

Parks and Rec Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2019 6:00 PM
Big Pine Senior Center
380 Key Deer Blvd
Big Pine Key, FL

Minutes recorded by Deb Martinez, Facilities/Parks & Beaches
Meeting began at 6:00 PM

Board Members in attendance:

Steve Miller
Dr. Jim Boilini
Margie Smith
Darcy Wadsworth
Gayle Glover

Media Present:

Steve Estes – News Barometer

Monroe County was represented by:

Chrissy Collins-Executive Administrator
Patricia Eables-Assistant County Attorney

There were approximately ten (10) members of the public in attendance.

Meeting Minutes:

- Introductions
- A motion was made by Margie Smith to approve the minutes from the July 15, 2019, meeting- Gayle Glover seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

Speakers:

Eric Martin- President of Florida Keys Reef Lights Foundation - Mr. Martin's Foundation is trying to preserve the light from the Tennessee Reef Lighthouse that the Coast Guard is removing next year. They were hoping that there was room at Rowell's Waterfront Park for the light. The Foundation will do the restoration of the light and were not asking for financial assistance, but rather they just want a permanent place to relocate the light. The light is approximately 50 ft tall and 20 ft wide. Steve Miller advised that the light would not fit at Rowell's under the current conceptual plans. He offered some suggestions such as Veteran's Park, Palm Villa, the Swimming Hole and possibly the land near the Dive Center in Big Pine, which is DEP owned.

Pam Hancock - Ms. Hancock would like to see the bocce and horseshoe courts at Fireman's Park turned into a dog park. These courts are not being used and she feels that this would be a good area for an "off leash dog park. There was concern that the area was not large enough to accommodate a dog park with separate areas for both large and small dogs. However, Ms. Hancock suggested there be a "time out" area for dogs that misbehaved. Steve Miller questioned if fencing off part of Wilhelmina Park would work, but he was advised that the Park was used by the children for softball, basketball, etc. all the time. Steve advised that the Risk Department would need to be involved due to liability since the Park is used by children and there would be a dog park close by. Dr. Boilini made a motion to open a discussion regarding the dog park and seconded by Darcy Wadsworth. Motion approved.

Kim Livingston- President of Big Pine Bocce League - Ms. Livingston wanted to know if the lighting at Big Pine Park would be completed before the league starts playing in January, so they can play a full season. The former Project Manager had advised her that it would be completed in December so she was looking for confirmation. There was no representative from Project Management present to answer the question though. Steve Miller advised he would reach out and get the answer for her. Ms. Livingston also advised that the benches were in bad shape and rusted. Several people had been hurt on them and approximately ten (10) of them needed to be replaced. The League is not happy with the new material that was put on the courts as they advised that it blows away and doesn't stick. They said it is like gray tennis court clay and they would like to have the Georgia clay, which is what was previously on the courts. Steve Miller advised he would see if Watson Field could be leveled and some of the clay from there placed on the bocce courts. The League is willing to assist if needed. Dr. Boilini asked if Commissioner Coldiron was aware of what was going on and if not, the League should reach out to her and update her on the status of the bocce courts.

Big Pine Community Park

- Steve Estes- Is concerned about the status of the swimming hole/scenic view. He advised that the money was received in the 2nd cycle of last year, and the conceptual design is completed, however, at this time there still is no permit from the County. Steve Miller advised that he reach out to Kevin Wilson to get an update and Darcy Wadsworth stated that she knew some people at the Building Department and would also reach out to get the status.

Board members expressed frustration that there was not a Project Management representative at the meeting to answer questions. Dr. Boilini said that this had never happened before. Patricia Eables advised the Board she would send the Director of Project Management an email expressing the Board's disappointment. Due to this fact, the Board did not discuss any other items on the agenda as to the status of various projects at numerous Parks. The Board agreed to schedule its January meeting on the second Monday in the month with the hope that the Project Management Director or someone else from that Department could attend.

Patricia Eables advised the Board of a recent event at Higgs Beach at which numerous balloons were released over the open water area and the County had received complaints. She advised that Florida Statute, Sec. 379.233 addresses the release of balloons and inquired of the Board as to their concerns and thoughts on exploring whether the County should pass an ordinance addressing the issue. Due to the environmental nature of the Florida Keys, the Board felt there should be no release of balloons. The matter will be brought back to the Board if a decision is made to take further action on the release of balloons.

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Dr. Boilini and seconded by Gayle Glover - meeting adjourned at 7:09 PM.