

**MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
PARKS, RECREATION AND BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
FIRE STATION # 2
528 NW 2ND STREET
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2025 – 6:30 P.M.**

Cumulative Attendance

Board Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Alex Collazo	P	3	0
Ruchel Coetzee	P	3	0
Vanessa Apotheker	P	1	0
Ronald Goff	P	1	0
Charlie Leikauf, Vice Chair	P	3	0
Solomon Schoonover	P	2	1
Zillah Tarkoe	P	3	0
Idan Eckstein	A	2	1
Joy Oglesby	P	3	0
Marta Reczko	P	3	0
Colette Keno	P	1	0
Samantha Sisler	A	2	1
Stacy Ritter	A	0	3

Oct 2024 - Sept 2025

As of this date, there are 13 appointed members to the Board, which means 7 would constitute a quorum. A quorum was present.

Staff

Ben Rogers – *Acting Assistant City Manager*

Carl Williams – *Director of Parks and Recreation*

Amy Jean-Baptiste – *Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation*

Leana Suarez – *Senior Administrative Assistant*

Patricia SaintVil-Joseph – *Assistant City Attorney*

Others

Karen Cruitt – *Prototype-Inc.*

Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chair Leikauf led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board members introduced themselves to each other since new members were present.

Approval of the December 4, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Alex Collazo and seconded by Ruchel Coetzee, to approve the December 4, 2024, meeting minutes, as distributed. In a voice vote, the motion passed 11-0.

1. Nominations for the Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Vice Chair Leikauf nominated Joy Oglesby for Chair. Alex Collazo seconded the nomination. Unanimous vote by show of hands.

Alex Collazo volunteered for Vice Chair. Unanimous vote by show of hands.

Mr. Leikauf passed the gavel to Chair Oglesby.

2. Parks Bond Update

Mr. Ben Rogers, Assistant City Manager, shared he would regularly update the group on the park bond projects, providing transparency and answering questions. He noted the Parks Bond team now reports to the city manager's office for better efficiency. He mentioned upcoming presentations, including a funding plan in March, and progress such as the start of construction at Jimmy Everett Tennis Center, the Holiday Park Phase 2 solicitation in February, and upcoming bids for Bass Park and Mills Pond.

Mr. Leikauf asked about the funding for Carter Park, and Mr. Rogers replied that approximately \$34M was needed, with \$25-26M currently available. He hoped to have the signature parks funding secured by March.

Ms. Coetzee asked about an outdoor gym on the beach in front of Bahia Mar, and Director Williams replied that the "Muscle Beach" gym will remain and undergo an upgrade. A timeline was not provided.

Vice Chair Collazo asked for an update on the joint-use parks at Poinsettia Heights, expressing concern that many promised amenities had been lost and that the project, which was supposed to break ground last year, had shown no progress. He requested an update on all joint-use parks be added to the next agenda.

Mr. Rogers agreed, acknowledging the challenges and mentioned that they are looking into opportunities, including adding additional consulting firms for more resources. He also noted they are working on a master plan and agreed to present on all joint use parks at the next meeting.

Mr. Leikauf asked about additional funding from the City Commission, and Director Williams responded that the bond was approved in 2019, but prices have increased since then. They are working to fill the funding gap or make decisions on potential reductions.

Ms. Reczko asked who the contractor for Jimmy Evert was, and Mr. Rogers replied it was Shift Construction. Director Williams added the renovation cost was \$7.4M. Mr. Rogers noted this was above the budget and mentioned he would send the documentation to the board.

Director Williams noted that Holiday Park's budget was approximately \$22M, with

\$4.3M allocated for courts, the Jimmy Everett Tennis Center, and irrigation. As the plan developed, the cost rose to over \$7M, but the project was fully funded. The playground was set to come online once the project went out to bid. Mr. Rogers explained, despite significant inflation, the project remained fully funded as proposed, except for the parking garage.

Mr. Rogers mentioned the long-term plan to put a garage near the Parker Playhouse and that they are considering adding a surface lot on the south side to improve conditions. The project is currently at 30% design, and the Commission is not interested in developing the north side.

Ms. Keno asked if there were plans to update the gym at Holiday Park. Director Williams replied Holiday Park had been part of discussions with the YMCA. Mr. Rogers added they would know more about the gym for Carter Park in March.

Ms. Tarkoe commented the Bayview sign looked nice and asked if the irrigation was fixed. Mr. Williams replied the project included grading elements, currently being tested, and some filling was done.

Ms. Apotheker inquired about parking and crosswalks, and Mr. Rogers confirmed they are included, with an 18-month timeline for design and construction.

3. Department Update (Amy Jean-Baptiste)

Ms. Jean-Baptiste announced this week's Noon Tunes event and location change. She also shared details of the Sistrunk Parade and Festival on February 22.

Ms. Jean-Baptiste shared an email was sent last week inviting her to the city manager search public meeting group, held at the Women's Club. She also mentioned the following day, the City Commission held interviews with the two candidates.

4. St. Patrick's Day 2025 Potential Sponsor (Amy Jean-Baptiste)

Ms. Jean-Baptiste discussed the St. Patrick's Day 2025 event and potential sponsor. She mentioned at the next commission meeting on February 18, the commission would review a sponsorship for the parade on March 8 along Las Olas, expecting around 1,000 attendees. Core Construction agreed to be the title sponsor, covering 25% of the \$9,350 event budget, which would enhance the event. Ms. Jean-Baptiste also noted Anchor Mechanical would sponsor the hospitality tent, contributing \$1,000 for supplies, and sought approval for the sponsorships.

Vice Chair Collazo asked if the St. Patrick's Day Parade was held on the beach last year. Mr. Williams replied it was moved to Tunnel Top Park, and Las Olas would be closed for the event.

Mr. Leikauf mentioned shop owners loved it.

Ms. Apotheker asked if vendors could apply for the parade. Ms. Jean-Baptiste confirmed they could, noting food trucks and a drink truck were part of the event last year. She offered to send the information and mentioned vendors are typically selected a few months prior.

Motion was made by Charlie Leikauf and seconded by Alex Collazo, to approve St. Patrick's Day 2025 sponsors: Core Construction as the title sponsor at \$9,350 and Anchor Mechanical at \$1,000 for the hospitality center. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 11-0.

Discussion ensued about shade options for Tunnel Top Plaza.

Chair Oglesby proposed doing a field trip as a group for a meeting in April. Mr. Rogers noted there were some impacts with the Sunshine Law. Chair Oglesby then suggested board members individually visit a park not in their neighborhood.

5. New Business

Chair Oglesby thanked Mr. Leikauf for his leadership at the last meeting and encouraged new members to attend commission meetings and visit parks.

Vice Chair Collazo asked if the dog rules had been implemented, and Director Williams replied that about 90% of the "dogs permitted" signs were up.

Ms. Coetzee asked if dogs were allowed on the beach, to which Director Williams confirmed they are only allowed on North Beach, north of Sunrise.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 P.M.

[Minutes prepared by TBaclawski, Prototype-Inc.]