

**MEETING MINUTES  
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
PARKS, RECREATION AND BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
FIRE STATION # 2  
528 NW 2ND STREET  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2025 – 6:00 P.M.**

**Cumulative Attendance**

<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Alex Collazo, Vice Chair	A	6	1
Ruchel Coetzee	P	6	1
Vanessa Apotheker	P	3	2
Ronald Goff	P	5	0
Anna Vratsinas	A	2	2
Solomon Schoonover	P	4	3
Joy Oglesby, Chair	P	7	0
Idan Eckstein	P	5	2
Colette Keno (Departed at 8:08 P.M.)	P	4	1
Marta Reczko (Arrived at 6:04 P.M.)	P	6	1
Sean Fee	P	4	0
Don Mizell (Departed at 8:10 P.M.)	P	2	0

**Oct 2024 - Sept 2025**

As of this date, there are 12 appointed members to the Board, which means 7 would constitute a quorum. A quorum was present.

**Staff**

Carl Williams – *Director of Parks and Recreation*  
 Amy Jean-Baptists – *Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation*  
 Leana Suarez – *Senior Administrative Assistant*  
 Patricia SaintVil-Joseph – *Assistant City Attorney*  
 Alex Torres – *Senior Project Manager of Parks and Recreation*

**Others**

Rich Campillo  
 Nicole Day, Prototype-Inc.  
 Karen Cruitt, Recording Secretary, Prototype-Inc.

**Communication to the City Commission**

**Motion** made by Vanessa Apothaker, seconded by Solomon Schoonover to send Communication to the Commission expressing their concerns about replacing the basketball courts with pickleball courts at South Beach. “communication attached to minutes”. In a voice vote, the motion **passed 10-0**.

**2ND DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**  
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Ronald Goff	P	5	0
Anna Vratsinas	A	2	2
Solomon Schoonover	P	4	3
Joy Oglesby, Chair	P	7	0
Idan Eckstein	P	5	2
Colette Keno (Departed at 8:08 P.M.)	P	4	1
Marta Reczko (Arrived at 6:04 P.M.)	P	6	1
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**Communication to the City Commission**

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**Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Oglesby led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of the May 7, 2025, Meeting Minutes**

**Motion** was made by Idan Eckstein and seconded by Ronald Goff, to approve the May 7, 2025, meeting minutes, as distributed. In a voice vote, the motion passed 10-0.

**1. Parks Bond Update – Update on the \$2,000,000 YMCA Proposed Appropriation from the Parks Bond (Ben Rogers and Alex Torres)**

Senior Project Manager of Parks and Recreation Alex Torres provided an update on the YMCA pool project at Holiday Park. He reminded the board the City Commission had allocated \$2M in land acquisition funds—\$1M each from District 1 and District 2—for this project in October of the previous year. Although project planning had progressed smoothly, Mr. Torres explained the challenge now was the availability of those funds, which are part of the final \$60 million tranche of bond funding and not yet accessible.

Mr. Torres informed the board the YMCA project was scheduled to appear before the City Commission for a public hearing on June 17, with a proposed budget transfer planned for June 30. He proposed using available accrued bond interest from Series 2022 funds to temporarily cover the \$2M allocation. Once the final bond tranche is disbursed, those interest funds would be reimbursed by the land acquisition balances for Districts 1 and 2.

He emphasized this proposal did not alter the original approval to use land acquisition funds but instead offered a short-term financial strategy to maintain project momentum without delaying progress while awaiting the final bond disbursement.

Ms. Keno asked about the repayment timeline. Mr. Torres said the third tranche would likely be requested next year and confirmed using interest funds would not disrupt other projects.

Mr. Mizell asked about risks. Mr. Torres said there was no risk, as interest funds were available, and the bond funds were secured. He said the goal was to avoid delays and rising costs. Mr. Mizell asked whether delay could create problems. Mr. Torres confirmed delays could increase project costs. Chair Oglesby asked if this would allow work to start in 2025. Mr. Torres affirmed.

