



Pinellas County Parks and Conservation Resources Advisory Board Minutes of the Meeting on February 17, 2022

PARK BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:	Mr. Bryan Beckman, Mr. Miles Croom Ms. Peg Cummings, Mr. Steven Ochsner, Mr. Brian Scott Mr. Cameron Temple
PARKS & CONSERVATION RESOURCES STAFF:	Mr. Paul Cozzie, Director Mr. Lyle Fowler, South County Operations Mgr. Dr. Steve Harper, Resource and Asset Mgr. Mr. Matthew Tolnay, Assistant County Atty. Ms. Deann Baker, Administrative Support Spec.

A regular meeting of the Pinellas County Parks and Conservation Resources (PCR) Advisory Board was held at the Pinellas County Extension Building, located at 12520 Ulmerton Rd. Largo, FL 33774 on February 17, 2022.

I. Open Meeting/Introductions

Vice Chair Peg Cummings called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. Introductions were then made by all participants present.

II. Approval of Minutes

- Vice Chairman Peg Cummings requested a motion be made to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2021 meeting. A correction was requested to be made by Miles Croom. in Section V, Bee County USA Designated Advisory Board, the word aviary should be apiary. Peg Cummings requested a correction in Section II, page 1. The word motion be changed to requested. The minutes were unanimously approved with corrections made.

III. Citizens to be heard

There were no citizens to be heard.

IV. Old Business

- Unincorporated Seminole Youth Sports Master Plan Update
 - Paul and Brian Lowack (ACA for the Central & South counties) will be meeting in March with the individual groups to finalize how they want to proceed.
 - The work session was held in November 2021 with the Board of County Commissioners outlining ways to move forward. This will be a significant capital improvement project for the 3 facilities.
 - The next meeting will be held in March. P&CR is hoping to bring back information to the BCC later this year addressing recreation MSTU's for the unincorporated areas of Seminole, as well as an umbrella organization that would be similar to what they currently have in East Lake.

The MSTU would provide for a staff person who would make sure that the facilities are being utilized to the highest extent possible. Currently all three organizations don't have sufficient fields to accommodate all the individual groups together. P&CR is looking at future plans and how we can bring all of the facilities infrastructures up to speed with lighting, electric and utilities. There are 3 new presidents, so everything done a couple of years ago needs to be looked at again. Collaboration is going well.

- Bee County USA Designation
 - Matthew Tolnay (P&CR's representing Attorney) has completed the draft resolution. Bee County USA is not yet accepting new applications for this calendar year. Once they begin accepting applications and our resolution is complete, P&CR will be moving forward with the designation. We will be the first county to be designated.

V. New Business

- P&CR American Rescue Plan Act Projects
 - The county received approximately \$189 million dollars in American Rescue plan funds. ARPA funds need to be expended by end of FY26.
 - Approved projects that P&CR will move forward with:
 1. High Point Community Park – \$3.3 million. Currently in the design phase. The facility will include 2 lighted multi-purpose fields, 2 lighted basketball courts, a playground and picnic shelter on approximately 9 acres of property. This is a joint project with the School Board and the City of Largo. The City of Largo will be responsible for daily operations, maintenance and programming. The county will be responsible for capital improvements. A revised agreement is currently being drafted. This project will begin construction late 2023.
 2. Lake Seminole Park sidewalk extension – \$2.2 million. Installation of a multi-use sidewalk that will run from Park Blvd. and go back to the loop trail.
 3. Unincorporated Seminole recreation facility improvements, 1st phase - \$10 million. The consultant gave an estimate of \$23 million dollars to re-do the 3 facilities. We budgeted \$16-\$18 million of penny money for the project. Cross Bayou Little League will be first on the list.
 4. Rehabilitation of the 119th Ave. overflow parking lot which is part of the Pinewood Cultural Park – \$5 million. This runs from Heritage Village to Ridgecrest Park. A large open green space will be created for community events.
 5. Ray Neri Park in Lealman – \$3.8 million. Going out for bid in a few months.
 6. P&CR received \$4.5 million for playground replacements. 10 playgrounds will be made all-inclusive in the next 3 years. The oldest ones will be completed first.
 7. Dansville Community Park – \$5.7 million. Located at the intersection of Wilcox and Pine. This has been a stormwater facility and will become a community facility. The public will provide input as to what they want the facility to be.
 8. McKay Creek Greenway - \$5.8 million. The multimodal trail runs from Taylor Park to Ridgecrest Park to the Botanical Gardens, Heritage Village and Walsingham.
 - The county is putting together a package to contract project managers and inspectors for these projects. ARPA provides the funding.
 - Brian Scott-Will the mountain bike trail will be part of the ARPA funded projects? No, it will not. Lyle responded that we're coordinating with the Public Works department now.

