

MONROE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

August 18, 2025

- In-Person and Virtual Meeting
- Minutes recorded by Erika Nodal, Executive Assistant, Monroe County Parks & Beaches
- Meeting called to order 6:00 p.m.
- Salute to Flag

Board Members in-person and via Zoom attendance:

Darcy Wadsworth, Chairperson
Jim Boilini
Steve Miller
Matthew Sexton

Media Present:

Monroe County Television (MCTV)

Monroe County was represented by:

John Allen - Director, Parks and Beaches
Naomi Pagidas - Community Center Specialist, Parks and Beaches
Jethon Williams - IT Media Manager
Cary Vick - Acting Director, Project Management

Public Attendees:

Phillip Dodderidge
John Nazzaro

Meeting Minutes:

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

Agenda Changes / Approval of Agenda

Darcy Wadsworth inquired if there were any changes to the agenda, no changes.

- **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes of March 31, 2025:** Steve Miller made a motion to approve, and Jim Boilini seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved.

Project Management Updates:

- **Rowell's Waterfront Park:** Cary Vick reported that the budget has been adjusted accordingly, and Pedro Falcon has been confirmed as the contractor. We are currently waiting to issue the notice to proceed, which will be given once Pedro Falcon has his subcontractors in place. This is expected to take approximately two weeks. The period of performance for the construction contract is roughly a year. Jim Boilini inquired whether this timeline is for full project completion, and Cary clarified that it pertains to Phase II. Phase III involves construction of tiki huts. Cary mentioned a generous donation intended for the Phase III construction of tiki huts, noting that the planned structure will likely be 20x20 feet.

Phase II will include drainage improvements, grading, construction of retaining walls, installation of pathways, and lighting. John Allen inquired whether the green space would be suitable for soccer, and Cary confirmed that it would be playable. Phase II is a priority.

- **Blue Heron Pickleball:** Cary Vick reported that the Blue Heron Pickleball Courts have been completed. and he's currently working with the contractor to address a few minor warranty issues.
- **Jacobs Aquatic Center:** Steve Miller inquired about the activity pool project, and Cary Vick explained that, with the assistance of Parks and Beaches staff, a TDC grant application was submitted and approved. A Request for Proposals will need to be advertised. The project is eligible to begin work starting October 1st.
- **Big Pine Park Skatepark:** Cary Vick reports that, with the help of John Allen and the Parks and Beaches staff, a TDC grant application for skatepark repairs was submitted and approved. The project is eligible to begin work starting October 1st.
- **Higgs Beach Pavilion Repairs:** Cary Vick reported that an additional TDC grant application was submitted for the two pavilions at Higgs Beach has been approved. The planned repairs include addressing rust, repainting, and roof repairs.
- **Bernstein Park:** John Allen asked Cary Vick for an update on the Bernstein Park project. Cary reported that the permit is currently in progress and believes there are a few comments that still need to be addressed. Once those are resolved, the project will move forward with the bidding process. He noted that the funding will come from a combination of capital funds and grant funding. Number one priority is to replace turf and irrigation system.
- **Key Largo Pickleball Courts:** Darcy Wadsworth inquired about the courts and their level of usage. Cary Vick responded that the courts are heavily used and everything is going well.
- **Big Pine Community Park:** Steve Miller inquired about the new amphitheater and mentioned noticing some cracks in the concrete. Cary Vick responded that this would fall under a warranty issue and added that they are also considering adding additional concrete to expand the space for community use. John Allen noted that he met with the project manager and the contractor to discuss the concerns regarding the cracks, and both parties are aware of the issue and plan to make the necessary repairs.

Guest Speakers:

- Phillip Dodderidge introduced himself as the new president of the Big Pine bocce league. He explained that the league plays three nights a week and includes over 200 players across 26 teams. The fall season is approaching, with sign-ups starting on August 25th and the season kicking off on September 9th. Phillip also takes a moment to express his gratitude for all the recent park upgrades. Looking ahead, on their ideal wish list, the league would love to see additional shade added to help with the heat, as well as the addition of porta-potties. Darcy Wadsworth shared that these requests have been discussed, and John Allen has responded with some solutions, including plans to add shade structures over the benches.
- John Nazarro introduced himself and expressed his gratitude to John Allen for the new courts and for all his efforts supporting the parks. He mentioned that the league has been active since 2009 and encourages everyone to stop by and check it out. He requested extra water because the new courts need more water to maintain. Darcy Wadsworth added that she appreciates John Nazarro for making great use of the parks.

