

**PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES FROM MEETING OF FEBRUARY 21, 2024**

The Marion County Parks & Recreation Advisory Council (PRAC) held a public meeting on February 21, 2024 at the Marion County Parks & Recreation Main Office, 111 SE 25th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34471.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Jerry Furlong, Chair
Joe Reichel
Kat Kelley

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Pat Gabriel, Vice-Chair
Brian Cretul

STAFF PRESENT

Jim Couillard, Director
Kelsey Mears, Assistant Director
Sara Lambert, Community Engagement Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was officially called to order at 3:36 PM by Chair, Jerry Furlong, followed by the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Jerry Furlong made a motion to accept the October minutes as presented; Joe seconded; unanimous approval; motion carried.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken by Sara Lambert

STAFF ITEMS

A. Park Management Institute

1. Jim acknowledged Kelsey and Charles' hard work in setting up and hosting the Park Management Institute (PMI)
2. Kelsey explained this is an annual "conference," that is put on by Florida Recreation and Parks Association (FRPA) and we were the host site this year.
 - i. Kelsey and Charles worked to develop the curriculum and showcase Marion County by including other local agencies and partners.
3. Our county came across as very progressive and empowered with well-trained staff who were trusted to accomplish their jobs.
4. Kat asked about hosting next year and Kelsey said it's in Collier County next year but we still received rave reviews.
5. Joe asked how many came, Kelsey said around 70.
6. Kelsey directed members to review the agenda and class options from PMI to understand the breadth and scope of who came and spoke.
 - i. Joe remarked that he loved the collaboration between us and other agencies.
 - ii. Jim added that he wants to explore having quarterly meeting with other agencies to foster collaboration.
 - iii. Jim then brought up the current situation with Salt Springs

Recreation Area and the role we may play in ensuring that it stays open to the public.

7. Jim gave additional shout outs to the team members who taught classes and helped shuttle participants to and from areas.
8. Kelsey said that she, Charles and Jess will be presenting classes at FRPA's annual conference to a larger group of people.
 - i. She added that those who attend PMI appreciate our honesty regarding policies and procedures.
9. Jerry asked what the biggest takeaway was and Kelsey replied that an attendee who worked for Hillsborough County had never interacted with anyone outside of their department.
10. Joe asked Sara about her "ah-ha," moment from the conference and she replied how shocked she was to hear that so many departments are not allowed to manage their own social media and outreach campaigns.
11. Jim stated that this conference really emphasized just how far along we've come as an organization.
 - i. We support healthy conflict, we trust one another and we foster leadership through internal and organizational leadership teams.
12. Jim noted that we only have two vacancies in our department with Joe replying that we must be doing something right.

B. Commissioner/PRAC Member Update:

1. Joe met with Commissioner Zalak and he's very happy with everything we're doing.
2. Kat and Jerry added that they still need time and Sara offered her assistance in scheduling meetings.

C. FY 25 Budget

1. Jim explained that Kelsey handles our budget presentations when it comes to presenting to our ACA and County Administrator.
2. Kelsey gave a high level run through of our anticipated budget for FY 25.
 - i. PRAC will see our budget before it goes to Angel Roussel, our Assistant County Administrator, and Kelsey will answer any questions and provide any comment PRAC may need.
 - ii. March 1st is the budget entry cutoff and we're 80% done.
 - iii. Kelsey discussed certain personnel moves from one account to another to free up funds, machinery and equipment requests are similar to those from FY 24, and there are no big items as of yet.
 - iv. Keara did a massive deep dive on spending to ensure our budget is aligned for FY 25
3. Jim noted to have Kelsey give Joe a rundown of our budget
 - i. Jim explained the Fees Fund and how it's revenue driven, seven staff are currently paid out of the fees fund and they need to be moved to free up those monies.
 - ii. Jim added that he's very aware of current Commission priorities and how that may affect us
4. Jim brought up educating people on our CIP process and the it works with the budget.
5. Jim noted that the County Administrator's goal was an 8% increase with 4% going to personnel.
6. Jim added that we're very team-focused when it comes to budget planning and he and Kelsey did position reviews.
 - i. Kelsey added that she asked staff what they need and for the first

- time they responded that they do not need additional people.
- ii. Joe asked if that's because you're already asking staff the right questions and Jim added yes, our staff engagement is very good.
 - iii. Jim reiterated that we're very people focused and Joe said that type of communication is key.

