

**MINUTES OF THE
PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE
MEETING DESTIN CITY HALL BOARDROOM
MAY 26, 2020 - 4:00 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairwoman Hebert called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 26, 2020 in the Destin City Hall Annex Chambers with the Pledge of Allegiance immediately following.

2. ROLL CALL:

Members Present

Teresa Hebert
Myra Williams
Matthew Sweetser
Nikki Johnson
Barbara Telford
Brian Liesveld

Staff Present

Rey Bailey, City Clerk
Lisa Firth, Recreation Director
Scott Berish, Deputy Recreation Director

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

4. OLD BUSINESS:

➤ **Welcome to Destin Sign Update**

The Chairman informed everyone that Delta Pavers is ready whenever the project can commence. And asked Mrs. Firth for an update.

According to Mrs. Firth, the EAFB Commander has denied the request for the improvements to the sign at this time. Adding that she feels it has a lot to do with their property around the general vicinity of the sign that they have closed off to the public. She advised to let all the contributors know the current status and she will find out what to do with the funding that was set aside for the project by the TDC.

➤ **Beach Advisory Partners Meeting**

Mrs. Firth explained at the meeting this morning. explaining that the main discussion was regarding how super busy everyone was everywhere this past holiday weekend. Adding that it seemed to be busier than the 4th of July.

She also mentioned how disheartening it is to read Facebook comments from people saying how much trash accumulation there was, and nothing being done about it. She explained how many times the trash is picked up and the bathrooms cleaned. As well as how by the times staff goes from one end of the city to the other than and by the time they get to the end its all trashed again at the beginning.

➤ **Memorial Day Weekend**

Staff and members discussed at length how busy they all were for the holiday weekend. There was a discussion regarding the traffic back up on Beach Drive from all the people wanting to put in at Joe's Bayou Boat Ramp. According to Mrs. Firth, both parking lots were completely full by 9:30 a.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. on Sunday. Adding that staff put 68 trucks and trailers in the overflow parking lot and finally, she spoke of how well her staff members worked to keep the flow going as smoothly as possible.

She then spoke of the flag systems and how there is a new flagpole is now installed at June White Decker Park. Additionally, there are now 5-flag poles that are 30-35 feet high. She spoke of how they want every vendor and lifeguard shack and any private entity that flies a flag to fly the same colors as what the lifeguards have declared the water to be. She spoke of how State Parks do not have lifeguards and that mile stretch of beach is a concern and is being looked at to see if there are some funding to get a lifeguard put there.

➤ **Arbor Day Tree Planting**

Mrs. Firth thanked Committee member Williams for attending the tree planting at Kellaire South Park in the midst of the pandemic. Adding that although Council was not encouraged to attend because of that fact, Councilmember Marler did attend. And they planted a Magnolia Tree and flowers by the park sign.

➤ **Annual Park Inspections**

Mrs. Firth informed the members that there is no rush to get their inspections turned in and that they can put them off as far out as September if they don't feel comfortable enough to do them just yet. She also asked the members if they would make note of any tree dedications they may have at their parks they are assigned to inspect and let her staff know the locations.

The Chairman mentioned that she turned hers in just before the virus outbreak. And thanked Scott for the safety measures he put in place for the water fountains and hand sanitizers.

Committee member Telford asked for input on exactly what all she should be reviewing and turning in for her locations that she was assigned to inspect. Mrs. Firth encouraged everyone to report everything they feel needs attention.

➤ **June White Decker Park MobiMat/ADA Ramp Update**

Mrs. Firth stated that the ramp is installed and looks wonderful. Adding that there is a beach wheelchair at the location for people to use. However, the mat is not and will not get installed for this summer season. She explained that sea turtle nesting season starts May through November.

Mr. Scott Berish reported that FDEP has not issued the City the permit for the MobiMat at the June White Decker Park and won't until after nesting season ends on November 1st. And staff is unsure long-term how that is going to work out at this time.

