

**MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
PARKS, RECREATION AND BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
FIRE STATION # 2
528 NW 2ND STREET
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2025 – 6:30 P.M.**

Cumulative Attendance

Board Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Alex Collazo, Vice Chair	P	4	0
Ruchel Coetzee	P	4	0
Vanessa Apotheker	A	1	1
Ronald Goff	P	2	0
Anna Vratsinas	P	1	0
Solomon Schoonover [arrived 6:35]	P	3	1
Zillah Tarkoe	P	4	0
Idan Eckstein	A	2	2
Joy Oglesby, Chair	P	4	0
Marta Reczko	P	4	0
Colette Keno	P	2	0
Sean Fee	P	1	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

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*
 Alex Torres – *Senior Project Manager of Parks and Recreation*

Others

Karen Cruitt – *Prototype-Inc.*

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Oglesby led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the January 29, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Motion was made by Alex Collazo and seconded by Zillah Tarkoe, to approve the January 29, 2025, meeting minutes, as distributed. In a voice vote, the motion passed 10-0.

New Board members, Mr. Fee and Ms. Vratsinas, introduced themselves.

1. Parks Bond Update

Mr. Ben Rogers, Assistant City Manager, introduced Mr. Alex Torres, Senior Project Manager, who presented the following: parks bond program overview historical timeline; signature parks and Phase 1 and Phase 2 parks commission approval timeline; budget amendment; and update on the 15 school parks.

Ms. Reczko asked if a public meeting had been held on the subject, and Mr. Carl Williams, Director of Parks and Recreation, confirmed it was part of the grant process for trails, with another meeting scheduled that evening.

Ms. Reczko inquired about the phased withdrawal of funds. Mr. Torres confirmed \$140 million had been withdrawn, with a final \$60 million disbursement pending. She asked if the first \$80 million had to be spent within three years, and Mr. Torres stated \$50 million had been spent, with remaining projects moving forward. Ms. Reczko expressed concerns about ensuring funds were used effectively, and Mr. Torres assured her that spending would accelerate.

Ms. Tarkoe asked about the pool chiller at Sunrise Middle School and whether the pool would be open to the public. Mr. Torres explained the request came from the school board, and the city did not control hours. She also inquired about park hours, and Mr. Williams responded, mentioning summer access when school is out.

Vice Chair Collazo requested clarification on the master plan timeline, noting that the joint-use program was not initially included until 2019. He explained that approximately \$15-16 million of the \$200 million bond was allocated for converting schools into public green spaces, but budgeting constraints were impacting planned amenities. Mr. Williams noted rising costs post-COVID had affected all projects, with funding gaps being bridged through commissioners' discretionary funds.

Vice Chair Collazo asked if the board could assist to move things forward, and Mr. Rogers responded that the bond process was being streamlined, with a new project manager starting the following week. Procurement cycle times had been reduced, and Mr. Torres added that they were handling procurement internally.

Mr. Rogers offered to send monthly memos to the board for transparency.

Vice Chair Collazo expressed concerns about accountability, and Mr. Rogers acknowledged delays but noted additional resources were coming.

Ms. Reczko asked what percentage of the \$80 million was allocated to schools versus city parks. Mr. Rogers explained the funding had shifted, making it difficult to specify. Mr. Torres stated that \$10 million of the \$200 million bond had been awarded to schools.

Ms. Vratsinas asked how information was being shared. Mr. Rogers confirmed that budget documents would be shared, and Vice Chair Collazo suggested improving clarity on the website regarding joint-use parks.

Chair Oglesby asked if the Walker Park project included a sunshade, but Mr. Torres's replied not currently.

Vice Chair Collazo questioned whether the modified project timelines were realistic given the workload, and Mr. Torres confirmed they were.

2. Department Update (Amy Jean-Baptiste)

Ms. Jean-Baptiste announced the St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 8th.

3. Riverside Park Residents Association proposed renaming of parcel located at 501 SW 12th Avenue to Abiaka Park (Amy Jean-Baptiste)

Ms. Jean-Baptiste explained the procedures for renaming a park required the HOA to propose a name, which had been approved by the neighborhood. The next steps involved bringing the proposal to the board for review before submitting it to the commission for final approval.

