

**PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES FROM MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 24, 2025**

The Marion County Parks & Recreation Advisory Council (PRAC) held a public meeting on September 24, 2025, at the Marion County Parks & Recreation Main Office, 111 SE 25th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34471.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Jerry Furlong, Chair
Joe Reichel, Vice-Chair
Brian Cretul
Kathy Funk
Curt Bromund

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

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

CALL TO ORDER

Jerry Furlong officially called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM, followed by the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Sara Lambert took roll call.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jerry called for a motion to approve the minutes. Brian motioned to approve the minutes, Kathy seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

STAFF ITEMS

A. Trust for Public Land Meeting Update

1. Jim gave a quick review of where we are in the process of exploring bond funding and how the Trust for Public Land (TPL) will be involved.
2. A letter of intent is with Mounir Bouyounes, County Administrator, and we will have 1:1 meetings with the Commissioners planned to move forward with the process.
3. Brian asked for a summary of what all the bond funding would include before said meeting.
4. Discussion was held about the following: competition we have with other facilities to stay relevant, the potential threat of communities with amenities that mirror what we provide, projects that could be funded with the bond (like a waterpark), and the importance of how tourism ties into all of this.
5. The bond referendum could be voted upon in the 2028 general election.

B. Tournament Fees

1. Discussion was had regarding the three tiers of our tournament fees and the services/amenities that go with each tier. Most tournaments start off selecting tier 1 or tier 2, then move to tier 3, tier 3 offers the most services

for the tournament holder.

2. Curt asked if we even need to offer the lowest tier.
3. Kathy shared that our fees are some of the highest in the area for some of the sanctions using our fields. She gave an example of a recent tournament at Bellevue, where they selected tier 1. She then shared that she's trying to advocate on behalf of the park to bring more tournaments to the facility.

C. "No Phones," Policy for Camp

1. Sara and Kelsey gave a debrief on their research of "no-phone," policies and cited Camp Kiwanis' rules for not allowing them.
2. Jim said that we would need to move it through certain channels for approval before executing it for our camps.
3. Kelsey reiterated that if enacted, the new rule would be a learning curve for parents/guardians and campers, but we do have an app (Class Dojo) that keeps parents and guardians informed on all daily camp happenings.
4. Discussion was had about the potential success of a "no-phones" policy.
5. Curt shared potential scenarios to help eliminate the fear of a lack of communication with the child.

Old Business

None.

Council Items

Kathy asked for an update regarding the lights at Bellevue. Jim gave her a timeline for the work that needs to be done, when it will be finished, and where we currently are in the process. Kelsey shared potential scenarios we've explored to ensure the kids can keep playing while the work is taking place. Brian returned to the subject of a potential water park and asked if we could have different rates for residents and non-residents. Jim said yes and that he would share the consultant's report from when we originally explored the project. Discussion was had on the following: providing free tickets to the waterpark to visiting teams during tournaments, the original waterpark project's cost, how it would benefit the department, and other cities that use a similar pricing model.

Closing Comments

Rotary Sportsplex is coming along nicely. The next meeting will be a park tour with project updates. The November meeting will feature formal introductions for Justin Cumbo, Airport Manager, and Heather Leopard, Fiscal Manager.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 3:44 PM

SIGNED



Jerry Furlong, Chair

DATE: 12/17/2023

Minutes submitted by Sara Lambert