

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

August 12th, 2025 – 4:00PM

City Hall – 2nd Floor - Open Planning Area

Present: Michael Odum, Mary Murphy, Perry Douglass, Niels Heimeriks, Jacquelyn Taylor

Absent: Phil Growick, Patt Sned

Staff Present: Leah Rockwell, Todd Snyder, Linda Madigan

Guest(s): Gail Levine

Topic **Discussion / Action / Follow Up**

Call to Order Meeting called to order by *Michael Odum* at 4:00 p.m. Motion made to approve June 10, 2025, meeting minutes; made by *Michael Odum* with a first by *Perry Douglass* and a second motion by *Niels Heimeriks*. All in favor.

New Business — *Michael Odum* read the agenda public policy with meeting attendees relating to engagement and behavior during our public meetings.

Old Business **Bond Projects Update –**
— *Currie Park* – *Leah Rockwell* stated that the first structure to be built are the restrooms. The seawall has been demolished, and we are getting ready to build the new shoreline. The project is on schedule.
— *Gaines Park – Community Center & Tennis Center* – *Leah Rockwell* stated that the trusses for the Tennis Center roof are up, and the trusses will be installed on the Community Center soon. Once the roofing is in, then we can build the walls and interior structure. The courts and Tennis Center will be open a couple of months before the Community Center. The project is on schedule.

— *South Olive – Tennis Courts and Parking Lot* – *Leah Rockwell* stated that the first layer of asphalt has been laid in the parking lot. The new courts are currently being built. There was an issue with the lights, the location was very close to the FPL line on the other side of the fence. We had to get approval from FPL, which we received once it was determined that it was a low voltage line and not dangerous.
— *Warren Hawkins Aquatic Center* – *Leah Rockwell* stated that we had the first meeting with the contractor. He showed two designs of what he thought we could do. One within budget the other not within budget. If we are getting funding in the future, we may be able to do the alternate design. We are currently discussing it with Administration. We hope to go under construction in September/October of this coming year and have it finished before summer 2027. This would be an aggressive timeline. *Jacquelyn Taylor* asked if the swim teams influence the public having access to the pool during spring break, or any school breaks. *Leah Rockwell* stated that public use takes priority.

— *Village Paws Park* – *Leah Rockwell* stated that the design is not ready to present to the committee yet. Lorenzo Rivero received another design this morning from our CAD technicians, which is getting valued before he does our presentation.

— *Brian Chappell Park Fishing Pier* – No update.

— *Dreher Park Playground* – *Leah Rockwell* stated that we had an issue with the piggyback contract we were using as it expires on August 19th. Therefore, we had to wait for a new piggyback contract to be approved. The work order is being processed, We hope the playground will be installed by spring next year.

Penny Sales Tax –

— *Howard Park Community Center* – *Leah Rockwell* stated that the design is ninety nine percent complete and starting to go through plan review and permitting. We hope to have it out to bid by mid-September and have our contractor selected by the end of this year, early next year, to break ground.

— Coleman Park Community Center and Gymnasium – Leah Rockwell stated we got our CO on the building, and they are now going through some warranty items that need to be fixed. All the IT is moving in, the computers, the cameras etc. The furniture has been assembled and is in place. We hope to have the ribbon cutting ceremony within the first two weeks of September, hopefully the Saturday after Labor Day. Michael Odum asked about The Paul Blackshear sign. Leah Rockwell stated it should be going up within the next week. Leah Rockwell stated that there is a delay with the pavilion as the roof was installed by the installer upside down. We are now waiting for new roofing materials that had to be ordered to install right side up.

Public Works Bond –

— Dreher Park Restrooms – Todd Snyder stated that two of the three restrooms are now open. The third restroom on the north end is waiting on parts as the toilets were leaking. Once fixed it will be inspected by the Building Department, and we will then get the CO. It should be open in a couple of weeks.

General Fund –

— Bill Moss Hillcrest Paseo Athletic Fields – Todd Snyder stated that grass on the field is growing, and we have a year warranty which doesn't expire until next spring. We are replacing the fencing with an eight-foot fence on the perimeter of the fields starting next week.

— Gaines Park Concession Stand/Restroom – Leah Rockwell stated that we found asbestos. Removal of the asbestos and the demolition of bleachers is happening fast.

