreation Director, Patty Howard and Records Retention Specialist, Heather McCarty

Unexcused Absences: Brooke Malone, and Alternate Member #2 Gerett MacMillan

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Yemm called today's meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and the Records Retention Specialist performed the roll call.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A) **January 8, 2019 Regular Meeting**
- B) **January 8, 2019 Special Call Meeting**

The minutes of the January 8, 2019 Regular meeting and the January 8, 2019 Special Call meeting were unanimously approved.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- A) **Chairman**

Mr. Yemm asked for nominations for Chairman.

Mrs. Jones nominated Mr. Richard Yemm as Chairman of the Recreation Commission. There were no other nominations. Mr. Yemm was unanimously appointed Chairman of the Recreation Commission.

- B) **Vice-Chairman**

Mr. Yemm asked for nominations for Vice Chairman.

Mrs. Jones nominated Mrs. Sue Dinunno for Vice Chairman of the Recreation Commission. There were no other nominations. Mrs. Dinunno was unanimously appointed Vice Chairman of the Recreation Commission.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Phyllis Frey thanked the Parks and Recreation Department for their dedication and working so hard in preserving and protecting their Parks. They are now looking forward to changes and they hope funding will be available now for badly needed repairs and maintenance that make their facilities safe and attractive. She thanked them for their support in protecting their Riverhouse from development of commercial enterprise. She said they did forfeit 1.66 acres of MacWilliam Park for the construction of 14,700 building that is not open to the public, but did get an extension on the five (5) acre Dog Park site. She said plans for the Marina will be presented at the March 19, 2019 City Council meeting and hoped everyone would attend. She invited the public to join in and preserve their Park lands.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A) Adopt a Park – Mr. Arthur Economy

Mr. Yemm said that Mr. Arthur Economy sent a letter (on file in the City Clerk's office) regarding Adopt a Park and he requested that he come to speak personally to the Commission because he thinks it is a good idea.

Mr. Arthur Economy thanked the Commission for the efforts in getting the Dog Park lease extended. He said it appears some individuals already physically act to keep their Parks clean. He explained his idea is that if an individual or group regularly frequents a particular park or lives near one, they can adopt that Park and report any issues or ideas directly to Park Management. He explained the focus of Adopt a Park is inspection, proper use, needs and improvement ideas. He added that if it is found to be an acceptable idea, it could be promoted on Next Door and publicized in the paper. He referred to the list of Parks in the Charter and said they could formalize a list for people to sign up and put it on the City's website. Presently he and Mrs. Phyllis Frey live adjacent to the MacWilliam Park, the Riverhouse, and the Dog Park and they would like to monitor that area. He explained presently in that area one (1) issue is the horrific traffic on Indian River Drive East. He said the Police Department told him today they are unable to properly address the issue because of a shortage of manpower. High on his list is going to the City Council and really push to solve the traffic issues in Central Beach. He has seen accidents with pedestrians and a lot of missed accidents from speeding vehicles. He said it is a dangerous situation that needs to be addressed.

Mrs. Dinunno said she likes the idea and she also thinks adopting a beach would be a good idea. She added there are people who are dedicated to picking up trash every day.

Mr. Rob Slezak, Recreation Director, said they could put it on their webpage and see if people are interested in starting this.

Mr. Yemm asked if it could be put on Social Media, including their Facebook page. Mr. Slezak said they could do that.

B) Pickleball University - Mrs. Mari Colacino

Mrs. Mari Colacino, President of Pickleball University, showed a short video about Pickleball. She wanted to point out that they donated \$4,000 to Riverside Theater for the children's workshop last year. She talked about the economic factor of what Pickleball University brings to Vero Beach and what a viable organization they are. They have been here since 2015. Last year they had 530 members and this year they are already up to 480 just since January and she predicts they will have 600 members by the end of the year. They are proposing adopting Pocahontas Park. They are looking at starting a Go Fund Me account. They would like to move forward with their proposal. She briefly went over their proposal presentation packet (on file in the City Clerk's office). She talked about the condition of the North courts. She explained for the first phase for \$110,000 they would pull everything out and put all new materials and surfaces down. They have had to fix the courts four (4) times and last year they had one (1) of their members fall and get hurt and they had to close the courts. The second phase for \$27,000 will be for the South courts to be resurfaced and fencing added and the third phase for \$45,000 will be for lighting. She said the entire project would cost \$183,000. She is here to ask for their blessing to be able to adopt the Park and to allow them to move forward with their project.

Mrs. Dinunno asked her to address the tournament this weekend. Mrs. Colacino talked about the four (4) day tournament and the large economic growth factor it will have. They have 411 participants for this tournament. She added they also coordinated with the City Centennial celebration.