Motion was made by Solomon Schoonover and seconded by Ruchel Coetzee, to approve the renaming the parcel Abiaka Park. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 10-0.

4. Discussion of the 2025-2026 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant application in the amount of \$450,000 for the development of the Floyd Hull Trail (Amy Jean-Baptiste)

Ms. Jean-Baptiste informed the board about a Floyd Hull Park Bond meeting that evening, required by the HOA, and noted it was also seeking public input for an EPA recreational trails grant. She stated that some bond funds were allocated for the project and clarified that the city's match was \$115,000 for a total project cost of \$6 million.

Vice Chair Collazo asked if the grant was federal. Ms. Jean-Baptiste clarified it was a state grant.

Mr. Fee inquired about the status of an issue at Floyd Hull. Mr. Williams stated there was a 50-year lease but noted non-compliance issues. Mr. Fee emphasized the need for progress.

5. 2025 Starlight Musical Series Title Sponsorship Bank of America Corporation (Amy Jean-Baptiste)

Ms. Jean-Baptiste stated that Bank of America, a longtime title sponsor, has donated \$20K this year.

Motion was made by Alex Collazo and seconded by Ruchel Coetzee, to approve the Bank of America donation of \$20K. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 10-0.

6. Unaccompanied Minors Ordinance (Patricia SaintVil-Joseph)

Assistant City Attorney SaintVil-Joseph presented updates on designated children's play areas, which had been revised for commission approval. The term exclusive areas replaced play areas, with playgrounds and splash pads specifically defined. Signage would mark these areas, and penalties remained unchanged. She noted that many cities had adopted similar ordinances, with minimal enforcement or adjudication issues. She recommended circulating the ordinance to HOAs for feedback.

Ms. Coetzee asked if adults in play areas must be accompanied by children. Ms. SaintVil-Joseph confirmed they must, but the ordinance did not address children without adult supervision.

Mr. Schoonover expressed concern that unsupervised children could be targets.

Ms. Tarkoe asked if benches were included. Ms. Jean-Baptiste clarified that the restrictions applied only to playgrounds and splash pads.

Ms. SaintVil-Joseph added that signage would clarify designated areas.

Ms. Tarkoe asked if baseball fields would be included. Mr. Williams stated they would not, explaining that children ages 12-14 might be allowed to play unsupervised in certain parks, such as Bayview, due to proximity to their homes.

Ms. Keno asked how individuals violating the ordinance would be removed. Ms. SaintVil-Joseph stated park rangers would first approach violators, and if they refused to leave, police would be contacted. Repeat offenders would go through a formal process.

Ms. Keno expressed concern that rangers might not feel empowered to remove individuals from parks. Ms. SaintVil-Joseph clarified the ordinance only applied to exclusive children's play areas.

Ms. Reczko asked why the proposed language was changed. Ms. SaintVil-Joseph explained the advisory board recommended it to the commission, with the city attorney making necessary modifications.

Mr. Fee questioned if baseball fields should be included. Mr. Schoonover agreed they should not, nor should soccer or football fields. Ms. SaintVil-Joseph stated the definition focused on playgrounds but welcomed recommendations for changes.

Mr. Williams emphasized allowing discretion in enforcement.

Mr. Fee asked about adult play areas at Hardy Park downtown.

Ms. SaintVil-Joseph stated that exclusive areas near other fields would require sufficient signage to clarify restrictions.

Ms. Vratsinas noted the ordinance allowed park rangers flexibility in interpretation. Chair Oglesby agreed, saying it provided park rangers with needed discretion.

Ms. Tarkoe asked how many cases had been prosecuted. Ms. SaintVil-Joseph stated city prosecutors had no issues with enforcement and noted that Miami Beach had only two cases go to court in ten years.

Motion was made by Solomon Schoonover and seconded by Alex Collazo, to approve the ordinance as presented. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 10-0.

7. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 P.M.

[Minutes prepared by TBaclawski, Prototype-Inc.]