

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARKS AND
RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD HELD IN AND
FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON
SEPTEMBER 5, 2019 AT 6:00 P.M., THE
FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

Present: Gay Steffen, Chair
Mark Rivers, Vice-Chair
Mary Jack Boone-Greenlaw
Ellen Andrews, Principal Planner acting as Parks & Recreation Director

Absent: Jeff Diekman
Leroy Smith
Stan James

Staff: Suzanne Lex, Growth Management Director
Herb Chancey, Recreation Coordinator
Muriel Straughn, Deputy Clerk

1. **Welcome**

With a quorum present Chair Steffen called the meeting to order at 6:09 P.M.

2. **Approval of Minutes of May 2, 2019**

MS. GREENLAW MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES WITH A SECOND BY MR. RIVERS, THE BOARD VOTED BY VOICE VOTE 4-0 TO APPROVE.

3. **Park Updates - Ellen Andrews, Principal Planner, Herb Chancey, Recreation Coordinator**

Ms. Andrews reviewed the purpose and function of the Parks and Recreation Board.

4. **General Discussion:**

Old Business

Ms. Andrews stated she talked to Olivia Smith about a Facebook page for Parks and Recreation. She said they were unable to do a Facebook page exclusively for Parks and Recreation because of time restraint and the fact that if County staff was doing that it had to be monitored and could take up a lot of time.

Chair Steffen asked how Tallahassee Parks and Recreation had a webpage. Ms. Andrews answered it was because they had more staff, Olivia did not have time and the County has only 2 IT staff. They could post activities to the Gadsden County website.

Chair Steffen asked if they wanted to post a picture of the board saying what was going to be done and post it on the web page was there someone who will take the picture and post it and Ms. Andrews said yes.

Chair Steffen said the board needs to let people know that the Parks and Recreation board exists, who the members are and invite public participation with ideas and opportunities.

Ms. Lex stated she believed there was a Parks page and Ms. Andrews said they did have a

page but the members were not posted on the website so there was opportunity to update the parks page with what was happening.

Ms. Andrews stated that Olivia was TDC and the PR agency they had been using had a contract that would be up on September 30, 2019 and a new PR agency had not been selected.

Ms. Lex stated she thought everyone on the board understood the staffing concerns and hurricane recovery is still consuming a lot of staff time. She stated they were working with FEMA on a claim for the parks.

Mr. Herb Chancey spoke on the damages to the parks saying at Pat Thomas Park there were about 31 trees down, there were damage to 3 handrails at the campsites, and a little damage at the south bathhouse but it was minor. Trees behind the office that were down were a cluster of water oaks that broke off. An Arborist did an assessment and suggested the rest be taken out because it was over the office and over the restrooms where there was a lot of traffic.

Drake Acres had the fence blow down and it is back up along with a sign that was blown down was rebuilt and put back up.

Ms. Lex stated it was not a lot of major things but it was costs to the County that will be claimed for reimbursement.

Ms. Andrews stated they were actively working on the St. Hebron Park Walk and Bike trail. They have the site plans ready and they were putting the package together and it would be ready to submit to DEP. (Department of Environmental Protection)

She stated Pat Thomas RV expansion had plans already submitted and minor tweaking was being done. The initial plan did not have parking spaces for RV's and bath houses that were already there needed supplements. She also stated that an upgrade to the dump station at Pat Thomas Park was needed.

Chair Gaye asked if it was allowed to have sponsorship for a video production of the parks if it was feasible. Ms. Lex stated that would be a question for David Weiss.

Ms. Greenlaw stated she thought all parks and recreation board members were feeling the same way spinning their wheels and not doing anything because they did not know what to do. She wanted to know what they could do to make people come to the meetings.

Ms. Andrews stated the board could make recommendations as to policy at the parks.

Mr. Chancey said the RV rentals cost, and if they used Reserve America they would need to incorporate the cost into the new fee for the RV site rental. To reserve now, anyone wanting to stay would have to call the Pat Thomas Park Office. The volunteer that had been coming for years goes home the first of the month for a week and does his life business and then comes back here for 3 weeks out of the month. Mr. Chancey has the phone forwarded to

himself when the volunteer is gone and does all the reservations.

Ms. Greenlaw asked how much it was to hire a company to do that and Mr. Chancey said it was \$7-\$8 per transaction and the fees for an RV overnight were only \$15 per night and had been for years.

Chair Steffen asked if they went with Reserve America it could possibly be more exposure for that park and asked if someone from Reserve America could come and speak at a meeting.

Mr. Chancey stated they were trying to get the campsites on-line and there did not seem to be importance until the clean-up was done. Just a little more advertising would help. He stated that FEMA contractors needed somewhere to stay during Michael and he asked if they would get a policy to reserve so many sites for staff working locally or staff staying here and working out of town as well.

