



## **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board**

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**MONROE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

**October 16, 2023**

- In-Person and Virtual Meeting
- Minutes recorded by Erika Nodal, Executive Assistant, Monroe County Parks & Beaches
- Meeting called to order 6:02 p.m.
- Salute to Flag

**Board Members in-person and via Zoom attendance:**

Darcy Wadsworth, Chairperson  
Dr. Jim Boilini  
Margaret Smith  
Matthew Babich

**Media Present:**

No Media Present.

**Monroe County was represented by:**

John Allen - Director, Parks and Beaches  
Nathalia Archer - Assistant County Attorney  
Suzi Rubio - Senior Project and Budget Manager, Parks and Beaches  
Kirrin Peart - Sr. Recreation Team Leader, Parks and Beaches  
Mike Piekenbrock - Recreation Team Leader, Parks and Beaches  
Naomi Pagidas – Community Center Specialist, Parks and Beaches  
Jethon Williams - IT Media Manager

**Public Attendees:**

Tiffany Pellicier

**Meeting Minutes:**

The Board approved the meeting via Zoom/CMT methods (Resolution 397-2020) and in-person. Darcy Wadsworth made a motion to approve, and Matthew Babich seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

• **Agenda Changes / Approval of Agenda**

**New Business:** John Allen added Key West High School Tennis Courts and introduced Tiffany Pellicier to say a few words under Public Comments.

- **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes of July 17, 2023:** The Board had no changes to the July 17, 2023, meeting minutes. Darcy Wadsworth made a motion to approve, and Matthew Babich seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved.

- **Project Management updates on projects for Parks and Beaches:** John Allen reads the Project Management updates on behalf of the Project Management Department.

- **Jacobs Aquatic Pool Liner update:** An updated proposal was requested from the original pool company. A meeting will be scheduled to determine how to proceed in selecting a contractor and a time estimate on the completion of project. The earliest work could begin is sometime in mid to late January 2024.

- **Rowell's Waterfront Park Phase 2:** The RFP was posted on September 21, 2023, with bids due on November 9, 2023. Construction is anticipated to begin in January and will continue through most of 2024. Access to the park will be limited throughout construction and will block access to the waterfront for an extended period of time. Closures to the park will be based on the construction schedule and public safety.

Dr. Boilini asked for clarification on the Jacobs Aquatic pool liner start date and if the bidding process has commenced. John Allen clarified that it is an anticipated start date and that we will begin the procurement process to accomplish it in the fastest and most effective manner, guided by legal advice. He expects to have more information from Project Management within the next few weeks.

- **Bay Point Park Drainage Issues:** The County has been working with an engineer to develop short-term and long-term plans to help minimize the flooding issues. There have been frequent follow up meetings with County staff and the engineer to discuss improvements and a possible solution.
- **Blue Herron Big Pine Key:** An engineer is assisting with plans to add the additional pickleball courts. We are in the process of figuring out the parking requirements.

Matthew Babich raised a question if there are regulations mandating a designated amount of parking for tennis, pickleball and basketball courts. This is especially relevant as these parking spaces might be occupying valuable land that could otherwise be utilized for additional courts and playgrounds. It was determined that it is a requirement, not only for the County but also for businesses.

Margie Smith referred back to Rowell's Park and if the construction is in general or one specific area. John Allen explained that the next construction phase includes down towards the water, where it will allow for a better parking area and multipurpose green area to play soccer, and other sports plus shelters. Copies of the plans can be provided to the committee to develop their understanding of the improvements.

- **Parks and Beaches Director Updates:** Erika Nodal is introduced as his new Parks and Beaches Executive Assistant and explains that Naomi Pagidas transitioned to the recreational department in one of the community centers.

