

GREATER BOCA RATON BEACH & PARK DISTRICT
MINUTES OF A JOINT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND THE
BOCA RATON CITY COUNCIL
BOCA RATON COMMUNITY CENTER, ROYAL PALM ROOM, 150 CRAWFORD BLVD.
June 9, 2015

The MEETING was called to order by Boca Raton Mayor Susan Haynie at 4:00 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Susan Vogelgesang, Chairman
Steven M. Engel, Vice-Chairman
Dennis R. Frisch, Secretary-Treasurer
Robert K. Rollins, Jr., Commissioner
Earl L. Starkoff, Commissioner

BOCA RATON CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Susan Haynie, Mayor
Robert S. Weinroth, Deputy Mayor
Jeremy Rodgers, Council Member
Michael Mullaugh, Council Member
Scott Singer, Council Member

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Boca Raton City Manager Leif Ahnell; Boca Raton City Attorney Diana Grub Frieser; Mickey A. Gomez, Recreation Services Director; and Beach & Park District Attorney Arthur C. Koski

Mayor Haynie welcomed the Board of Commissioners and advised that the District had furnished an agenda.

I. Overview of District's Obligations & Facilities

On behalf of the District, Commissioner Frisch presented an overview of the District's obligations and facilities [a copy of the presentation was included in the agenda packet].

II. Current Relationships

Chairman Vogelgesang commented on the City/District partnership and the need for improved open lines of communication between the two entities.

The last joint City/District meeting was held in 2011. Both entities agreed that meeting jointly on a regular basis would improve communication. Better collaboration could be achieved by having a designated representative from each entity attend meetings.

III. Current District Facility Projects

Chairman Vogelgesang gave a project update on the following District projects: Sugar Sand Park Science Playground (plans and specifications are complete); Swim & Racquet Center (going through the permitting process) and Patch Reef Park Renovations (project moving forward).

IV. Proposed Cooperative Projects

DeHoernle Park Phase II

There has been an on-going debate about artificial turf vs. natural grass. There has been several revolving proposals on the issue and, as a result, the project has not moved forward. In an effort to move the Phase II project forward, the City Council, at its goal-setting session, directed its staff to proceed in fiscal year 2016 with the development of four rectangular organic/artificial turf fields and assume the cost.

The majority of District Commissioners expressed an interest in developing four rectangular grass fields at DeHoernle Park and three rectangular artificial turf fields at Patch Reef Park. The District planned to construct the maintenance facility, the connection to the dog park and other amenities and fund the operation and maintenance. However, if the City develops the four artificial turf fields in FY 2016, the District will utilize its development funds on other District projects.

Both entities would like to see a balance between grass and artificial turf fields based on the availability of the fields and the lack of maintenance on them. The feasibility of having two different maintenance crews (one for all artificial turf; the other for grass) at two different locations was discussed. There is mutual support for the use of organic in-fill material as opposed to crumb rubber.

Concern was expressed about the potential loss of the two Glades Road athletic fields at Florida Atlantic University due to the expansion of the Henderson School and its intramural program.

There is 35% participation on the fields from other than City/District residents. The total current rectangular field inventory is 15 or 16 – only two are artificial turf.

The District maintains that the concerns of the users could be satisfied by developing three artificial turf fields at Patch Reef Park and four grass fields at DeHoernle Park. The District has the funds and can accomplish the task in FY 2015-2016, including the maintenance facility and the dog park connection.

If the Council is agreeable to the compromise, the District is ready to commit the funding to construct four grass fields at DeHoernle Park with full operation and maintenance, along with the maintenance building, dog park connection and other ancillary amenities, and three artificial fields at Patch Reef Park with full operation and maintenance funding. Project designers are currently working on the Phase II project. If the Council agrees to the compromise, an interlocal agreement could be signed by the Board of Commissioners and delivered to the City Council for execution prior to July 1, 2015.

V. Public Comment

Jennifer Bielec

2459 NE 4th Way, Boca Raton

Ms. Bielec is the President of the Soccer Association of Boca Raton. On behalf of SABR's 3,000 players, she wanted to make it known that they prefer to play on grass. She thanked the City for moving their players off the artificial turf when parents became concerned about health issues. Grass is favored due to the safety factor. She noted that many of the 35% of non-resident participants live just across the City/District boundaries and they do pay to play.