Mrs. Dinunno commented it would be nice to have bleachers there. Mrs. Colacino said she looked at that and it would cost \$2,000 to bring them in for the tournament. She suggested that could maybe be a part of the remodeling project. She pointed out they have grown and they are now a nonprofit 501C7 with a Board of Directors.

Mrs. Dinunno said she did not see what any objection to the plan could be and asked Mr. Slezak if he did. Mr. Slezak answered no. He pointed out they started in 2015 with 20 to 25 people and they are now over 500. Also, one (1) of the reasons for all the cracks Mrs. Colacino talked about is the incredible usage and those courts were not made for that kind of unbelievable usage. What they are bringing forward is to completely change that and they are talking about doing it with their group. He said they are a great group and they have had a great public-private relationship with them. What Mrs. Colacino is asking is for the Commission to approve the concept so they can move it forward to City Council.

Mrs. Colacino added that they believe in their concept so much that the Board of Directors has allocated matching funds for \$45,000.

Mrs. Burdick said a club she belongs to meets at the Community Center and they have issues with the homeless that seem to live in the Park. She asked if they are having any problems. Mrs. Colacino answered no. She said when they are around, they tend to watch and move on. She

has never had an issue where somebody was disrespectful or that they were scared or anything of that nature. They understand there is a situation there, but she is not aware of any members having any issues.

Mr. Holtan asked how many courts and what kind of surface.

Mrs. Colacino said they have 12 courts. They started with 60 members on the South courts. Once they expanded, they asked if they could expand their usage to the North courts and take the tennis courts and use them for pickleball. She said they got a resounding yes and they ended up paying for the cost of that, including bleachers, windscreens, and everything you see on the courts. She said they try to be good citizens and they understand the situation clearly. The Board of Directors is here to help both the members and the City working as a team.

Mrs. Burdick asked if they are looking for a recommendation from the Commission. Mrs. Colacino said yes, they are looking for a recommendation to move forward to the City Council. With the funds of \$183,000, they have to be good stewards with those funds and they are looking for two (2) things. They are looking for a long term lease with Pickleball University and also if Brightline comes through on the west side; they need to make sure they will have parking in the future before they go into this venture because parking is a premium. If the Commission agrees she can move forward, that is what they would be looking for.

Mr. Yemm asked when do they anticipate starting construction. Mrs. Colacino said after the Commission approves the concept and she can get the Go Fund Me up, which is ready once they get approval. Mr. Slezak added after the Board approves the concept, they are going to need to go to the City Council and then follow through with whatever is needed through the City with permitting.

Mr. Yemm asked with this tournament, how will they handle the parking. Mrs. Colacino said she sat down with Mr. Slezak and the Events Committee and marked all the areas around the City where they could have parking. They came up with a map showing in blue all the areas and places they received permission from.

Mr. Yemm asked if they would have extra Police. Mr. Slezak said he does not see it as necessary, but they were at the Events Committee meetings so they are aware of the event and if there is an issue, they will be there.

Mrs. Burdick asked if the Community Center has any big functions going on at the same time.

Mr. Slezak said they have a few things, but he doesn't see any issues.

Mrs. Colacino commented that she did get a call from the Heritage Center about an event they are having on Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and they will be blocking off their parking lot for that. They have done their due diligence of letting everybody know that that there was going to be problems with parking and that they need to adhere to the parking map that they established.

Mr. Yemm referred to the memorandum from the Board of Directors with their concern about the elimination of parking due to the railroad and/or other additional parking would be made available in close proximity (on file in the City Clerk's office). He explained with regards to the railroad, their land is designated and they can't go out by eminent domain and take additional land. Mrs. Colacino said that was great because that was one of their concerns.

Mr. Slezak said that every indication he has gotten from the Public Works Department reiterates what Mr. Yemm said.

Mr. Yemm said in regards to additional parking by the City, there is no other parking available. Mrs. Colacino said she is just looking for the parking they have now. Mr. Slezak said they have a full group now and the Community Center and the Heritage Center have big groups at times and it has been working well. He doesn't see any issues.

Mrs. Dinunno said there had been some talk in the past about who was using the courts and when. She asked how this was going to work and if the courts were going to belong to Pickleball and not be public. Mrs. Colacino said no, that everything is going to remain basically the same and the public can still use them. They just want a long term lease. The Board of Directors wants assurances that what they have is going to be maintained and if they are going to raise \$183,000 that they will have a long term lease.

