

Monroe County Board of Parks and Recreation Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2022

Virtual Meeting

Minutes recorded by Naomi Pagidas, Executive Assistant, Parks & Beaches Dept.

Meeting Called to Order at 6:00pm

Board Members in attendance:

Steve Miller

Darcy Wadsworth

Dr. Jim Boilini

Board Members not in attendance:

Gayle Glover

Margie Smith

Media Present:

No Media Present

Monroe County was represented by:

John Allen - Director, Parks & Beaches

Cary Knight - Director, Project Management

Tom Henry – Project Manager

Kevin Wilson – Assistant County Administrator

Suzi Rubio - Aide to Kevin Wilson

Patricia Eables - Assistant County Attorney

Jethon Williams – IT Media Manager

Public Attendees:

No public members in attendance

Meeting Minutes

- **The Board approved meeting via Zoom/CMT methods (Resolution 397-2020).** Dr. Boilini made a motion to approve meeting via Zoom and Darcy Wadsworth seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Agenda Changes/Approval of Agenda

- Discussion on Gayle Glover’s replacement was moved to old business.
- Dr. Boilini made a motion to approve the agenda and Darcy Wadsworth seconded the motion. Agenda was approved.

Approval of January 24, 2022 meeting Minutes

- Board had no changes to the January 24, 2022, Minutes. Dr. Boilini made a motion to approve and Darcy Wadsworth seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

Parks & Beaches Director Update – John Allen

2023 Budget

- Capital Projects were added
- Interviewing for Parks & Beaches (“P&B”) Manager
- Interviewing for P&B Recreational Team Leader

Current Projects

- Reviewing project items
- Outreach to community to inform if they want to provide input
- Upgrade parks to be ADA compliant

Staffing/New Hires/Apprentices/Interns / Summer Camps

- Introduced Naomi Pagidas, Executive Assistant, who will take over organizing Advisory Board Meetings
- P&B Recreational – Request for Use of Property scheduled events will continue the same, through Michele Safos, until new P&B Recreational Team Leader hired in a few weeks
- Request for Use of Property forms will be updated and more user friendly
- Summer Camps considered at Bernstein Park and Big Pine Community Park
- Looking into website to add parent camps database to share with community
- Dr. Boilini suggested The College of the Florida Keys students for internships
- Steve Miller recommended Take Stock in Children for student community service hours

Bay Harbor Drive Right of Way and Mike Forster Memorial Park

- Monroe County website has updated details with hours open to public, sunrise to sunset, and no parking

Veterans Memorial Park

- Replacing the Flagpole with more information to come
- Getting community involved

House Bill 105 – Patricia Eables

- New law will allow counties and municipalities to prohibit smoking in parks and beaches with the exception of unfiltered cigars.
- Once the Bill is in effect, staff will draft a proposed ordinance and vote at the July 18, 2022, P&B Board meeting.
- The Bill passed House and Senate and once signed by the Governor it will be effective 7/1/2022.
- Darcy Wadsworth favors passing no smoking at the July 18, 2022, meeting once the Bill is passed.

Harry Harris Parking

- Beach closed due to construction
- Boat parking has 20 spaces. There was overflow grass parking that was shut down in 2020.
- Kevin Wilson and Suzie Rubio not aware of any other available parking in proximity of the Park and in the neighborhood.
- There is no known data as to how many people are turned away from the Park.
- Researching various computer apps with reserved parking system to alleviate traffic situation.
- App is cost savings for County
- Change fees
- Gives residents priority and free parking
- App may not be effective in time for 2022 lobster mini season
- Steve Miller suggested Park Closed/Beach Full signage on U.S. Hwy 1
- Steve Miller suggested for mini season to park at schools, shuttle people to the Park by bus, can be used as a school fundraiser; however, may not reduce residential traffic
- Kevin Wilson recommended Coral Shore High School for shuttle service, however traffic may be cumbersome to the residents.

Rentals/Independent Contractors

- Getting process set up to teach classes
- Working with Patricia Eables, County Attorney's Office, on process, insurance, certifications, etc.

Big Pine Scenic Overlook Name Suggestions

- Various names were suggested to name the park to present at next BOCC meeting
- John Allen - the word "Nature" must be part of the name
- A unanimous recommendation was made to name the parcel as "Pine Channel Nature Park." Darcy Wadsworth made a motion to approve, Dr. Boilini seconded the motion, and motion was approved.
- Swimming Hole- everyone agrees that it is coming along very nicely.

Project Management update on projects for Parks and Beaches - Cary Knight

- **Key Largo Community Park** - Suzi Rubio – Walking Path Asphalt – Initial Contractor did not perform and approved by BOCC to cancel the contract. New contractor, Affordable Asphalt, Inc., began repairs and proposed to be completed within two (2) weeks. Pickleball courts - new contract for design services is waiting for approval. Should have plans within sixty (60) days.
- **Harry Harris Park** – Suzi Rubio - Soft opening of Wilkinson's Point. Community is receptive. Walking path is still a work in progress, but anticipate completion by end of Summer.
- **Rowell's Park** - Cary Knight - Near completion. Rowell's phase two: second parking lot and restroom paid by grant; continuing with design during construction and while working on grant agreement. Current with 90 percent of the design completed and anticipate completion by end of hurricane season. Shelter -TDC grant or next year budget cycle available October 1, 2022.
- **Key Largo Community Park** – Tom Henry – Playground (YMCA) replacement equipment- Four

proposals under GSA contract to discuss with John Allen. Goal is to install by end of FY22. Style, delivery time is taken into consideration. There was no push back on the goal date. Use the amenities as a “tree house” theme was suggested by children in the community. Staff is working on renewing the lease agreement for the Upper Keys Community Pool entity.