D. Annual Report

- 1. Jim mentioned previous End of Year reports and how they were a bit stale, containing mostly spreadsheets.
- 2. Kelsey researched other county Annual Reports and the current template was adopted.
- 3. Jim noted that it's very dynamic and tells a whole story.
 - i. Kat remarked that she found it very impressive.
- 4. The new report will be shared across social platforms and hard copies will be made available.
- 5. Kat said it's very visually appealing and Jim remarked about the continuity in theming throughout the report.
- 6. Kelsey said the report needs to tell the story of our department, not just share number-based data.
 - i. Jim said it means the world to him to see it come together in such a manner.
 - ii. Kelsey added that it will be accessible on the website.

E. Leadership Development

- 1. Jim began by saying Mounir kicked started the leadership development and it began to spread.
 - i. We now have 5 organizational teams (1 for each commissioner), 2 Bridge teams, and 2 departmental leadership teams.
 - ii. Jim is on Team Purple where he co-leads with Assistant County Administrator Amanda Tart and Commissioner Matt McClain
 - iii. They are currently reading the book Sticking Points about working with different generations and understanding how to best communicate with them.
- 2. Jim explained that leadership summit and all of the various books they've read throughout the years.
- 3. The program was developed to train leadership positions and now it's being pushed down throughout the county departments.
- 4. Jim mentioned our two internal leadership teams, the books their reading and the work they've done and will do.
 - i. Jim shared the HICARD Go and No-go's developed by Team 1 alongside other leadership initiatives.
 - 1. The HICARD is an acronym for our County's core values: Humbleness, Integrity, Commitment, Accountability, Respect, and Discipline.
 - ii. He also shared how staff are being moved up from internal groups to county-wide leadership teams and Bridge teams.
- 5. Jerry said he really liked the go, no-go's and Jim added that they will come in handy during evaluations.
- 6. Jim said it will given to staff soon and Kelsey added that they were developed by staff for staff.
 - i. Jim shared that they will run through Senior Staff and his County leadership team first before the final version is handed out.

F. Discussion

1. Jim brought up the pickleball tournament at Coehadjoe this past weekend, 25 teams participated.
 - i. Recreation partnered with Ocala Pickleball Club for the tournament.
 - ii. A private entity wants to start hosting pickleball tournaments at Coehadjoe for a fee.
 1. Jim stated that we had been hesitant to explore this option but it's worth looking into because of the success we've seen in hosting travel ball tournaments.
 - iii. Pickleball has put Coehadjoe on the map from a tourism perspective.
 1. People are driving more than an hour to play at Coehadjoe.
 - iv. Jim remarked on much positive feedback those courts receive, adding that the YMCA and City of Ocala used our plans for their courts.
 - v. The biggest complaint we've received is to keep them open longer.
 - vi. Jerry said he knows a gentleman who plays out there and he's having a blast. Jim concurred because he plays as well.
2. Heagy Burry is going out to bid very soon, numbers are still to be determined.
 - i. We may be asked to make up some of this funding from our Fees Fund.
3. Turf quote for Rotary is now \$4.6M
 - i. Joe asked why it's \$2M more and Jim said because of general cost increases and unique features asked of County design teams to enhance the visitor experience.
 - ii. This project will be completed quickly and correctly.
4. Jim shared that moving forward, all information, good or bad will be shared with PRAC.
5. Kelsey shared that Marion County Day is coming up, March 23 and that the Livestock Pavilion is slated to have a ribbon cutting for the RV Campground very soon.
 - i. Jim added that the project is moving along nicely aside from an issue with the punch pad for entry.
 1. Jerry asked who handled that and Jim said a local consultant.
 - ii. The return on investment for the campground will make it profitable within seven years.
6. Kelsey added that the event tower is close to being completed.
7. Kat asked when the Southeastern Youth Fair is set to take place and Kelsey shared it was beginning that week.
8. Jim noted that a grant was acquired to update SELP entryways, sales arena, and other items.
 - i. He added that the fees at SELP were raised to help keep us competitive.
 - ii. All revenue from SELP goes into the General Fund but there is discussion about putting it into a special fund designated just for SELP.
9. Kelsey gave a brief Airport update
 - i. The state is helping replace the roof on a corporate box hanger via grant funding.
 - ii. Mike has done a great job working with other government agencies to secure this type of funding.
 - iii. Jerry asked if we're replacing the clamshell doors and Jim said no,

they will be repaired.

Old Business

None.

Council Items

Closing Comments

None.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 4:49 PM

SIGNED


Jerry Furlong, Chair

DATE: June 19, 2024.

Minutes submitted by Sara Lambert