**Minutes**

**Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting of January 18, 2019, 7:30 a.m.**

**Long Key Nature Center & Natural Area, Oak Hammock Hall, 3501 S.W. 130 Ave., Davie, Florida**

**Board Members Present**

Patrick Brochu Bill Gilmartin Arthur McNeil

Christina Clifford Javier Lasaga Kristen Reineke

Terry Danger Stephen Lawson

Howard Garson Dana MacDonald

**Board Members Absent**

Larry Goehrig Daniel Mulieri

Barry Harris Tyson Jones

**County Staff in Attendance**

Cyndy Baker Gayle Preston Dan West

Chris Deal Gary Remillet Erik Westberg

Cathy Hagen Linda Thompson

John Pipoly Kelli Whitney

**Guests/Members of the Public**

None

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (Board) meeting was called to order by Chair Terry Danger at 7:35 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 Patrick Brochu to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2018, meeting. The motion was seconded by Stephen Lawson and was passed unanimously.

**Announcements:** Representing Commissioner Steve Geller from District 5, Javier Lasaga introduced himself as newest member of the Board.

**Park Manager’s Report:** Kelli Whitney, Parks Manager at Long Key Nature Center and Natural Area (Long Key), welcomed the Board. Long Key is a 167-acre ecological, archaeological, and natural preserve. The history of the area begins when Florida was completely submerged under the ocean. After the state was inundated with fresh water as the Everglades formed, it became an island and was the only dry land around. The island has been a habitation site for more than 5,000 years. Native Americans such as the Seminoles occupied the land, as well as the Tequesta at the time of Spanish contact. Portions of the site are adjacent to an archaeological boundary. As this is the case, patrons must be accompanied by a guide during tours, which are offered several times per year.

In the 1960s, the site became a Wild West-themed park named Pioneer City. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the site went on to house the Kapok Tree Inn and Restaurant. This establishment hosted many weddings and specials events. Long Key carries on that tradition by renting out the hall and outside area for 50-75 weddings and receptions per year. In June, Long Key hosts preschool graduations for seven or eight different schools. In addition to being able to have their events at this site, patrons are also welcome to attend the various environmental education programs and walk around the museum.

While Long Key is most famous for birds and butterflies, moths are also important to this park. Several rare moths have been found, including one that was not known to be in the United States. During National Moth Week in the last week of July, Long Key attracts many speakers, including moth experts. In the past year, the number of people attending this event has doubled. Another available activity is walking the nature trail. In response to patrons’ comments about the trails not being long enough, the park is in the process of starting a mitigation project on the south side of the property that will include new trails sections. Construction for the project will begin in about a year. In addition to this project, the County is in negotiations to purchase a small piece of private property within the park.

**Parks Foundation Update:** John Pipoly, Program/Project Coordinator for the Public Communications and Outreach Group, welcomed the Board. The new attraction, Nature Playscape at Quiet Waters Park in Deerfield Beach, has become very popular, resulting in more inquiries about donations. The Foundation received $5,000 from Florida Power and Light to plant native species on Deerfield Island as part of the ecological restoration project for the gopher tortoise habitat. Recently, the Foundation started communicating with the Florida Youth Orchestra about a possible event for Fall of 2019 that may coincide with the annual Riptide Festival. The most important effort now revolves around Family Fun Day that will occur on March 2, 2019, at Tradewinds Park and Stables from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Volunteers are welcome and appreciated.

**Parks and Recreation Division Update:** Dan West, Director of Broward County Parks and Recreation Division (Parks), invited Linda Briggs, Manager of the Planning and Development section, to speak to the Board about an issue revolving around coyotes. Ms. Briggs is the first line of contact when it comes to any interaction with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and other agencies involved with environmental issues. Currently, Parks is dealing with coyotes making themselves very visible. Their numbers are generally larger in urban areas, as they are able to take advantage of garbage, dog food, birdseed, and cockroaches as food sources. These animals have been living in Broward County since the 1980s. However, their populations are growing to such a level that they are becoming more noticeable in person and through technology via doorbell cameras and security footage. The public has been voicing their concerns and there has been coverage on the topic in the media where a coyote went after a dog. To educate residents on how to live alongside the coyotes, Parks is partnering with the FWC to give a presentation at Fern Forest Nature Center on January 23rd from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

A question was asked about whether or not coyotes run in packs, to which Ms. Briggs replied that they are not like wolves. Instead, they usually form families and expand their range by taking advantage of food available to them. As this is the case, trapping is not a good solution since coyotes will have more pups to make up for the loss. The FWC presentation does a very good job of addressing fears regarding coyotes and advising residents on what to do, including scaring them away, keeping small pets safe, and not giving coyotes easy access to food. Mr. West commented that this is not a Parks issue. Parks is responding to a habitat issue Broward County may have by partnering with the FWC.