Ms. Keno asked if this was a YMCA relocation. Mr. Torres said it was a separate project. Director of Parks and Recreation Carl Williams added fencing would soon be installed and said it was important to use available funds. Mr. Mizell asked why the funding was not available. Mr. Torres explained the bond would be paid in three phases and the last phase had not been released.

Ms. Reczko asked if the June 17 hearing was for project approval. Assistant City Attorney SaintVil-Joseph said it was to approve the allocation of funds and a budget amendment, as required for transparency. Ms. Reczko questioned using land acquisition funds for pool construction. Director Williams said the transfer was already approved, and this was only about the interest funding. Mr. Torres confirmed it would be reimbursed.

Ms. Reczko questioned whether the YMCA pool was part of the original bond scope. Director Williams explained District 1 and 2 commissioners allocated \$1M each for the project. Assistant City Attorney SaintVil-Joseph explained the bond resolutions allow reallocations if approved by the City Commission after a public hearing. She noted this process had already occurred.

**Motion** was made by Idan Eckstein and seconded by Alex Collazo, to approve using the interest earned on the Series 2022A debt in order to fund the balances for District 1 and District 2 that are not available until the future 3rd Bond disbursement. Once the 3rd Bond disbursement takes place, the land acquisition balances of District one District 2 will be adjusted, reducing each by \$1M per district, and thus the \$2M will be reimbursed to the interest account. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 12-0.

## **2. The Fort (Rich Campillo)**

Mr. Campillo, an 11-year Fort Lauderdale resident, highlighted the development and community impact of “The Fort,” a \$30 million public-private partnership (P3) pickleball facility built at Snyder Park. He explained the site includes 43 courts, a beach club, and a redesigned disc golf course, developed without city funding.

Mr. Mizell asked if the project was a P3 and whether it was for profit. Mr. Campillo confirmed it was for profit, with the City receiving a percentage of revenue. He noted two weeks ago, 900 people participated in wellness events on the site.

Mr. Campillo added all Fort Lauderdale employees receive 25% off memberships and “The Fort” is the only P3 offering resident discounts.

Mr. Mizell asked whether the City provided the land. Mr. Campillo confirmed the City granted a 50-year license with two 5-year extensions. He explained the site was previously used for back-of-house operations including seaweed storage and called the transformation a major enhancement for the City.

Mr. Campillo noted they are now working with Port Everglades and the Convention & Visitors Bureau to attract tourism and convention attendees. He invited Board members to take a free introductory pickleball class and encouraged them to visit the facility.

## **3. Department Updates & Budget Request (Carl Williams & Amy Jean-Baptiste)**

*Agenda Item 3 was heard following Agenda Item 4.*

Director Williams presented the department's FY26 budget requests. He proposed replacing the current Facility Asset Management and Work Order Platform due to inefficiencies with the existing system. He also recommended transitioning from owning to renting a beach dozer, which would reduce long-term maintenance costs. Ms. Reczko requested clarification on the cost comparison.

Ms. Keno left the meeting at 8:08 P.M.

Director Williams continued with a request to enhance public restroom cleanliness by hiring 15 part-time staff for high-traffic areas.

Mr. Mizell left the meeting at 8:10 P.M.

Director Williams next proposed expanding the Smart Irrigation Controller Program into city medians, estimating \$50K in water savings. He requested funding for a full-size bus and driver to support varying school dismissal times and recreation transport needs. Finally, he sought funds for updated signage and dog waste bag stations following the Commission's approval of dogs in parks, noting the added responsibility on staff.

#### **4. Outdoor Events Ordinance (Carl Williams)**

*Agenda Item 4 heard immediately following Agenda Item 2.*

Director Williams introduced the Outdoor Event Ordinance presentation, including a proposed event matrix and fee schedule. He explained the application of tiered fees based on event size and impact and highlighted stakeholder feedback from the Central Beach Alliance, which recommended a ticket surcharge for events on the barrier island.

