

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Minutes

May 5, 2021

Board Attendance Record

William Dryburgh 8/8
Don McCormick 8/8
Kay Tvaroch 7/8
Debra Anlauf 8/8
Erick Toth 5/8
Maria Greenberg 6/8
Fred Pazona 7/8

Present

William Dryburgh
Don McCormick
Kay Tvaroch
Debra Anlauf
Erick Toth
Maria Greenberg
Fred Pazona

Absent

County Representatives

Ken Doherty, Commission Liaison
Tommy Scott, Director
Maureen Broderick, Recreation Manager
Tina Powell, Natural Resources Manager
Mike Koenig, Resource Manager
Mike Norton, Recreation Supervisor
Marc Solomon, Recreation Superintendent
Kathy Koroschetz, Administrative Assistant

Guests

Padmini Sooknanan	Kaitlyn Huber
Alexis Demma	Faith Culver
Luca Romero	Carol Driscoll
Elizabeth Skipp	Judith McAniff
Thea Fox	Paul Popper
Ariel Popper	Patrick Jerek
Paul Martinowicz	

Chairman William Dryburgh welcomed members, staff and visitors to the meeting.

- Roll Call
- Minutes
 - Motion to approve the 2021 March Minutes made by Don McCormick, 2nd by Maria Greenberg and was unanimously approved.
- Division Reports – March 2021
- Old Business
 - **Englewood Beach Projects** – Tina Powell, Natural Resources Manager shared the current projects at Englewood Beach that included restroom renovations to add that should be done in the next few weeks. A proposed playground replacement with a beachy pirate theme is also in the works.

The existing playground has had some repairs and is being monitored for safety while the project is currently in state permitting process and should be completed in approximately 6 months.

- **Tippecanoe boat ramp** – Tommy Scott, Director gave an update on the letter sent to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to explore possibilities for a boat ramp at Tippecanoe I & II. After presenting information to the BCC regarding cost estimate, environmental concerns etc., the BCC chose not to move forward with the project at this time but did ask if there were any alternative sites for the boat ramp. Tommy Scott stated there was a piece of property in that Manchester area that was identified, although a little pricey, but could be an option in the future. There are still talks of opening a pass from Charlotte Harbor into the Manchester Waterway.

Commissioner Doherty added that the Manchester Waterway request was complicated, lots of federal and state regulatory agencies are involved in that potential project.

Don McCormick shared that he serves on the Beaches and Shores Advisory Committee and gave contact information to Jim Bever a biologist in the area to look further into the Manchester boat ramp project and stated the Beaches and Shores Advisory Board is in the process of looking at the project and may be taking it on.

- New Business

- I. **Renaming application for Harold Avenue Regional Park** – Mike Koenig, Resource Manager presented a renaming application form to the Board members where Mr. Jim Stanley and family have asked to rename the **Harold Avenue Recreation Park** to the **Charles “Buck” Stanley Sports Complex** after his late father Charles “Buck” Stanley. Mike Koenig explained that Charles Stanley was involved in the development of the facility. Mr. Stanley organized an army of volunteers to do the maintenance, upkeep and care of the facility until many years later when Charlotte County Parks and Recreation took over, Mr. Stanley also gave thousands of hours of service to the community and youth of Charlotte County at Harold Avenue.

Maria Greenberg suggested naming a baseball field or having a monument in Mr. Stanley’s name instead of the renaming the entire facility since baseball was Mr. Stanley’s main focus and there are several other sports that are offered at **Harold Avenue Recreation Park**. After a lengthy discussion between members of the Board a Motion was made.

Motion to rename the baseball field at **Harold Avenue Recreation Park** the **Charles “Buck” Stanley Baseball Complex** made by Don McCormick and 2nd by Debra Anlauf and was unanimously approved.

- II. **Sunshine Law Review** – Tommy Scott, Director asked that this agenda item which involves a video from the County Attorney’s Office could be deferred to the next meeting.

