Minutes
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting – March 7, 2025, 7:30AM
Plantation Heritage Park, 1100 S Fig Tree Ln., Plantation, FL 33317

Board Members Present

Joseph Carter
Christina Clifford
Terry Danger (Vice-Chair)
Howard Garson
Javier Lasaga
Lawrence Martin
Marty McNeil
Daniel Mulieri (Chair)
Howard Nelson
Kristen Reineke
Willie Wilcoxen

County Staff in Attendance

Gideon Baig
Katherine Burnell
Trevor Fell
Monica Florestal
Kirk Henry
Nadine Levy
John Pipoly
Lori Vun Kannon
Dan West
Erik Westberg

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (Board) meeting was called to order by Chair Mulieri at 7:32 AM. Roll was called.

Approval of Minutes: Howard Nelson MOTIONED for approval of the January 10, 2025, minutes; Vice-Chair Terry Danger seconded. MOTION carried.

Announcements: None.

Parks Manager Update: Eric Harker, Parks Manager Associate

Mr. Harker provided a brief history of the creation of Plantation Heritage Park.

In 1931, Frederick C. Peters bought 90 acres of land that became farming and ranching grounds for his family by 1948. It was later leased to establish the University of Florida USDA Plantation Experiment Station to conduct research on the spread of the citrus black fly. The Peters family's outdoor kitchen, now the Duck Pond gazebo, is the City of Plantation's oldest structure, hosting events like engagements and weddings.

Through a grant from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, Broward County and the City of Plantation acquired the park land in 1977, renaming it Plantation Heritage Park in 1984. The 6-acre lake in the park was designated a fish management area in 1990, and Heritage Hall was opened in 1994 for community events, with renovations completed in 2023. Today, the park features picnic shelters, playgrounds, a fitness station, disc golf, trails, and hosts annual events like ParkFest Love & Music Day, and the Scottish Festival.

Parks Emergency Management and Public Safety: Lori Vun Kannon, Operations Manager

Ms. Vun Kannon introduced some members of her team and provided an overview of their responsibilities. The team, including Gideon Baig (Program/Project Coordinator, Sr.), Kirk Henry (Security Supervisor), and Erica Werner (Park Ranger), outlined their comprehensive program dedicated to ensuring patron and employee safety, security, and emergency preparedness across Broward County, including parks, nature centers, trails, and sports facilities. Their focus involves

adapting to the evolving needs of the community, particularly for special events by creating emergency contingency plans and safety protocols.

Ms. Vun Kannon highlighted the importance of the vacant Safety Manager position that is currently in recruitment, which oversees safety manual updates, mold and air quality testing, AED programs, and safety training. Additionally, the Park Ranger program has expanded over the past year and a half, growing to 11 positions, significantly enhancing on-site security measures.

The Park Rangers have significantly enhanced their operations to better serve Broward County's parks, patrons, and staff. Weekly homeless assistance initiatives have reduced the number of homeless individuals in neighborhood parks from a daily average of 50 to around 15, while vehicle burglaries decreased from 12 in 2022 to 3 in 2024. Patrols now run seven days a week, with extended daily coverage from 6:00 AM to 11:00 PM across all 50 parks and nature centers. Rangers also support over 50 annual special events, such as the Cricket World Cup, Camelot Days, Irish Fest, ParkFest, and the Caribbean Carnival. Additionally, they oversee daily programs like nightly sports leagues at Tradewinds and Brian Piccolo, security for evening nature hikes, and support for naturalist programming.

Mr. Baig spoke about Parks' role as related to Emergency Management and the annual review of Parks' Continuity of Operations Plans. Each park submits a natural disaster plan, reviewed annually, alongside support for special event emergency response planning, land management groups, land use plans, or parks agency logistics, including administration complex management.

During emergencies, Broward County Parks and Recreation supports the County's Logistics Section for response and recovery. Dan West and Lori Vun Kannon serve as Logistics Section Chiefs, overseeing the Service and Resource Management branches to procure and distribute supplies. Parks Administration, led by Erik Westberg, manages park recovery efforts to restore operations.

Parks Planning and Design (PPD) Update: Nadine Levy, Capital Program Administrator

Ms. Levy provided a high-level status update on several construction projects and some upcoming initiatives. She highlighted the successful completion of the C.B. Smith Park Aquatics building, which obtained its certificate of occupancy last week. The facility is now operational for spring break, offering spaces for lifeguards and other park personnel.

Phase I of the Central Broward Stadium Icehouse project is nearing completion. Despite challenges in procurement, the site work is finished. The ice will serve both routine needs by enabling patrons to purchase it, while also serving emergency situations by supporting activations as required. Over the next two years, Central Broward Stadium will also add permanent public restrooms under the newly installed grandstands.

Projects underway include Tradewinds Farm and Gardens and the Hollywood North Beach Mooring Fields. Lafayette Hart Park is gaining additional parking, and Markham Park RV sites are being upgraded with new concrete parking pads. Hollywood North Beach will also see parking lot and picnic area improvements. At the Long Key Natural Area, PPD is in the planning and design stages for the Voluntary Wetlands and Annex site. Meanwhile, the contractor for the Quiet Waters Cabins project has been removed, and the project will need to be re-bid, including the demolition of defective work by the previous contractor. At Everglades Holiday Park, the on-site treated well water system is being replaced to connect the park to municipal water service.

Several future projects are pending funding. These include two projects at Everglades Holiday Park: the Levee Greenway Trail & Observation Tower and a new concessions and resource building. At Plantation Heritage Park, plans include building a Cultural Arts Park and considering the placement of

a new Parks Administration building. Delevoe Memorial Park will be redeveloped to better serve the community. Construction at Deerfield Island is ongoing, with several projects already completed. The Secret Woods Natural Area Redevelopment project is slated to begin its planning phase in 2026. Additionally, the Fern Forest Nature Center Structural Repairs & Elevator Modernization project is in the planning stage. Finally, audio-visual equipment throughout the park system is being updated to better accommodate modern needs.

Parks and Recreation Update: Erik Westberg, Assistant Director

Mr. Erik Westberg highlighted some recent and upcoming events throughout the parks system. ParkFest, sponsored by the Parks Foundation, has been expanded into two events held in fall and spring. The Scottish Festival, now in its 41st year, was hosted at Plantation Heritage last weekend and was very successful. The Renaissance Festival, in its 31st year at Quiet Waters, has three weekends remaining in its seven-week run. Attendance is currently up by 4%, which is remarkable and continues to rise.

Waters Matters Day, a major educational and environmental event that includes a tree giveaway, will be held on March 8th at Tree Tops Park. Numerous agencies, from state to county level, will be providing services and educational opportunities.

Preparations are also underway for our aquatic season, starting March 21st. Additionally, we are hiring and training staff for our youth summer programs.

Finally, we are excited to announce that Central Broward will host cricket matches again this July, featuring teams from West Indies and Pakistan. Planning for these events is already in progress.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:22 AM.

Next Meeting: Friday, May 2, 2025, at 7:30 AM
Anne Kolb Nature Center
751 Sheridan St., Hollywood, FL 33019