

VERO BEACH RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES
Tuesday, April 10, 2018 – 3:00 p.m.
Community Center, Florida Room, 2266 14th Avenue, Vero Beach, Florida

PRESENT: Chairman, Richard Yemm; Vice Chairman, Sue Dinunno; Members: Bobbi Burdick, Brooke Malone, Alternate Member #1, Greg Holtan (arrived at 3:08 p.m.), and Alternate Member #2 Garrett MacMillan; **Also Present** Assistant Recreation Director, Patty Howard (arrived at 3:08 p.m.), Assistant City Attorney Stefanie Beskovoyne, and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

Excused Absence: Judy Jones

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Yemm called today's meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and the Senior Administrative Assistant performed the roll call.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) February 13, 2018

Mrs. Dinunno made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2018 Recreation Commission meeting. Mrs. Malone seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

4. NEW BUSINESS

A) Recreation Department Staff Input for Budget Discussion

Mr. Nathan Rieck, Vero Beach Lifeguard Captain, said that his wish list is for himself and his staff. The first request is to have 10-hour lifeguard shifts during the summer. Currently they are working eight (8) hour shifts and they leave at 5:00 p.m. Other items on their wish list include two more (2) Automated External Defibrillators (AED), because they would like one (1) on each of their all-terrain vehicles (ATV) and one (1) on the beach truck. By the year 2020 they will be transitioning over to the new Communications International System and they will need new radios. They are replacing two (2) this year and the other five (5) will be replaced by then. The lifeguard towers at Jaycee Beach and South Beach need some repairs and a new coat of paint. They have also been trying for the past several years to get the Building Maintenance Department to get quotes from companies that can wax the fiberglass lifeguard towers. Another item on their list includes replacing one (1) paddleboard each year. He said the following items are from Mr. Eric Toomsoo, Assistant Lifeguard Captain, who would eventually like the lifeguards to become their own entity.

Mrs. Burdick asked what does he mean by their own entity. Mr. Rieck explained that Mr. Toomsoo would like them to be their own department and not part of the Recreation Department.

He said Mr. Toomsoo feels it would be better if they were responsible for their own policies, budget, etc.

Mr. Holtan asked how old are the existing radios. Mr. Rieck replied that they are six (6) to seven (7) years old, but they cannot be changed over to the new radio band for this area. He said they will get a trade in credit for the old radios when they purchase the new ones.

Mr. Rieck continued with Mr. Toomsoo's wish list which, also included extending the lifeguard hours, jet skies, more storage space at South Beach, and new lifeguard towers at Jaycee Beach and South Beach.

Mr. Yemm asked if the Public Works Department would have time to enlarge their current storage garage at South Beach. Mr. Rieck said that he can check to see if that is an option.

Mrs. Dinunno asked if any of the buildings on the Power Plant land can be moved. Mr. Yemm stated that there are a lot of people grabbing for those buildings. The one on the North West corner is the one the Recreation Department talked about having moved to Leisure Square.

Mr. Jeff Matthews, Leisure Square Manager, asked what is the life span of the towers. Mr. Rieck explained that they will only last about 15 years if they are not taken care of, but if they are washed and waxed they should last 30 to 40 years.

Mrs. Burdick said she would imagine if the City took the lifeguards out of the Recreation Department they would put them in with the Police Department, because they are not big enough to be their own department. Mr. Rieck said he agreed.

Mrs. Angie Holshouser, Center Stage Supervisor, stated that she has been with the City of Vero Beach as a full time employee for 20 years, a part time employee before that, and a Junior Staff member prior to that. Her wish list consists of a larger parent viewing room, because that is the biggest complaint in the Center Stage building. She believes they finally fix the water leak that they had in the building, so that is a plus.

Mrs. Burdick asked if the Recreation Department was supposed to get a building from the Power Plant property. Mrs. Patty Howard, Assistant Recreation Director, replied yes. She explained that the Recreation Department is getting displaced from the Dodgertown property and they are moving everything from there to the building on the Power Plant property by July 1, 2018. The entire building is not air conditioned, so they are working on having that added. She said that building is actually big enough to store all their stuff from Dodgertown and still have gymnastics in there.