III. **South County Regional Park Project** – Tina Powell, Natural Resources Manager gave updates happening at South County Regional Park which included working on a design plan to add 8 additional free standing pickle ball courts where the current tennis courts are now and 2 new tennis courts near the basketball courts, as well as a driver stand for the RC track to **South County Regional Park (SCRP)**, this will finish out the SCRCP master plan.

IV. **Centennial Pool operations** – Marc Solomon, Recreation Superintendent gave an overview of the Centennial Pool operations regarding the 50-meter by 25-yard competition swimming pool built at **Centennial Park (CP)**. Marc Solomon went through the plan Staff put forward to utilize the pool between swim lessons, recreational swim, swim clubs and sports council teams.

Fred Pazona voiced his concern that if Saturday's and Sunday's mornings from 8am to noon would only be for swim teams and swim clubs with no recreational swim it would prevent him and other citizens from getting to swim due storms that set in every day during the summer afternoons and this is diminishing the capacity of the tax paying citizens that want to use the Centennial pool because its being monopolized by swim clubs.

Tommy Scott responded that these hours would be at the Centennial Pool, but the other pools would continue with normal operations. If the swim teams shift to the Centennial pool, then there will be access at the SCRCP pool and vice versa. Tommy Scott went on to explain that swim clubs, swim teams and parents of the kids are also citizens, residents and taxpayers of Charlotte County and have the same rights to the facilities, and the same scenario for all our other sports complexes such as little league baseball, youth soccer, and youth football where there is private for their use, the pools are no different.

Fred Pazona responded there is a big difference, because they pay \$1,000.00 or more for a private swim club or for a 65-year-old to join the master's program its \$850.00, even though they register as non-profit organizations they pay their coaches \$1000.00-\$1,200.00 per week.

Tommy Scott then asked if Fred Pazona's concern was with the swim teams and their structure or pool hours? Fred Pazona said he is trying to find out is what is going to be the availability for the regular people that want to use the pool in the morning before the summer storms set in, because you are taking away the access and that is his point.

Tommy Scott replied we are shifting the access from CP to other locations that is correct, we have always had swim teams.

William Dryburgh interrupted and said Fred you have made your point and we have citizens here waiting to speak.

Maria Greenberg asked, to get real answers for Fred, what is the availability at SCRCP pool and what is the availability at CP pool?

Tommy Scott replied we have swim lesson weeks and non-swim lesson weeks at the CP pool, and we have lap swimmers and recreational swimmers water aerobics, law enforcement both city and county, public safety both city and county, and private enterprises that want to utilize the pools, so it's a big operation. As Marc Solomon explained, on the 2 weeks we have swim lessons Tuesday through Friday we will be running short course and Saturday, Sunday & Monday we will run long course and on the weeks we do not have lessons we will run long course the entire time. If we have make-up lessons during swim lesson week and need a day or two or three, we shift those into those off weeks and they would still be short course and any day we don't have make-up lessons will be long course. Hours of operation are always posted on our website.

Maria Greenberg said the bottom line is we are a community and in a perfect world we would have enough pools to use for whatever and whenever we wanted to, but that's not the way it is, we have swim teams to consider, we have the public to consider and we try to work around everybody the best we can. It's a fluid situation and if there is a massive amount of complaints, I'm sure it will be considered. Everyone must work together to use the facilities that we have available, we don't have an infinite amount of pools for everybody to use for what they want when they want.

Fred Pazona replied to Maria and said that is a very good statement you just made Maria, we share the facility and it's not just one sided for one particular group and the public is entitled to share the facility, we have a 50 meter pool that is a showcase but not everyone can swim 50 meters so there has to be a blended schedule here, we can't have some Ayatollah telling us this is the way it is.

William Dryburgh interrupted by saying we don't do that here Fred, we just don't.

