

SUMMARY MINUTES

ISLAMORADA, VILLAGE OF ISLANDS PARKS & RECREATION CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, May 16, 2024

Meeting started at 4:00 p.m. at the Founders Park Community Center

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Alina Davis, Carolyn Wightman, Christy Hughes, Natasha Early, Richard Russell, Eduardo Suarez, John Weare, Shannon Cary, Joseph Jannach, Maria Bagiotti (IVOI), Anne Onsgard (IVOI), Alicia Mote (IVOI)

ABSENT:

David Epstein, Ted Benbow - Justified

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairwoman Carolyn Wightman asked Joseph Jannach to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Alina motioned to approve the minutes from April 30th. Shannon seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously (9-0).

EMERGENCY AGENDA ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS:

Carolyn stated that a tentative second meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 5th for any overflow discussion topics that cannot be discussed today due to time constraints. She stated that the Committee will be visiting the Baseball Field first before the discussion, and there will be no decisions made during this meeting's discussion. Richard mentioned that the interlocal agreement was signed and approved with a 5-0 vote from the Village Council, but that only means that the usage agreement will stay the same as it has been, with no new decisions or progress being made at this time.

The Committee members exited the meeting room to attend an orientation at the Coral Shores High School Baseball Field, located at Founders Park. No discussion took place during the visit.

In addition to the current Zero Tolerance for Alcohol policy at the park, Maria asked the Committee for their support and approval in implementing Non-Resident Holiday Rates every weekend throughout the summer. The park's approved Holiday Rates are \$15.00 per adult and \$10.00 per youth or senior. Maria mentioned that this will help offset costs of hiring off-duty police officers on Saturdays and Sundays to monitor the park and help with enforcement. These rates will only affect non-residents. John Weare motioned that the Committee endorse and accept the proposed revision of park entrance fees on weekends as outlined. Christy Hughes seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously (9-0).

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Sandi Bisceglia thanked the Committee for scheduling meetings more often, to stay on top of important topics, especially the upcoming decisions involving millions of dollars.

Captain Ed Davidson stated that by observing the discussion topics on today's agenda and how they impact each other, he believes the park needs a management plan via a consultant that is experienced with park management issues. He believes Founders Park is one of the finest municipal parks in the country and is glad these topics are being discussed. He mentioned he is still concerned about the PFAS (Forever Chemicals) that are present in artificial turf and the involvement in the proposed Baseball Field plan.

Carolyn mentioned that when it becomes time to make decisions or provide input on the Baseball Field improvements down the road, it would be important for the Committee to consider both the environmental and budgetary impacts of this project.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:

BASEBALL FIELD IMPROVEMENTS, ARTIFICIAL TURF: Joe, Alina and Carolyn all voiced and agreed that not much discussion will be had on this topic during this meeting, due to the premature status of the project. Shannon asked that once the time comes to make decisions, to consider the youth population that uses the park for their sports. Her experience with youth soccer has shown that the population has grown, and the fields are full year-round with different sports. She stressed the importance of considering that these fields will be used all the time when discussing any new maintenance or upkeep plans.

Tony Hammon, the current Coral Shores Baseball coach, spoke about the condition of the field as it is currently. He mentioned he and staff have been working hard to get the field to an acceptable playing level, because it had been in very poor condition. He mentioned that he agrees with the proposed upgrades to the field. He visited the Key West High School baseball facility and interviewed their coaches, and they all said they would never want to go back to having a regular sod/natural grass field after transitioning to artificial turf. Currently, the field at Coral Shores needs more sodding in the infield and outfield, more clay, resurfacing of the uneven outfield to avoid injuries, and a very aggressive maintenance plan for the full 12 months of the year, not just for the 5 months during baseball season.

Joe proposed that a member of this Committee should be on any evaluation committees that are involved in the overall planning of the park, including Master Plan evaluations. Maria explained that four proposals have been received for the Founders Park Master Plan. An evaluation committee had already been formed, which included Maria, Planning Director Jennifer DeBoisbriand, and Village Biologist Daniel Parobok. This has been evaluated, the four proposals ranked, and a recommendation will be given to Council on June 11th. Maria stated the evaluation committee members are selected by the Village Manager, and she was unaware the non-staff members or other committee members could

be selected to these evaluation committees, but she will recommend this moving forward. John, Joe and Alina volunteered to be a part of future evaluation committees.

FORMER SILVER AND SPICE PROPERTY STATUS: John mentioned that he learned at Thursday's Village Council meeting through heated discussion around dolphin health and safety at Theater of the Sea that the FKAA has ownership of this property until at least March of 2025. He believes this Committee will have to wait a bit longer before beginning to make plans for this property.

ADDITIONAL PICKLEBALL COURTS: Alina expressed that she believes there is a need for additional pickleball courts, but until there is a Master Plan in place, there is no use in discussing the topic.

Maria mentioned that the current Capital Projects moving forward this year are the Solar Light Replacement Project, Splash Pad Resurfacing Project, and the Inclusive Playground Project. The playground project is currently on hold due to application for TDC funding, as well as waiting to have the Master Plan consultants look at the area for any other improvements. Maria plans to have Committee members involved in this process.

Alina expressed that she does not believe that the Committee needs a second meeting to discuss the rest of the topics, because no decisions will be made or implemented until the Master Plan has progressed further.

Carolyn left the idea of a second meeting open to the Committee in case topics arise that need discussion. The Master Plan decision will be made at the June 11th Village Council Meeting.

FUTURE ITEMS: Village Council Chambers and Public Works building, Marquee sign upgrade, Park maintenance/equipment area situation, Putting green, Master Plan updates.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairwoman Carolyn Wightman set the next meeting date as TBD. Christy made a motion to adjourn, Alina seconded. The meeting ended at 5:46 P.M.

Recording Secretary,

Alicia Mote

Minutes Approved by Committee on
Chairwoman Carolyn Wightman _____.