Parks and Beaches Director Update:

- **In-House Projects:** John Allen shared that there are plans to install tiki huts at several park locations to provide more shade. Matthew Sexton inquired about planting additional trees to further increase shade. John Allen responded that this idea has been discussed and that he will soon be collaborating with the land steward. John Allen reported that with soccer season starting, they have been making repairs to the fields. He commends the staff for their excellent work. Soccer began last week at Harry Harris and started this week at Big Pine Park. He also mentioned plans to add shade structures over the benches at Big Pine Park Bocce soon, and if successful, similar shades may be added to benches in other locations. Resurfacing and painting of several courts is underway. Bay Point Park has recently been completed, and the Friendship Park basketball courts will be resurfaced soon, and they'll also be taking care of some root intrusion. Two of the tennis courts at Key Largo Park are also scheduled to be resurfaced soon. John Allen reported that the old trash cans at boat ramps and beaches are being replaced with new concrete receptacles to help reduce the amount of waste entering the water. John also mentioned the recent TDC grants.
- **Summer Camp Update:** John Allen reported that summer camp had a great turnout. Thanks to grant funding provided by Baptist Health, they were able to offer two days of camp free of charge to local teachers, along with covering other operational expenses. John Allen explained that Sugarloaf School was very accommodating in allowing the use of their gymnasium several times to host the camp. He added that at the next BOCC meeting, he will be presenting a summer camp study and will emphasize the importance of summer camp. He highlighted that providing safe, affordable, and enjoyable camps is vital for the community, and hopes to continue these programs for years to come. Steve Miller noted that it should be on record that, for many parents, this camp is the only option available, as other camps fill up quickly and tend to be less affordable, making parents choose between going to work or taking care of their kids.
- **Independence Day Celebrations:** John Allen reported that this year was a great success, with several events held at our parks, including Key Largo Park and Big Pine Park. He noted that it's an exciting time to be involved with the parks. John also shared that we expect Rowell's Waterfront Park to be open and available for fireworks viewing next year. Steve Miller commended the staff at Big Pine Park for stepping up and providing outstanding support for the annual Independence Day event. He said the turnout was excellent and the event went very well.
- **Volleyball at Harry Harris Park:** John Allen has received some community requests about adding volleyball at Harry Harris Park. He wanted to bring this to everyone's attention and gather more community feedback to determine if it's something worth pursuing. Jim Boilini mentioned that he will reach out to the Upper Keys communities for further input.
- **Best Dinkers in the Florida Keys:** John Allen reported that he has communicated with Friends of Parks and Beaches about organizing a Keys-wide fundraiser pickleball tournament. This would be a fun event that also supports the Friends of Parks and Beaches. Jim Boilini asked if there would be separate pickleball tournaments across the Keys, and John confirmed that that is the plan.
- **Relocation of Offices:** John Allen announced that he and Erika Nodal, Executive Assistant, have relocated their offices from the Marathon Government Center to the Big Pine Key Community Park.

Old Business:

Bay Point Park: Steve Miller inquired about Bay Point Park and any recent updates. John Allen reported that the courts have been resurfaced and mentioned that he has requested funds for an engineering study for FY26 to hopefully address flooding issues, with the goal of planning and budgeting for repairs in FY27.

Airport Property: Steve Miller inquired about the airport property. John Allen reported that he recently had a meeting with the City of Key West and notes that there will be further discussion on the topic at the upcoming BOCC meeting.

Scout Key: Steve Miller inquired about Scout Key and the possibility of the County taking over the property, asking if there are any updates. John Allen responded that there have been several conversations regarding property and states he expects to have more information to share at the next advisory board meeting in October.

Veterans Memorial Beach: Matthew Sexton inquired about Veterans Beach, specifically asking about the possibility of the restrooms being replaced. John Allen responded, noting that he recently had a meeting regarding the location. He explained that they've been working through some paperwork related to the property, and there have been ongoing discussions about the restrooms, which have experienced several challenges. Matthew also asked about the pavilions, and John confirmed that all the pavilions are now back up.

New Business:

No new business to report

Public Speakers:

Phillip Dodderidge
John Nazzaro

Additional Public Comments:

No comments

Board Comments:

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Darcy Wadsworth and seconded by Matthew Sexton. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.