

**VERO BEACH RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, January 12, 2021 – 1:30 p.m.**  
**City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida**

**PRESENT:** Vice Chairman, Brooke Malone; Members: James “Rock” Tonkel, Brooke Steinkamp, Samuel Lapeyre, Alternate Member #1, Steven Neman (via GoToMeeting), and Alternate Member #2, Christopher Woodruff **Also Present:** Recreation Director, James O’Connell; Assistant Recreation Director, Patty Howard, City Attorney, John Turner; Assistant City Attorney, Jenny Flanigan, and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Hawkins

**Excused Absence:** Judy Jones

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chairman Malone called today’s meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and the Senior Administrative Assistant performed the roll call.

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, explained that the City has ended the use of remote appearances for their Boards and Commissions. It will require an approval by the Commission and they should entertain a motion to approve Mr. Steven Neman’s request to appear remotely.

**Mrs. Malone made a motion to accept the remote appearance by Mr. Steven Newman, Recreation Commission Alternate Member. Mr. Tonkel seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

The Commission members introduced themselves for the benefit of the new members: Mr. Lapeyre, Mr. Woodruff, and Mr. Newman.

**2. MISSION STATEMENT**

Mrs. Malone read the Recreation Commission’s Mission Statement.

**3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**A) Chairman**

Mr. Turner explained that he will take the gavel and conduct the Election for Chairman and once that selection is made he will give the gavel back to the Chairman to proceed with the Election of Vice Chairman. He said the floor is now open for nominations for Chairman of the Recreation Commission.

**Mrs. Steinkamp made a motion to nominate Mrs. Brooke Malone for Chairman.**

**Mr. Turner asked if there were any other nominations. With no other nominations being made the nomination was closed. The motion passed unanimously and Mr. Turner**

**announced that Mrs. Brooke Malone was elected as Chairman of the Recreation Commission.**

**B) Vice-Chairman**

Mrs. Malone announced that the floor is open for nominations for Vice Chairman.

**Mrs. Malone nominated Mr. Rock Tonkel for the position of Vice Chairman. There were no other nominations. Mr. Rock Tonkel was unanimously elected as Vice Chairman of the Recreation Commission.**

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A) December 8, 2020**

**Mr. Tonkel made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2020 Recreation Commission meeting. Mrs. Steinkamp seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Mr. Turner introduced Ms. Jenny Flanigan, Assistant City Attorney. He said she will be taking over his position as legal representation of the Recreation Commission for future meetings.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

**A) 2020 Annual Report**

Mrs. Malone stated that they all received a copy of the 2020 Recreation Commission's Annual report that was put together by the Senior Administrative Assistant (on file in the City Clerk's office). She asked if they normally include any capital projects or things they have done.

The Senior Administrative Assistant explained that if a project was discussed at their meetings or recommendations were made by the Recreation Commission she includes them. She said she creates the report based on what took place at their meetings throughout the year.

Mr. Tonkel said he would like to refer to page eight (8) of the report where it mentions the task, action, and outcome for the Three Corners Project. He asked if a letter was submitted to the Steering Committee because he has not seen it.

Mrs. Malone explained that at the December Recreation Commission meeting they compiled a list of their suggestions, which was put into a memo and presented to the Steering Committee.

Mr. Tonkel asked if there has been any response from the Steering Committee in regards to the suggestions.

Mrs. Malone said there have probably been some conversations about them, but not a formal reply. She mentioned that the Steering Committee meets this Thursday at 1:30 p.m.

Mrs. Steinkamp suggested that Mr. Tonkel read the minutes or watch the video from the last Steering Committee meeting. She said he is also welcome to attend their meetings.

Mr. Woodruff also suggested watching the video of the Steering Committee meeting because it is quiet insightful.

Mr. Newman said their Annual Report mentions the request for the Recreation Department and the Recreation Commission to join the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). He asked if that has been done.

Mr. Jim O'Connell, Recreation Director, explained that he just submitted the paperwork yesterday so they are joining the NRPA and the cost for it will come out of the Recreation Department's operating budget. He will be in touch with each of the Commission members so he can provide the NRPA with their contact information to receive the NRPA magazines and updates. They are registered, so they will soon be NRPA members.

Mr. Newman replied excellent. They will learn a lot from being a member of the NRPA.

