

# City of Clearwater

*Main Library - Council Chambers  
100 N. Osceola Avenue  
Clearwater, FL 33755*



## Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday, October 27, 2020**

**6:30 PM**

**Main Library - Council Chambers**

**Parks and Recreation Board**

**Pursuant to Executive Order No. 20 69, issued by the Office of Governor Ron DeSantis on March 20, 2020, municipalities may conduct meetings of their governing boards without having a quorum of its members present physically or at any specific location, and utilizing communications media technology such as telephonic or video conferencing, as provided by Section 120.54(5)(b)2, Florida Statutes.**

### **Roll Call**

**Present** 7 - Chair Mark Rodriguez, Vice Chair Jennifer Wood, Board Member Jason Hood, Board Member Lisa Tuttle, Board Member Patrick Raftery, Board Member Scott Thomas, and Board Member Bruce Rector

**Also Present** – Art Kader – Interim Parks & Recreation Director, Michael Lavery – Parks Senior Manager, Patricia O. Sullivan - Board Reporter

**Awaiting approval**

### **1. Call To Order – Chair Mark Rodriguez**

*The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Chair Mark Rodriguez, Vice Chair Jennifer Christou-Wood, and Board Members Lisa Tuttle, Jason Hood, Patrick Raftery, Bruce Rector, and Scott Thomas attended the meeting using communications media technology. Also participating in the meeting were Parks Senior Manager Michael Lavery and Board Reporter Patricia Sullivan. Live participation occurred in Council Chambers at the Main Library.*

**To provide continuity for research, items are in agenda order although not necessarily discussed in that order.**

### **2. Approval of Minutes**

2.1 Approve the Minutes of the January 28, 2020 Parks and Recreation Board Meeting.

**Member Thomas moved to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2020 Parks & Recreation Board meeting as submitted in written summation. The motion was duly seconded and carried unanimously.**

### **3. Citizens to be Heard Regarding Items Not on the Agenda: None.**

### **4. New Business Items**

4.1 Discuss proposed redevelopment of The Landings Golf Course into light industrial use.

On November 3, 2020, Clearwater residents will vote on a referendum that would permit the City to lease most of the 77-acre City-owned Landings Golf Club to development group Harrod Properties to construct a light industrial complex on 57 acres with 8 acres of parkland and a 12-acre driving range.

Staff estimated the project would generate \$9.7 million in net benefits over 10 years. The golf course operator currently pays the City \$12,000 annually.

*It was stated the referendum was reasonable, the City would benefit from tax revenues and good paying jobs close to residents' homes, the development would provide extensive buffering from nearby residences, the Tampa Bay Times supported the referendum, and the current golf course had little traffic, could not economically sustain itself, and the sport of golf was dying.*

*Concerns were expressed a pandemic fueled economic downturn may reduce demand for light industrial uses, significant light industrial space was available off Hercules Avenue, development congestion would offset economic benefits, the green space would be permanently lost to future generations, the City should retain the green space if the referendum fails and the golf course closes, the City Council discussed the proposal late at night with little citizen input, and the Council sent the item to referendum without requesting Parks & Recreation Board review.*

*Interim Parks & Recreation Director Art Kader said members could provide input to the City Council at any time; the Council listened to Boards. The City Council held significant discussions and listened to residents re this item that was on City Council agendas and advertised. Voters will determine the referendum's outcome. If defeated, the tenant must stop pumping free well water and irrigate with reclaimed water at a cost of approximately \$25,000 - \$32,000 annually; the course lease expired in 2029.*

*Concerns were expressed the Parks & Recreation Board had just heard about this issue, the board was not included in discussions to develop City parkland prior to the Council's decision, and the board should have the ability to address important issues related to Parks & Recreation land.*

*A resident expressed concern staff had not followed the normal governance process for referendum planning by first determining alternative uses for the land, considering using excess reclaimed water at the site rather than dumping it into Tampa Bay and Clearwater Harbor, or reviewing the City's Comp Plan and GreenPrint Sustainability Plan prior to recommending converting parkland to IRT (Industrial, Research, and Technology) use. He supported converting the golf course into multipurpose fields; the 2013 Parks & Recreation Master Plan identified a City shortage of 11 multipurpose sports fields.*

*It was questioned how many multipurpose fields could be built on the golf course property and it was noted other areas of the City also would benefit from new multipurpose fields. It was noted that Clearwater was becoming a major sports destination, attracting national events that brought visitors to City beaches, hotels, and restaurants. It was recommended the City expand*

*its inventory of multipurpose fields to improve its standing in the growing sports tourism industry and increase City revenues.*

## **5. Old Business Items**

### **5.1 Report on chemical products used in Parks and Recreation.**

*Parks Senior Manager Michael Lavery referenced the FY 2020 Parks & Recreation Department report on fertilizer use. All staff chemical applicators were licensed and followed label instructions. Staff was responsible for enormous acreage of athletic fields and lawns. The integrated pest management program used limited quantities of chemicals and had reduced its number of chemicals to 94. Mr. Kader said supervisors strictly monitored the chemical program.*

*It was noted as the request had asked staff to identify and eliminate use of chemicals harmful to children and people, the report should have stated that all City applied chemicals were safe and used in a lawful manner.*

*In response to questions, Mr. Lavery said staff followed processes to limit environmental impacts and reduce runoff into waterways. Staff also followed chemical storage laws, securing them in safe facilities guarded by video surveillance; fertilizer had never been stolen from City storage.*

### **5.2 Update on the current CIP projects.**

*Mr. Kader reviewed current Parks & Recreation Department CIPs (Capital Improvement Projects). The project list was reduced as the department shifted its focus to maintenance. Board members will be invited to the Crest Lake Park ribbon cutting ceremony.*

### **5.3 Report on COVID-19 and how it has impacted Parks and Recreation operations.**

*Mr. Kader said the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted everyone. All staff had returned to work. Programming required health and safety checks for every activity and enforced mask requirements. Every program abided by CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines. No large groups or crowds were permitted. Guidelines will be adopted before the Aging Well Center reopens.*

*In response to concerns that seniors without resources were stuck at home while the Silver Sneaker program was paused, Mr. Kader reviewed staff efforts to connect with seniors at home via Skype. He invited members to share contact information for seniors in need of this service.*

*In response to a question, Mr. Kader said the old restrooms on Pier 60 were failing and the sanitary lift station was replaced. No leaks or*

*environmental problems occurred.*

*Staff was complimented for removing the increase in trash and debris on the beach.*

*In response to a question, Mr. Kader said the department reviewed event applications based on participation. Low and medium sized events required safety and health plans. A health expert and Assistant City Manager reviewed applications, including safety and health plans, for events of up to 500 participants. Special events were difficult to plan at this time.*

#### 5.4 Update on the search for the new Parks and Recreation Director.

*Mr. Kader reported 3 finalists had been interviewed; he anticipated the new Parks & Recreation Director would be announced next week.*

*In response to a question, Mr. Kader said he had served as Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation for 41 years and chose not to compete for the director position.*

### **6. Director's Report**

*Mr. Lavery said the Board would make its annual presentation to the City Council in December. Members were requested to forward ideas to Mr. Lavery who will work on the presentation with Chair Rodriguez. The Board will be advised of the date and were encouraged to attend.*

### **7. Board Members to be Heard:** None.

### **8. Adjourn**

*The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.*

Attest:

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Chair  
Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

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Board Reporter