

## **Call to Order**

### **Roll Call**

Present were Chairman Hicks, Leah Harrison, Renee Borden, Antonio Bruni, David Del Gallo, Michael O'Donovan, and Alejandra Escobar-Ryan.

Absent were Maranda Sword and Michael Wolf. Director Cooper was out of town on Parks and Recreation business.

Michael O'Donovan was sworn in as a member of the Parks and Recreation board by Robyn Tice.

## **Approval of the Minutes**

Member Del Gallo motioned to approve the minutes from September 2021, which was seconded by Member O'Donovan, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

## **Staff Reports**

Deja Dowdell, Marketing Coordinator, gave the board a fine presentation. Coordinator Dowdell insures the visibility of the Parks and Recreation department. The events and playgrounds and improvements that we offer the public are highlighted and communicated to Pensacola. The past year was severely impacted by the pandemic, yet a number of new programs and events were introduced, including a WKRG commercial promoting the CMP, an After School Program, Pilates at CMP, public art with Folding Planes at Bartram Park through a generous donation from Holly Benson, Bands on the Bayou, ESPN's "Teeing Up" with Adrian Stills at Osceola Golf Course, the upcoming first annual Oar Fest, and the grand opening of the Splash Pad at Legion Field. Our community partners have been pivotal in these successes. For instance, a viewer of one of our Parks and Recreation meetings contacted us to contribute towards basketball for youth. This year we raised \$24,950 in cash contributions with an in-kind match of \$44,420. Engagement on social media helps us understand what works without cost. Facebook is our best portal to the public. 9,737 have attended our events. Increases in Instagram and Twitter are promising.

Questions: Member Borden complimented the work and member Escobar-Ryan asked about our engagement with Visit Pensacola. Coordinator Dowdell indeed optimizes that connection and connects with the public through other media including PNJ, WKRG, and Facebook produces great results. She is on the PEP Talk radio show monthly. Member Escobar-Ryan asked about bringing back our newsletter in order for a family to schedule around upcoming events. The newsletter is a monthly subscription and will be resumed soon. The Oar Fest will feature free kayaking and paddle boarding. We have a great resource down on the bayou and our rates are affordable, just \$15 per hour for kayak rentals! We'll have environmental education, races, food trucks, everything we need.

Member Del Gallo noted how successful Bands on the Bayou was and raised significant dollars through contributions, so the East Hill Neighborhood Association was able to donate \$1,000 to three charities. They are hoping to plan Bands on the Bayou events quarterly next year. The last event drew 400 people. Chairperson Hicks suggested that if there is sufficient time given Coordinator Dowdell's skills in media presentation following the renewal of the newsletter, that Coordinator Dowdell could record two-minute video vignettes with leading local sports figures and place them on our website and social media to stimulate interest.

Caitlin Cerame, Transportation Planner, presented the Active Transportation Plan which the City is developing. The Council recently approved funding for \$166,000. Planner Cerame's

responsibilities are wide-ranging: she works with FDOT, sidewalk prioritization, development reviews. Member Bruni stressed that our plans should embrace the whole city and not primarily be focused on downtown. We noted that the Bicycle Advisory Committee proposed a grid that would connect north-south and east-west, and that the coming Shareware event along Gonzalez from Bayview to Alabama Square, promoted by Bike Pensacola on December 4, 2021, is an east-west arterial that illustrates what can be done to achieve integration and multimodality. Planner Cerame talked first about Complete Streets: it aims to integrate all users of all ages into a network that is safe for all, including pedestrians, persons with disabilities, bicyclists, motorists, public transit, etc. In June 2021 the Council adopted a Complete Streets ordinance that directs staff to develop a program and design standards to accomplish this. This is a process, not a product, but we're moving forward, looking at land development code. Evaluation and monitoring is essential. By May 2022 they will have a report on that. Context classification as applied to a roadway's characteristics is another key element in establishing design criteria that is appropriate to a specific area. Complete Streets does not connote the presence of all possible elements in all situations.

The Active Transportation Plan follows Complete Streets to develop solutions and identify critical infrastructure investments to improve access, comfort, and safety for all people moving in ways they choose. Our staff will take a series of steps -- analyze data and existing conditions; engage the public; offer design guidance; look at future network needs; evaluate, implement, and fund. Policy recommendations will follow, and we already have a feel for what people want. That means that we'll focus closely on implementation through a methodology that correctly identifies objectives that we can realize. Staff plans for a one-year project, asking in Fall 2021 for an RFP with an NTP for early 2022, and adoption by the City Council in late 2022. We will have public engagement from beginning to end. Caitlin shared a visual from GIS with bike lanes, sharrows, and sidewalks illustrated. We could clearly see where gaps in connection exist in all categories. For instance, what obstructs us from getting to meaningful destinations along various routes? We are working on West Jackson Street with Escambia County now to establish good connections. Vision Zero is something we strive for. Tactical urbanism, living laboratories will be incorporated. Project prioritization is huge for us. There are so many kinds of bicyclists, and we want to accommodate all so far as possible.

Member Bruni asked about traffic calming, which we accept petitions for (neighbors adjacent must sign). Might implement speed cushions or speed humps. 75% of homeowners must agree. Deputy City Administrator Forte clarified that minor tweaks have been instituted to make it more customer friendly. If it is warranted, it directs improvements and further discussion with the affected community and a determination of where the improvement will be installed. Traffic calming continues as a challenge. Scenic Heights Neighborhood Association specifically formed to address traffic at Scenic Highway and Langley. Administrator Forte answered at length and commented that NACTO guidelines for cities are now being used and we seek to implement their approaches. Member Bruni suggested that public input should come before the plans are made and the neighborhood associations should be approached first. Our Parks and Recreation Board members can stimulate neighborhood associations to reach their citizens and promote engagement with the City of Pensacola's inquiries.

## **New Business**

### **Old Business**

Chairperson Hicks noted that Director Cooper was out of town for professional obligations this month and will rejoin us next month. He also noted that Council Executive Kraher has not had time to address our question of how best to put before the Council the board's request for a

masterplan. We will return it to the next agenda, as well as the basketball court lights for Operto Square. The latter is well-seen as part of the masterplan question.

### **Open Forum**

Hayne Haigler asked for an update about Roger Scott Tennis Center, especially regarding the extra funding resources that the County might approve for the prospective plan. He mentioned too that we would benefit by establishing a here-and-now method to fund future needs for the tennis program. Mr. Haigler also noted that we need a larger illustration at the courts to show people what the plan is. Member Bruni expressed an interest in seeing the plans for the courts at the earliest possible point in the interest of public engagement.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.