➤ **Beach on the Westside of Marler Bridge Status**

Mrs. Firth explained that this is out of staff's hands and there are not any new updates at this time. The Chairman agreed to just table this since there is no need to discuss anything at this meeting until they know more information from the County and the EAFB.

➤ **Harbor Lane ROW Improvements**

The Chairman spoke of how Council appropriated \$25k for the improvements of the ROW to make it more accessible for the public.

Mrs. Firth explained that Council member Destin set aside the funds so that lighting and other improvements that could be made to the area.

The Chairman recognized Mrs. Sandy Trammell to provide input. According to Mrs. Trammell, they were not expecting the funds, but all involved agrees that it should be a community effort and feels that a community meeting should take place with staff and members of the public to discuss potential improvements. Adding that if that is not an option, she would be glad to have a meeting in her backyard and bring the items agreed upon to staff and this committee for their consideration.

Mrs. Trammell spoke of several different improvements that could be considered as well as the possibility of using a portion of the funds set aside to make improvements to the other nearby ROW's that have water access. She also spoke of how the neighborhood has agreed to do matching funds for improvements if possible.

The Chairwoman suggested installing the pier at an angle with composite wood. If Mr. Odom is not willing to remove the bushes, she suggests clearing out as much of the area as they can and have fill dirt brought in to level out the incline.

Committee member Johnson spoke of clearing out the other ROW that is flat to be used by kayakers as well as doing the other one. And then asked what happens after they are cleaned up. Do they stay ROW's, or do they become parks?

Joanne Bouchon spoke of the ordinance that Council member Morgan suggested staff write to protect the rest of them from any potential vacation of ROW requests in the future.

Committee member Sweetser suggested that if the stairs are to be rebuilt, he suggests that they make them wider for people to transverse in both directions and build them out of the Trex material, so they will last longer.

Mr. Matt Trammell suggested if possible to use the funds to improve each location and spoke how each one is different from the other in terms of water depth and fishing/kayaking possibilities that and if there are matching funds, they'll be able to make the necessary improvements that better fits each ROW.

Mrs. Trammell spoke of how whatever is done to this water access will dictate how the others in the city will be handled. She also suggested installing a bike rack to encourage people to bike to the access and not drive to it. Adding that she does feel that a streetlight is needed on Harbor Lane since there is not one but not in the ROW.

Committee member Liesveld does not agree with having a light installed simply for the fact that if there the area is lit is no longer a dawn to dusk access and becomes a dawn to whenever area. And agrees with what Mrs. Trammell mentioned.

The members briefly discussed the possibility of their next meeting being a workshop to discuss ideas for improvements to the water accessible rights of ways.

The Chairman suggested a workshop be set up for the community members interested to come together to discuss their ideas for their next meeting.

5. COMMITTEE MEMBER/STAFF COMMENTS:

Committee member Johnson asked about the status of the Fire Dept. taking over the portion of Clement Taylor Park and if there is still a chance for the public to provide input.

According to the Clerk, the lease is in the form of an ordinance which requires two readings and the first reading is June 1st.

Covid-19/Public Access

Mr. Berish explained some of the facilities are still closed. But with the Governor recently allowing programs to start back up with little to no restrictions.

Mrs. Firth explained that staff will be meeting with the City Manager to decide on starting up the smaller camp programs.

Committee member Johnson feels that since the Daycares have stayed open with no issue and the parents are comfortable with allowing their children then it's ok with her.

Committee member Sweetser agreed that ultimately it is up to the parents and if they feel comfortable with allowing their children to attend then they should start them up again. Adding they should add language about Covid to the paperwork they are required to fill out and submit.

Committee member Liesveld stated that he feels its incumbent for the city to maintain a safe environment. And they should follow the same models that are currently set forth for the beaches to have no more than 10-people in a group and stay 6-feet apart. And to slowly phase into an open environment.

Committee member Telford recommends for staff to make the decisions that will be easier and safer for them. But ultimately, she agrees, it is up to the parents if they feel they are comfortable to allow their children to attend.

Chairwoman Hebert agrees and to do what is easiest for the staff to maintain and if the parents to feel comfortable.

