

Recreation and Open Space Advisory Committee

Date: September 19, 2024
Time: 4:00 pm
Location: Freedom Community Center
7340 SW 41 Place, Gainesville, FL 32608

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 pm

Members Present: Sarah Bruning, Stephen Rodriguez, Steven Scott (Chair), Jane Luzar (Vice Chair) Krurian Allen.

Members Absent:

2. Welcome and introduction of new members Allen Kurian and Jane Luzar

New members Jane Luzar and Krurian Allen introduce themselves and gave brief background details about themselves.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Jane Luzar made a motion to approve the agenda as presented; Sara Bruning second; unanimous approval; motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes

Sara Brunnig made a motion to approve minutes as presented; Stephen Rodriguez second; unanimous approval; motion carried.

5. Election of Vice Chair

Jane Luzar was elected for the Vice Chair. Sara Bruning moved the motion, and it was second by Stephen Rodriguez.

6. SunshineLaw Presentation- Diana Johnson

Diana Johnson was presented, and she gave an overview of what the Sunshine Law is and what are the requirements of the Sunshine Laws to the Committee members.

1. REASONABLE NOTICE - requires giving the public reasonable and timely notice so they can decide whether to attend a meeting

2. OPEN TO ALL PUBLIC – public must be allowed to attend meetings and meetings cannot be held at exclusive or inaccessible facilities
3. MINUTES ARE REQUIRED – written minutes must be taken and made available promptly.

The Sunshine Law says board members cannot engage in private discussions with each other about board business or any business that may foreseeably come before the Board at a later date. The Sunshine Law applies to any gathering, whether formal or casual, of two or more members of the same board, council, or commission to discuss some foreseeable matter that may be taken or considered by them. No whispering at meeting or discussions on break.

What about Email, Texts and Posts? Law says cannot meet outside of the public – this includes communications whether written, e-mail, social media, text message, blog or other electronic communications. **DO NOT HIT REPLY ALL.**

Any Exceptions? Exemption to Public Records is not the same. Only the State can create an exemption to the Sunshine Law (Example is a closed session, but very restrictive).

May I talk with County staff alone? Individual board member can meet with County staff about board business.

However, County staff cannot be used as a liaison or go-between for board members.

Can we have lunch? Yes. The law does not prevent you from attending same social event, church or having a lunch together before meeting. However, save your opinions and ideas about board business for the meeting so can be heard and be on the record.

Voting conflicts: No county, municipal, or other local public officer shall vote in an official capacity upon any measure which would inure to his/her special private gain or loss; which he/she knows would inure to the special private gain or loss of any principal by whom he/she is retained or to the parent organization or subsidiary of a corporate principal by which he/she is retained, other than an agency as defined in s. 112.312(2); or which he/she knows would inure to the special private gain or loss of a relative or business associate of the public officer. Relative” means any father, mother, son,

daughter, husband, wife, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, or daughter-in-law. F.S. Chp112

*Applies to any person elected or appointed for public office, including any person serving on advisory board.

7. Poe Springs Capacity/Parking/Payment Options

Gina Pebbles gave an overview of what the capacity for Poe Spring is, how is the parking and what are the payment options.

The discussion included the capacity for Poe Spring is 100, meaning that it does not mean 100 people, but 100 parking space. Once the parking space have reached the capacity then the gates are close off until. Gates reopen once spaces have been freed up. Mr. Scott (chair) gave example as what not to do, based off one of the parks he has visited where money was being collected at the gate, however you are not sure if there will be parking space for you and there is no refund for your fee that you have already paid.

Mentions were made as to what type of payment, and how can we improve the payment method that are in place. The payment options that are currently being used are cash payment, however on weekends and major holidays within summer there are workers that are at the main gate that does credit card payment as well as accepting cash payment.

