

**NON-APPROVED
MINUTES
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
PUBLIC MEETING – HILLSBORO/EL RIO PARK
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2014
BOCA RATON DOWNTOWN LIBRARY, BOCA RATON 33432**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairman Stevens. Roll was called.

Board Members Present: Dr. Trudi N. Stevens, Chairman
Ronald L. Betters, Vice Chairman
Peter Boylan (*arrived at 7:15 p.m.*)
Dr. Dennis R. Frisch
Gordon Gilbert
Joseph Good
Hank Kreh

City Council Member Present: Scott Singer

Staff Present: Mickey A. Gomez, Recreation Services Director
Ann Nappa, Manager of Library Services
Buddy Parks, Deputy Director Recreation Services
Greg Stevens, Recreation Services Superintendent
J.D. Varney, Recreation Services Superintendent

Others Present: David Johnson, Jeff Johnson, Carol Gonnell, Luthar Herrmann, Elizabeth Hoffman, Tom Thayer, Bill Gearhser, Gene Folden, Joe Panella, Jim Landon, Steve Schieltz, Dan Schauer, Jackie Johnson, Kimberly Johnson, David Ramsey, Peggy Jones, Scott Eckert, Bill Cramer, John Speer, Jennifer Speer, Elizabeth Ball, Owen Sagar and Don Stanton

Welcome:

Chairman Stevens welcomed the residents in attendance and explained the reason for the public meeting on the Hillsboro/El Rio Park. She noted that Commissioners and City Council have been made aware of the public concerns and are interested in gathering public input.

Mr. Parks offered a history on the development of the master plan for the park and information on the present approved plan and the process of working together with the Parks & Recreation Board, residents, staff and the consultant to develop the plan, which received support from the public. It was noted that the first Master Plan was approved in 1988. The revised Master Plan for the southern part of the park –was adopted in 2005 by City Council. The project was placed on hold shortly after adoption due to the state of the economy. The Master Plan, now nearly 10 years old, is under review after receiving a recommendation to move forward.

Chairman Stevens opened the floor up for public comment.

Public Input - FAVOR A PARK:

Those who spoke in favor of building the park:

David Johnson, Jeff Johnson, Carol Gonnell, Luthar Herrmann, Elizabeth Hoffman, Tom Thayer, Bill Gearhser, Gene Folden, Joe Panella, Jim Landon, Steve Schieltz, Dan Schauer, Jackie Johnson and Kimberly Johnson spoke in support of the park.

Input included the following comments:

- Need for a park in the south end of Boca Raton due to growth of downtown
- Park is best use of property
- Park will restore the property/enhance nature; currently an eyesore
- Need for passive amenities
- Opportunity for boating destination / dockage; soft launch for canoes, kayaks and paddleboards
- Build a park now, as we've waited 26 years to develop the property

Public Input - NOT IN FAVOR A PARK:

Those who spoke against building the park:

David Ramsey, Peggy Jones, Scott Eckert, Bill Cramer, John Speer, Jennifer Speer, Elizabeth Ball, Owen Sagar and Don Stanton

Input included the following comments:

- Loss of habitat / mangrove
- Noise and light concerns
- Shallow water depth of El Rio a concern for boaters
- Questions about users of the park, Boca or Deerfield?
- Fishing pier issues
- Concerns with safety of crossing SW 18th St. from one side to the other
- Boardwalk expense
- Homeless usage
- Concerns with safety of adjacent railroad corridor

Public Input - OTHER:

Input included the following comments:

- Recognized a need to work together
- Compromise to find common agreements

Chairman Stevens thanked the attendees for their input.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned by mutual consent at 8:10 p.m.

Gina Miller, Recorder