

**MINUTES
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS
CITY HALL
TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2015
6:00 P.M.**

Call to Order: Chairperson Gary Johnson
Invocation: Vice Chairperson Michael Jones
Pledge of Allegiance: Chairperson Gary Johnson

Roll Call: Those in attendance were, Chairperson Gary Johnson, Vice Chairperson Michael Jones, Board Member David Fawcett, and Board Member Tom Bryan.

Also in attendance were Parks and Recreation Manager Richard Weed and Administrative Assistant Anaeli Quinones.

Members not in attendance were Becky Roach and Yvonne Thornton.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: JANUARY 27, 2015

Chairperson Johnson asked if there were any concerns about the January 27, 2015 minutes and made a motion to approve the minutes; seconded by **Board Member Fawcett** and motion was approved by unanimous voice call vote.

Chairperson Johnson asked if we could move the Business Items around since the one that needed voting was number 3. Parks and Recreation Manager Weed said it was ok to move item number 3 to be the first item to be discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

1) DISCUSSION & APPROVAL OF THE PEAK & NON-PEAK MONTHS FOR RENTALS AT MACKAY GARDENS AND LAKESIDE PRESERVE.

Chairperson Johnson opened the floor for **Parks and Recreation Manager Weed** to explain. **Parks and Recreation Manager Weed** started by explaining the increased rates from the last meeting and wanted to clarify the difference in peak and non-peak months and give an actual set of dates for such seasons. City Staff went back through data already compiled to see how the peak periods would be determined, that way if anyone wanted to ask, it would show on what has already been booked in the past and what has been voted on. He suggested for the peak season to be from the months of October through June, and the non-peak season to be from the months of July through September, and he explained the non-peak season being during the hotter months and with goal of promoting the rental during that time frame with a lower rate as previously voted on. He also referred to the list of rentals during peak times that is attached to the agenda, as **Vice Chairperson Jones** stated. **Vice Chairperson Jones** made a motion to vote on the seasonal rates, and it was seconded by **Board member Fawcett**. Motion was approved by unanimous call vote.

2) REVIEW REVENUE REPORT FOR MACKAY GARDENS AND LAKESIDE PRESERVE FOR 2014 & 2015.

Chairperson Johnson opened the floor for **Parks and Recreation Manager Weed** to speak on this item as well as the other business items.

Parks and Recreation Manager Weed stated that he wanted to bring a copy of the revenue report before the Board to show what has been booked at the Mackay Gardens and Lakeside Preserve and do a comparison from last year and the current year. Rental revenue from the new rates will not show for about another year or so, but this already shows the rentals exceeding last year's rentals. He gave credit to Jeff and how he got the place and the Master Gardeners on how they are working to maintain it looking phenomenal. The next step after raising the rates will be getting more advertising for Mackay. He then went on to explain the pamphlet that was attached to the agenda discussing the totals received from the rentals. Needs to go back and check on a figure listed because it does not add up to the amount of weddings listed, but believes that we will have another record breaking year. He said that the money collected from the rentals goes back into Mackay for improvements and help it grow. He asked if there were questions.

Vice Chairperson Jones asked about the amount shown on the chart for the month of September. **Parks and Recreation Manager Weed** said that he does not know if it is a collection of deposits and refunds combined, but will have it straightened out for the next meeting to show the board. Thinks this year we are on track to break last year's record. He asked if there were any other questions.

There were none.

Chairperson Johnson moved on to the next item on the agenda.

3) REVIEW LIST OF SCHEDULED RENTALS AT MACKAY GARDENS AND LAKESIDE PRESERVE.

Parks and Recreation Manager Weed stated that this item number tied in with the previous one, which is the list of the rentals for Mackay Gardens. He explained the number of rentals between the years of 2014 and 2015, and how we are getting more rentals for the Estate and for the pavilion at Mackay as well. He suggested coming up with a plan some day on how to separate the pavilion event and the wedding event when they take place on the same day. This is due to maybe not enough parking space when you have large events such as wedding. We want to have the pavilion and playground being utilized but not interrupting the wedding event and/or viceversa. He has been working with Bill Bissett, a well known landscape architect and he is drawing some schematics on where we would be able to place parking and taking the flower beds to blend and that is where he is coming in to help. The biggest issue would be the parking with the large wedding parties, such as the one that just took place this past weekend with 200 people, and we want it to look nice and not just be asphalt on the property. Mackay is growing in popularity and we want to keep drawing in the large weddings and not just because of the size of the house, but also because we try to make accommodations to have such large weddings. He stated that we will continue to appeal to the public and to the people visiting the property. He asked if there were any other questions.

There were none.

Chairperson Johnson moved on to the next item on the agenda.

4) DISCUSS NEW LANDSCAPING PROJECT BEING DONE AT LIBRARY.

Parks and Recreation Manager Weed stated that as soon as this item was listed, he received a call from Ms. Schinn and she was concerned with the secret garden behind the library. He said that we will follow suit with the other city offices, putting St. Augustine, schefflera, gold mound for flower beds and have all of Downtown look nice. The irrigation has been started as well, and it will be running before anything else is put in. Knows the Friends of the Library will really like that.