Commissioner Doherty interjected, to summarize I received several phone calls on what I'm hearing today on concerns of pool hours being out of balance. After the BCC Board meeting last week, I was presented a spreadsheet from Administration which shows Ann & Chuck Devers, Centennial Park, South County Regional Park and Port Charlotte Beach pools and gives the division totals. The spread sheet shows 13 categories of swimmers as Tommy was saying using the pools, plus all the people that participated since June 5, 2020.

Commissioner Doherty read off the top three categories which were lap swimmers 22,482, water aerobics 9,259 and recreation swimmers 8,282 and then asked Tommy Scott if it would be possible to get this spread sheet sized so print would be easier to read and have it at the next meeting. Commissioner Doherty said the facts will speak for themselves and as this spreadsheet shows we are not out of balance, if anything we are accommodating, and believes the data will show this.

Maria Greenberg addressed Fred Pazona by saying, I know you are passionate about aquatics and I completely respect that, but there is nobody that does more for the citizens of this community than Tommy Scott and I didn't appreciate you pointing at him and calling him Ayatollah, I respect your passion but we are a cohesive board here that work for this community and our leader is Tommy, that's not fair and I think you owe him an apology for that statement.

Fred Pazona responded with; I am not going to apologize; I am part of the citizens advisory and represented them for the past 11 years. I have asked him questions in the past and one of his stock answers is "I'll look into it and get back to you" and sometimes it never happens. I watched the Commissioners meeting last week on television and watched a couple commissioners ask him pointed questions and he was dancing around the questions, he is an employee of the county government, the only five people elected are the 5 county commissioners, so we should have an advisory board that represents the citizens and submit our suggestions and recommendations to the commissioners and they make the final decisions. Mr. Pazona also stated, I am a little more informed about aquatics than most people.

Maria Greenberg replied, I understand that but still don't appreciate your comment towards Tommy.

William Dryburgh stated in the 14 years I have been on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board I have never seen this, and we need to get back to where we were.

- Sports Council Update – Erick Toth

March 2021 (March included due to regular PRAB meeting replaced by April tour)

- Reviewed athletic partnership opportunities (Easter egg hunt, pitch hit run, etc.)
- Reviewed all COVID protocols for all sports clubs
- Grease trap cleanout invoices and insurance updates for all clubs
- Facility Concession reviews and reports
- Spring Training programs and tickets.
- Facilities do's & don'ts review.
- Centennial Memories program and celebration activities review.

April 2021

- Review Survey from Community Services to Youth Sports for Volunteer hour counts, COVID impacts, members counts, etc.
- Community Events reviews, Easter Egg Hunt, Pitch hit & Run (200 participants)
- Centennial Memories and upcoming events review - Marc Solomon
- Field Fatigue guidelines and implementation of recourse.
- Maintenance projects on going during season announce to clubs that will be affected.
- Kid to Park Day.
- upcoming tournaments and sports season book your slots now.
- Facility & Field round table with MONTY.

- Member Issues

- Fred Pazona voiced concern with coverage of the lifeguards, saying sometimes only one lifeguard is on duty for a very large pool and he assumed there was Board of Health Regulation based on the sq.ft of the pool, but found out there is not due to Florida goes county by county and does not have a state law. Fred

Pazona suggested the Board write a letter to the BCC for a group of aquatics professionals come up with a solution for a pool this size.