Mr. Fee asked who comprised the Beach Improvement District (BID). Director Williams responded it included the top eleven hotels on the barrier island, such as the Westin, and functions through a tax roll assessment to promote business. Mr. Fee also asked why there was a proposed fee reduction, which Director Williams clarified could vary depending on event details.

Mr. Mizell asked for the definition of the barrier island, which Director Williams confirmed referred to the beach area. Mr. Keno raised concern about shifting costs to the community versus the event organizers. Director Williams explained the BID viewed events as revenue drivers during slower seasons.

Mr. Mizell inquired whether hoteliers were the only members of the BID. Director Williams stated Visit Lauderdale also participates.

Ms. Reczko asked if fees are charged per day. Director Williams confirmed they

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are, using the Boat Show and Tortuga as examples and stating event organizers are charged for setup and cleanup days. Ms. Reczko supported this fee structure.

Mr. Mizell inquired whether the City calculated additional police and fire service costs. Director Williams confirmed that event assessments include input from police, fire, and other departments.

Chair Oglesby asked how the Central Beach Alliance would be involved. Director Williams stated the City's goal is full cost recovery and transparency. Mr. Fee asked about Tortuga's contract. Director Williams confirmed a daily fee of \$500 plus additional parking revenue.

Chair Oglesby requested clarification whether the City evaluated the proposed economic impact. Director Williams said data had been gathered but not yet vetted. Chair Oglesby recommended using a percentage-based fee model instead of a flat rate. Director Williams noted the City does not currently assess events based on bookings. Chair Oglesby stated there were approximately 200 beach events and 189 downtown events annually and emphasized the need for more community input.

Ms. Reczko commented the City should pursue both direct fees and surcharges to generate revenue. Director Williams responded that the Commission preferred reducing the number of events. Mr. Fee proposed a moratorium on new events until others fall off the calendar. Chair Oglesby asked if new events such as Oceans for Soul would be excluded.

Mr. Schoonover asked about multi-year events and whether they receive priority. Director Williams stated organizers may only apply one year in advance but confirmed the City would reach out to those with recurring events.

Ms. Reczko noted large events should be spaced out to avoid overlap. Mr. Keno emphasized the importance of providing clear deadlines and opportunities for quality new events. Ms. Apotheker asked who makes approval decisions. Director Williams responded that if no alcohol is involved and attendance is under 500, he may approve; otherwise, it goes to City Commission.

Chair Oglesby asked for a calendar of upcoming events. Assistant City Attorney SaintVil-Joseph stated the City would provide monthly event data upon request. In 2024, 392 outdoor event applications were processed. Chair Oglesby said she did not need to see all individual events.

Mr. Schoonover noted the challenge of managing the cap process. Director Williams stated events would be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Ms. Reczko emphasized the importance of aligning a potential cap with a workable timeline. Mr. Mizell suggested rating events by type to ensure variety. Director Williams stated his department does not currently categorize events that way. Chair Oglesby and Mr. Mizell requested a breakdown of events, including types and

frequency.

Mr. Eckstein asked whether Director Williams could provide a list of current events. Director Williams said the list would be available next week. Ms. Reczko suggested watching the Commission's March 18 meeting for more context. Chair Oglesby requested participant numbers and locations, along with year to date figures.

Discussion shifted to the proposed surcharge on ticketed events. Ms. Apotheker and Mr. Keno opposed the surcharge, citing concern for affordability. Mr. Schoonover noted sophisticated event organizers could adjust, but smaller events may struggle.

**Motion** was made by Vanessa Apotheker, seconded by Solomon Schoonover, to reject the surcharge on ticketed events held in the City. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 8–1, with Ms. Reczko voting in opposition.

The Board then discussed proposed impact fees.

Mr. Schoonover questioned why beach fees were lower than park fees. Director Williams explained only a portion of the beach is used, in contrast to full park rentals. Mr. Schoonover asked about potential revenue. Director Williams said it would vary by event and would require a complete assessment.