Chairperson Johnson asked if there were any problems with the irrigation in the front because it would seem like it would work for a while but then it would not.

Parks and Recreation Manager Weed answered yes to that question and he previously spoke with Jeff regarding that and there were some problems with it. He has already spoken to John, the Public Works Director, about it because he believes the problem is the volume and maybe another line may have to be run. Will check the valves to see, if it is a simple solution. Once this is done, work will continue to keep the library looking beautiful inside and outside.

Chairperson Johnson questioned about the serpentine sidewalk in the back being the garden that the Friends of the Library paid for and bought the plants for, but now it looks like it is being neglected.

Parks and Recreation Manager Weed said that is a part of the plan, an inmate crew has been taken back there to start cleaning it up and doing some work to it as well to be able to continue the upkeep.

Chairperson Johnson mentioned that it is a Florida Friendly Garden and a Butterfly Garden as well, and that a lot of those plants could look like weeds if they are not being taken care of so he wondered if they are being pulled out thinking they are weeds when in fact they are not.

Parks and Recreation Manager Weed stated that they have been very careful about that. City employee Jason from Streets Department has been brought over to the Parks and Recreation Department and he knows plants real well so he is keeping the guys on track with the plants and the parks. He mentioned wanting to have everything looking great, not just the front part but the back as well and it will attract more attention to it.

Chairperson Johnson asked if there were any other questions about the garden.

There were none.

Chairperson Johnson moved on to the next item on the agenda.

5) UPDATES ON UPCOMING EVENTS AND PROGRAMS.

Parks and Recreation Manager Weed started talking about the upcoming boat races in April, Heritage Day and how he has been working with Segway of Central Florida so they bring segways to this event. They will set up at the basketball courts for people to ride on, receive lessons, etc. Thinks it will be a really good draw to the event. He also mentioned how there will be arts and crafts vendors, and there are 25 already signed up for it. Another round of flyers and letters went out to draw more craft vendors to participate. The Touch -A-Truck will be there to draw more families as well. He is expecting something like PSC Fall Fest. He spoke about summer recreation coming up and encouraged to let kids know, and he listed some of the field trips that will take place. He said that attendance and revenue had fallen last year, and wants to do it a little better this year with almost matching Haines City's program but also beating their prices.

He then wanted to give an update on Jamboree at Little League Baseball. They came to a Commission Meeting and were concerned with how the fields were. He said the department spent a whole month down at the fields leveling the bases, re-clayed them, smoothed out some of the infields and outfields, re-fenced the dugouts, pressure washed the sidewalks and the whole place, did some concession stand work, other fencing as well. The Leagues was afraid that Auburndale would not want to use them anymore, and when they came over for the Jamboree they said that they will play more games over here, all because of the work done. They are happy so we are happy.

He also mentioned the Fourth of July event coming up as well. Maybe adding another Touch-A-Truck, something else to draw more people.

He discussed again the Mackay Gardens and Lakeside Preserve and bringing Bill Bissett over. He said he would like to see maybe the tennis court be available again, with an open patio area to draw more people in to come and just relax. Spoke about a 50/50 grant that the City has applied for to restore the upstairs area, another well known architect will probably be able to come on board and help with that design and keep cost to a minimum. He also talked about Cleanup Day coming up this weekend. He started wrapping the meeting up and will give new updates on the next meeting about the Fourth of July Celebration and the End of the Year Centennial Event.

Chairperson Johnson asked if there were any other questions.

Board Member Bryan asked if all the wedding at Mackay were all people from Lake Alfred and how is it getting such a big draw.

Parks and Recreation Manager Weed answered by saying they are from everywhere and that the draw is basically through word of mouth. Also said that we want to get an advertising campaign together to getting Mackay out there. He explained that we have other fundraising events, such as the Bluegrass Bash but that the weddings are the easiest way to bring in revenue. He also explained how other cities charge a different fee if you are a resident of the city or not, and how Mackay does not do that, but that the seasonal rate is easy enough to draw more people and get more revenue. He spoke about another gentleman, Joel, that has been promoting the nature walks at Mackay and doing all kinds of advertising for the property.

Board Member Fawcett reminded about the Easter Egg Hunt and the Sunrise Breakfast at the Lions Park.

Vice Chairperson Jones mentioned having flyers for the Sunrise Service and that they will be put up around Downtown, and said the Lions Club will be sponsoring the breakfast.

Parks and Recreation Manager Weed said he has no problem putting them up at the library as well. He also mentioned that the deck at Lions Park will get redone this year.

Chairperson Johnson asked if there were any other questions.

There were none.

Chairperson Johnson made a motion to adjourn.

The motion was seconded by **Vice Chairperson Jones** and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:49 p.m. (Meeting started at 6:20 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anaeli Quinones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Anaeli Quinones
Parks and Recreation Administrative Assistant