

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

September 14, 2023

Members Present

Leonard Caillouet (alternate)
Seth Wood – Vice Chair
Steven Scott – Chair

Members Absent

Christopher Potts
Jan Frentzen
Suzanne Wynn

Staff Present

Diedre Houchen
Ed Williams
Gina Peebles
Ivy Bell
Jane Santos
Jason Maurer

Guests

Alexander Sokolowski
Mark McGuire

I- Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:34 p.m.

II - Approval of the Agenda

MOTION: Seth Wood made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. **Leonard Caillouet** seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval. The motion carried.

III - Approval of the Minutes – July 13, 2023

MOTION: Seth Wood made a motion to approve the July 13, 2023, minutes. **Leonard Caillouet** seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval. The motion carried.

IV- Equity & Community Outreach Manager Presentation – Youth Participation in Board Committees – Deidre Houchen

Deidre Houchen emphasized the importance of having youth participation in county committees and would like to have youth representation in ROSCO and other committees that could benefit from their contribution. Deidre also expressed her desire to have a standalone Youth Advisory Committee for the Council. Leonard Caillouet expressed his support and reiterated the importance of having youth integrated and participating in government and their communities because it is developmental for them, and brings a different perspective to the committees. It is important to have larger segments of the community participating in government.

Steven Scott supported the idea and emphasized the importance of youth participation. There was a discussion regarding the logistics for the participation of youth due to school and transportation. Gina Peebles suggested virtual participation and Deidre agreed that this is something that can be considered. The change of the time of the meetings will also be an option.

V- Park Projects Update – Ed Williams

Jill McGuire Santa Fe Lake – The restroom building is now installed and painted. The sidewalks were extended from the fitness area to the building and parking area. The septic system has also been installed. The electricians are in coordination with Clay Electric to have a transformer installed and two additional street lights one on each side of the parking lot. The old restrooms by the ramp will be demolished.

Steven Scott asked about the parks name change and Jason Maurer and Ed Williams addressed the question. The name change is to honor Jill McGuire, an influential person in the community, for her service and dedication to education and conservation and environmental issues. She was instrumental and advocated for many projects. The community came together to request this special recognition.

Veterans Park – The final set of project documents for the new inclusive playground and accessible parking lot is with procurement for bidding. It should be advertised in the next couple of weeks. It will be out for bids for 30 days, and after that there will be a period for review, acceptance, and Board approval. The playground equipment has already been produced and it is at the manufacturer's warehouse in Texas.

MKR (Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings) / Kate Barnes – We are waiting for the approval from Growth Management of the design for replacement of the existing boarding dock at the ramp, a new courtesy dock on the South side of the channel, the addition of accessible parking, and an accessible route to the park amenities; restrooms, playground, pavilion, boarding and courtesy dock. Jason Maurer and Ed Williams are working to update the parks' conservation management plan for approval from the State's Parks system and this is already in their possession for review and approval.

Poe Springs – There are two projects underway, the replacement of the restrooms and improvements to the boat launch. There will be 6 individual restrooms side by side. JB pro has completed a survey of the conditions of the existing boat ramp and will soon begin the design of the replacement boarding dock, which includes a kayak launch and an accessible route.

Copeland & Montechoa – For Copeland, JB Pro is surveying the park to help us to prepare a new master plan for this park which will incorporate the feedback that we received from the community and it will likely include a new playground, additional parking, better accessibility and additional site lighting.

For Montechoa, we reached out to the community as we did with Copeland, and we are waiting to hear from them before we schedule a meeting. The community had a meeting scheduled for September 11th. They wanted to have their own meeting before meeting with the county officials. We anticipate similar needs. This method will be the model of major park improvements moving forward, to engage with the community in advance of improvements to get their feedback.

Jonesville Park – We are currently painting two buildings at Jonesville Park, the soccer and baseball facilities. The gutters are being replaced and new signage is being prepared.

Cuscowilla – ADA accessible parking is being added to the Cuscowilla Nature Center this week.

We are also soliciting engineering proposals for an East University Fishing Pier at the end of University Ave. There is an area there that belongs to the county where people use the area for fishing.

Jason Maurer brought up a request from Gainesville Soccer Alliance for a stadium to be installed to the Veterans Memorial Park for tournaments. Negotiations are also starting for the Diamond Sportsplex, and this will be brought back to the committee for input once there is a plan.

VI – Parks Risk Assessment Update – Ed Williams

The Risk Assessment includes 8 appendices, and contains 174 items classified as either critical, high, medium, or routine. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the identified items were found at Cuscowilla. In the two years since the Risk inspection, continuous renovations & improvements have occurred, implemented by the Facilities Management Department and Parks personnel, in an effort to achieve the County's overall vision for this property. In the process, nearly 90% of the Risk items at Cuscowilla have been resolved, and plans are in place to complete those outstanding. Overall, the resolution rate for all the items listed

in the Risk Assessment is currently at 60% and resolution rates when broken down by category are as follows: 85% for critical items, 64% for high items, 50% for medium items, and 47% for routine items.

With projects currently in the works at Santa Fe Lake Park (construction), Veterans Memorial Park, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park/Kate Barnes Boat Ramp (design development), and Poe Springs Park (construction docs), once completed will increase the overall resolution rate to 81%. Projects envisioned for Copeland and Montecocha Parks should bring that overall rate to 92%. The 3 buildings at Cuscowilla that were on the list were also demolished, the swamp walk has been replaced and will undergo inspection next week. We are on the road to get all these projects completed by 2025.

Jason Maurer added that a park inspection form was created to be used for annual park inspections/inventory management, which will be carried out by the Parks Director and the Supervisor. Inspections will still be carried out occasionally by Risk Assessment staff.

VII – Parks Master Plan Update – Jason Maurer

The Master Plan was finalized and the Board adopted the Projects Priority List with the caveat for adjustments to be made if certain situations arise, and we are using it as a guide to move forward with the projects. Steven Scott asked about the interactive map project which shows all parks, conservation lands and amenity areas located in Alachua County. Jason Maurer and Ed Williams clarified that the project was presented to the Board and was well received, but it still has not gone live. It is going under some adjustments.

Ivy Bell, Senior Planner with the County's Planning and Development Division and ROSCO member, requested the Parks . Jason Maurer and Gina Peebles clarified that now there is a quarterly performance benchmark report being prepared and that she will be copied.

VIII – Discuss Day/Time/Location of future meetings

The next ROSCO meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, November 9, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. at the Poe Lodge at Poe Springs Park. Address: 28800 NW 182nd Avenue - High Springs, FL 32643.

IX – Public Comment

There were no public comments.

X – Tour of the new restrooms installed at Jill McGuire Santa Fe Lake Park

XI - Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.