

# **VERO BEACH RECREATION COMMISSION ORGANIZATIONAL MINUTES**

**Tuesday, October 12, 2021 – 1:30 p.m.**

**City Hall, Council Chambers, Vero Beach, Florida**

**PRESENT:** Brooke Steinkamp, Christopher Woodruff, and Leonard Markir **Also Present:** Recreation Director, James O’Connell; Assistant Recreation Director, Patty Howard; Assistant City Attorney, Jenny Flanigan; and Senior Administrative Assistant, Rita Chartier

**EXCUSED ABSENCES:** Rick Gillespie and Samuel Lapeyre

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mrs. Tammy Bursick, City Clerk, called the meeting to order at 1:39 p.m.

## **2. SWEARING IN OF NEW MEMBERS – CITY CLERK**

Mrs. Bursick welcomed the new members and performed the Oath of Office en masse.

## **3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Mrs. Bursick stated that they will hold the election of officers. At this time she opened the floor for nominations for Chairman.

### **A) Chairman**

Mr. Markir nominated Mrs. Brooke Steinkamp for Chairman. Mr. Woodruff seconded the nomination. With no other nominations, Mrs. Brooke Steinkamp was unanimously appointed as Chairman of the Recreation Commission.

### **B) Vice Chairman**

Mrs. Steinkamp asked if they can discuss this or do they have to make a nomination.

Mrs. Bursick replied that there are two (2) other members who could not attend the meeting today. They can postpone the election of Vice Chairman if they decide to wait, but they did have to have the election of Chairman so they can run the meeting today.

Mr. Woodruff said he thinks that postponing it is a good idea.

Mrs. Steinkamp said she agrees that it would be appropriate to wait on the election of Vice Chairman until the next Recreation Commission meeting.

## **4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Steve Newman, Vero Beach resident, said that there are a few items that are of interest to him and he encourages the Recreation Commission to pay attention to them. First is youth sports, because it is important for children’s emotional, social, and physical development. It is important that the Commission meet with the various little leagues, soccer, and basketball programs to find out what issues they have and how the City can help. They should also find out if the programs

include participants from all areas of the City and County. If there is not participation from all areas they should find out why, is it financial or other reasons. The Recreation Commission should be doing something to change that. He passed out two (2) articles on youth sports (on file in the City Clerk's office). He said his second item is promoting recreational activity. It is important for people's health and the City should be doing more to promote participation in activities. He passed out two (2) other articles on tennis (on file in the City Clerk's office). He said studies show that tennis extends the life of people more than other sports. The third issue is the cost. The reason people do not play tennis and participate in other activities is because it is very expensive here. He suggested that the Commission do a survey of other cities in Florida that are comparable to the size of Vero Beach.

Mrs. Steinkamp thanked him for coming to the meeting. She hopes that he stays involved and will come back to their meetings with his knowledge and experience.

## **5. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A) Ms. Jenny Flanigan, Assistant City Attorney, to go over the Sunshine Law**

Ms. Jenny Flanigan, Assistant City Attorney, stated that Florida has some interesting rules for serving on a public Board or Commission. She gave a Power Point presentation on the Florida Sunshine Law (on file in the City Clerk's office). She explained that the five (5) members of this Commission may not speak outside of their publicly noticed meetings on any matter that might come before the Commission for action. She said social media makes it a little harder to comply with the Sunshine Law. She said they should not reply to any social media posts from other Recreation Commission members on subjects that are about Recreation Commission business.

Mr. Markir asked if they should refrain from writing articles as an individual for local news publications.

Ms. Flanigan replied that as individuals they can speak for themselves, but not on behalf of the Recreation Commission unless they are authorized to do so.

Mr. Markir said she mentioned that the restrictions are dealing with matters.

Ms. Flanigan replied the language in the Statute says "at which official acts are to be taken." It has been interpreted to mean that any matter that might perceptibly come before the Commission.

Mr. Markir asked if the Commission was discussing individually or collectively how to handle bringing in new information or making decisions, would that be considered matters or perspective agenda items.

Ms. Flanigan replied that would be considered an official matter. If it can touch upon City business or Recreation Commission business it is better to err on the side of caution. The Commission members can request items to be added to the agenda and they can be discussed at the meeting.