Chair Steffen asked what would be the first three steps that the board could do to help with the RV Reserve America and Ms. Lex answered collecting data of what was done, getting facts about our usage, getting info from Reserve America. She also stated they were looking at other options as well. She stated she did not know, in terms of local policy procurements, and a follow-up with the attorney was necessary if a contract was needed.

Ms. Andrews asked what the fees for pavilion rentals were and Mr. Chancey answered \$54.50 per day with tax and most every weekend is booked and paid in advance.

Chair Steffen asked if that was for any of the parks or just certain parks and he answered only Pat Thomas Park.

Chair Steffen stated if anyone wanted to reserve the pavilion at Eugene Lamb was there was any fee involved or did they just call and reserve it and Mr. Chancey said they were not being charged and should call for reservations.

Ms. Lex asked if State Parks charged and Ms. Andrews said yes State Parks do charge fees based on the park and the pavilion size.

Ms. Andrews stated the reason for charging was the amount of trash generated requires an extra trip for people to do clean up.

Mr. Chancey stated they needed to solidify the policy of bouncy houses. (yes or no) Ms.

Greenlaw asked if a waiver was signed or if the County was responsible. Mr. Chancey stated that was what he was getting at. He had been telling people no because of liability.

Ms. Lex expressed that this feeds into policies and programs affecting parks and as a board, seeing this information and coming together, deciding, voting and bringing recommendations to the BOCC brings credence and objectivity to it along with the staff being in support of it.

Ms. Greenlaw said that sounded like a great step and wanted to get a fact sheet together for expansion of the Pat Thomas Park.

Chair Steffen stated it needed to be advertised somewhere.

Ms. Lex asked if Ms. Andrews was aware of the expansion at Pat Thomas and she answered she had not had details about the expansion. Ms. Lex stated they could get a facts sheet together for the next meeting and go over it. She also stated nothing was solidified but there was a little money in the budget.

Chair Steffen asked what the timeline on that was and Ms. Lex said it was one of those things that was unsure and she thought it was because they had 11 capital projects going on and to have that many projects was significant for Gadsden County. She further stated there was a

Courthouse grant and there will be a new Ag center.

Mr. Chancey said they were applying for the next round of FRDAP grants for parks and either the restroom or the pavilion could get repaired.

Ms. Lex stated there was not an approved plan so they needed to come up with a full budget of what it would take. They are looking at ways to make it more user friendly but minimize cost and maximize safety.

Ms. Andrews stated that one project was already there and they were just looking at how to make more money and have more business.

Chair Steffen stated it may be one of the best projects to start on to help get the next phase of it going.

Ms. Lex stated they were working very hard to find money to fix the bridges and with all the capital projects moving ahead and they would like to move Pat Thomas in behind them to get from design, to approval, and then to funding.

Ms. Andrews stated some of the projects were started before Hurricane Michael and because of the storm they were temporarily put on hold.

Chair Steffen stated they could start working on moving forward with Reserve America at the next meeting.

Mr. Rivers gave a report on Kids Fishing Tournament. He stated there were enough kids (over 30) but they needed more volunteers. He stated that he felt the board had a spotlight with this county. He stated some people have focus groups for more than a year before they make a move. He said kids did not understand the process and some parents as well. He just wanted a "take a kid fishing" day and the trophy was won by his 5 year old. There were give-a-ways and interaction on social media was very important to that event.

Ms. Lex asked if he would speak before the BOCC and express his passion to continue the event and he said he would. It would be good for this event to continue and be sponsored by the County. He stated the event cost was around \$400 for everything including prizes and food and it was all advertised through social media and the posts he made himself and people he knew. He further stated with this board, going forward they will find their mission because they had quality people and good staff and if no one gave up they would accomplish big things.

Ms. Andrews said she had spoken to the Chair about vacant seats caused by people not showing up and she will recommend before the board two positions that needed to be filled.

Ms. Lex stated that applicants were welcome to apply to sit on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board could also go on the park page. (must be Gadsden County Resident)

Ms. Andrews stated she could get that on the agenda for the October or November meeting.

New Business

Ms. Andrews asked the board if they wanted to continue meeting monthly or if quarterly would be better and Ms. Greenlaw said if there was something to work with she did not mind meeting monthly. Mr. Rivers stated if they went to quarterly meetings and a quorum did not show, it would be a long time between meetings. Chair Steffen asked if there was a way

someone could send out a text on the day of the meeting. Ms. Andrews said she could do an email. Everyone stated they liked phone calls.

Mr. Chancey stated he thought the budget was already set and they would have to look into funding for next spring. Mr. Rivers stated he would like to go before the BOCC quarterly and give them an update so they did not forget about Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

5. **Next Meeting Date**

Monthly meetings were agreed upon along with meeting before the BOCC quarterly. Next meeting will be held October 3.

6. **Citizens Requesting to Be Heard on Non-Agenda Items**

None

Motion to Adjourn

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, MS. STEFFEN
DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:15 P.M.**

**GAY STEFFEN, Chair
Parks And Recreation Advisory Board**

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk