

## MONROE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

### MEETING MINUTES

#### **November 7, 2022**

In-Person and Virtual Meeting

Minutes recorded by Naomi Pagidas, Executive Assistant, MC Parks & Beaches

Meeting Called to Order at 6:16pm

#### **Board Members in-person attendance:**

Steve Miller

Darcy Wadsworth

Dr. Jim Boilini

Margie Smith

#### **Media Present:**

No Media Present

#### **Monroe County was represented by:**

John Allen - Director, Parks & Beaches

Tom Henry – Manager, Parks & Beaches

Suzi Rubio - Aide to Kevin Wilson

Kirrin Peart – Recreation Team Leader

Patricia Eables - Assistant County Attorney

Jethon Williams – IT Media Manager

#### **Public Attendees:**

Denise Downing

Sue Heim

#### **Meeting Minutes:**

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

#### **Agenda Changes/Approval: of Agenda**

##### **Add to New business:**

Steve Miller added:

- Big Pine Park
- Terms

Dr. Boilini made a motion to approve and Margie Smith seconded. Agenda was approved with the change.

#### **Approval of July 18, 2022, meeting Minutes:**

Board had no changes to the July 18, 2022, Minutes, but Chairman Miller did question a quote on smoking that was attributed to him. Darcy Wadsworth made a motion to approve the Minutes and Margie seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

#### **Update from Project Management:**

Cary Knight not present and will send written report.

John Allen updated:

Little Duck Key Park name change to Veterans Memorial Beach is being presented at 12/7/2022 BOCC meeting.

Work is being done on the memorial, restrooms, and artwork from Irma repairs and proposed to complete near Memorial

Day 2023. TDC Grant was awarded for \$100,000, and the Architect's service is pro bono. Margie has a person of interest for artwork.

#### **Parks & Beaches Director Update:**

- Introduction of Kirrin Peart. New Parks and Beaches Recreation Team Leader for Rentals, events, and to develop recreation programs to meet the needs of the community.
- Introduction of Suzi Rubio. Suzi joins Parks and Beaches as Sr. Project and Budget Manager helping with budget items and capital projects for this coming budget year.
- Introduction of the new ParksandBeaches.fun website and a new phone number soon to come. It's an easy name for the community to remember. The website will have all the information on the parks current, future projects, and events.
- Use of County Property Policy revision was approved by BOCC. The policy was streamlined to make it easier for customers to read and understand our processes. Fees were slightly raised, and shelter reservation information was included.
- Capital Budget FY2023. The plan is to improve the parks playgrounds and new turf. John will be reaching out to the community, including children, to get input on the playground ideas to meet their needs.
- Master Plan Survey is under development. The survey will assist to start recreation programs and development by getting feedback from the community as to what types of programs they would like to see at the parks, similar to the recent "Staying Active In Life" senior program survey. Margie volunteered the committee to assist with the distribution of the survey to families and multiple populations.
- Hurricane Ian Update
  - Higgs Beach, Boca Chica and Veterans had significant damage that will need future improvements
  - Pier and playground at Higgs Beach are closed
  - Astro playground will need repairs
  - Inspectors will come to review status

Dr. Boilini question: "Rowell's ballfield, will it be the same as Bernstein Park?" A rectangular field is being considered, but we will get more information from Cary Knight.

#### **Old Business:**

- Wisteria Island. There is nothing new to report about the ownership of the property as it is still with the courts.

#### **New Business:**

- **Learn to swim program** (Dr. Boilini) "Keys Kids Earn Their Finns"
  - Monroe County and School District starting a program that will kick off in May. The program will provide free swim lessons for kindergarten kids. Transportation from Key Largo schools to the pool is an issue under discussion with attorneys from School District and Monroe County. The first program starts in Key Largo then moves county wide.
  - Ocean Reef offers learn to swim vouchers to first through 8th grade students at no cost to the families.
- **2023 Board meeting dates:** The meetings are traditionally held each quarter on the third Monday. The 2023 meeting dates are scheduled for January 23<sup>rd</sup> at Big Pine, March 27<sup>th</sup> at Key West, July 10<sup>th</sup> at Key Largo, and October 16<sup>th</sup> at Big Pine.
- Added to agenda. **Big Pine Park:** Darcy would like to open a discussion to add a pool in Big Pine and if it's in the budget. The budget has been separated into operating and capital projects. There is an extensive capital projects list

interested by the community. This year is \$3.5mil. The list has some priorities such as safety, improvement, and accessibility. A special meeting was proposed to discuss the pool at Big Pine for the community to attend. The Committee would like to be involved in meetings.

- Added to agenda. **Terms:** Steve Miller was appointed to advisory board in 1999 and served 15 years as Chairman. At the end of today, he will step down as Chairman. He would like to nominate someone new. Tricia Eables would like to select officers at the next meeting once they have a full Board again. Steve Miller will stay on board until January 2023 meeting. Dr. Boilini made motion to have election at the next meeting and seconded by Margie. All were in favor.

**Additional Public Comments:**

- Denise Downing, Founder and Board Member of Just Older Youth, Inc. ,a 501c3, that has operated the Joy Center since 2017, and offers activities held at churches to people age 50 and over. Currently available at the county are social services and meal programs, but her interest is to offer learning activities. She would like a community center for seniors and children, but her group is not able to run the center. The goal is to have the county fund and staff an Upper Keys community center to benefit seniors and teens with indoor activities and after school programs, such as language, book club, and technical classes, and they can act as a support group towards fundraising and share their expertise knowledge. Several rooms are needed totaling 3,500-4,000 square feet with one larger room to accommodate physical movement. Transportation may be of concern, and it was suggested to find a central location within the Upper Keys. John Allen is looking for partnerships to engage in a community center and is currently developing a plan to run programs with outside assistance. The old courthouse may have an opportunity for a community center; however, the County continues to look at options for Lower, Middle, and Upper Keys.
- Sue Heim, unaffiliated organization. Would like an update on Bay Harbor right of way and parking spaces, and to know if the advisory board committee, or the county is managing the outcome. She was advised by the Committee that it has been turned over to the County and is under attorney review. Once it was turned over to the County, there has not been a decision, or discussions of the topic, not presented to the Advisory Committee yet to take any action.

**Board Comments:**

Margie. If there are any RFQs, RFPs, or any bids, please reach out to the committee to help with contacts and spread the word to local businesses to get best prices. Provide a list to spread the word with local businesses at next meeting, especially those that have trouble finding contractors. John Allen will have special meetings and extend invite to committee members. Example. Fireman's and Wilhelmina Park safety issues meeting.

Dr. Boilini. FCT properties. Patricia to advise if the agreements have sunset or are they still under agreements.

Steve. Grateful to John for his efforts and keeping the advisory board committee in the loop so they too can answer questions from the public.

Dr. Boilini. Congratulated Steve Miller on his last meeting as Chairman.

**Motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Dr. Boilini and seconded by Margie. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:17 PM.**