

ADOPTED

MARION OAKS MSTU ADVISORY BOARD FOR RECREATION SERVICES AND FACILITIES Tuesday, January 12, 2021

ROLL CALL:

Board Members

Alice Mitchell-Chairperson
Carole LaMotte
Kathleen Martin
Bobby Whipple

Marion County Marion Oaks MSTU Representatives

MSTU/Assessments Director, Alan Jones - Absent
Marion Oaks Community Center Manager: David Pierce
Marion Oaks Recreation Specialist: Kari Coates
Staff Assistant III: Marlene Maldonado

General Public: See Sign In-Sheet

Chairperson Alice Mitchell called the meeting to order at 9:33 AM.
Chairperson Alice Mitchell requested everyone rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

VOTE ON ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

Chairperson Alice Mitchell presented the October 13, 2020 draft of minutes for adoption. A motion was made by Kathleen Martin and seconded by Bobby Whipple to accept the minutes. Approved by all.

RECREATION SPECIALIST REPORT – Kari Coates

- **First Friday & Music in the Park**

October – we had 70 plus cars attend. Had a nice flow with the food trucks and we had our breast cancer walk and turkey trot. November and December the First Friday was also held, although numbers were down for the Farmer's Market and the car show. We did, however hold our first ever light up Marion Oaks event. Santa, Mrs. Claus, and an elf were there, also a snowman. The children received presents and candy and all the buildings had Christmas lights. The Splash Pad was set up with blow ups and looked like a village – staff worked really hard to make sure everything was set up nicely and everyone had a great time. We did a great job for the first time and overall we were pleased with the results.

- **Bootastic**

Our annual trick or treat was set up with social distancing in mind, all the candy was wrapped up individually. Everyone who worked the event was provided masks, hand sanitizers and gloves. We had over 26 trick or treat stations. 16,900 individual bags of candy were passed out. Over 4,000 pieces of school supplies were passed out, along with some additional items. A big thanks to our Bootastic sponsors, our volunteers and our staff. We had a lot of positive comments.

- **Thanksgiving and Christmas Luncheons**

Since it would be difficult to social distance at these luncheons, these events were cancelled.

- **The Auction did return and in December Dave Pierce will decide on the future of the auction**

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RECREATION SPECIALIST REPORT – cont'd:

- **Yard Sale**
We had 20 plus residents set up and social distancing was observed and it was well-attended.
- **Holiday Extravaganza**
We had about 22 vendors participate, which was half of what we normally do, and the foot traffic was steady. We did not have photos with Santa and Mrs. Clause due to Covid precautions.
- **Marion Oaks Hawks – Marion County Youth Football League**
Presented us with a signed jersey to thank us for our on-going support. They were in the final championships this year. We also provided them with certificates of appreciation.
- **Outside Instructors**
Have all returned to conduct their classes
- **Farmers Market**
The decision has been made to cancel the Farmers Market, as there has not been enough community support.
- **2019-2020 Membership** – Even with Covid, our membership continues to rise. We registered 460 adults, 56 youth under age 13, and for youth 13 and up we have 32. Non-residents were 5.
- **Annual Eggstraordinary Spring Celebration**
Vendors are already signing up.
- **Marion Oaks Recreation Van** – We are working on trips for our new van which will be starting shortly.
- **Discovery Room** – Classes in the Discovery Room will also be starting up.

2020 was a tough year in many ways, but we did fantastic regardless and 2021 is a new year and we are going to push forward with our activities and new events. We have a lot to be proud of considering everything we had to deal with this year.

Alice Mitchell thanked Kari for all her hard work and stated that the facility was beautiful during December with all the lighting and acknowledged all the hard work that staff put in.

COMMUNITY CENTER MANAGER REPORT – David Pierce

David Pierce wanted to thank the staff for their participation in the December event and acknowledged that it has been a trying time dealing with the Covid environment. We have had a lot of challenges both operating the facilities and putting on programs – but we also had many positive things going on as well. He is proud of the staff for maintaining high standards in everything that we put out.

Our organization participation is low due to Covid, but our private events – the rentals have continued to stay strong throughout this whole time and actually are increasing on a weekly basis. As everybody has noticed development has really taken off here in Marion Oaks, and with new people coming in that has translated into new memberships daily. Our outdoor recreation programs seem to be going strong, more so than any programs inside. Kari Coates will continue to coordinate more outside programs until we get through this Covid crisis.

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COMMUNITY CENTER MANAGER REPORT cont'd – David Pierce

Marion Transit:

David Pierce let the Board know that although Marion Transit has been offering their transportation services from the Community Center for several months now, nobody is utilizing the service. After speaking with the driver, he was told that if it is not used the service may go away. He asked the Board to get the word out if they could. Alice Mitchell stated that not many people know about it and she spoke with the Mirror and the editor said that she never received any information on it from Marion Transit. Kari Coates stated that we have the schedule here and hand them out to people daily and we do our best to get the word out. Dave feels that not enough people know about it. Discussion ensued.

New MSTU Director: Effective as of December 14th, we have a new MSTU Director; his name is Alan Jones and he's replaced our previous Director, Shawn Hubbuck. Shawn is still working for the County, but is now working in another County Department acquiring property for the County. Alan was planning to be at today's meeting but had to attend his new hire orientation today. He will be at our February 9th pre-budget workshop to introduce himself.

