

City of Pensacola

Meeting Minutes 3 - Draft Parks and Recreation Board

June 17, 2021 8:00 AM

222 West Main Street Pensacola, FL 32502

Hagler-Mason Conference Room

Members of the public may attend the meeting in person; however, there will be limited seating capacity. Consistent with CDC guidelines, attendees will be required to sit at least 6 feet apart and wear face coverings that cover their nose and mouth.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:03.

Chairperson Hicks read a statement to the public about how they can participate.

2. ROLL CALL

Present 5 - Chairperson Rand Hicks, Vice Chair Maranda Sword, Renee Borden, Antonio Bruni, Alejandra Escobar-Ryan

Absent 4 - David Del Gallo, Leah Harrison, Gabriela Garza, and Michael Wolf

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes for the May 20, 2021 meeting were not ready for approval.

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Cooper first called Officer Bell, PPD, who recommended that shrubbery be reduced and picnic tables removed from Wyer Park (Reus and Belmont) in order to help mitigate unwelcome use of the park. He further recommended that the hours be adjusted to sunrise to sunset instead of 7 AM to 10 PM.

Director Cooper proceeded with the following updates:

- The board was encouraged to attend the Legion Field grand reopening and ribbon-cutting on 26 June 2021, which will showcase a new splash pad, available for public use from 9 AM to 7 PM. Fitness court, playground, splash pad, walking path, new press box and scoreboard. Bounce houses, vendors, etc.

- Hitzman Park will have its grand opening and ribbon-cutting on 24 July 2021.
- We're expecting bids on the Kiwanis Park renovation in a week or so.
- We'll be erecting a pole barn at Osceola to house our heavy equipment and protect them from the elements. A number of quotes are coming in now.
- We are in the process of installing five new playgrounds around the city. Woodcliff Park and the Vickrey Center are complete. Next come Estramadura, Operto, and then Granada.
- Roger Scott Tennis Center renovations are moving along right now. The construction documents will be 100% delivered by the end of the month. We expect to go through permitting and the bid process by the middle of July, with a contract delivered to the Council in August or September with an expected 5-6 month period of construction.
- Chairperson Hicks invited members of the public who had come to speak about the Roger Scott project. Mildred Arroyo Figueroa asked how P&R would allocate funds. She noted that 71,000 people play at RS, and citizens from the age 3 to 90, including many who are disadvantaged, play tennis there. The courts are in hazardous condition, and their concern led to a local petition with 500 names on change.org to address this. Robin Olsen, president of the Under the Hill Tennis League, read a statement in support of the reconstruction of the hard courts there, and cited the significant interest and revenue tennis draws at Roger Scott. Hayne Haigler then addressed the board, highlighting the joy tennis brings to those who play there. Post-tensioned concrete at UWF's courts are great and don't have a crack after 12 years of use. Steven Shelley noted how many people travel significant distances to play on these courts. We need more clay courts just to serve current members, and they pay more to play.
- Director Cooper then provided historical context about our forty-year courts that are now twenty years beyond their lifespan. They're chipped and worse. We effected temporary repairs to carry us until the reconstruction is complete. Five years ago we thought \$500,000 might get the job done, so he set aside \$700,000 given inflation. After seeing the UWF post-tensioned courts, they determined to replace the current courts with those and also to spread them out so wheelchair events will have plenty of space. We'll have 12 new hard courts on the bottom level, which will accommodate high school and college needs. Instead of putting hard courts on the top level, another six clay courts will be installed (bringing the clay court total to 17). We need more resources for the project, and a team was formed which conferred with Mayor Robinson, who is working to pull together the funding ahead of council consideration. An easel with the plans and timeline will be placed at the front of Roger Scott for public view. We're expecting renderings soon from Mott MacDonald and will share those.
- Further discussion with the public: The walking paths will be resurfaced in phases so that we can keep 12 courts open at one time. Director Cooper also noted that the Gulf Coast Tennis Group pays the City annually to operate the tennis programs at Roger Scott: they cover our costs, so the City doesn't make money off the programming there. The City breaks even; all profits go to the Group. Pickle ball courts already exist in the city and are popular (Armstrong Park, Vickrey Center, Hollice T. Williams, Malcolm Young). Also, membership fees are set by annually by City Council as part of the budget process.
- Discussion among board members: clay courts are cheaper to build and install than hard courts; it's the ongoing maintenance costs that require higher fees from players (extra clay, daily maintenance, sweeping, etc.). We discussed the possible placement of clay courts in other parks