There were mentions about the third party taken over the operations of the parks (Anderson Outdoor) which has been the vendor at Poe Spring for several year. It is in the discussion stage and proposal have been made of how the day-to-day operation of Poe Spring would need to be operated, so resident can enjoy Poe Spring throughout the year.

8. Parks & Open Space Director Update - Jason Maurer

Mr. Jason Maurer was absent.

9. Park Projects Update - Ed Williams

Veterans Memorial Park - New inclusive playground, Gold Star Families Memorial, a secondary asphalt entry drive & parking lot, accessible sidewalks, and associated stormwater and utility infrastructure. Improvements also include installation of additional site lighting, landscaping, and temporary irrigation using reclaimed water.

Bids were received on 12/13/23, contract was approved by the Board on 2/13/24, the purchase order for this work was issued on 3/5, and construction onsite began on or about 4/22. Due to delays for supplies & weather work onsite is

about a month behind schedule and expected to be substantially complete in early October.

MK Rawlings Park/Kate Barnes Ramp - Replacement of the existing boarding dock, addition of a courtesy dock on the south side of the channel, paved accessible parking, and accessible sidewalks.

Plans have been submitted for DRC and water management district approval. Comments provided by the SJRWMD have been addressed, and the boarding dock has been approved. Further work, however, will be needed to gain approval for the courtesy dock planned for the south side of the channel. We are working with the consultants to find the quickest route to construction, even if that means implementing a phased approach.

Poe Springs - Two projects underway here, the first being replacing the existing spring-side restrooms and the second being improvements to the boat launch that include replacement of the boarding dock, and accessible kayak launch, paved accessible parking, and accessible sidewalks.

Construction documents have been completed and we are exploring a job order contracting (JOC) option to expedite the construction process.

Boat Launch - The water management district requested delineation of the wetlands and high-water levels in the vicinity of the proposed improvements. That work was completed, and we met with the SRWMD onsite 5/30 but are still awaiting their approval and/or comments. DRC approval was granted on 8/15.

Copeland & Montechoa Parks - New playgrounds, additional parking, pavilion(s), better accessibility, landscaping, site lighting, and additional amenities as appropriate.

Purchase orders for A&E were issued on 4/23. Surveys have been completed, and we're currently working on schematic designs. We anticipate the whole A&E process will take 6-8 months, after which bidding & construction phases will occur.

Jonesville Park - Construction of a new soccer stadium, additional parking, better accessibility, and new pickleball courts.

Purchase order for A&E was issued on 6/4. Survey has been completed as well as schematic design of the building containing press box, bleachers, locker/restrooms for officials, and storage. We're currently working on schematic design for the site. We anticipate the whole A&E process will take 6-8 months, after which bidding & construction phases will occur.

West End Park - Fast-track demolition, clean up, and improvements in preparation for the upcoming World Masters Athletics (WMAi25) event. Includes a 2K cross country course, an internationally certified area for javelin, discus, and hammer throw, additional parking, and associated utility infrastructure.

The County closed on this property on 6/14, and with the assistance of Parks & Public Works staff cleaning & demolition operations began immediately thereafter. All of the existing buildings have been demolished and associated septic tanks have been decommissioned. Rough grading of the site was recently completed. We're working now to get the irrigation rough-in, concrete runway, and well/pump restoration started. Afterwards finish grading, hydroseeding, and installation of the additional throwing equipment will occur.

On 8/13 we hosted our first community engagement meeting to receive feedback on what the community envisions for this park moving forward. It was well attended with approximately 225 attendees and had good audience participation. We discussed where we are, how we got here, World Masters Event, and what park amenities residents would like to see.

10. Discuss Day/Time/Location of Future Meetings

The next meeting will be held @ Poe Spring Park on Thursday November 21 @ 4:00pm.

11. Public Comment

None.

12. Adjournment

Sara Brunnig moved a motion to adjourn the meeting, and it was seconded by Jane Luzar (Vice Chair). The meeting was adjourned at 5:40pm