- Don McCormick added, Mr. Chairman I would not want to be in the position of micromanaging the operation, I think it's fine to ask Tommy Scott and his staff members to discuss their views on this issue to see what they think is relevant.
- Commissioner Doherty suggested Tommy Scott bring to attention of Administration and the County Attorney's office to research what the standard is for Charlotte County, and I can bring it up on my one on one meeting Monday and share what information was provided at the next PRAB meeting.
- Directors Report
 - Tommy Scott gave update on the recent state level Covid guideline changes by stating the operations at our facilities will go back to pre Covid starting Monday May 10th, meaning all adjustments to capacities will end along with pre-registering requirements. Tommy suggested that we all continue with hand washing, sanitizing and masks will still be encouraged.
 - Tommy Scott acknowledged Padmini "Neesha" Sooknanan as being in the Charlotte County Mentor Program and explained that part of the mentorship is to attend a PRAB meeting. Neesha has specifically developed a mentor program for the recreation division; and she has been with Charlotte County for 18 years.
 - Tommy Scott congratulated the winners of Top Guard; Alexis Demma, Faith Culver, Lucabella Romero and Liam Straw and explained it is an event held for lifeguards to go through exercises showing their competency, skills and to participate in fun activities where they are then judged.
- Citizens Input
 - Citizens Carol Driscoll, Elizabeth Skipp, Judith McAniff and Ariel Popper were all present at the PRAB meeting to voice their concern for the Walk Fitness program being eliminated at Ann & Chuck Dever Regional Park in the summer months due to camp starting up, and this has upset several participants of the Walk Fitness program leaving them no where to exercise inside during the hot months.
 - Tommy Scott thanked the citizens for coming and stated that starting Monday May 10th all of the capacity issues due to Covid will go away with the recent state guidelines being changed by the executive order from Governor DeSantis this past week, so all normal programming will return and Covid requirements will end, and this will not be an issue having Walk Fitness while camp is running.
 - Citizen Paul Popper voiced concerns of hours at the pools particularly at the South County Regional Pool, Mr. Popper stated that citizens with skin cancer only have the option to swim during the hottest part of the day because swim

lessons start at 6pm and multiple teams swim during the evening hours which squeezes down the available lap lanes that close at 6pm, Mr. Popper added he would like to see availability of hours for lap lanes in the evening to allow citizens to get out of the hot Florida sun.

Tommy Scott responded that at a BCC meeting last week we discussed and are reviewing our hours of operation to extend into evening hours at our pools and what resource allocations we would need to be able to do that. The analysis of that is ongoing and we will be getting back to Administration with options and further conversation with the BCC.

- Maria Greenberg asked what the current hours were. Tommy Scott replied, currently we close at 6pm at most facilities and are looking to extend those hours.
- Citizen Thea Fox voiced concern regarding available lanes as well pointing out that the data from the spreadsheet mentioned earlier confirmed there are 22,000 lap swimmers and asked why do lap swimmers have limited access.
- Citizen Paul Martinowicz voiced concern he was not being heard on issues he has brought up in the past regarding lane availability for lap swimmers. Paul also talked about how rules changed during Covid giving preference to the kids (swim teams and clubs), explaining on a few instances he was told there were limited lanes open for safety reasons, but the next day more lanes were available because the kids were coming back, same with locker room being closed one day and open the next because the kids were back. Mr. Martinowicz also had concerns of recreational swimmers swimming in the 50-meter pool stating most cannot swim that far without hanging on the lanes which is a safety issue.

Citizen voiced concerns of the 50-meter pool being too much for most average swimmers to swim without taking a break, and the lifeguards do not permit stopping and hanging on the lines. Mr. Bowman's proposed solution would be to have the swim teams swim in the morning and then at 4pm change it back to 25 yards for other swimmers.

- William Dryburgh thanked all the citizens for their comments and concerns and said he along with the rest of the board members and Tommy Scott would look into their concerns.
- Fred Pazona suggested making a motion for a letter to the BCC to address the citizens input.
- Erick Toth responded he believed before sending a letter to the BCC we should wait until we have the report with data showing usage at the facilities and also Tommy Scott will be reviewing the lifeguard situation and what the standard codes are on safety and bringing that to the next meeting.

- Maria Greenberg suggested putting the lifeguard concerns on next month's agenda and discuss after looking at the data.

- Announcement

- Adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

CC: Commissioner Ken Doherty, District 1
Commissioner Chris Constance, District 2
Commissioner Bill Truex, District 3
Commissioner Stephen R. Deutsch, District 4
Commissioner Joe Tiseo, District 5
Hector Flores, County Administrator
Emily Lewis, Deputy County Administrator