Mr. Yemm commented that all of this is contingent on the sale with Florida Power & Light (FP&L).

Mrs. Howard stated that they still have a plan. She said they have enough equipment and what they do need is budgeted for every year. However, a larger parent viewing room is an issue.

Mrs. Burdick asked how can the existing parent viewing room be made larger at Center Stage.

Mrs. Holshouser explained that they would bump out the wall where the existing viewing room is and extend it down further past the south entrance door. This will allow the parents to enter directly into the viewing room from the outside and there will be another door going into the gym. That is where they will release the children to their parents and it will keep the parents and siblings out of the performing area.

Mr. Matthews stated that another option would be to build a parent viewing room outside of the south entrance so that it will not take away any room in the gym. This option would probably cost \$100,000 or more to engineer. Mr. Yemm stated that the Recreation Department's future depends on what happens with the building on the Power Plant property, which might take a couple of more years.

Mrs. Malone asked if the storage area on the Power Plant land is only temporary. Mrs. Howard stated that they have been given the directive from the City Manager to move into the building and get quotes for air conditioning to be installed. If for some reason they do not get that building then the alternate plan for Center Stage will be to budget money to expand the parent viewing room.

Mr. Yemm said that they just need to make it work for a couple of years. He asked how old is the Center Stage building. Mr. Matthews replied they have been operating in there for almost 20 years.

Mr. Yemm stated that the Aerial Antics Circus has been around for longer than that. Mrs. Holshouser replied yes. They have been performing the Aerial Antics Circus for over forty years.

Mr. Matthews explained that he was not able to get a wish list from Mrs. Laurie Lee, Community Events & Rental Facility Supervisor, because she is out on a family emergency. He announced that the Riverhouse should be ready to be rented out shortly. He continued by handing out a report from the National Recreation and Parks Association on "Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services" (on file in the City Clerk's office). He said this year a City Councilmember referenced that maybe Vero Beach has too many Parks. Because of that comment he will continue to talk about the Parks and what the Recreation Department offers, because they are both extremely important. He said that recreation brings economic and social value and has environmental benefits. Home values increase by living near Parks and having vibrant recreation. His biggest wish is to figure out how to make other people aware of how important recreation is to the community. The City and the County used to have a combined Recreation Department, but that ended in 2002. He said he ran across a study from 1992 called "Service Cost Evaluation and Operation of the Parks and Recreation Department". He believes it is very important they do another one for the City to see where they are as a department and what the citizens want. It is important to him to know what they offer, how to make it better, and most importantly what the community wants. Ultimately it is the citizens that have the power to say what they want and that is being lost by people making decisions that are not based on citizen input. He thought that it would be good to do a town survey to see what the people want the Recreation Department to be. Mr. Yemm stated that it is very expensive to do a survey.

Mrs. Howard explained that the Planning and Development Department is working on a Comprehensive Plan for the City. It is not as detailed for the Recreation Department as they would like it to be, but they are asking for their input.

Mr. Matthews said it is vitally important for the Recreation Department to focus on what their future holds with the Power Plant being sold, what the citizens want, and what people are willing to pay for. Mr. Yemm said that he agrees, but the Recreation Department is challenged for money. He said with Mr. Matthews researching the background of the Recreation Department is a good start, but to do a full-blown survey is expensive.

Mrs. Burdick commented that people don't know how much they appreciate something until they know they are about to lose it.

Mrs. Malone stated that the Recreation Department is not a member of the National Recreation and Park Association, because it was cut from the budget. She said the membership cost is \$250 per year. She asked Mr. Matthews if he personally pays the dues out of his own pocket to remain a member of the National Recreation and Park Association. Mr. Matthews replied yes.

