



City of Pensacola

Parks and Recreation Board

Meeting Minutes

March 21, 2019

8:00 am

Whibbs Conference Room

Members Present: David Forte, Rand Hicks, Maranda Sword, Ed Wonders

Members Absent: Paul Epstein (Chairperson), David Mayo, Whitney Voeltz

City Staff Present: Brian Cooper (Parks and Recreation Director), Chris Holley (City Administrator), Kim Carmody (Recreation Superintendent), Heidi Thorsen (Assistant to the Director)

Others Present: Nora Bailey (downtown resident), Anthony Caldwell (East Pensacola), Pat Crawford (WUWF Public Media), Lissa Dees (Downtown Improvement Board (DIB) Executive Director), Dottie Dubuisson, Robert Mott (Trek Bicycle Store), Jim Sweida (Blue Morning Gallery), Mary Anne Sweida (Blue Morning Gallery)

CALL TO ORDER - 8:02 by Director Cooper.

ELECTION OF TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON

In the absence of the Board Chairperson, Director Cooper opened the floor for nominations for acting chairperson. Member Hicks nominated member Forte, the nomination was seconded by member Wonders.

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Hicks made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2019 meeting. Member Sword seconded. Member Hicks mentioned that the last meeting mentioned that a new time for the meetings would be discussed, but all agreed to table this until another meeting. The minutes were approved.

OPEN FORUM

Since the majority of the others present were present to discuss Ciclovía, Open Forum was moved to the first item of business.

Ms. Dubuisson acknowledged the work done at Henry Wyer Park. Picnic tables have been added, which are a nice addition. The Neighborhood Association has asked to move the port-o-let to the sidewalk. Director Cooper responded to her comment.

Mr. Sweida commented in support of Ciclovía. His comments were in the Pensacola News Journal on Saturday's opinion page. He feels that it is an important contribution to downtown.

Mr. Crawford thanked the staff for Ciclovía participation in ensuring that everything is done right.

Mrs. Sweida mentioned that at the latest Civicon, the speaker talked about becoming a "loveable city". Ciclovía helps with that. Further the event promotes health and wellness.

Mr. Mott praised Ciclovía and the impact it has on the City.

Director Cooper publicly thanked Nikki Gray (Special Events Supervisor), Maggie Lochas (Special Events), and Superintendent Carmody for their roles in the event.

Administrator Holley thanked the Board for their service. He mentioned that the Mayor supports Ciclovía.

Ms. Bailey mentioned that she has seen a wonderful change happen to downtown. Ciclovía tries to engage all parts of the City. They are trying to engage under-served neighborhoods.

Ms. Dees mentioned that she got some negative feedback for having Ciclovía on a Saturday. The DIB sent out a survey asking how it impacts all of the businesses. The DIB received 14 positive responses, 14 negative responses, and seven neutral responses. She mentioned though that we have other great streets, and asked the Board to highlight other streets besides Palafox.

Member Hicks recused himself and spoke as an organizer of Ciclovía. Ciclovía helps clean the environment, and greatly promotes community. Once the people have exercised, the people will shop and look at things. Ciclovía brings in about \$500,000. People get introduced to businesses they didn't know existed before. If Ciclovía were on Sunday the turnout would not be as good. Palafox is the best street to have it on. He understands that it can be an inconvenience.

Ms. Dubuisson mentioned Roquanda Forever. There will be a Jumbotron truck on Belmont/Devilliers at 6:00 pm. Bring blankets. Hotdogs, popcorn, and kool-aid will be served.

Mr. Sweida mentioned that if Ciclovía can't take place, maybe the other special events such as parades, gallery night, etc. should be held to the same standard.

Director Cooper mentioned that Parks and Recreation has strongly discouraged any new events on Palafox. Wherever we do events there are inconveniences to people in the area.

Ms. Dees mentioned that as Executive Director at the DIB, they hear about all of the events happening downtown, and notify all of the businesses affected.

Mrs. Sweida is against moving Ciclovía to a Sunday. On Sunday's most of the stores on Palafox are closed besides theirs.

Member Hicks asked for responses from the Board members. Member Wonders mentioned that when he moved to Pensacola, downtown was dead. Now that the ball field is here, it is slowly coming to life.

Member Sword understands the inconveniences as a business owner. Maybe we can figure out what the concerns are and find ways to resolve them.

Member Forte was wondering how we notify businesses about road closures. How soon are they notified? The special event organizer is responsible for notifying the businesses 1-2 weeks out. Member Forte would possibly like to have a future agenda item on how to notify businesses about events.

NEW BUSINESS

Director Cooper mentioned that Council tried to reduce the size of the Parks and Recreation Board size from nine to seven, but the item failed five to two. We have six vacancies on the Board – three reappointments, and three positions to be filled. Please encourage people to apply. We will send out a notification when they will be appointing members.

DIRECTOR/STAFF REPORTS

Director Cooper brought the following reports:

- The landscaping at City Hall has been finished. We are doing the job in-house.
- Sacred Heart Hospital has donated two dog park features. We will probably be installing them at Roger Scott.
- Construction is underway at the new Bayview Resource Center.
- Renovations at Bayview Senior Center have stalled. We will continue to use Brownsville Community Center. We have a few new seniors that have begun coming.
- Armstrong Park has a new playground.
- This Saturday there will be a ribbon cutting for the new playground at Hitzman. We will have tents in case of inclement weather.
- We will be demolishing the playground at Parker Circle. We have a new playground structure ready to take its place.
- The tree trimming on Bayfront and Main Street is almost complete.
- The Legion field plans are coming along. We will be installing a new press box, walking path, and splash pad.
- Magee Field is still in the planning process. We are looking for funding.

OLD BUSINESS**Board Member Park Visitation Program**

The following parks were reported on – Chimney Park, Malaga Park, East Pensacola Heights Lion's Park, Andalusia Square, Granada Square, and Ft. George.

Director Cooper mentioned that we had some volunteers clear the sight line of Granada Square. Ms. Dubuisson mentioned that just having a park as green space adds beauty to the neighborhood.

Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC)

The BAC is not meeting right now. They won't meet for another 30 days or so, or the Committee may be discontinued. The City is hoping to hire a Complete Streets employee who will take over the BAC. Once this person is hired, we can reapply for the Bicycle Friendly status.

ADJOURNMENT – 9:08 am