

**MINUTES
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS
CITY HALL
TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2023
6:00 P.M.**

Call to Order: Chair Sheilan Runnels

Invocation: Chair Sheilan Runnels

Pledge of Allegiance: Chair Sheilan Runnels

Roll Call: Those in attendance were Chair Sheilan Runnels, Vice Chair Dean Jones, Board Member Ron Long, and Alternate Board Member Diane Pereira.

Also in attendance were City Manager Ryan Leavengood, City Clerk Linda Bourgeois, and Administrative Assistant Anaeli Quinones.

The meeting began at 6:00 pm.

City Manager Leavengood gave the Board an update on the Parks and Recreation Director position. Interviews are being finished this week and then there will be another round of one-on-one interviews with him. A decision should be made within the next couple of weeks to determine when the new starting date will be. He is looking forward to getting the new person to continue with the goals and objectives of the Parks Department. He then welcomed Alternate Board Member Diane Pereira to her first board meeting and thanked her and the rest of the board members for their service.

Chair Runnels announced the recognition of citizens. Seeing no one, the meeting moved on to the approval of minutes.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: JANUARY 19, 2023

Vice Chair Jones made a motion to approve the minutes for January 19, 2023; seconded by **Board Member Long** and the motion was approved by a unanimous voice call vote.

Chair Runnels moved on to the next item on the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

1.) Colonel John H. Dame Sr, Memorial Park

City Manager Leavengood read over the analysis from the agenda for the item listed above. He gave a brief description of Colonel John H. Dame Sr and presented on the map the area in question, which is 11 acres of land that were given to the City by developers that are across from the canal. There will not be any vehicle access, as it will be a passive park. He opened the floor for questions.

Chair Runnels asked if there were any questions.

Board Member Long shared his concern about recreational uses in that area. He asked where anyone would be able to park.

City Manager Leavengood explained that it would be an extension of the existing trail network. The parking would be either by Tract 8 or at the Mackay Gardens and Lakeside Preserve. It would be used mostly by the residents from the Lakes subdivision that are using the trails currently.

Board Member Long asked about having a gate on the bridge because of coyote concerns.

City Manager Leavengood talked about the suggestions made the at City Commission meeting with fencing on the other side of the canal so it can help. Since there are other concerns with vehicles or ATVs as well, maybe another thing to consider would be having bollards to prevent that type of access. He also suggested maybe contacting Fish & Wildlife for any recommendations.

Alternate Board Member Pereira inquired about it being designed for foot traffic.

City Manager Leavengood responded that the character of the entire area, including the Mackay Gardens, is the passive recreation component. So, it would just be an extension of that, and it would not connect thru the housing development.

Chair Runnels asked for a motion to name the park.

Board Member Long made the motion to name the memorial park after Colonel John H. Dame Sr. It was seconded by Alternate Board Member Pereira. It was approved by a unanimous voice call vote.

Chair Runnels moved on to the next item on the agenda.

2.) Discussion Naming the Barrel Bridge after Alexander Mackay

City Manager Leavengood presented the analysis on this item. He also explained a bit more about the bridge, and how Commissioner Daley thought to name it after the person that made it all happen, Alexander Mackay.

Chair Runnels shared how she likes the name Alexander Mackay for it. She asked if anyone else had any thoughts on it.

Vice Chair Jones suggested naming it after Commissioner Daley since she's the one that got the grant for the Mackay Estate. But she also liked Alexander Mackay for it as well.

Chair Runnels suggested doing a plaque for it and asked for a motion to accept the name of Alexander Mackay for the barrel bridge.

Vice Chair Jones made the motion, and it was seconded by **Board Member Long**. It was approved by a unanimous voice call vote.

Chair Runnels moved on to the next item on the agenda.

3.) Updates on Parks, Events, and Programs

City Manager Leavengood went through the building official's response to the proposed Highlands Community Center CDBG Restroom Project. He explained the different projects that have been completed regarding the boat docks, and the ones that are being worked on after Hurricane Ian. There are bids in process for the ones that need updating like the ones at Lions Park. He spoke about the success of the Heritage Day event, and how Central Park Phase II is going with the rebuilding of the basketball court, the street parking on East Cummings, and the multipurpose field. TECO needs to come and move some of the poles for lighting and there will be a split rail fence that surrounds the perimeter, so vehicles won't be able to access the fields. Once this phase is completed, the only thing left to complete at Central Park will be upgrading the softball field, and redoing the concession stand in the middle. He then moved on to talk about the summer camp program that will be from June 5 through July 21. He concluded by thanking his staff for helping out with the Parks Department and its responsibilities. He opened the floor for any questions.

Chair Runnels asked about a playground at Central Park.

City Manager Leavengood stated that we are trying to achieve that in this phase, and it will be located where the trees are currently. And if it's something that cannot be achieved in this phase, it will be in the next one.

Chair Runnels asked about Lions Park plans.

City Manager Leavengood explained that Lions Parks is part of the Master Plan, and it will be left for last because it is the most expensive out of all that is being done. With also acquiring Growers Fertilizer, we will be able to completely redo an entrance into Lions Park from 557. A new community center would also be a great addition to that park.

Alternate Board Member Pereira inquired about a recreation room for senior citizens to use.

City Manager Leavengood said that is a service that would be better within the community center concept. Having a multi-purpose facility will be able to provide a recreational room just like with the library expansion that will also have extra rooms to use.

Chair Runnels inquired about the time frame for both the Lions Park community center and the library expansion.

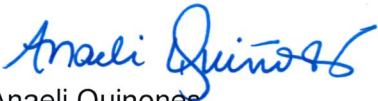
City Manager Leavengood said that a community center would run between five and six million dollars, depending on how much growth the city gets, and in getting Growers, there would still need to be remediation on that facility. Since it can take years to get Growers torn down and remediated, the City will be able to build funds in the meantime to contribute to the center, but there might also be an opportunity for some level of debt to get things started. It can take six to eight years for a community center and he would like it to be done within the next ten years.

Chair Runnels announced the recognition of citizens. Seeing no one, she asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Alternate Board Member Pereira made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by **Board Member Long**. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice call vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anaeli Quinones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Anaeli Quinones
Parks and Recreation Administrative Assistant