Mrs. Malone said that Mr. Matthews is responsible for the physical maintenance of the Leisure Square facility and he does not get City support. He is also maintaining his connection to the national support structure on his own. As a group they need to figure out how to get support for the Recreation Department in general, because they do not have any. Year after year the financial support for recreation keeps going down. Mr. Yemm explained that the budget cuts are across the board for the City and not just the Recreation Department.

Mrs. Malone said it would seem to her that the money from the FP&L sale will go to the people with the biggest, brightest, and best forward thinking ideas. The National Recreation and Park Association is doing symposiums left and right on how to solve the current situation. Their ideas are out of the box, aggressive, and a change of pace. She does not believe that Mr. Matthews should have to personally pay for his membership to the National Recreation and Park Association.

Mr. Matthews reported he found some old information which shows that in 2006 he was the last person to go to a training seminar that was paid for by the City. Now the only thing they are receiving is through the lifeguards for their Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training.

Mrs. Malone stated that they need to figure out what they can do this year to get funding and have the Recreation Department taken care of, because they should not have to fight for an AED.

Mr. Matthews stated that they need the Recreation Commission to help them obtain the tools to make them successful. Mr. Yemm said that the Recreation Department has been struggling since 2006.

Mr. Matthews commented that he is not sure if any money from the sale of the Power Plant will go to Recreation. His ultimate goal would be to ask the citizens if they are willing to support a bond referendum to do major improvements. They would need millions of dollars and he is not sure what the money would be used for. He does not know how many bonds the City has and

requesting a bond is above his pay grade, but that is what every other City and Town in the United States does to get the proper recreation services they should have.

Mrs. Malone said they should consider adding to the top of their wish list the reinvesting in organizations and associations that have top thinkers who are coming up with solutions to help solve the current problems. These associations have connections to help them start firing off some ideas that will gain attention.

Mr. Yemm asked Mr. Matthews if he would like his handout from the National Recreation and Park Association to go to the City Council. Mr. Matthews replied yes he would like the City Council to see that information. Mr. Yemm asked the other Commission members if they were in favor of submitting it to the City Council. The Commission members agreed that they would need to read all first. Mr. Yemm told Mr. Matthews that he can submit it to the City Clerk's office on his own to be distributed to the City Council.

Mr. Matthews stated that it is important to have a feel for what the City residents want for recreation, because they are seeing the County and their recreational facilities grow.

Mr. Yemm asked Mr. Matthews for his top three (3) wish list items for Leisure Square.

Mr. Matthews said the first item would be to update all of the gym equipment, because he makes repairs on a daily basis. The current equipment cost \$22,000, which has not been updated in over 20 years. The company the equipment was purchased from is no longer in business, so it is hard to find replacement parts. His second item would be to expand the Leisure Square offices, redesign the lobby, turn the Tuff Room into administrative offices, etc. When they first started putting together funds for Leisure Square the goal was to start with the restrooms and that has been a hurdle. We know how expensive it is to operate the pool, but if they could somehow expand the pool they could hold more classes. They need to have a large amount of money thrown at them, because they cannot operate in the positive when they are working with 30 to 40 year old equipment and buildings. Mr. Yemm stated that Leisure Square has been a band-aid operation for many years.

Mr. Matthews said just because there are private entities that offer the same programs it does not mean the City's low cost recreation isn't important.

Mrs. Burdick stated to get things changed they need their supporters to run for City Council, because otherwise the same Councilmembers keep coming back every year.

Mrs. Dinunno asked how is the funding coming along for the Skateboard Park. Mr. Rieck replied that they are at about \$18,000, but now they are also fundraising for the new lifeguard tower. Mr. Yemm stated that they have been talking about the new tower for three (3) years. Mr. Rieck reported that they need \$250,000 and the fundraising is being done by the Vero Beach Lifeguard Association (VBLA).

Mr. Yemm said that Leisure Square will continue to be a band-aid operation for many more years, or they need to find someone to step forward who can tear it down and build a new complex.