Gayle Preston, Assistant Director of Parks, introduced herself to the Board and began to speak about a construction project at Sunview Park in Fort Lauderdale. Years ago, the Sunview Park community center burned down and a modular unit was set up in the interim. The new community center will be approximately 3,200 square feet, it will have a large activity room that can be rented, a computer lab for patron use, offices for employees, and a back area that will open to a new patio and playground. Parks is expecting a dedication to take place sometime in May.

Mr. West asked Cyndy Baker, Manager of the Public Communications and Outreach Group, if there was date set for the Annual Employee Meeting. Ms. Baker replied that it will be held on February 28, 2019, at Long Key Nature Center and Natural Area in Davie. This is the time of the year when Parks will celebrate its employees and their accomplishments. For example, the Holiday Fantasy of Lights Drive-Thru attracted approximately 65,000 people. The Chip-A-Tree program, where people can recycle their Christmas trees at one of the 13 participating parks, has just been completed. The Florida Renaissance Festival at Quiet Waters Park in Deerfield Beach has started and will end in March. Mr. West commented that the Festival is going to be held in the same area as the new Woofin’ Waters dog park, which means it will be closed to patrons. Parks knew there would be some disagreement over this issue. However, the dog park had to open in that area. Until an access road is built from Hillsborough Boulevard, the dog park will have to close during the festival, as there is currently only one way in and out. In the interim, patrons are able to use the dog park at Markham Park at no extra cost.

There are a few projects coming up. This includes opening Boaters Park by the end of 2019 if all goes well, which is currently only accessible by water. Parks is proposing a request for additional staff by the next budget cycle so that parks can be open seven days a week. The pool at Markham Park in Sunrise has been closed since the recession. There were never enough operating dollars to reopen it to the public, but staff has always maintained it. Proposals are being made to add Markham aquatics to the budget list. Parks is aiming to make the Target Range at Markham Park more full-service by adding concessions, including gun rentals. This will make the facility more attractive to those who enjoy the sport and would like to rent firearms to use at the facility.

For Deerfield Island Park in Deerfield Beach, Parks is already in the process of building a $2.7 million half-mile boardwalk, which would replace the old one. The island is currently only open on weekends, so proposals are being considered to open it four to five days a week with boat tours. While there are other plans in progress, these are just a few projects Parks is trying to complete to make the parks even better.

As for the capital budget, the Parks and Recreation Administrative Complex’s North Building needs to be renovated, but there are some issues that need to be addressed beforehand. Both the North and South Buildings were built in the 1960s for the purpose of being bomb shelters and barracks for soldiers. The South Building has been renovated, but the North Building is in a flood plane area. The new flood plane maps have been published and if the North Building is renovated, it will have to be done according to the new standards. This means that a number of things will have to be done to mitigate the building from water damage that could occur from a flood.

A $1.8 million renovation project was proposed, but it might not be possible since there could be more funds spent on renovating the building because of flood zone issues rather than constructing a new building. This project must be completed, so additional funds are being proposed to be added to the budget to either renovate the North Building or demolish both buildings and construct a new one. If a new building is constructed, Parks would propose building a new park where the old structure was as an addition to Easterlin Park. As many events need to occur to make this project a reality, it will be another three to four years until construction starts.

Many projects are in progress right now that are scheduled for completion in three years or less, including the camper cabins at Quiet Waters Park. The cabin plans will possibly be approved in March 2019, and construction will possibly start by the end of 2019.

**New Business:** Cathy Hagen, Senior Administrative Officer, Parks Director’s Office reminded the Board about the elections that are held every two years at the Annual Employee Meeting. An election was held at the last meeting, so there will not be one this year.

**Old Business:** None.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Adjournment:** MOTION was made to adjourn the meeting by Dana MacDonald, seconded by Mr. Brochu, and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 a.m.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held at Central Broward Regional Park & Stadium in Lauderhill on March 7, 2019, 6 p.m, followed by a Public Forum at 7 p.m.