Mr. Yemm referred to long term leases, such as the Dog Park lease, and said they have escape clauses in them so even if they are granted 20 years, there can be exceptions to the lease. He said an example would be at the Dog Park, if there was a hurricane, the City could put debris there if necessary.

Mrs. Dinunno asked about what the City is going to charge for the lease. Mrs. Colacino said she wants exactly what they are paying right now. Mr. Slezak said the City Attorney will write up the agreement. He said that they are looking for the same agreement as now, which is a monthly fee of about \$200 to \$300 a month.

Mrs. Colacino explained it depends on the number of participants. Last month there were 550 people who played on the courts from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and that money would go back to the City.

Mrs. Dinunno asked if they are changing the agreement and investing money, why couldn't they get a lease like the Dog Park has for \$25 a year. Mr. Slezak said it would be up to them if they want to try and do that, but he would not be able to work with them as he does now. He feels like they should stay partners as they are now. The Recreation Department helps them when they can and they do assist with paying for certain things when they can. He does not work with the Dog Park at all anymore.

Mrs. Dinunno said she was curious why it was a different deal. Mr. Slezak said they have paid for repairs and windscreens in the past and they paid for part of changing the courts from tennis courts to pickleball.

Mr. Yemm referred to the fees they pay. Mr. Slezak commented that would be another thing they would lose revenue on. He said they have been a terrific partner and whatever happens, he will be amenable with whatever the City Council decides.

Mrs. Dinunno referred to the tennis players and that they don't pay. Mr. Yemm said that is a straight City program. Mrs. Dinunno said if this group is taking over the maintenance and all of the improvements, perhaps it should be different now. Mr. Slezak commented all of the tennis players are paying for the usage of their facilities. Mrs. Dinunno said yes, by the head, but not \$180,000 to improve the facilities that the City is still going to own.

Mr. Slezak said that he would work with Mrs. Colacino and this group because they have been a very good group and good for the City. He is going to do whatever it takes to keep them moving along.

Mrs. Burdick made a motion that they recommend to the City Council that Pickleball University be allowed to move forward with their plan. Mrs. Dinunno seconded the motion.

Mr. Holtan asked what do they have to do with the surface. Mr. Slezak said it has to be completely resurfaced.

Mrs. Laura Moss, City Councilwoman, encouraged the Pickleball University. She thinks it is a great idea. She wanted to point out that the Dog Park has been operating for five (5) years and has already paid over \$200,000 for improvements. Speaking for herself, she suggested that the Council has a history of supporting public-private partnerships, such as Live Like Cole. They built a Memorial at Riverside Park and are refurbishing the pier at Royal Palm Pointe and also initiated a bike sharing program and they never asked the City for money. She said they have done fundraising and received grants. The City did not put money into it or dedicate any resource. She encouraged Pickleball University to adopt the same methodology and be largely self-sufficient financially and to minimize demands on City staff. She encouraged them to go forward, but to adopt a methodology that has proven to be successful.

Councilwoman Moss said with the Adopt a Park idea from Mr. Economy, she thinks that is a very interesting and good idea and hopes that works out.

Mr. Slezak commented that Mrs. Colacino has a large group and they are going to be able to raise the funds. He said that Live Like Cole and Go Play Vero and others do the Go Fund Me. They raise the money, do the work and then they donate the work and the City property back to the City and it is all agreed upon in a permitting process.

Mrs. Colacino said they are aware that they need to raise the funds from friends, members and grants and they are prepared for that and that is why it is three phases (3).

The Records Retention Specialist performed the roll call and the motion passed unanimously.

6. OLD BUSINESS

None

7. RECREATION DIRECTOR'S MATTERS

A) Recap of the Mother Daughter Tea Party

Mr. Slezak reported that the Mother Daughter Tea Party was at the end of January and they had 125 people in attendance and it went very well.

B) Firefighters Fair Performance

Mr. Slezak said that their last performance is tonight at the Firefighters Fair. They had shows on Saturday and they both went very well.

C) Spring Gymnastics Registration – April 6, 2019

Mr. Slezak said spring gymnastics registration will be held on April 6, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. at Leisure Square.

D) Spring Break Cheer Camp

Mr. Slezak said that Spring Break Cheer Camp is March 18th through the March 22nd and they still have some registrations available.

E) 59th Annual Easter Egg Hunt – April 13, 2019

Mr. Slezak reported that the 59th Annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Saturday, April 13th at Mulligan's, which is another of their public-private relationships.

8. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

Mr. Yemm said there is a proposed new Ordinance to combine the Marine Commission and the Recreation Commission.