The mound at Lake Seminole Park is a dewatering site for material dredged from the bottom of Lake Seminole. The project was expected to last decades, but they're ahead of schedule. The site is still under the control of the contractor, Gator Dredge. They're close to turning it back over to P&CR. On February 21st, the SWAMP club will be introduced to the property, as this is the alternative that was found after Walsingham was no longer an option. Moving forward the staff will be exploring trail options. It's not clear how much of the pile will be part of the trail. The old plant nursery that is fenced off from the park proper will be incorporated in some capacity.

- Peg- Explain the process used to determine the ARPA projects. Covid had a big impact on Penny collections, so P&CR looked at projects that could be completed in a 3-year timeframe outlined in the ARPA regulations and where Penny money was allocated. We looked at underserved communities (Ray Neri and High Point) which are receiving Penny money and were already under design. We also wanted to do something for children, so the playgrounds were included. There were 13 projects that P&CR, the ARPA coordinator and the budget representatives looked at. They needed to determine if they would fit in with the ARPA requirements. The list was then narrowed down to 8 projects. ARPA funds aren't replacing the Penny money for Ray Neri, High Point and the Unincorporated Seminole projects. P&CR is currently working on a contract now for the playground replacements.
- A public awareness campaign is being created. A team is being put together to go out to each of these communities, holding public meetings, working with the various departments that are stakeholders in these projects. The county social media sites will be posting information as they start to ramp up. This needs to be done soon because of the tight timeframe to expend the funds. P&CR can work with our communications group to provide them with the Advisory Board Email addresses assuring that you are on a list to receive information when they send out any information on park or community projects. Any projects that P&CR is working on or are in the design phase can be discussed and plans viewed at the Advisory Board quarterly meetings.
- FY22 CIP Projects and Proposed FY23 CIP Projects
 - The Bay Pier at Ft. De Soto will be closed and replaced soon. Notice to proceed on construction is March 4th. The concrete pier is over 40 years old and will take approximately 545 days to complete. This is a \$6 million dollar project. The county received a \$1 million dollar transportation grant a few years ago and by the terms of the grant, the pier must be completed by end of year 2023 or the money will need to be paid back.
 - Turner Bungalow restoration: The Turner house was previously located at Ft. Harrison and Druid. The house was moved to Heritage Village. The Turner Sister's bequeathed the house and the funds to move it to the county. The contents of the home were also donated. The Historical Society began the restoration, completing the exterior.

- Taylor House restoration: Located on Keene Rd. and fronts Eagle Lake Park. P&CR purchased the house and have had architects working on the restoration plan. This house could be a community meeting space or rented out for weddings.
- Education Centers at Brooker Creek and Weedon Island: \$1 million will be allocated for updating the displays at the Ed Centers.
- Brooker Creek: \$2 million allocated for a total replacement of the boardwalks.
- Sutherland Bayou: Driveway replacement will begin soon.
- Philippe Park: Seawall replacement.
- Four Lakes Hammock Park: Going out for bid later this year. This is part of Brooker Creek, close to the Trinity area.
- Budget projects: Infrastructure projects such as lift stations at Ft. De Soto Park, paving and boardwalk replacement projects at Wall Springs. All wood will be replaced with Trex decking which is a composite material.
- Bryan asked about how sustainability factors into these projects. Every project that P&CR has over \$1 million dollars gets a sustainability review, which is part of the CIP process. Any projects done in flood prone areas, will need to be looked at to forecast the potential sea level rise and the impact it could have. Energy audits are also done.
- Projects to be completed in FY22: Turner house, lift station at Ft. De Soto, paving at Sand Key, Weedon Island salt marsh, rehab of the caboose & new sidewalks at Heritage Village.

