

**PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES FROM MEETING OF MARCH 19, 2025**

The Marion County Parks & Recreation Advisory Council (PRAC) held a public meeting on March 19, 2025, at the Marion County Parks & Recreation Main Office, 111 SE 25th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34471.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Jerry Furlong, Chair
Curt Bromund
Joe Reichel
Brian Cretul

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Pat Gabriel, Vice-Chair

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 3:01 PM, followed by the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Sara Lambert took roll call.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Joe motioned to approve the minutes, Curt seconded the motion with the following amendments: correcting the spelling of his last name throughout the document and clarifying his comments regarding the resolution on C.6 PRAC Functions and Expectations.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Jerry asked for nominations for PRAC Chair and Vice-Chair. Joe nominated Jerry, Curt seconded, motion was carried unanimously. Jerry nominated Joe for Vice-Chair, Curt seconded, motion was carried unanimously.

Jim shared with the Council and staff that Pat Gabriel had submitted her letter of resignation from the Council to Commissioner Bryant and Jim. We will have a formal recognition of her time on the Council at a Board meeting alongside the presentation of an award to commemorate her service to the County and the Council.

STAFF ITEMS

A. Project Update

1. Heagy-Burry

- i. Joey shared that this is a boat ramp facility undergoing a total renovation, then gave a high-level presentation of the project and its current status.
- ii. Joe wanted to know what the boundary was between us and Alachua

County since counties border the lake. Jim shared that it's the water's edge.

- iii. Joey shared photos of the site and informed PRAC of unforeseen challenges that were discovered once work began. Jerry asked if any of that work (addressing the challenges) had been budgeted, and Kelsey told him no and that we needed to find \$82,000 for remediation.
- iv. Joey gave a project timeline with projected dates for completion.
- v. Joe asked if we think the project will take until October for completion or could it be done before then. Jim shared that it will take that long, but the final month of work will be handled by Park Operations staff.
- vi. Jim diagrammed the site and explained some of the challenges we've faced alongside possible solutions.
- vii. Jim shared that FWC (Fish and Wildlife Commission) manages the vegetation in the lake, and historically, they've received some grief over their management technique yet praised their effort to improve the lake.
- viii. Lastly, Jim explained why we went with the Tedder Boat Ramp system, explaining that it was chosen because of the way it's installed and our use of them at other county parks.

2. Reddick Park

- i. Joey gave an outline of the future park's amenities and the work schedule.
- ii. Joey added that he intends for Park Operations staff work to happen concurrently with the playground's installation. He also shared that there were some minor issues with the restroom's permit, but all of that has been absolved.

3. Rotary Sportsplex Turf Conversion Project

- i. Joey gave an outline of the amenities and a project timeline.
- ii. Jim made note of how much the price has changed since this project originated.
- iii. Jim shared that this field conversion is a game-changer for our community. Curt asked if the use of the field will fall into a fee-based structure, and Jim said yes.
- iv. Jim added that we will continue to honor our agreements with Big Sun Soccer League.
- v. Curt inquired about naming rights, and Jim shared that some entities are still interested.
- vi. April 7 is the start date for construction and it will take roughly ten months. The tentative completion date is March of 2026.

B. FY 26 Budget Review

1. Belleview/MCBCC Joint Workshop

- i. Kelsey began by saying that the numbers provided are what is being presented to Administration, and it's one of the flattest budgets we've ever proposed.
- ii. We are not requesting any new staff, just one reclassification of a position. Duke Energy raising their prices as affected the budget. We went down on our asks for equipment by purchasing used vehicles from other county departments.
- iii. Joe remarked that we had done a good job here.
- iv. Jim explained the County's Used Vehicle Purchase Program and

how our department makes use of it.

- v. Kelsey addressed specific budget changes, noting that changes of \$5,000 or more are typically points for discussion. She also addressed upcoming park maintenance work that will be addressed within this budget.
- vi. Curt asked if this budget comes entirely from revenue, and Kelsey explained how our various funds work and the way they're all broken up via funding source, i.e., General Fund, Fees Fund, etc.
- vii. Curt asked about the funds for the Airport, and Jim said its budget is part of the General Fund, yet it operates on the revenue generated there.
- viii. Kelsey went on to explain how she separates monies across each fund and that our budget is our commitment to the Board and our community of what we intend to accomplish in the coming fiscal year.
- ix. Jim added that this is a very modest budget, nothing that we're in a good spot with staff and investing in our team. Kelsey agreed and remarked on the importance of having a diverse team with multiple skill sets.

C. Action Items

1. Parks Rules Resolution

- i. Jim introduced the Resolution and proposed changes. He then assigned it to PRAC for review and to return with feedback at our next meeting.
- ii. Sara is to re-send a Word document with the "track changes" enabled.
- iii. There was a discussion regarding prohibited items, such as smoking, brought forth by Curt.
- iv. Curt had questions regarding the distribution of print materials and displays in parks for commercial purposes, asking if that included information promoting political, non-profit, or religious entities. Jim and Curt discussed the phrasing "commercial purpose" when it came to displaying print materials.

Old Business

None.

Council Items

A. Capital Campaign Proposal

- 1. Curt developed a potential plan for seeking sponsorship funds. He explained that there is evidence-based research on the success of running campaigns similar to a gift registry.
- 2. He proposed a digital platform that would allow donors to pick and choose projects or parks of projects to support; this would work in tandem with our social media.
- 3. There was a discussion regarding the benefits of having an interactive app that could include information about major projects. It would be used to grow public knowledge and interest.
- 4. Curt also added geofencing-style advertising to share specific messages.
- 5. The conversation shifted to the potential of using a digital platform to identify maintenance and potential risks in parks.
- 6. Jim assigned PRAC to review the draft policy and come to the next meeting

with feedback.

7. Curt said we should consider how the College of Central Florida (CF) handles its naming rights, namely its sunseting policy.
8. Kelsey added that we have looked at places that have a sunseting aspect to their sponsorship policies.

Closing Comments

Joe shared that the Belleview City Commission is raving about Parks & Recreation and how easy we've been to work with on the nets at Belleview Sportsplex.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 4:18 PM

SIGNED


Jerry Furlong, Chair

DATE: 21 MAY 2025

Minutes submitted by Sara Lambert