- **Veterans Park** – Tom Henry – Project 1) Restroom repair project: Engineer plans are being drafted. Would like to complete by Veteran’s Day. Project 2) ADA Pavilion and Tiki Huts: Should have plans by end of April. FEMA documented damage may change scope of work. A ceremony is suggested. Goal to have it completed by November 11th. More updates at next meeting.
- **Big Pine Community Park** – Tom Henry - New flood panels for first floor due to Irma damage - going out to bid. Substantial completion of the residential house in the next three (3) months. Final completion expected by end of fiscal year. Once tenant is selected notify Patricia Eables to create a lease.
- **Blue Heron** – Tom Henry - Repairs to the surrounding edges of the pickleball courts. Should get on the contractor, Affordable Asphalt’s schedule in two (2) months.
- **Watson Field Park** – Tom Henry - Irma FEMA documented repairs have been completed. Has stove and ice machine installed.
- **Bernstein Park** – Cary Knight - Determination between sod and turf. Gathering more information on pine shavings artificial turf cost. Has a cooler feel. Exploring in the Natural turf versus Astro turf. Goal is to put new sod or completely repair and put Astro turf. Drainage is a big consideration. Want to make sure that the turf has some “give” to avoid athletic injuries. John Allen added safety is main concern. Natural turf maintenance allows some time to regrow. Use of field is on a first come first serve basis - adding to rental policy for more control for large teams.
- **Higgs Beach** - Cary Knight - Mitigation work is in the process now that sand replenishment project is completed. Participating in a trap removal program that monitors erosion, ongoing maintenance, and refurbishing. Have partial funding for a completed design to replace bathroom. Waiting on funding for street and underwater repairs. Waiting for TDC grants.

New Business

- Discussion of fee increase for Harry Harris Park and pay apps
- Discussion and direction on new proposed rules for Disc Golf, Tennis and Pickleball Courts – sports specific rules for different sports. All rules will be put into a format for a proposed ordinance. Patricia Eables will get with John Allen to work on rules. Proposed ordinances will be presented later. Approve current rules as written; Darcy Wadsworth made a motion to approve and Dr. Boilini seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

- Discussion of dogs on athletic fields and children’s playground areas in the parks. The sand is not a surface for the dogs. Health concerns if playing in the same sand. A fence was recommended. Rules - will discuss with Patricia Eables to come up with a recommendation for ordinances. Other parks and playgrounds are fenced off with no dogs allowed. Will provide committee with draft rules at next meeting. Darcy Wadsworth made a motion to approve, and Dr. Boilini seconded the motion; all were in favor and approved for dog signage.
- Discussion on an above-ground swimming pool at the now closed Big Pine Key prison property. The College of the Florida Keys leases the property now and one use is for it to be used for a CDL driving school. Less construction cost for above-ground pools or recommends a splash pad. Look into a direction to have a pool for swimming lessons. Parking can be an issue. There are no pools between Key Largo and Key West. The nature park will be opening soon in the Big Pine Key area. A combination splash pad and pool was discussed.
- Discussion on scheduling 2023 meeting schedule to allow for meetings prior to budget deadlines. Move April 2023 meeting specifically to early March 2023. Approved by committee.
- Schedule the dates/venue for the remaining 2022 meetings. July 18, 2022, Fire House in Big Coppitt. October 17, 2022, in Key Largo. Meet at 5:00pm at Bay Point Park on July 18th. Recommend 45 minutes to visit the various parks in that area.
- Discussion of Advisory Board Mission – to be discussed at another time.

Old Business

- Patricia Eables has spoken to Commissioner Scholl about appointing a new member to replace Gayle Glover.
- Gayle Glover permanently moved out of state. Steve Miller - Does the commission want to appoint another person or continue with a four (4) committee panel the rest of the year? Patricia Eables recommended to stay with the four (4) committee panel for the rest of the year until someone is appointed.
- Patricia Eables – would like the Board to review the proposed Resolution being presented at the next BOCC meeting – agenda item C-30 giving the County Administrator or designees the authority to waive county fees specific to County facilities, parks, beach, boat ramp, or other County property when it is warranted under certain circumstances. Support to proceed with Dr. Boilini making a motion to approve, and Darcy Wadsworth seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Next Meeting: July 18, 2022, Fire House in Big Coppitt at 6:00pm - meet at 5:00pm at Bay Point Park to visit parks and beaches.

October 17, 2022, meeting to be held in Key Largo location. Meet at 5:00pm at Rowell’s Waterfront Park to visit parks and beaches.

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Darcy Wadsworth. Meeting adjourned at 7:47 PM.