and drainage problems that affect court maintenance. Ms. Figueroa expressed that 12 hard courts will be inadequate for the actual needs of the playing public.

NEW BUSINESS

5. EPH Lions Park

- Jack Robie, the Vice President of the East Pensacola Heights Neighborhood Association addressed the board about a neighborhood proposal to remove and replace the chain link fence at EPH Lions Club Park to enhance neighborhood value and enjoyment. Several visuals were supplied by the City's GIS team to illustrate. The presented plan aligns with the parks-without-borders concept to install a 3' to 4' high post-and-rail fence and access points as depicted in the submitted map. Benches are added in the design. They would retain the chain link fence along Perry near the ballfields to maintain safety.
- Board discussion touched on ADA concerns and installation costs. \$5,000 to remove the chain link fence; split-rail fence replacement of 1500 linear feet would cost \$15,000. Transition points also have to be addressed. Many parks have no fence whatsoever. Increasing the aesthetic value of the park would outweigh other considerations.
- Money hasn't yet been allocated for this project. Chairperson Hicks asked whether EPH has applied for a PNC grant to achieve a quicker replacement of the fence through a two-phase proposal, which the city allows (\$10,000 each of two consecutive years). There's a 2-to-1 match that allows tracked volunteer work to count towards. We can help tackle the paperwork. New PNC grant submissions are welcome. Lawrence Powell, Neighborhoods Administrator, came in and confirmed the possibility. Board member Escobar-Ryan mentioned that adding a bike rack to the park would be great. Board member Borden offered that the fencing could be removed now and funding for its replacement could be found later in the normal process. Director Cooper pointed out that the amenities belong to the City, but the City leases the park from the Lions Club.

6. Parks and Recreation Board Duties

- In the last board meeting per Council direction, we agreed to insert language in redefining the board duties to include that we review, report, and engage. Chairman Hicks presented a draft for revising the code, and placed engagement first. The revision read:

Sec. 6-2-3. — Duties

Members of the Parks and Recreation board shall engage with the citizens of Pensacola and be liaisons to the public, participate in city events, attend neighborhood meetings, and encourage recreational activities across our park system. The parks and recreation board shall review developing plans and advise and make recommendations to the city council with timely reports, and shall advise the mayor on matters concerning the establishment, maintenance, and operation of parks and recreational activities within the city. The board based on informed review shall also provide input to staff, council,

and mayor on master plan updates and improvements, and policy development for the use of recreational facilities.

The board discussed the proposal. Board member Borden asked about the review of budgets, so we agreed to change “review developing plans” to “review developing plans and budgets.” Member Borden motioned the change, Vice Chair Sword seconded, and the change was unanimously approved.

Vice Chair Sword motioned that we advance the revised definition of Duties to the Council for its consideration, Member Escobar-Ryan seconded, and the board voted unanimously in favor, 5-0.

Here is the final approved language:

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OPEN FORUM

- Member Bruni asked that an update be provided on the status at the Veterans Memorial Park.
- Member Borden asked about a budget review, which will be provided in coming months. Per Assistant Thorsen, a budget presentation was to be made at the July Parks and Recreation Board meeting, but due to unforeseen events, the update will be delayed.
- The minutes for May 2021 have been delayed because of a technical issue.
- 311 and other issues were discussed, and board member attendance at neighborhood association meetings. Member Borden expressed interest in attending the EPH meeting.

ADJOURNMENT