### **B) Mr. Jim O'Connell, Recreation Director, to give an overview on what the Recreation Department does and how they interact with the Recreation Commission**

Mr. Jim O'Connell, Recreation Director, handed out a copy of the Recreation Department's program guide and a flow chart about the Recreation Department, their staff, programs, events and facilities. He informed them that they have 19 full time staff, seven (7) permanent part time staff, and between 20 to 35 casual part time staff members. He also explained that they have 17 Parks, over 100 programs, they do stage rentals, in house programming, partnerships, special events, facility rentals, aquatic programs, and they guard the City beaches. More importantly is the Recreation Commission's role and how they interact with what the Recreation Department does. He continued by reading the Recreation Commission's Mission Statement (on file in the City Clerk's office). He said the Commission's role is to advise City Council on the operation and direction of the Recreation Department, their programs, and the facilities in the City of Vero Beach. He explained that ideas for items for discussion can come from their own backgrounds and thoughts on what recreation should be. It can also come from City Council asking the Commission to advise them on a certain subject, or it can come from their interaction with the public who might want subjects discussed. He explained that the Recreation Department's fees are reviewed on a fairly regular basis. The Recreation Department works with the Finance Department to put together recommendations that will in turn come to the Recreation Commission. The Commission can approve, reject, or change it and eventually make a recommendation to City Council. They can make recommendations and advise City Council on a variety of subjects. He stated that both he and Mrs. Patty Howard are available for any of the Commission members to speak with if they need clarification, have ideas they want to discuss, etc. He said he appreciates the members taking their time and effort to help them in an important area for the City.

Mr. Markir asked if there has been any communication between the Three Corners Steering Committee and the Recreation Commission.

Mr. O'Connell replied that he is not sure if there has been any direct contact between those two (2) bodies. He explained that when he started with the City over a year ago, that process was already pretty far along. However, he knows that all of the plans that were submitted have some sort of recreational aspects to them.

Mrs. Steinkamp explained that the previous Recreation Commission was asked to present a list of ideas or thoughts on recreational uses for the plan. She said as far as she is aware, the Recreation Department will not be overseeing anything on the Three Corners properties.

Mr. Markir asked where is the list of their ideas.

Mrs. Bursick stated that it was presented when the Steering Committee first started meeting, but she will provide him with a copy.

Mr. Woodruff suggested that Mr. Markir listen to some of the Steering Committees videos that are on the City's website. They are quite informative on where they are heading and their plans.

Mrs. Steinkamp said over the past three (3) years the Recreation Commission has offered a list of ideas a couple of times, but they have not been directly involved.

Mr. Markir said he is not sure how the Boards and Commissions interact. He asked if it would be the responsibility of the Steering Committee to come to the Recreation Commission or can the Recreation Commission go to the Steering Committee.

Mrs. Steinkamp asked if the Steering Committee was sunsetted.

Ms. Flanigan said on April 26, 2021 the Steering Committee submitted their Master Plan to City Council.

Mrs. Bursick stated that they have not sunsetted the Steering Committee yet, just in case City Council needs to call them back.

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

Mr. O'Connell announced that over the summer, they had a very successful summer camp event with the COVID restrictions. They had a total of 93 students and six (6) junior staff volunteers. Their summer gymnastics program had approximately 85 students and the summer performing arts program had 40 participants. The Aerial Antics Circus performances took place in August and they had 461 presold tickets and approximately 300 were sold at the door. There were 163 participants who put on three (3) performances and a good time was had by all. He announced that October 30<sup>th</sup> is their second annual Halloween Car Parade. Last year it was a COVID invention that took it from a walking parade to car parade and it went well, so they are trying it again this year. Participants are encouraged to decorate their cars for Halloween. It starts at 10:00 a.m. at Riverside Park and they will travel down Beachland Boulevard to Sexton Plaza.

Mrs. Patty Howard, Assistant Recreation Director, said at Sexton Plaza they will give out goody bags to children ages 0 to 17 and they will be giving out prizes for the best decorated cars.

## **7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS**

Mrs. Steinkamp said she would like to put a few items on next month's agenda from where the prior Commission left off. She would also like to continue with the youth sports discussion after they have a chance to read the articles they received.

## **8. MEMBER'S MATTERS**

None

## **9. NEXT MEETING DATE**

**A) November 9, 2021**

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

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

Today's meeting adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

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