

Parks and Rec Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Special Meeting Re: Rowell's Waterfront

April 15, 2019 6:00 PM
Murray Nelson Government Center
102050 Overseas Highway
Key Largo

Minutes recorded by Deb Martinez, Facilities/Parks & Beaches
Meeting began at 6:02 PM

Board Members in attendance:

Steve Miller
Dr. Jim Bolini
Margie Smith
Darcy Wadsworth

Board Members not present:

Gayle Glover

Media Present:

No Media Present

Monroe County was represented by:

Roman Gastesi- County Administrator
Kevin Wilson- Assistant County Administrator
Sylvia Murphy-County Mayor
Willie DeSantis - Facilities Maintenance Director
Chrissy Collins-Executive Administrator
Patricia Eables-Assistant County Attorney
Keith Bring- Project Manager

There were approximately 60 members of the public in attendance.

Meeting Minutes:

Introductions

- Mayor Murphy advised the audience that the meeting was being held to get public input on what they would like to see at Rowell's, after having conducted a workshop at the Park earlier in the day.
- Steve Miller introduced the attending Parks and Rec Board members.
- Dr. Bolini introduced consultant, Jack Kardys, retired Director of Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces Department.

Mr. Kardys showed a presentation of some potential features for the eight (8) acre parcel at Rowell's. After the presentation, there was a discussion on what the public would like to see. Some of the ideas were:

- Walking Paths
- Playground and Fitness Zone
- Water Features
- Picnic Tables with Shelters
- Flexible Civic Space
- Pet Friendly
- Trees surrounding the perimeter
- Parking

Board Chair Steve Miller advised everyone in the room to remember—sometimes less is more.

The floor was open for the public to voice their ideas, questions, and concerns.

- Bill Forshey- Public
 - Expressed concerns about loud music, jet skis, and making sure that negative issues wouldn't happen.
- Sally Stribling-Public
 - Sally advised she was looking forward to a park that all could use.
- John Stewart-Public
 - The former President of the Key Largo Chamber of Commerce stated that he was excited by this opportunity and felt that everything would come together in this community space which has been utilized by non-profits in the past.
- Susan White-Public
 - Susan was concerned about all the debris at Rowell's after Hurricane Irma and wanted to know if there was a plan in place regarding debris and if Rowell's would be used again.
 - ✓ Steve Miller advised that if necessary Rowell's would be used again for debris.

- ✓ Kevin Wilson stated that there is a plan in place. Using Rowell's was the obvious choice as the Key Largo area was less impacted by the hurricane than the Key West area.
- Bill Klute- Public- Tamarind Bay
 - Bill feels that Tamarind Bay, the adjacent property, will be affected by what happens at Rowell's more than any other place.
 - He wanted to know what would keep live-aboards from moving to Rowell's.
 - ✓ Kevin Wilson advised the Park would be controlled by ordinances and enforcing them.
 - He suggested that trees be planted to act like a buffer between Rowell's and Tamarind Bay.
 - Bill also asked Jack Kardys if would meet and discuss these issues with the Tamarind Bay Board of Directors and Jack advised that he would do so.
- Dave Retting-Public-Tamarind Bay
 - While Dave is looking forward to having and being a good neighbor, he suggested that a Sheriff's substation be located on the property.
- Linda Webber-Public-Tamarind Bay
 - Linda feels that having events at the waterfront would cause parking/traffic and noise issues. It was suggested that only small events be allowed. She also feels fencing or trees should be used as a buffer.
- Art Webber-Public-Tamarind Bay
 - Art would like to see no boats allowed at the Park.
 - Restrooms to have controlled access (non- residents pay).
 - A guard building on property.
- Gary Stater-Public-Tamarind Bay
 - Gary feels that kayak rentals should not be allowed.
- Robby Majestica-Public
 - Doesn't like the idea of making Rowell's a rest area. He feels the restrooms should be in the back of the park and that there should be an off-duty officer to live on premises. He also doesn't feel that dogs should be allowed. He would like Rowell's to be a natural park and only allow small events.
- Gene Graham-Public
 - Loves the dog park idea, however, doesn't want to see the park become a rest stop. He feels that the area businesses depend on tourists to stop and use their facilities and purchase from them. He doesn't want to see Rowell's become like Harry Harris Park.

Jack Kardys responded that the rest stop is the trail head for the Overseas Heritage Trail and is being funded by FDOT.
- DJ Muller-Public
 - The owner of DJ's Diner understands that compromises will need to be made. Would like to see a fence and trees as a sound barrier. Due to the fact that the Park is so close

to the Key Largo school- traffic can be a nightmare. He would like to see a turn lane possibly put in or ample signage to help avoid possible accidents.

- Eileen Eadie-Public
 - Works at the Key Largo Chamber and says that a big part of their business is people stopping to use the restrooms.
- Bob Thomas-Public-Key Largo Chocolate & Ice Cream
 - Bob stated he feels the Board is doing everything they can to make Rowell's better and feels if done right it can enhance Tamarind Bay.
- Dottie Moses-Public
 - Would like to see a decorative fence in front of the Park and a walking path with natural trees to help absorb sound.

Everyone was concerned that there were no ordinances were established or rules posted at the Park. A motion was made by Dr. Bolini to establish an ordinance that mirrors the policies at the Murray E. Nelson Government Center Park. The motion was seconded by Margie Smith and unanimously approved.

Jack Kardys advised that he would take the public input from the meeting and draft three (3) potential designs for the Park to be later presented to the public.

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting- motion was seconded- meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.