STAFFING UPDATES: We have two vacant positions. Full time Recreation Leader Eric White resigned effective November 13th to pursue a career with the Marion County School System. That position has already been advertised. We have received several applications and will be interviewing sometime next week. Part-time Recreation Leader Michael Davis has decided to retire effective January 22nd to spend more time with his family. Mike has worked for us over eight years, and he will be missed by all. Dave recommended that we invite Mike to our April 13th meeting and have the Board acknowledge his accomplishments and have cake and coffee after the meeting.

We also have a vacant advisory board position created when Douglas Kerr stepped down. We have sent in four applications and have not yet heard a response from the County Commissioners. As soon as we find out who our new board member is we will share that information with you.

COVID/CARES ACT Funding:

On Nov 4th David Pierce sent out an email to the Board about being approved to receive \$151,210 in CARES Act Funding to upgrade our facilities to touchless controls in public areas. When you use our rest rooms you no longer have to manually flush the toilets, and when you wash your hands you no longer touch the faucets. Everything is automatic to prevent the spread of Covid or any other virus that might come up in the future.

Board member Kathleen Martin asked if masks were required to which David Pierce replied we cannot mandate masks. We have put up the CDC recommendations, but the County does not mandate mask wearing inside our buildings. Kathleen Martin stated that she felt uncomfortable and Board Member Carole LaMotte also stated that she felt uncomfortable due to a visitor at the meeting not wearing a face mask.

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COMMUNITY CENTER MANAGER REPORT cont'd – David Pierce

Kathleen Martin stated to the visitor that she hated to start something, but he is wearing a Trump hat today after what happened last week, and that he was not wearing a mask. The visitor stated that he could've worn an ANTIFA hat, to which Ms. Martin responded that she'd rather go with them. Board Member Bobby Whipple commented that that was a lie, and Kathleen Martin also stated that yes that was a lie and that she read his letter in the paper – the rest of Ms. Martin's statement was inaudible and at this point Recreation Specialist Kari Coates stated that she thought we should go back to our meeting. Chair Person Alice Mitchell asked if we could strongly suggest wearing a mask, to which David Pierce responded that we do suggest wearing masks at the door, but we can't enforce it and stated that at one point the Annex Building put up signs requiring masks, and the Legal Department had us take the signs down.

COVID/CARES Act Funding- cont'd:

All touchless controls were covered by the CARES Act funding we received. We did not have to pay a dime. Everything is completed, but there were some things that couldn't be done because the funding expired on December 31st. We did, however get 90% of the work done, except touchless water fountains. They are back-ordered until February and are \$7,000 a piece – we will not be purchasing those. Down the road, there may be some more funding we can apply for where we may be able to acquire the water fountains.

PROJECTS: On November 16th an email was sent out confirming that our fibar mulch was delivered and installed. The cost was \$7,875. The work was performed by IMulch from Oakland, Florida and people in the Community seem to love it. The sandbox that was built has also been a big hit with the children and once this Covid has gone away we will put some sand toys there for the kids to play with.

VAN: The 12-passenger van was delivered the first week in November. The cost was \$23,340 purchased under State Contract pricing. If we were to purchase it without the State pricing it would have cost us over \$47,000. We saved ourselves over \$20,000 by being able to go through The Sheriff's State Contract price. Board member Bobby Whipple asked if we were able to go visit other MSTU Community Centers to which Dave replied that it is possible and that he would recommend it. It's a good way to compare and get new ideas. Alice Mitchell commented to Mr. Whipple that if we do go to other facilities that we will have a lot to be proud of when comparing other facilities. Dave Pierce let the Board know that Kari Coates is looking into planning trips for the kids to go to local parks. That really was the purpose of purchasing the van since we've been very limited and can now transport kids safely to hiking, biking, and many different things. The van is currently parked in the maintenance garage. Trips are also being planned to go to the movies.

REMINDER: Our Pre-budget workshop is on February 9th. It is very important that if the Board has any ideas, they bring them to the workshop so that we can try to earmark them for our budget next year and get the dollars put in there. At one point Alice and Dave are going to have to meet with the Finance Department to see where we are with our millage rate and whether or not we would need to increase it. Therefore, whatever we put into our pre-budget workshop will determine if we have to increase the millage, which right now is 1.02 percent and the average home-owner in Marion Oaks pays about \$55 per year for our services. Dave believes right now the County is recommending it go up to 1.50 percent which would be about an \$18 to \$20 increase per Marion Oaks property owner.

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OLD BUSINESS: No old business.

NEW BUSINESS: No new business.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Joanne Coast commented that she thinks the Community Center Staff is doing a great job and especially in their program offerings. She can't compliment the staff enough. As far as the Marion Transit issue, maybe they need to advertise in the Marion Oaks Mirror and perhaps the churches can advertise it in their newsletters and bulletins. Discussion ensued regarding Marion Transit. Kari Coates clarified that Marion Transit falls under Marion Senior Services, not Marion County Board of County Commissioners.

Chairperson Alice Mitchel asked if we were going to continue with the auctions, to which David Pierce replied that at this point, we will more than likely not continue with the auctions. Maybe once a year we'll do a fund-raiser auction, but not on a monthly basis. Ms. Mitchell asked if we still had shuffle board since she has gone out several times and found no-one there for shuffle board. Kari Coates stated that we were not getting a lot of response.

NEXT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

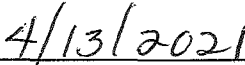
Our next meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. in the meeting room in Building B.

Chairperson Alice Mitchell asked the Board for a motion to adjourn, motion was made by Carole LaMotte and seconded by Bobby Whipple. Approved by all.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:11 a.m.
Minutes Submitted by Marlene Maldonado



Chairperson, Alice Mitchell



Date