— Dreher Park Tree Relocation – Todd Snyder stated that some of the trees moved from the Boys and Girls Club build have been saved. We set up temporary irrigation at their new location and the trees will provide shade to our new playground. The trees have been watered since they were planted, and they are already showing new growth.

— Gaines Park Lighting – Purchase Order is ready to go. First the contractor will be at Phipps Park as baseball field lights need to be fixed, which will be done after Labor Day. Then the fixtures of the seventy-five lights will be changed at Gaines Park. Leah Rockwell stated it may take up to four weeks to do.

Staff

Comments

— Programs – Leah Rockwell stated that the summer camps went very well, the kids seemed to have a great time. We had our first day of afterschool pick up yesterday and everything went smoothly. The fall soccer season is open for registration, and practice starts on August 19th.

— Community Events – Leah Rockwell stated that Community Events are finalizing the vendors for Greenmarket. They are also working on Soul in the City, our jazz event, at the Lake Pavilion. They are working on the opening of the Sunset Lounge with a Soul in the City event. We are planning Soul in the City at the Sunset Lounge in November, December and January. They are also working on events for Halloween and Holiday in paradise with Sandi Tree in December.

— Sherry Wilson – Leah Rockwell stated that Sherry Wilson, our Assistant Director, has resigned. She has gotten a job closer to home, and we will sorely miss her. The committee asked that we extend their best wishes to her.

PARKS:

— Parks Maintenance – Todd Snyder stated we are working on the master contracts that are expiring, many of them at the same time. Master contracts last up to six years, usually with a two-year extension. The fencing contract is going through procurement, and we hope to have it awarded in December. The landscape installation service contract is currently open for bid. The sod installation contract is in process. The Right of Way contract expires in fall, but we have two more extensions we can use.

**Board
Comments**

These extensions are for two years. The Right of Way contract allows us to take care of the right of ways and medians. We maintain County and State roads from Okeechobee to 441, Northlake Beeline to Ibis, Southern to I95, all the I95 interchanges, Australian, Congress, and portions of 45th Street.

- *Leah Rockwell* stated that *Ms. Gloria Williams*, a long-term employee of the City of West Palm Beach, and for whom the Gloria Y Williams Multicultural Center at Pleasant City is named, sadly passed away two days ago.
- *Leah Rockwell* stated that *Phil Growick* had an idea that he wanted to bring to the committee, but he couldn't attend the meeting today. This idea came about because of the tree that was moved from a private property to Monceaux Park which was named Elizabeth. He thought of creating a program allowing the public through competition to name the City's most unique trees in our parks. He stated that it would bring exposure to our parks and teach people the importance of our trees. He will discuss it further at the next meeting.
- *Niels Heimeriks* asked if we knew that Chris Roog from the CRA awarded the Downtown Neighborhood Association one hundred thousand dollars to build a pocket park. *Leah Rockwell* stated that she talked to Chris about pocket parks and he said that it is not currently a priority.
- *Niels Heimeriks* stated that the zoo is currently trying to get a license to neuter male iguanas as the population is large and extremely invasive. *Todd Snyder* stated that we have a program which we are doing with Florida Atlantic University. The program catches iguanas at Woodlawn Cemetery by an invention that traps them. The iguanas are then euthanized. *Niels Heimeriks* stated he would be happy to help with assisting with these programs.
- *Niels Heimeriks* stated that his fence, which backs onto one of our parks, is being worn down by lawnmowers when we are cutting the grass on our park side. He also mentioned that a neighbor of his had a ficus tree growing into his fence which he removed at great cost and now he is concerned that the tree will grow back if we don't keep it trimmed on the park side at Hansen Street. *Todd Snyder* stated that he will follow up on both issues.
- *Gail Levine* stated that she appreciates all that the Department of Parks and Recreation does, and the Committee also. *Leah Rockwell* thanked Gail and her husband for always letting us know if we need to do things in our parks, which is of great help to us.

**Public
Comment**

**Next Meeting
Meeting
Adjourned**

Tuesday, September 9, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. on the 2nd Floor Open Planning Area, City Hall. *Michael Odum* made a motion to adjourn at 4:50 p.m. First by *Perry Douglass* with a second by *Niels Heimeriks*. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.