Mrs. Tammy Bursick, City Clerk, said they haven't finalized anything. She explained that they have had such a problem getting people to sit on various Boards so the City Council mentioned they could look at combining some of their Boards and Commissions. She said the City Attorney is looking at that and she is not sure when it will come before the City Council.

Mr. Yemm said so they really don't know what the proposal is right now. Mrs. Bursick said she would send the proposal to them once it is received. She said Ms. Honse is going to bring it to the City Council, but not for first reading right away.

Councilwoman Moss said the City Council has not voted on anything. She said if this Commission wants to make a recommendation in that regard to send it to the City Council and they would be happy to hear how the Commission would like to proceed.

Mrs. Dinunno said she thinks that there is more synergy between the Tree and Beautification Commission, the Recreation Commission, and the Veterans Memorial Island Committee. Also, she thinks the Marine Commission and the Airport Commission seem more similar.

Councilwoman Moss agreed that the focus of the Marina has intensified and she feels the Marine Commission is coming more into their own and she feels they should stay on their own.

Mr. Yemm said he thinks the Marine Commission is becoming more important as an oversight of a business entity, whereas this Commission has been included with park and recreation issues through the years.

Mr. Yemm said they do have a recent problem with some members attending meetings, but he has been on this Commission for 20 to 25 years and membership has never been an issue. He did not think the Marine Commission has had a problem.

Mrs. Dinunno thought maybe they were trying to have fewer staff at meetings.

Councilwoman Moss did not think it was just that. She said that some of the Commissions have had some problems with members in attendance for their meetings.

Mr. Yemm noted they used to have more staff in attendance at their meeting and they have been able to get by with less. He explained one (1) thing they do every year is hold a general staff meeting to get input from everyone. He said they look at Mr. Slezak's proposed budget and help him tweak it. He added they just went through a fee review and made suggestions. He said there is still value in this Commission. He said they are going to have to learn what another Commission does if they start combining them. Mrs. Dinunno said and vice versa.

Mr. Yemm said that his time is limited and he would question the use of his time for learning what other Commissions do. He referred to the multiple meetings and all the very drawn out discussions on the Dog Park, the Rowing Club, and Youth Sailing. He said they are specialized with what they do. He added that they have cut down on the number of meetings. He said the changed life in the Marine Commission has been substantial. He said that it doesn't make sense for them to get involved with the Marine Commission. Mrs. Dinunno said it is a more technical field.

Mr. Yemm said it is a business synergy and as far as Marine operations, they do a good job. He said that the City Council will have to make the decision. They serve two (2) different purposes.

Mrs. Dinunno said she didn't know how they could start to combine that number of Commissions. Mr. Yemm said they would have surplus people, but the question would be how many people want to continue to serve.

Mrs. Burdick suggested a lot of them live in the County and maybe they want all City residents as members.

Mr. Yemm explained that all of them have attachments to the City and are not outsiders.

Mrs. Bursick explained that she puts the Board and Commission openings on every City Council agenda and they have had an issue filling spots. She said it was just a direction of the City Council that maybe they need to look at something, such as combining the Boards. She added the Ordinance is a work in progress. She commented that there is one (1) Board that has had three (3) positions open for a year.

9. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mrs. Dinunno thanked Mr. Slezak and his department for putting the Park together so well for Under the Oaks.

Mr. Slezak commented that if they ever have any issues or crisis at their events to please call the Supervisor on duty and let them know.

Mrs. Jones referred to the Railroad and behind the Community Center where there is a slab of bricks that doesn't look good and wondered when they were going to move that.

Mrs. Dinunno said that she has spoken with the Railroad about it and it is their property and they don't care.

Mrs. Burdick wondered if Mr. Slezak has heard anything from the Police or the City Manager regarding three (3) incidents at their meetings at the Community Center with the homeless. She wrote a letter to the Chief of Police and the City Manager asking them to monitor it.

Mr. Slezak said the Police have upped the amount of Officers in that area and they will continue to address the issues.

Mr. Slezak said they received a note reporting three (3) areas of concern. There were a couple pieces of equipment that needed repair and they are going to be repaired, but it will take about six (6) to eight (8) weeks. The second issue was with leaves and garbage in the Parks and that has been taken care of by the Public Works department. He added that there was also a cleanup by a group of individuals in the Park last Saturday.

Mr. Slezak referred to the Police presence in the area. He said the Chief Currey is really trying to up the crews. He asked Mrs. Burdick to let him know if they can see Police Officers in the parking lot or driving around when she is there because the Police presence has stepped up. He reminded the public if they encounter any issues, to please contact the Police Department and they will be there quickly.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) Next Recreation Commission Meeting Date – April 9, 2019

The next Recreation Commission meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2019.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

/hm