Mrs. Malone explained that currently there are still a number of other individuals, organizations, nonprofit groups, and athletic nonprofits that are being approached to try to find partners.

Mr. Matthews said he believes the information that was presented at the City Council meeting pertaining to a partnership with a nonprofit group was from someone who misspoke. Anytime there is an organization or nonprofit group working with the City it normally starts off as an idea and a presentation to the City Council. They get feedback and it grows from there, but it can take years in the making. He said the comments and the information that was presented were misconstrued by many people.

Mrs. Dinunno stated that she believes there is a cultural difference between that City Councilmember and the rest of Vero Beach. She heard him state that there are gyms all over town, so why doesn't the City get out of the gym business. He does not value the importance of what the City offers to people in the community who cannot afford to go to the other gyms. She believes that a tour of Leisure Square would be very beneficial for him. They need to set up tours for all of the City Councilmembers, especially during the summer camp to see how many of them are there on scholarships and how many children attend the camps that otherwise would have nowhere to go. They need to take pictures of all the people in the City's programs and put it in a presentation to show who they are providing services to.

Mr. Matthews said it has gotten to the point where it feels like he has to beg for survival, but at this stage of his life and at this point in his career it isn't something he wants to do for the rest of life. Unfortunately, that is where they are at and it should not be that way.

Mrs. Dinunno suggested that they find someone in the media who takes an interest in their plea for help. Mrs. Malone mentioned that perhaps they should reach out to Mrs. Paige Van Antwerp, because this is right up her alley. The hardest thing that the Recreation Department is going to have to overcome is the fact that they have to beg. They have to position themselves to fight for what they believe in. She said it is not so much the Parks and Beaches that are under attack, but it is the structures. Mr. Yemm stated that he believes the Parks are also being looked at.

Mrs. Howard stated that they cannot change the City Council, but they can educate them. Mrs. Burdick commented that they can educate the public and then the public will change the City Council.

Mr. Yemm stated that the money from the sale of the Power Plant will not be going in the General Revenue, because the law prevents that. The City voters will make demands on what they want and that is going to come quicker than they think. It all goes back to the demand for services, so the public needs to speak up.

Mrs. Gabby Dwyer, Riverside Racquet Supervisor and Special Events Coordinator, thanked the Recreation Commission for all their help in getting the things that they have. Her wish list for Riverside Racquet includes new laminate flooring in the Pro Shop, paint the Pro Shop building, refurbish, or get new doors on the restrooms, and a maintenance person who can stay until 5:00 p.m.

Mrs. Dinunno stated that when the Pickleball group needs work done on their courts they get together and get the work done. Why can't she get the tennis players to help volunteer. Mrs.

Dwyer replied that she did have a few people volunteer and some of the Tennis Pros do things around the property. She does not know what the liability is for allowing them to do the work.

Mr. Yemm asked if they used to have three (3) maintenance employees. Mrs. Howard replied that they used to have seven (7). They have not had good luck keeping the part time maintenance position filled. Mr. Matthews commented that they have had a lot of great applicants, but they are mainly looking for full time work and if they are hired they do not stay. Right now they have a gentleman who is retired and is just looking for something to do, so hopefully he will work out.

Mrs. Dwyer agreed that she would like the City to hire another full time maintenance person. She stated that her long-term goals include resurfacing the tennis courts in 2020 and as of right now that is not in the five (5) year capital improvements list. She announced that the racquetball courts at Riverside Park are closed indefinitely and they are not safe. The roof grates have been gone since Hurricane Frances and have been replaced with windscreens. The lights are damaged and dangling down and the floor is covered with mildew. She cannot rent them out, so she sends people to Leisure Square.

Mr. Yemm asked what is the demand for racquetball. Mr. Matthews explained that he has had an increase of about 20 more players since another gym changed some of their policies.

Mrs. Malone asked if there is any insurance money coming in to repair the racquetball courts at Riverside Park. Mrs. Dwyer stated that she was not sure, but they have not been usable since 2004. It would be nice to be able to renovate them and use them to generate income.

