

SUMMARY MINUTES

ISLAMORADA, VILLAGE OF ISLANDS PARKS & RECREATION CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, September 24, 2025
Meeting started at 5:01p.m. at the Founders Park Community Center

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Carolyn Wightman, Shannon Cary, Natasha Early (via Zoom), John Weare, Christy Hughes (via Zoom), Richard Russell, David Epstein, Alina Davis, Maria Bagiotti (IVOI), Anne Onsgard (IVOI), Alicia Mote (IVOI)

ABSENT:

Joseph Jannach – Justified
Ted Benbow - Justified

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairwoman Carolyn Wightman asked David Epstein to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETINGS:

John Weare motioned to approve the minutes from the August 21st meeting. Alina Davis seconded.

EMERGENCY AGENDA ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS: None

Village Manager Ron Saunders reported no progress regarding the Baseball Field since his last update. He, Richard Russell, and Tony Hammon agreed to move forward with updating the existing building at the end of the 1st base line at the baseball field. David Epstein inquired about the Silver and Spice property—many ideas have been discussed, but no progress made. Ron mentioned potential updates to Southwinds Park, but John Weare noted Peter Frezza said it's designated as conservation land. Alina asked about removing Public Works from Green Turtle Hammock Preserve and Founders Park. Ron said Green Turtle is being vacated into the old church area, with Founders Park next, though space for equipment remains an issue.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

STAFF REPORT – FOUNDERS PARK FEE DISCUSSION:

Anne Onsgard presented proposed increases to several Founders Park user fees, including park and pool daily admissions, memberships, facility rental fees, and contractual service provider fees. Considerations also included the possibility of charging hotel/motel/vacation home guests park entrance fees while continuing to maintain

Islamorada resident and resident guests' free access, a new daily admission rate for Monroe County residents, and membership increase of up to 30%.

David Epstein and other Committee members questioned whether removing free access for hotel guests would negatively affect access to TDC project funding. Maria and Annie agreed that they were unsure and would bring more information on that back to the Committee.

The Committee agreed to keep the current 90%/10% split for contractor fees rather than moving to an 85%/15% split, in consideration of the instructors, as well as community members who participate in these long-standing programs. Shannon suggested that revenue increases can most likely be found in other ways through other fees.

The Committee agreed that the proposed park, pool and membership increases are very reasonable and acceptable. David suggested lowering the Monroe County fee from the proposed \$8 per adult/\$5 per youth or senior because he did not feel those rates would be giving Monroe County residents any kind of discount. The Committees consensus is to lower those fees to \$5 per adult, \$3 per youth/senior. The Committee also agreed to keep the holiday and summer weekends fee policy and rates the same – as \$15 per adult/\$10 per youth or senior on the four designated holiday weekends, and summer weekends between Memorial and Labor Day. The Committee suggested removing free access for hotel/motel/vacation rental home guests, pending feedback from TDC. The Committee suggested charging hotel/motel/vacation rental home guests the proposed new full non-resident rate of \$10 per adult, \$7 per youth/senior. The Committee as well as Village Manager verbally approved of continuing with the 90%/10% fee split for contracted service providers.

It was proposed to open the current Pavilion and Tiki rentals to non-Islamorada residents. The Committee agreed to keep these rentals to Islamorada residents only. The Committee agreed to increase the current Pavilion rental fees to \$100 for security deposit and \$100 rental fee for a four-hour maximum time frame, and Tiki rental fees to \$50 for security deposit and \$50 rental fee for a four-hour maximum time frame.

It was proposed to open Pool Facility rentals (for private pool parties, civic groups and school field trips) to non-residents and include a \$5 per person access fee. The Committee agreed to keep these rentals to Islamorada residents only, but to include the \$5 per person access fee. It was proposed to increase Pool Team rental fees by 20%, which would apply to visiting winter/college teams. The Committee agreed to increase the Pool Team rental fees. It was also proposed to include a new Seasonal Swim Team fee at a rate that is to be determined, which would apply to Coral Shores High School, and to be paid by the Monroe County School District. The Committee suggested researching fees that other schools pay for their swim teams to use pool facilities before discussing further,

It was proposed to add a new Private Instructional Service Fee for non-contracted ongoing programs. This would include general pool area or lane space for third party private or commercial use for specialized instruction. Examples would be swimming, freedive, mermaid, lifeguard, or water survival courses and military training. The Committee agreed to allow these options and include the proposed fees. It was proposed to add a new locker rental fee, including monthly and annual options within the pool locker rooms. This was approved by the Committee.

It was proposed to add a Private Party Facility Rental fee, which would apply to all existing sport facilities in Founders Park for Islamorada residents only at a \$75 security deposit and \$75 rental fee, with a four-hour maximum time frame. The Committee agreed to this fee, but requested that the Pickleball and Tennis courts are not included in this ability to be reserved, due to their high popularity and management difficulty.

Anne mentioned that the Special Events section of the fee presentation would require a more in-depth conversation and include all stakeholders. She gave a brief overview of the different event size categories and their respective fees charged currently. The Committee and staff agreed that this subject would be covered in the next meeting.

CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE:

Maria provided an update on Capital Projects. She stated that TDC funding has been secured for the Inclusive Playground Project. Two qualifying bids were received for the Pool Resurfacing project; a contractor will be selected at tomorrow's meeting, with a recommendation going to Council on October 7. If approved, the project will begin February 1 and is expected to take approximately four months. Carolyn recommended including significant penalties for contractor's failure to meet the deadline. Staff will coordinate with Jacobs and potentially local resorts for program usage during construction. Maria also mentioned that due to budget cuts, funding for the Wall of Fame project was removed from this year's budget; Staff will explore fundraising options.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

Continuation of Fees Discussion – Special Events

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairwoman Carolyn Wightman set the next regular meeting date as TBD in October. Carolyn made a motion to adjourn, Shannon Cary seconded. The meeting ended at 7:45 P.M.

Recording Secretary,
Alicia Mote

Minutes Approved by Committee on
Chairwoman Carolyn Wightman _____.