**Motion** was made by Marta Reczko and seconded by Don Mizell, to approve the Proposed Outdoor Event Ordinance including the impact fee matrix as presented by staff. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 8–1, with Solomon Schoonover voting in opposition.

Mr. Eckstein asked how difficult it would be to adjust fees in the future. Director Williams said changes must go through Commission. Assistant City Attorney SaintVil-Joseph added that fees are set by ordinance and could include automatic increases. Ms. Reczko supported an auto-increase mechanism, but Director Williams indicated feedback from staff and City Commission advised against it.

The Board discussed bonus structures for major events. Director Williams noted events such as Tortuga, Oceans for Soul, and the Boat Show provide significant economic benefit, prompting the BID to support incentive credits.

**Motion** was made by Vanessa Apotheker and seconded by Marta Reczko, to reject the proposed credit for events providing economic impact on the barrier island. The motion passed 8–1 by roll call vote, with Idan Eckstein abstaining. The abstention was approved by Assistant City Attorney SaintVil-Joseph.

Director Williams clarified that Pride Festival was not included in the City's definition of a major event, which is based on number of days, attendees, and other factors.

**5. New Business and Communication to the City Commission**

Chair Oglesby opened discussion on a draft letter prepared by Vice Chair Alex Collazo to send a Communication to the City Commission in response to the city's plan to remove a basketball court and install pickleball courts at South Beach Park. Chair Oglesby clarified the letter, included in the board's packet, was originally discussed at the May 7, 2025, meeting.

Edits were proposed to clarify the context and intent of the letter: to replace general references to signage with direct mention of the city's agreement to replace the basketball court, and to remove the phrase "pictured here below" by Mr. Eckstein since no sign is currently posted. Ms. Apotheker suggested changing "initial discussion" to simply "discussion." Mr. Eckstein recommended removing the phrase "all board members agree" from the third paragraph, given that not all members were present on May 7. Mr. Eckstein added that the city already has many pickleball courts, and the need for four more should be questioned. Mr. Fee recommended to add verbiage to section removing the basketball courts and add the phrase "from existing location" at the end of the sentence.

There was also brief discussion on referring to upcoming development in the area, including the B Ocean site, without naming it directly.

**Motion** was made by Vanessa Apothaker and seconded by Solomon Schoonover to approve the letter drafted by Vice Chair Alex Collazo with the amended changes, as discussed. In a voice vote, the motion **passed 10-0**.

Director Williams provided a brief update on the Designated Child Safety Area Ordinance. He stated, following legal review, the City would move forward with applying the ordinance only to playgrounds, rather than broader areas originally considered.

**6. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 P.M.

[Minutes prepared by TBaclawski, Prototype-Inc.]



## **PRBAB Communication to the City Commission of Fort Lauderdale**

May 28, 2025

RE: South Beach Basketball Courts

To our esteemed City Commission,

During our May 7, 2025, meeting for the Parks, Recreation and Beaches Advisory Board, the discussion came up regarding the Basketball Court Conversion in South Beach Fort Lauderdale.

The PRBAB recognizes the popularity of the growing sport and the need for more courts. We have supported repurposing courts in such popular places at George English Park, Holiday Park and Joint Use Parks such as Sunrise Middle School. We even supported the massive endeavor to donate land at Snyder Park for a Pickleball Park that was very controversial.

However, the City's agreement to remove the basketball courts and replace with pickleball have residents concerned. Board members agree that these iconic basketball courts have become a landmark and are part of the history of South Beach.

After discussion, the PRBAB strongly opposes removing the basketball courts from the existing location.

There are big plans for a big site with big investors slated for that area. It stands to reason that they can provide an alternate space for pickleball on their property development.

If the development property arrangements spill over into public space, then pickleball courts should be considered in addition to the existing basketball courts.

This Communication to the City was unanimously approved by all attending board members at PRBAB meeting Wednesday May 7, 2025, and also communicated to Director Carl Williams.

We hope that the City Commission will reconsider its proposal to remove the basketball courts in question for pickleball courts.

Respectfully,  
Parks, Recreation & Beaches Advisory Board