Mrs. Dwyer said other items on her wish list include new shirts for the Recreation Department staff, so that they look uniform at their events. She would also like to have her permanent part time clerical position filled and pay raises for part time employees.

Mr. Yemm asked if there are any youth tennis programs. Mrs. Dwyer replied that Mr. Cliff Perez, Tennis Pro, does some youth clinics, but they are not free. She said that Mr. Rob Slezak, Recreation Director, is trying to increase the youth tennis activity and they publish it in several places.

Mr. Yemm asked how are the tennis courts at Charles Park. Mrs. Dwyer announced that two (2) of the tennis court nets were recently vandalized at Charles Park. She is waiting on her order for the new nets to come in. Mrs. Howard commented that the court surfaces at Charles Park are in good shape and they were resurfaced a few years ago. Mrs. Dwyer said the tennis courts at Charles Park are free all day long.

Mr. Yemm asked if children have access to play on the Riverside Park tennis courts. Mrs. Dwyer replied yes. She said that Saint Edward's School has a partnership with the City and they use the Riverside Park tennis courts. The free time for the courts is Monday through Thursday from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday they are available from 12:00 p.m. until dark, and Sunday is free all day.

Mrs. Dinunno stated that Mrs. Laura Moss, City Councilwoman, will be scheduling a visit to Riverside Park to look at the Racquetball courts and she will also visit Leisure Square during the

summer camps. She believes they need an advocate on the City Council to help them and Councilwoman Moss might be their person.

Mrs. Burdick said that unfortunately they will probably need to fight for themselves. She suggested that they put together a Power Point Presentation and visit the various organizations and clubs to show them what the City offers and ask for support.

Mrs. Malone explained that there are organizations out there that want to either have their name put on things, or host an event at a facility and they are willing to put out a lot of money. The National Parks and Recreation Association is littered with information on how to find funding. Having lack of support, facilities that are falling apart, etc. is a nationwide problem and they are not the only ones fighting for employees and no maintenance. Their support has to come from someone who is passionate about what the Recreation Department does.

Mrs. Dinunno suggested that it might help to have a brochure that lists the areas the Recreation Department needs help with. Mrs. Malone added that it will be a media campaign. Mrs. Dwyer said that they have sponsors and they are doing advertising and marketing, but it is hard. They need help finding the correct people in the community to contact.

Mrs. Howard stated that the Recreation Department solicits their programs and they do marketing on a daily basis. She said she takes pictures everyday and they are put on the Recreation Department's facebook page and the City's website. She explained that there is absolutely no money budgeted for advertising and marketing. She cannot control what the newspapers decide to publish, but she makes sure they have all the information. Having money for advertising is an item on her wish list. She said the Community Center needs updated and the grant that they applied for does not look very promising. However, they still have about \$100,000 in this year's budget to do some repairs. She will be working on fixing the bathrooms and the plumbing, replacing the flooring, installing new doors, etc. She explained that the Riverhouse is looking great and it should be completed in the next two (2) months, so they can start renting it out again. She feels like there are people who want to change Vero and they want to bring in things like a bike rental system that is normally seen in bigger cities. If they are going to discuss implementing new items then they need to discuss a parking system again. They also need to discuss renting out the Park Pavilions instead of them being available on a first come first serve basis.

Mrs. Malone asked what would be the disadvantage of utilizing a social media campaign to post photos of the vandalism at Charles Park and the condition of the racquetball courts. Along with the photos and information on all the cool City events, they could also reach out by asking the community if they have any ideas or ways they can help. Mrs. Dinunno said the only bad part is that it might come across as shamming the City Council for not taking care of it.

Mrs. Holshouser commented that she can see both sides. On one (1) hand it might encourage people to step up and help, but people might decide not to enroll their children because they think the facilities are in poor condition. Mr. Yemm agreed that they might not want to advertise the damage.

