**Minutes**

**Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting of December 7, 2018, 7:30 a.m.**

**Everglades Holiday Park, 21940 Griffin Rd, Fort Lauderdale, Florida**

**Board Members Present**

Patrick Brochu Barry Harris Daniel Mulieri

Howard Garson Stephen Lawson Kristen Reineke

Bill Gilmartin Dana MacDonald

Larry Goehrig Arthur McNeil

**Board Members Absent**

Christina Clifford Tyson Jones

Terry Danger

**County Staff in Attendance**

Cyndy Baker Cathy Hagen Gary Remillet

Paul Davidson Meoshi Jackson-Graves Linda Thompson

Trevor Fell Susan Mason Dan West

Mike Fayyaz Sarah Perkins Erik Westberg

Martin Gross Gayle Preston

**Guests/Members of the Public**

None

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (Board) meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Daniel Mulieri at 8:00 a.m., after which all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called; a quorum present.

**Approval of Minutes:** A MOTION was made by Howard Garson to approve the minutes of the October 5, 2018, meeting. The motion was seconded by Stephen Lawson and was passed unanimously.

**Park Manager’s Update:** Trevor Fell, Senior Parks Manager at Everglades Holiday Park, welcomed the Board. Mr. Fell explained that the property was deeded to Broward County in 1964. Around 1982, George M. Bridges started giving airboat rides to the public, which officially developed into a business in 1992 when the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission asked the Bridges family to become the full-time concessionaire for the area. In 2012, the County entered into a long-term contract with Bridges Everglades, LLC (Bridges) to continue being the concession operator. Today, Bridges owns 24 airboats and is planning to add more that are ADA accessible. Being one of the top three Florida attractions, Everglades Holiday Park welcomes up to 300,000 visitors annually.

Mr. Lawson asked what Bridges pays the County to operate. Mr. Fell replied that it is roughly 12 percent of the business’ gross income and fluctuates from approximately $850,000 to $1 million. Dan West, Director, Parks and Recreation, stated that the park is being transformed into a destination resort and public boating access point. The airboat rides are available daily from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and the park is open 24 hours for patron use, as security is present. Some upcoming changes include the conversion of the single-lane entrance bridge to two lanes and the construction of a new corporate shelter.

Martin Gross, Engineer for the Parks Planning and Design Section, introduced himself to the Board. He provided an update on current and upcoming improvements to the park, which include water treatment plant improvements, replacing the current airboat ticket booth and parking area with new buildings and a bus drop-off loop, and relocating the current boat ramp to the west side of the site. Additions include six new boat ramps, a new airboat launch area, and a boat trailer parking area. Renovations will also include mitigating the wetland area to convert it to a grassy area for airboats, constructing a 400-foot long sheet pile wall on the existing shoreline to replace the existing levy, and building a road over the levy.

Mr. Gross stated that although this $8 million project contains 1.5 years’ worth of construction, the site is going to remain open for public use after construction begins, which is expected to be within eight to 10 months. When Board member Brochu asked whether or not new rental cabins were still going to be constructed, Mr. West replied that there is no dedicated funding for it in the current capital budget, but he hopes that the project will be budgeted in the future. Mr. West mentioned that the Bridges family is also planning to add a new restaurant and boardwalk.

**Bond Construction Update:** Mike Fayyaz, Construction Management Supervisor, Highway Construction and Engineering

* Anne Kolb Nature Center Observation Tower – Permitting with the Building Department is almost complete. The contractor is ready to start construction in January 2019.
* Quiet Waters Park Cabins – The permit for the architectural plans is still under review. Based on comments from the Building Department, plan revision is in progress. Construction is expected to start in January 2019.
* Deerfield Island Park Boardwalk Renovation – Construction contract is scheduled to be awarded to Lambert Bros., Inc. after approval from the County Commission at their meeting on December 11, 2018. Permitting is in progress with the City of Deerfield Beach. Project construction starts in January 2019.
* Everglades Holiday Park– Designs for the project are complete. Permits are pending approval from federal, state, and local agencies. Upon approval, the plans will be submitted to the Broward County Purchasing Division for bid advertisement. Construction is anticipated to start in six months.
* Miramar Pineland Nature Center – Designs for the new office and nature center are 90 percent complete. Construction is anticipated to start mid-2019.
* Shooster Preserve Natural Area Improvements – The permit for work inside the property has been approved by the City of Margate. Engineering Construction, LLC has pulled the permit and is scheduled to start the process in December. The contractor is currently ordering necessary materials, but actual construction will start in February 2019.
* Snake Warrior’s Island Improvements – The preliminary design has been completed and the Site Plan amendment package has been submitted to the City of Miramar for Development Review Committee approval.
* North Tradewinds Park Project – After many negotiations meetings, staff was unable to reach an agreement with design contractors, putting the project behind schedule. The project is going to be divided into three phases: 1) designing underground utilities, 2) designing roadway and parking facilities, and 3) all architectural and building components.
* Anne Kolb Nature Center Exhibit and Aquarium Project – Designs for the exhibit are complete and have been submitted to the Broward County Purchasing Division to be bid on in January 2019. The design for a 3,500-gallon aquarium is 80 percent complete. Upon completion and award of a grant, staff will proceed with a bid package and construction by early next year.