**Mrs. Malone made a motion to accept the Recreation Commission's 2020 Annual Report. Mr. Tonkel seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

## **7. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A) Update on the Three Corners Project**

Mrs. Malone stated that they will keep the Three Corners Project on their meeting agendas so they stay on top of what is being discussed.

Mrs. Steinkamp said she thought that Mr. Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development Director, was going to be at today's meeting to give them an update on how much Park space the City currently has and what it costs to maintain it.

Mrs. Malone explained that the Three Corners is a huge project and they will keep it on their agendas, because there is going to be play space and recreational areas that they need to be involved with. Ultimately the responsibility of maintaining the Park space will fall on the Recreation Department. She said they need to stay informed and the Recreation Commission members are allowed to speak with and ask questions of the Steering Committee members.

Mr. Turner reminded the Recreation Commission that two (2) or more members of the same Commission, Committee, or Board cannot discuss an item that will come before the Commission unless it is at a public meeting.

Mr. Tonkel asked if the Recreation Commission has evaluated any of the concepts and programs for the Three Corners Project and have any of them gone through any kind of financial analysis.

Mr. O'Connell replied that the public comments and the charrettes that brought them to this point occurred before he became employed with the City. The Recreation Commission is getting their opinions heard, but a little late in the game. Each plan that has been presented for the Three Corners has some kind of recreational aspect to it. It is a matter of determining how much is going to be public space versus other things. The Recreation Department has not done any specific or financial analysis for the project. Most of the planning has not involved the Recreation Department directly other than the suggestions and recommendations that have come from the Recreation Commission. He reminded the Commission that when they build more Parks and buildings they need to make sure they can provide for the building of it as well as the ongoing maintenance.

Mrs. Steinkamp said Mr. Jefferies spoke with the Recreation Commission and stated that they would not be looking to the Recreation Department to oversee any aspect of the project and that they would expect the developer to oversee and maintain any recreation that will take place there.

Mrs. Malone said that they are now responsible for showing their interest as citizens in the community. They have made their recommendations and that is as far as they can go unless City Council comes back to them. The Recreation Commission members all have their hands in the community in very different aspects. She asked if any of the other Commission members are planning on attending the Steering Committee meeting on Thursday.

Mr. Tonkel replied that he will probably be there. He said he is struggling a little bit because attitudes, options, and direction has been expressed and some people are moving one (1) direction and others are moving another direction. If the Steering Committee is going to ask them to be specific with cost, participation by the community, how it is going to be managed, etc. and does the Recreation Commission have a role to play at this time.

Mr. Turner explained that their roll as the Recreation Commission would be advisory and a request from that position would be to review all the recreational activities and advise which ones would be most appropriate for the location. He said Mrs. Steinkamp addressed the Steering Committee with the Recreation Commission's recommendations and it was discussed. They can address it again with the Steering Committee, but he is not sure how they will take that. He said the Steering Committee is currently accepting input from the public and dealing with the developer on the best recommendations in order to assemble a Master Concept Plan to present to City Council. The Recreation Commission needs to keep making it known what activities they want to see for recreation. Even though the property will be built by the developer and under the developers control to a certain extent, the public will have access to the entire property. He said the Master Concept Plan will be put to a voter referendum.

Mr. Tonkel said that the Recreation Director clearly needs to be involved in the assessment of the Recreation Commission's recommendations. There needs to be a plan on how to get it done, the cost, and what is the probability of offering services that are acceptable to the Steering Committee and City Council. The City has to come to their own conclusions on the project. They need to ask if the overall concept of an activity will support a need in the community. An example is the Skate Park. To him it is not compatible because it is an activity that might distract from the openness and the acceptance of other people enjoying the area. A Skate Park can be noisy, the kids are loud, etc. He is not sure if they have been specific enough in analyzing different approaches, but if everyone agrees to have a Skate Park he will not object to it. That is just one example that might need to be examined in depth if it is accepted by the Steering Committee.

Mrs. Malone suggested that they read the minutes, attend, or watch the next Steering Committee meeting, so as the process develops they can see what areas will be allocated for recreation and then they can have further input.

Mrs. Steinkamp said she understands that the Recreation Department is not involved at all with this project and anything that goes on the property will be up to the developer. The Recreation Commission has no impact on what their recommendations are.