Mrs. Holshouser said that maybe they should solicit certain clubs or service organizations. Mrs. Dinunno said that possibly the Rotary Club would help. Mr. Yemm commented that the Rotary Club might contribute money more than physical help.

5. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business for discussion.

6. RECREATION DIRECTOR'S MATTERS

A) Recap of Mother Daughter Tea Party – February 3rd

Mrs. Howard said that the Mother Daughter Tea Party was organized by Mr. Holshouser and it took place on February 3, 2018. It was packed and everyone had a great time. Mrs. Dwyer stated that her daughter goes every year and always has a great time. She said Mrs. Holshouser and her staff really does a great job with the tea party.

Mrs. Dinunno asked if the artist she recommended came through for them. Mrs. Holshouser replied yes. She was so good and a perfect fit for this event. It was right before Valentine's Day so she provided little valentine paintings for them. Everyone loved her and a thank you note was mailed to her.

B) Report on 59th Annual Easter Egg Hunt – March 24th

Mrs. Dwyer reported that the Easter Egg Hunt drew a big crowd. It took place at Mulligan's Beach House on March 24th. Councilwoman Moss attended and she really enjoyed starting off all the groups. It was a nice event with quite a few volunteers. She thanked the Treasure Coast Women's Club for filling all the eggs and Ocean Grill for allowing them to use their parking lot.

Mrs. Howard explained that Mulligan's donates \$10,000 to the Recreation Department every year and they have a great partnership with them.

C) Update on the Aerial Antics Youth Circus Firefighters Fair Performances

Mrs. Howard reported that the performances at the Firefighters Fair were amazing. They got rained out on Saturday, but they were able to get those performances squeezed in on Tuesday.

D) Gymnastics Registration – April 7nd

Mrs. Howard announced that the gymnastics registration was on Saturday, April 7th and every class is almost full. They even opened up a few more spots in a couple of classes. The next gymnastics registration will be on June 16, 2018 and that session ends with the performance of the Aerial Antics Circus on August 3rd – 5th at Saint Edward's School. She reported that the Spring Break Cheer Camp was a little smaller this year because it was only four (4) days. It fell during Easter week, which is not usual.

Mrs. Dinunno asked what does Saint Edward's School do for the Recreation Department.

Mrs. Howard replied that they allow the Recreation Department to use their gymnasium for eight (8) days free of charge for the Aerial Antics Circus. In return Saint Edward's School can utilize the Riverside Park tennis courts.

7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS

None

8. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mr. Yemm asked Mr. Garrett MacMillan to introduce himself.

Mr. MacMillan stated that he is a new Alternate Member on the Recreation Commission. He is a student at Vero Beach High School and he is currently writing a book.

Mrs. Burdick asked him if he is a Senior this year. Mr. MacMillan replied yes.

Mr. Yemm asked him what next year holds for him. Mr. MacMillan replied that he will be going to college. He has applied at several colleges, but he is not sure which one he will be attending.

Mrs. Malone asked him what brought him to the Recreation Commission. Mr. MacMillan said he loves the Parks in Vero Beach and he likes what the Recreation Commission does and he wants to get involved.

Mr. Holtan asked if the City would ever consider installing a metal roof on Leisure Square, because they last about 40 years. A metal roof is a little more expensive, but it more than doubles the life span. Mrs. Howard said that is certainly something to consider.

Mrs. Dinunno said that Mrs. Megan Hoots was at a meeting at Leisure Square recently to talk about possibly doing a mural there. She said they might be looking at utilizing the long wall on the west side of the building. She commented that the Pickleball Organization is looking at getting a price quote for building Pickleball courts across from Crestlawn Cemetery. She asked why is Leisure Square not an option for pickleball courts if the Skate Park does not get off the ground. Mrs. Howard said that it is a consideration and Mr. Slezak was looking at the area near the volleyball and basketball courts.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

A) Next Recreation Commission Meeting Date – May 8, 2018

The next Recreation Commission meeting is scheduled for May 8, 2018.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

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