VI. Director's Report

- Parks and Conservation Resources Director's Report
 - Staff members are currently developing FY23 budgets, due by 2/28. An additional seven positions will be added consisting of rangers and craft workers.
 - West Klosterman Preserve Group: This is 14 acres of old School Board property priced at \$3 million. It didn't make the top end of our list. Now, the legislature has an appropriation of \$3 million dollars to the county to use the money to purchase the property from the School Board. If successful, we will incorporate that property into the Mariner's Point Management area. It will be preserved and will not become a public park.
 - Pinewood Cultural Park Master Plan: Survey closed on 1/22. The consultant provided us with the draft responses. Only 144 responses were received. A workshop will be held with the BOCC on June 2nd regarding the master plan. Once more information is received and a draft completed, this will be shared with the Advisory Board prior to our May 17th meeting.
 - A workshop will be held on May 5th regarding access issues on the Pinellas Trail. There are people (some in the Dunedin area) who are providing their own access to the trail across the counties right of way. P&CR is trying to formalize a standard way of providing access that is safe and protects the county from any liability, but still provides people that are using the trail the opportunity to visit restaurants or shops. Part of this will be to address that this is not for residential access. Residential access interferes with mowing, etc. We will also be addressing E-bikes on the trail. A survey regarding E-bikes will be done by Public Works and Forward Pinellas. The survey will be distributed to bicyclists, E-bike users and pedestrians to gauge the impact that E-bikes are having on the Pinellas Trail.
 - This is not an effort to remove the E-bikes from the trail, but rather to gauge how everyone can co-exist and be courteous while sharing the trail. This survey will include all modes of transportation to include scooters, electric mobility devices, etc.

- The speed limit on the trail is 20 mph. Peg asked how enforcement is handled for motorized vehicles on the trail. Lyle responded that the board asked P&CR to present at a work session with the emphasis on E-bikes. The board has been receiving citizen comments, some through social media and are specific to the E-bike issue. Micro-mobility devices are changing constantly. There are unicycles, hover boards, scooters, etc. In the Florida State Statute, the micro-mobility devices were given the same access as E-bikes as well as conventional bicyclists. This is where the dispute lies. Traditionalists claim that anything with a motor is a motorized vehicle. While this in a practical sense is true, in the legal sense that's not the interpretation of the law. Attorney Matthew Tolnay will be extensively involved updating an opinion that was offered to the County Attorney's office by the Forward Pinellas group in 2014. This is not just a Pinellas Trail issue. This is any trail managing agency's issue. It's also a sidewalk issue, bike lane and a transportation issue. Enforcement on the trail is severely limited. We're currently developing signage to clarify what is acceptable on the trail and don't have a misconception of what is prohibited. A courtesy campaign was just completed. This was designed to educate trail users to be more courteous, not to use ear buds, announce when you're behind a pedestrian, pass on the left, etc. There will be another Work Session to only discuss the Pinellas Trail issue. A speed study was done by Forward Pinellas and there was very little speeding detected.
- Peg thanked Cameron for his continued attendance at our meetings representing the Youth Advisory Committee. His peers requested an update on the Bee County USA designation. He was able to share that they are not yet accepting applications. He'll be bringing back the information regarding the Pinellas Trail to the committee. The YAC have been looking into conservation and how they can provide a public service. They've decided to work on a tree planting project. They're trying to decide which park to plant the trees and setting a date for the project. They would also like to get involved with the Living Shoreline project at Philippe Park. A grant was just received for the 2nd phase of this project. Oyster shell sacks are stacked so that the shoreline is not battered by waves, helping to preserve the shoreline.

VII. Other Business

- N/A

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

The next meeting of the PCR Advisory Board is scheduled for May 19, 2022