Mrs. Firth explained that her staff has been diligent at keeping the areas clean, but the tournaments are going to be the ones that will be challenging. She also spoke of how opening the Dalton Threadgill Park to the Little League for the local kids. But opening up to tournaments could cause a whole another issue being that the State of Louisiana has 30-teams and they are still not allowed into this State. And is a hard decision to come to a decision. She also mentioned how they are getting negative comments form the local citizens that do not want all people from different states coming into the city just yet.

Committee member Williams suggested that they err on the side of caution and make the tournaments smaller. Mrs. Firth explained that is not feasible because first it is the Tournament Director call to do that and he would not agree to only have half the teams.

Committee member Telford agreed and spoke of how there is not enough room at any of the parks where tournaments are played for people to be separated, as they should be. Adding that she thinks they should not even have them at all for this year and as a resident, it scares her to think of all the people it would bring in other than the normal vacationers.

Committee member Johnson agrees to not allow the tournaments this year. Adding that there are already plenty of tourists in Destin as it is and then if they had to be cancelled that could cause negative remarks on social media. She does however agree with having the little summer camps for the local kids.

She then asked if the Fire Station going in at Clement Taylor Park a done deal. According to the Clerk, the ordinance has two readings for the public to comment at the June 1st meeting and the June 15th Council meeting. She also mentioned how the lease agreement was never brought before them for discussion and then the next thing it's going before City Council.

Committee member Williams spoke of how hard its been for people to zoom into Council meeting with the Covid-19 and also how convenient it is for the Fire District too to bring this up subject up at this time. Adding that the community has been focusing on safety for themselves. She also spoke of

how for safety reasons, the two uses should be separate from each other. Adding that having a Fire Station at a park where children are is in no way a safe environment.

Committee member Johnson also spoke of how the one area of the park that someone can see the water from the road is where they want to put the station will destroy the look of the park. She also mentioned how she thought that anything that had to do with any of the Parks in the city should first had to come through them for discussion and recommendation to Council, so they don't have to go and speak individually as citizens in front of Council.

Chairwoman Hebert asked the Clerk if it was now too late for the committee to provide input. The Clerk informed the members that they can still provide recommendation as long as they all have a consensus agreement. The members discussed at length their concerns and disagreement and the result was that they all agreed that they do not favor the Fire District installing a station at Clement Taylor Park with the main concern being safety concerns for everyone and they were not consulted either. As well as the fact that the lease is only for \$1, is insulting considering the value of the land where the park is located.

➤ **STAFF REPORTS:**

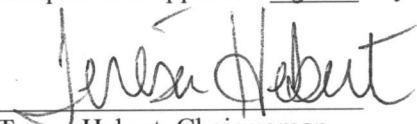
- **Clement Taylor Park Seawall Replacement** – Permits are now in place from the State and just waiting on the contractor to get it on their schedule. And Scott will be on site during construction.
- **Capt. Royal Melvin Park** – The bid opening is Thursday, May 28th with the bid committee meeting the following week to make a recommendation to City Council.
- **Capt. Leonard Destin Park** – Punch List items are still being worked out and should be opened in July. With the June Meeting being a workshop think about a date for the ribbon cutting ceremony.
- **Concrete Plant Property/Joe's Bayou Boat Ramp** – Waiting on the plan review.
- **Norriego Point Park** – Waiting on the final permits before they can begin.

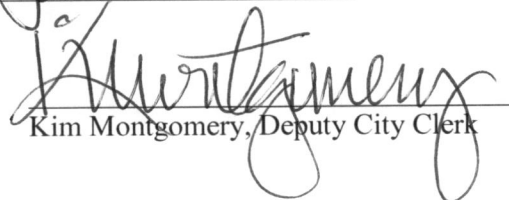
➤ **Public Comment** – None

ADJOURNMENT:

Having no further discussions, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Adopted and approved 30th day of June 2020.


Teresa Hebert, Chairwoman


Kim Montgomery, Deputy City Clerk