Mr. West thanked Mr. Fayyaz and the Planning and Design Section for their work and noted that many projects are 100 percent designed. Construction for at least seven major projects will be moving into the next phase of construction in the next year.

**Parks Foundation Update:** Cyndy Baker**,** Manager, Public Communications and Outreach Group, stated that the Parks Foundation recently collaborated with Brandano Inc., the company that operates the Holiday Fantasy of Lights Drive-Thru event at Tradewinds Park. Both teams worked together to hold a United Way Night for Broward County employees and raised around $800. Ms. Baker announced that the Foundation is planning the Third Annual Family Fun Day at Tradewinds Park, which had about 5,000 in attendance last year.

The Parks Foundation received a $3,000 grant from the National Recreation and Park Association and The Walt Disney Company that was used to implement the first phase of the Nature Play Station at Quiet Waters Park.

Mr. West commented that Broward County Parks is always looking for people who are passionate about parks to become more involved with projects such as these. The Division is starting to see supporters and grants contribute to the success of parks.

**Urban Wilderness Designation Update:** Susan Mason, Senior Natural Resource Specialist for the Planning and Development Section, introduced herself to the Board. She stated that the Urban Wilderness Advisory Board recommends the designation of Urban Wilderness Areas for approval by the Board of County Commissioners and implemented by County Ordinance. These areas are permanent preserves that are incompatible with human activities, which means they are largely for passive recreation like hiking, wildlife viewing, and scientific research. So far, the Urban Wilderness Advisory Board has designated 13 sites, which translates to about 660 acres, and has reviewed and evaluated another 14 areas.

On November 13, 2018, the County Commission unanimously voted to direct the County Attorney’s Office to amend the ordinance to add these areas as designated urban wildernesses. Once the ordinance has been drafted, there will be two public hearings that will add over 201.9 acres of designated urban wilderness areas. In total, there will be 869.46 acres that will have an additional layer of protection. Ms. Mason noted that the sites under review have more steps to follow, as they may be owned by entities other than Broward County.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brochu to support the designation. The motion was seconded by Stephen Lawson and was passed unanimously.

**Parks and Recreation Division Update:** Mr. West thanked the Board for donating their time to support and provide counsel to the Parks Division. Mr. Brochu commended everyone involved for their efforts in making Everglades Holiday Park the success it is today.

**New Business:** Cathy Hagen, Senior Administrative Officer, Parks Director’s Office, requested a review of the tentative 2019 Board meeting schedule for approval, which contained a date for a Public Forum. Bill Gilmartin posed a question about how the Public Forum meetings are advertised since there are not many members of the public attending. Ms. Baker stated that the Public Communications and Outreach Section sends out press releases, and advertises on the Parks website and online calendar. Mr. Gilmartin expressed that he would like to see more engagement from the public and asked what the annual attendance was, to which Ms. Baker replied that there were 12.4 million visitors to parks in fiscal year 2018. A suggestion was made to advertise at the parks to let patrons know when a meeting is coming up. Ms. Baker reminded that at the October 5th meeting, there were patrons of Brian Piccolo Park who came to express their concerns.

Larry Goehrig suggested holding a public meeting at the same time as a public event, wearing shirts identifying them as Parks Advisory Board members, which will hopefully lead to engagement with the public. Mr. Lawson, who is also with the Cooper City Optimist Club, remarked that they sent out 15,000 emails advertising free food at one of their meetings, but no one showed up. He noted that people primarily come when their own special interests are at stake.

A Motion was made by Dana Macdonald to approve the 2019 meeting dates, which was seconded by Mr. Lawson and passed unanimously.

**Old Business:** None.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:49 a.m.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be the Annual Meeting, which will be held at the Long Key Nature Center & Natural Area, Oak Hammock Hall, in Fort Lauderdale on January 18, 2019, at 7:30 a.m.