#### **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Projects:**

- **Big Pine Community Park:** Installing a new playground, rubber surface, replacing elevator, adding iron gates, repairing skate park, and resurfacing bocce courts.
- **Bernstein Community Park:** Replaced floors and painted interior.
- **Bay Point Park:** Ongoing meetings with engineers to go over the design regarding flooding issues.
- **Friendship Park:** Rubberized surface is being installed.
- **Key Largo Community Park:** Replacing fitness equipment is in progress, adding artificial turf in batting cage, remodeling bathroom fixtures, and installing additional fencing.
- **Blue Heron Park:** Adding three new pickleball courts, installing new playground equipment, and fitness court.
- **Old Settlers Park:** Installing new playground equipment in the next couple of months.
- **Wilhelmina Park:** Installed new playground rubber surface and repaired shade structure.
- **Palm Villa Park:** Installed new tiki hut.
- **Big Coppitt Park:** Installing new fitness equipment.
- **Harry Harris Park:** Remodeling bathroom fixtures, installing new playground and additional fencing near ballfields.

### **Community Centers:**

- **Big Pine Key Community Center:** Mike Piekenbrock, Recreational Team Leader, explained that the new community center hosts a few activities, including the host location for the AARP food service program that runs five days a week. He receives various emails inquiring about this location and has had a lot of community engagement.
- **Plantation Key Community Center:** Naomi Pagidas, Community Center Specialist, explained that the community center is brand new, and that the space has been a host location for a few meetings and classes. The University of Florida will use the space to host a few ongoing classes for children. She has been interacting with the locals to encourage the use of our community center.

John Allen explained that both community centers are open daily and would like to offer the space for different classes, courses, and meetings for our community. The goal is to provide a safe place for the community to gather and to meet their needs. For more information visit [ParksandBeaches.Fun](http://ParksandBeaches.Fun).

**Higgs Beach Playground:** In the process of reviewing quotes and expect to have updated information soon.

**Higgs Beach Pickleball and Tennis Courts:** The new fence was recently published on Bonfire, and we are finalizing the RFS for the resurfacing project.

**Jacobs Aquatic Pool RFP status:** Opening bid date on October 25, 2023. Published on Demandstar resulting in a few interested management companies. We will know the companies that responded on or after October 25, 2023.

- **Key Largo Pickleball:** Updated the RFS and placing it back out to bid. We should have an update at the next meeting.

**School Break Camps:** The ordinance was amended to charge a daily fee to make it easier for parents who wish to bring their children for daily drop off with no minimum number of days and a daily charge. We want to provide school break camps for children on holiday breaks like we do for summer breaks. The ordinance will be addressed at the next BOCC meeting.

**Keys Kids Swim Program:** The program was implemented last year, and we plan on expanding this year with additional water safety instructors, potentially using the Islamorada school pool, and continuing to use Jacobs Aquatic Pool. Matthew Babich compliments the Keys Kids Swim program team; John Allen, Kirrin Peart, and staff for outstanding work. John Allen said that “70% of the students passed the American Red Cross safety test after two weeks and that watching the kids learn to swim was very gratifying.”

**Holiday Fun:** John Allen suggested having a get-together with the committee outside of our regular meetings. All agreed.

**2024 proposed Board meeting dates:** The meetings are traditionally held each quarter on the third Monday with exceptions. January 22<sup>nd</sup> at Marathon meeting date was approved. Darcy Wadsworth made a motion to approve, and Dr. Boilini seconded the motion. The motion was approved. The meeting dates for March 25<sup>th</sup> at Big Pine, July 22<sup>nd</sup> at Key West, and October 21<sup>st</sup> at Key Largo, will be discussed and confirmed at our next meeting.

- **Old Business:**

**Key West Bernstein:** ILA passed The City of Key West and Monroe County, and the agreement is in place.

**Harry Harris Park fees:** The ordinance to change fees has been added to the BOCC agenda for October 18, 2023, updating it to a per-vehicle fee for non-residents. The proposed change will increase the boat ramp fee from \$40 to \$60 on holiday weekends and mini season.

- **New Business:**

**Key West High School:** The potential for public use of the courts was previously discussed at our meetings. The school board is unable to agree to allow the public to use the courts since the children have after-hours programs. We will discuss other options in the future.

**Public Speaker:** Tiffany Pellicier explained that The City of Key West would like to collaborate with Monroe County regarding the Monroe County swim program and other initiatives. All were welcomed to join The City of Key West meetings held every third Thursday of the month at five p.m. in City Hall.

- **Additional Public Comments:**

No comments.

- **Board Comments:**

No comments.

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Darcy Wadsworth and seconded by Matthew Babich. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.