

**RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, AUGUST 1, 2023 1:30 P.M.
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

PRESENT: Chairman, Brooke Steinkamp; Vice Chairman, Christopher Woodruff; Members: Leonard Markir and Jackson Stewart (arrived at 1:32) **Also Present:** Recreation Director, James O’Connell; City Attorney, John Turner; City Clerk, Tammy Bursick, and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Chartier

Excused absence: Rick Gillespie

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Steinkamp called today’s meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) October 11, 2022

Mr. Markir made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 11, 2022, Recreation Commission meeting. Mr. Woodruff seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A) Recommendation to City Council on establishing Policies and Procedures relating to the Naming or Renaming of Public Parks

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, said the Resolution they received was by the direction of City Council (attached to the original minutes). He explained that it is for the naming of City facilities and it came about when they received a proposal for a name, but they did not have a policy in place. They put together some ideas, drafted the Resolution, and presented it to City Council. City Council liked the general idea of it so it was suggested that the Recreation Commission make a formal recommendation on the proposed Resolution. The Resolution is an outline and the Commission can discuss whether they should consider the Resolution as a whole or change any of the recommendations, standards, or criteria.

Mr. Markir said if the City is looking for guidelines about the future naming or renaming of facilities they should have a formal set of guidelines. He said there should be a list of their general priorities that the Commission and the public can use to help them make recommendations. He suggested that the Commission members do some research on the best recommendation to make to City Council on how they want to proceed with a request for a naming. They need operational procedures that everyone, including the public, understands. He does not believe there is a lot they can do today, but there is a process for moving forward.

Mrs. Steinkamp said she believes the purpose of the Resolution was to create the policy for renaming Parks or facilities.

Mr. Turner explained that when there is a proposal for naming a facility, park, or structure on City property, the proposed naming needs to be adopted by a policy, which is what the Resolution is. If they have suggestions on improving or adding to the policy they can make a recommendation to City Council for consideration.

Mrs. Steinkamp said if there is a proposal presented, the Recreation Commission will review it and make a recommendation to City Council. The Resolution lists the criteria such as historical figures, prominent individuals, etc.

Mr. Jim O'Connell, Recreation Director, stated that Section 2 lists the criteria for choosing names.

Mr. Markir said that even though it is considered a policy, it is not so much a policy but a selection of various properties that are proposed to be named.

Mr. Stewart said they cannot anticipate every single possible name that might be proposed for a piece of property.

Mr. Markir said this is just a list of possible locations that could be named, but he believes they need some guidelines on what the policy names are so they can make a decision.

Mr. O'Connell read Section 2 item D of the policy. He said he believes that the purpose of this policy is to make sure that before a naming request goes before City Council that the Recreation Commission hears it first. They do not need a larger set of rules but the Commission should review and discuss it on a case-by-case basis to determine if the name is a good fit for the facility.

Mrs. Steinkamp said she agrees. The Resolution is general enough that they will be able to make a recommendation based on the guidelines.

Mr. Markir explained that if they had a request before them today, each of them could have their own personal ideas and thoughts of what would be best, so that is why he believes they need a list of procedures in order to make decisions in a consistent manner.

Mrs. Steinkamp stated that the Commission's job is to listen to public comment, consider the feedback from the residents, and vote in a manner that reflects what they heard.

Mr. Turner stated that the policy is established by City Council and the Recreation Commission will make recommendations based on the criteria in the Resolution. If the Recreation Commission reviews the application and feels the applicant has met the recommended criteria then they can send it to City Council. If City Council determines they don't have the needed criteria in the policy they can add or remove information from the Resolution.

Mr. Markir asked if it is a perfunctory decision by the Recreation Commission. It sounds like they don't really have an option but to agree.

Mr. Turner said they will make a recommendation based on whether they accept or reject it.

Mr. Woodruff asked if in Section 4 – Maintenance, is it normal for a donor to maintain the structure.

Mr. Turner said this came about because of some structures that were donated to the City but were not maintained and the City had to assume the cost to take care of them. They want to make sure the donor is aware that they are still responsible for the maintenance and not the taxpayers.

Mr. Markir asked if a leasehold developer is considered a concessionaire or a property owner because that might establish different criteria regarding naming or renaming the Three Corners property.

Mr. Turner explained that a long-term property lessee has an interest in the lease under Florida law versus a licensee or concessionaire who does not have that standing.

Mr. Turner said he is looking for some direction from the Recreation Commission on whether they feel that City Council needs their input when applications are submitted for naming City property.

Mr. Markir asked if they could expect public comment to be heard at the Recreation Commission meetings.

Mr. Turner replied probably not.

Mr. Woodruff stated that he believes the Resolution is comprehensive enough without being restrictive.

Mrs. Steinkamp said the Resolution makes sense and she likes that the criteria is simple without restrictions.

Mr. Markir said that based on how this was presented he thought the Commission was being asked to establish the policies and procedures regarding the naming. However, what Mr. Turner explained is that the Commission is only supposed to receive the applications and vote yes or no.

Mr. Woodruff told Mr. Markir if he has guidelines he would like to present to City Council for them to consider in the future that would be fine, but he feels the Resolution has enough information to get them started.

Mrs. Steinkamp asked Mr. Markir if he has any guidelines that he would like to discuss today because they can do that and make a recommendation to City Council.

Mr. Turner explained that the policy, standards, and criteria are listed in the Resolution and this is what he was asked to present to them. If they want greater details they might want to make some suggestions. The Recreation Commission is charged with considering the applications and making recommendations based on the policy of the Resolution.

