

Recreation and Open Space Advisory Committee

Date: March 21, 2024

Time: 4:00 pm

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m..

Members Present: Leonard Caillouet, Christopher Potts, Stephen Rodriguez (via phone), Steven Scott (Chair), and Seth Wood (Vice Chair)

Members Absent: None

2. Welcome New Member - Stephen Rodriguez

Stephen Rodriguez was welcomed. He attended briefly by phone as he was traveling home from the airport.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Christopher Potts made a motion to approve the agenda as presented; Seth Wood second; unanimous approval; motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes

Seth Wood made a motion to approve the January 18, 2024 minutes as presented; Christopher Potts second; unanimous approval; motion carried.

5. Parks & Open Space Director Update - Jason Maurer

Director Maurer reported that he recently attended the first session of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Director School, a program focused on new Parks Directors. He also stated that staff are finalizing our FY 25 budget submission. Summer Camp is currently full for all weeks except for the weeks of Independence Day and Juneteenth; staff is considering increasing registration to 75 campers per week.

6. Park Projects Update - Ed Williams

- **Santa Fe Lake Park** - It's been a long time coming, but the new (playground adjacent) restrooms are ready for public use. The old (lakeside) restrooms & associated septic were demolished 3 weeks ago. And we had the pump, tank & treatment apparatus removed from the adjacent (lakeside) well and replaced with a locking cap for the Suwannee

River Water Management District (SRWMD) to use as a monitoring site. New signage is in the works to honor Ms. McGuire, and a dedication has been scheduled for Saturday, April 13th at 12pm.

- **Veterans Memorial Park** - Gray Construction has put up their silt fences, tree barricades, and safety fencing. Issuance of the construction permit from Public Works is pending. Gray mobilized on the site March 4th and are on a 4 month schedule to reach substantial completion. The playground and Gold Star Memorial installers are standing by for their respective areas to be cleared & prepped so they can begin their work onsite.
- **MKR/Kate Barnes** - Our development plan was approved by FDEP/state parks on 12/22, their signed affidavit for development plan review for Growth Management was received on 2/20, and JBPro submitted plans for preliminary DRC review in February. JBPro will now work towards finishing the construction documents, so we can put the project out for bids. Depending on approvals, construction is not likely to begin until late summer of this year.
- **Poe Springs** - Two projects underway here, the first being replacing the existing restrooms and the second being improvements to the boat launch.
 - Restrooms - Soil borings revealed a layer of organic material several feet down. This necessitated some additional foundation design which includes timber piles and concrete grade beams. JBPro is working to finalize the construction documents so that we can put the project out for bids with construction slated to begin October 1st.
 - Boat Launch - Replacement boarding dock that incorporates an accessible kayak launch, accessible parking, and an accessible route tying them together. After our pre-app conference with Growth Mgmt on 11/7, JBPro made their preliminary submissions to County DRC & the water management district. They've recently received comments from both entities, and we are working to address those.
- **Copeland Park** - We've soliciting A&E services to work on a master plan for this park that incorporates the feedback we receiving from that community early last year. This will likely include a new/relocated playground, additional parking, better accessibility, landscaping, site lighting, and additional amenities as appropriate.

- **Monteocha Park** - We held a community engagement meeting with this community on 10/21 and received some good feedback. We've soliciting A&E services to work on a master plan for this park as well that incorporates many of the same amenities listed above for Copeland Park.
 - We did go ahead and address some of the low-hanging fruit by purchasing some bleachers for the basketball court, upgrading the site lighting, adding light on a timer to the existing pavilion, and connecting the pump house to our electric meter.
- **Cuscowilla Pavilion** - Construction of a 65'x120' red-iron, metal roofed pavilion over an existing asphalt sports court. Estimated construction cost of \$310,465. Our timeframe is to have this completed before summer camp 2024. This contract with a 5% contingency was approved by the Board on 1/23.
 - Since our last meeting we've also completed demolition of the old scout hut (log cabin), built a new fire pit, and installed a accessible concrete parking space and ramp with handrails to serve the Nature Center.
- **Jonesville Park** - Two capital projects being considered here, the first being construction of a new soccer stadium and some new pickleball courts and the second being renovation of 2 soccer fields.
 - Soccer Stadium & Pickleball - Estimated construction costs for press box, restroom/changing rooms, bleachers, SE Field Improvements, and additional paved parking are \$1,101,600 with \$92,100 for A&E services. And estimated costs for additional pickleball courts with sports lighting are \$360,000 plus \$36,600 for A&E services. (\$1,590,300 total)
 - Renovation of Soccer Fields 2 & 3 - Field renovation consists of eradicating existing turf/weeds, rototilling existing material 4-6" deep, laser leveling, and resodding using big rolls of bermuda grass sod for \$294,030. We're working with Procurement to accept this quote as a piggyback off another county's ITB.
 - We've also recently installed additional chain link fencing around the new pitching cages, a covered pavilion for the cricket players, and are 95% complete with new gutters & downspouts on the Soccer Building.
- **West End Park** (former golf course) - As some of you may have heard, the County, along with Viking Companies, Celebration Point,

RADDSports, Visit Gainesville, and the Gainesville Sports Commission, submitted a bid to host the 2025 World Masters Athletics (WMA) Indoor Championships. This will mark the first time the event has been held in the United States. The WMA is the international governing body for track & field, cross country, road race, and racewalk for athletes 35+.

Much of the competition will be held at the Alachua County Sports and Events Center (ACSEC) at Celebration Pointe, but there's also the need for an outdoor venue. Thus, the County has been in conversations with Viking Companies to acquire the old West End Golf Course through a public-private partnership. Because of the haste with which this work will need to be completed in preparation for the March 2025 event, Viking will take the lead on procurement & development. A deal can then be worked out between the parties for the County to take over ownership & management as a public park satisfying suggested acquisition "E" identified in our Master Plan and enhancing our level of service in that area.

- **Wayfinding & Environmental Graphics** - We're working with GAI & Procurement to accept this quote for \$86,330 as a piggyback off another county's RFP. It's being submitted as an FY25 budget proposal.

7. Youth Commission - Diedre Houchen

Dr. Houchen reported that she is requesting the County Manager support a Coordinator position to launch a Youth Commission (similar to the Board of County Commissioners who would take up policy issues from a youth perspective) and coordinate the County's Citizens Academy. For the proposed youth ROSCO members, she suggested three (3) 15-18 year olds be appointed, which would require an amendment to our enacting Resolution. She suggested the Committee reach out to several local youth organizations to recruit members. The Committee questioned how the process would work (i.e. would they be full voting members, or ex-officio); would the County Commission appoint them (or would there be a different selection process); would they be eligible for volunteer hours for Bright Futures; and how would transportation be addressed? Since this project is not on her current work plan, she suggested a meeting with Carl Smart and Gina Peebles to discuss these issues.

8. Discuss Day/Time/Location of Future Meetings

The next meeting will be held on May 16 at 4 p.m. at Veterans Memorial Park.

9. Public Comment

None.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:44 p.m.