Mrs. Malone replied that is why they need to stay actively involved as citizens and not as Recreation Commission members. She hopes that Mr. Jeffries will have some firm information and advise them on what the next steps should be for the Recreation Commission.

Mrs. Steinkamp said that in addition to being involved with the project, the Recreation Commission can make recommendations to City Council based on their perspectives and what they hear from the residents of the City.

Mrs. Malone said she agrees. They all have different people they are touching and they need to listen to their friends and family and invite them to the Recreation Commission meetings so they can share what they are learning, what their ideas are, what fears they have about the project, etc.

Mr. Tonkel said it is conceivable that the Recreation Commission might have more input along with the Recreation Department that is compatible with the overall interest of the people in the City.

Mrs. Malone stated that they already made a recommendation to City Council that the Recreation Commission would like recreational spaces acknowledged and represented in the plan. They were specific in stating they wanted water access, play spaces, and open spaces.

Mr. Turner explained that when they speak in front of the Steering Committee or City Council they cannot speak on behalf of the Recreation Commission unless the Commission has approved it. They can appear personally and say they are speaking as a private citizen but they are also a Recreation Commission member and they are not speaking for the Commission.

## **8. RECREATION DIRECTOR'S MATTERS**

Mr. O'Connell reported that the new Recreation Department program guides have been printed and copies are available at the City buildings, the Library, and a few other locations (on file in the City Clerk's office). The information will also be available online in the near future. He announced that the employee of the fourth quarter of 2020 is Mrs. Angie Holshouser, Centerstage Supervisor. He read a prepared statement about Mrs. Holshouser and why she was selected.

Mr. Tonkel asked if the sponsors listed on the back cover of the program guide have grown or decreased.

Mr. O'Connell said it is an impressive list of sponsors compared to other cities. They basically have had the same amount over the past several years, but they are open to accepting new sponsors.

Mr. Newman suggested that the Recreation Commission send a letter of congratulations to Mrs. Holshouser.

**Mr. Tonkel made a motion requesting that Mrs. Malone write a letter congratulating Mrs. Angie Holshouser on being selected as the employee of the quarter. Mrs. Steinkamp seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

## **9. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS**

Mrs. Malone stated that she covered her items in their previous discussions.

## **10. MEMBER'S MATTERS**

Mr. Newman asked if there are any active youth basketball, football, or hockey leagues in Vero Beach.

Mr. O'Connell replied that most of the youth athletic programs are run through the County, but there is a basketball program at Leisure Square. They have two (2) baseball programs that are run via license agreements at the Jake Owens Field and at Bob Summers Field, so the City is not directly involved in running those.

Mr. Newman asked if the City has ever had a Senior Olympics or any activity programs like tennis, or golf for seniors.

Mr. O'Connell replied that they have the Pickleball program which is mainly seniors, but as far as sending participants or contestants to the Senior Olympics he has not heard of that taking place here. He said they might be interested in getting involved with state-wide or even larger competition programs for seniors. He knows they certainly have some very good Pickleball and tennis players. He announced that Pickleball University will be holding a regional tournament here in March.

Mr. Lapeyre asked if the Recreation program guide is distributed to the public via mail, or email.

Mr. O'Connell replied that they do not mail it out, but they have them available at all of the City facilities and the County Library.

Mrs. Patty Howard, Assistant Recreation Director, stated that this is the first year they did not send them to all of the public schools and daycare centers.

Mr. O'Connell explained that they are trying to push the online publication, because that is where most people go to find information.

Mrs. Steinkamp asked if people can register online for the Recreation Department programs.

Mr. O'Connell replied as of right now the answer is no, but he will have some information available soon on the point of sales system for Leisure Square that was purchased from Book King. They are working out all the details between the vendor and the Finance Department before rolling

it out. This will be a big step for the Recreation Department and he is looking forward to getting it up and running.

Mrs. Steinkamp said she has questions for Mr. Jeffries, but he is not at today's meeting. She would like to know how much Park space they will have in the Three Corners Project and the maintenance costs involved.

Mrs. Malone suggested they ask those questions as citizens at the Steering Committee meeting and then discuss it at the next Recreation Commission meeting.

## **11. NEXT MEETING DATE**

### **A) February 9, 2021**

The next Recreation Commission meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT**

Today's meeting adjourned at 2:33 p.m.

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