Mr. Markir said he was hoping the Commission could prepare a list of guidelines that establish the policy and submit that to City Council.

Mr. O’Connell said he believes that the Resolution contains a policy that is broad enough but allows them to consider each application and make a recommendation on an individual basis, based on its merits and shortcomings. They don’t know what cases might come up and having broad policy guidelines without going overboard might be the way to get this started. Every case could be a little different so that is probably why City Council wants the Commission’s recommendation on this. With this process, City Council can be assured that applications are investigated and public comment is allowed before it comes to them.

Mr. Turner asked if they are going to make a recommendation.

Mrs. Steinkamp asked if anyone objects to making a recommendation. She asked Mr. Markir if he feels comfortable with where this is going. She said it is their role to make recommendations, not be policymakers.

Mr. Markir said he could make a motion that the Recreation Commission will only receive applications and make a recommendation after hearing from the public.

Mr. Woodruff stated that City Council does take their recommendations into consideration. He thinks it is fantastic that they have been asked to be included in this process.

Mrs. Steinkamp said she is grateful they are included and this is what the Recreation Commission has been asking for.

Mr. Woodruff made a motion that they recommend the proposed Resolution for naming City facilities and Parks be submitted to City Council. Mrs. Steinkamp seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-1 with Mr. Markir voting no.

4. OLD BUSINESS

None

5. RECREATION DIRECTOR’S UPDATE

Mr. O’Connell announced that the License Agreement with the United States Tennis Association (USTA) Florida went into effect on May 22, 2023, but they started operations on June 1, 2023. USATA completed the resurfacing of the four (4) back tennis courts and they are now operating the facility. He reported that a couple of months ago a storm took out some of the fence, but that has now been repaired. USTA has a new Tennis Director, Margo Carter, and some staff on site who are holding a Summer Camp and other activities at the facility. He reported that the Recreation Department’s Summer Camps are wrapping up. They were sold out, but they tend to do that most summers. He announced that the Ariel Antics Circus will take place this weekend, August 3-5, 2023 at St. Edward’s School. The show is called “One Hit Wonder” and he will be the Emcee. He said he would like to invite each of them to stop by because his

staff and the students always put on a great show. He reported that the Fall Gymnastics registration starts on August 19th and if anyone has any questions about it to please contact Leisure Square.

Mrs. Steinkamp asked if they were able to start any programs with the homeschool groups.

Mr. O'Connell replied that they put it out there but they did not get much response to it. He said with school starting up he will bring it back up to his staff.

Mrs. Steinkamp reported that the Youth Sailing program is exploding. She will get a current list of the homeschool groups for him and hopefully, they can get something started.

6. MEMBER'S MATTERS

Mr. Stewart asked for an update on the Racquetball court at Riverside Park, which has been closed for many years.

Mr. O'Connell replied that the building is part of the USTA agreement and they do not have any specific use for it right now. He hopes that as this agreement blossoms, they will utilize it for something in the future. He is not sure what they will do with the building, but he doubts that they will turn it back into a Racquetball court.

Mrs. Steinkamp asked since it is occupied by USTA would it be up to them to decide what the future plans are for that building.

Mr. O'Connell stated that USTA will probably make a proposal to the City about the building in the future, but right now they are trying to get their programs running and money flowing. They will have to wait and see what happens.

Mr. Stewart asked what is going on with the Humiston Park Boardwalk.

Mr. O'Connell reported that it is condemned at this point. He believes the Public Works Department has asked to budget some money to do a rebuild, but he is not sure what that will look like. The Recreation Department moved one of the old lifeguard stands to Humiston Beach and temporary beach access. He is not sure about all the plans, but they might move things further back and create some sort of sidewalk structure to make it more storm resilient. He said he does not know if they will replace the lifeguard pod that is there or build a permanent structure as part of the rebuild. Either way, it is going to take quite a while.

Mrs. Steinkamp asked if the Vero Beach Lifeguard Association (VBLA) is still trying to raise money for a new tower.

Mr. O'Connell stated that he has not had any discussions with VBLA, but he does not think they are in a position to start putting any money into that.

Mr. Woodruff asked if the Riverside Boat Ramp is part of the Recreation Department.

Mr. O'Connell replied that it is in Riverside Park, but it is not a facility they handle. He reported there will be engineering work and other expenses to handle before they can do any construction work there. It is open with a lot of warning signs stating there is no dock, but they are working on it and trying to get it done as soon as possible.

Mr. Woodruff said he heard that the Rowing Club wants to dredge out that basin and add new docks there.

Mr. O'Connell said he has not heard anything about that.

Mrs. Steinkamp asked if they will be meeting again next month.

Mr. Markir stated that City Council switched them to meeting quarterly.

Mrs. Tammy Bursick, City Clerk, explained that City Council has most of the other Commissions and Boards meeting quarterly and it is working out well. However, if something comes up that they need to meet on they can call a meeting.

Mr. Stewart asked if Pocahontas Park is under the authority of downtown or if it is under the Recreation Department.

Mr. O'Connell stated that it is a Park and it falls under the Recreation Department's purview.

Mr. Stewart said that Mayor Cotugno has done a wonderful job of getting some much need work done at the Park.

Mr. O'Connell reported that people from The Source have been doing some pressure washing and cleanup projects at Pocahontas Park and around downtown. They have been doing a wonderful job and he would like to thank them for what they are doing.

Mr. Turner announced that more information about Pocahontas Park will be forthcoming in the near future.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Today's meeting adjourned at 2:18 p.m.

/rc