Glenn Gromann

2201 NW Corporate Blvd., Boca Raton

Mr. Gromann, a taxpayer and constituent, took issue with the Beach & Park District's lack of transparency: holds meetings at 5:15 p.m. on Mondays which is difficult for constituents to attend;

meetings should be videotaped; District is not properly following the FL Statutes pertaining to public commentary; refuses to be a part of the Ethics Commission scenario; the District is not monetizing its operations.

David Johnson

792 Camino Lakes Circle, Boca Raton

Mr. Johnson commented that Hillsboro El Rio Park has been a part of the City's plan for over 25 years. With many new residents moving into Boca, there is a greater need for the park today. He noted that there is a lack of various amenities south of Palmetto Park Road which could be met at Hillsboro El Rio. In addition, the park site has access to the water.

Steve Finver

767 Haven Dr. Boca Raton

Mr. Finver is President of Boca Jets/Lacrosse and supports artificial turf fields at Patch Reef. He noted that there is space at Patch Reef Park for a fourth artificial field if needed at the baseball field just north of the bathrooms.

Brian Clinton

99 SW 10th Drive, Boca Raton

Mr. Clinton acknowledged his involvement in Lacrosse but spoke on the needs of all sports in the City and the District. He stated that City staff has the knowledge and certification to determine how many fields are needed and where they should be located. "Listen to the experts - they know the data and maintenance".

Don Clinton

3350 NW 24th Terrace. Boca Raton

Mr. Clinton thanked the City for having the dialogue as the issues were brought before the District on numerous occasions and never received feedback. The joint meeting is a good start; needs to happen more often. He stated that Patch Reef Park is 25 years old, and DeHoernle Park is only one year old and is already outgrown. There are zero plots of land available for large parks to accommodate users in the next 30 to 40 years. More opportunities to put in turf fields need to be explored.

Mike Schmidt

President of Pop Warner Boca Braves

Mr. Schmidt stated that he supports artificial turf. The biggest issue in the City is the need for more playing and practice time which reduces injury. Studies suggest that the issue of safety is equivocal. Concussions are the number one injury; not sprains bruises or scrapes. Urged both entities not to make decisions based on personal preference. Base decisions on facts as the science is available. We need artificial turf rectangular playing fields.

Christine Kassover

1180 SW 15th Street, Boca Raton

Ms. Kassover stated that she is on the Board of SABR, President of Addison Mizner PTA and incoming Secretary for Boca Middle. Attending as a parent with two children who play in COBRA and SABR. Stated that she was glad that there is a proposal and funding source to move the DeHoernle project forward.

~ Public Commentary Closed ~

An option discussed was that the District's commitment at DeHoernle Park would enable the City to use its resources to develop artificial fields at Woodlands Park.

Beach Renourishment Agreement – Historically, the District has paid 1/3 of the cost for its portion of the beach front. As a partner with the City, the District is willing to fund 50% of the beach restoration project.

Hillsboro El Rio Park - Historically, the District has developed regional parks as opposed to local neighborhood parks.

Mayor Haynie was advised by the City Attorney that no official action could be taken by the Council other than to develop a consensus and have staff formulate an appropriate agreement for execution.

It was the consensus of the Council to move forward on the District's compromise of constructing three artificial fields at Patch Reef Park and four grass fields at DeHoernle Park including the maintenance facility, dog park connection and funding operation and maintenance at both locations.

Other topics suggested for future discussion were user fees; the old Polo fields that are not part of the Beach & Park District and Ocean Strand.

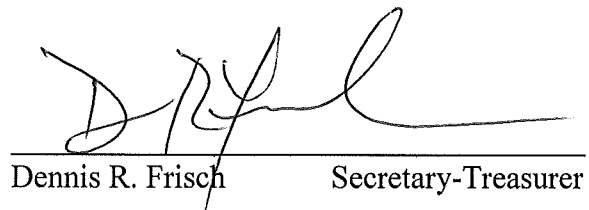
Arrangements will be made to schedule a second joint City/District meeting.

Mayor Haynie stated that she will support the consensus plan. She is optimistic about improving communication; the District's commitment to schedule another joint meeting; and a renewed partnership to identify the needs of constituents and to move forward. However, in the future, artificial turf will have to be looked at on a much larger basis because of need and usage.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.


Susan Vogelgesang Chairman


Dennis R. Frisch Secretary-Treasurer