

**MINUTES  
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD  
CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS  
CITY HALL  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2016  
6:00 P.M.**

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

**Roll Call:** Those in attendance were, Chairperson Gary Johnson, Vice Chairperson Mike Jones, Board Member David Fawcett, and Board Member Becky Roach (6:07pm).

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

Member not in attendance was Board Member Yvonne Thornton. A vote took place to excuse her for being absent. Motion was made by **Vice Chairperson Mike Jones**, and seconded by **Chairperson Gary Johnson**. Motion was approved by unanimous voice call vote.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: JULY 21, 2016**

**Chairperson Johnson** asked to make a motion to approve the minutes for July 21, 2016; **Board Member Fawcett** made the motion, seconded by **Board Member Roach** and motion was approved by unanimous voice call vote.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**1) DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF RATE INCREASE FOR RENTALS AT MACKAY GARDENS.**

**Chairperson Johnson** opened the floor for **Parks and Recreation Director Weed** to speak. **Parks and Recreation Director Weed** said that some trends have been noticed with the bookings at Mackay, which have been good for the rentals. He talked about the weekdays being rented out more so City staff wants to increase those rates from \$400.00 to \$500.00. And also the weekend rates during off peak season from \$550.00 to \$600 which is not substantial but it will make it consistent across the board. He explained how this year we have had weddings almost every weekend even during the hot months when normally we would have no rentals at all. City staff wants to move Friday from a weekday rate to a weekend rate, which is \$600 during off peak season, and \$800 during peak season. He stated that we are still trying to figure out the price range and where we need to be due to popularity. He does not think that raising these rates will not sway customers from booking. He then went to talk about the current two hour option for the night before for setup or rehearsal. A lot of people want to go over the two hour time frame without having to pay, or come in a bit early to not get charged extra. With raising the two hour rental to a three hour rental for \$100 instead of \$50, it should cover setup, walk through, rehearsal without any problem. He stated that the rate for the full day prior will stay the

same at \$300 because the more popular option is the two hour option and will give do away with customers trying to pay a prorated rate. Finally, he went to explain about the tables and chairs option. Currently, we have the old, fold out chairs and he is in the process of bidding out 100 of the white, folding, stackable resin wedding chairs that can be used outside as well. They rent for \$3.50 each at any party rental store, and he thinks that if the City rents them out for \$200 for them, they can use them both inside and outside and it will make the weddings look a little bit nicer. The chairs are being purchased regardless since there was money left over in the budget and that can attract more weddings. He asked if there were any questions. **Vice Chairperson Jones** inquired about the two hour rental being part of a package deal with the Saturday rentals taking place and losing some money on Friday by giving that away. **Parks and Recreation Director Weed** answered yes and explained that customers try to get prorated and he does not want to nickel and dime people. We are a budget friendly facility and want to maintain the appeal that we are a very reasonable location to rent. We are still trying to figure out where we need to be since we have already raised the prices before from \$650 to \$800 and that is not slowing us down. **Board Member Fawcett** asked if he could rent it for two hours for \$50, then he can also ask for another two hours for \$50 as well. So that would be four hours for \$100. **Parks and Recreation Director Weed** answered by saying that the two hour option will be taken away completely, so just the three hour option will be available for \$100. **Chairperson Johnson** inquired about having Saturday already reserved. **Parks and Recreation Director Weed** said that if they wanted to rent that evening, then it would be a regular rental for the whole day. **Chairperson Johnson** also asked if we check around and are pretty competitive with surrounding places. **Parks and Recreation Director Weed** said that because of that is why the deposit went up to \$500, because typically that is the going rate for a lot of places. For what we offer, if you are looking at comparable venues, you are looking at thousands of dollars. And this is based on recent experience and talking to the customers that come out to Mackay. Weddings are not cheap. **Vice Chairperson Jones** asked if we are seeing any damages with the deposit being raised. **Parks and Recreation Director Weed** said that we have not recently, although about two weeks ago, we had to take half of the customer's deposit because they left trash and it was quite messy. We try not to take the full deposit. A lot of times they are trying to bring the alcohol without paying for the police officer, or they leave the place trashed; we have not had that in a while and we try to be fair. **Chairperson Johnson** inquired about the customer's reaction when that is addressed. **Parks and Recreation Director Weed** answered by saying that most of them count on their friends and family to take care of the cleanup and they are not letting them know the extensiveness of it. When they pick up the key, we let them know where everything is, such as trash bags, where the dumpster is, and what we expect of the place. He explained that if food stays in the house, it is there for the whole weekend and it stinks the place out, etc. And if they leave it like that, they expect it. That is the key; we notify them, and if they let their friends and family know then they need to make sure they understand what it needs to be done to get their deposit back. **Board Member Roach** asked if there are many events on Sunday, if a weekday rental is from Monday through Thursday, and about peak season months. **Parks and Recreation Director Weed** said a few, but not as Saturday since that is the most popular day. Clarified that yes, Monday through Thursday is considered the weekday and Friday through Sunday is the weekend, as well as peak season months being from October through June. **Board Member Roach** stated she asked about Sunday because she does a lot of marriage prep and that would be the first thing she asks. **Parks and Recreation Director Weed** spoke about the difference between his own experience with his own wedding and the different options we offer as a budget friendly facility making this a part of the popularity. **Chairperson Johnson** asked if we try to accommodate customers' needs. **Parks and Recreation Director Weed** said that the key is that we are a budget facility with a lot to offer.

**Chairperson Johnson** asked to make a motion for the rate increase. **Vice Chairperson Jones** made the motion, seconded by **Board Member Roach**. Motion was approved by unanimous voice call vote.

**Chairperson Johnson** moved on to the next business.

## 2) UPDATES ON CURRENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS AND PROGRAMS.

**Parks and Recreation Director Weed** started by saying the Fourth of July event that had recently taken place turned out real good, with a car show, the Mr. & Ms. Firecracker Pageant, a bass tournament, an animal show that was really entertaining. He mentioned the sponsors for this event and thanked them for their help. He had a slideshow presentation and he talked about the animal show that was there at the event, and will use him for next Summer Recreation Program as he was more involved than previous acts. He then mentioned the Memorial Day service that took place in front of the Magnolia tree, and it was well attended. The Lake Region ROTC participated this year in it and lowered the flags. He explained how each ROTC is broken up into the different cities. He proceeded to move to the ongoing project that is going on at the Mackay Gardens and Lakeside Preserve. This project is being done by the matching \$50,000.00 grant that was received by the Department of Historical Resources through the State. This is to restore the upstairs part of the Mackay House. He showed pictures of before and after the restoration still in progress. LTO Contractor was who worked on this project. There were some change orders and the budget was exceeded by a little bit, but overall, it will turn out looking great. It will be more open and maybe there can be a picnic area there where people can go and have a picnic lunch or take pictures. The next slide he showed on the presentation was the lakefront at Lions Park. Currently being worked on is the torpedo grass. Applied Aquatics is under contract to help clean up the lakefront that he cannot get to with the back-hoe. He talked about other things he has been doing to make the beach look better even though there is still no swimming allowed. He explained the clarity factor for the lake and other factors that fall into place with the no swimming allowed. He then moved on to Summer Recreation, currently taking place at the Lions Club. There are about 40 kids enrolled and he thanked the Lions Club for allowing the Camp to be at their facility. It is going really great this year with the counselors and the field trips. Have gotten compliments from the fieldtrip locations about the camp. The Good Ole' Days event will be moved to Downtown this year. That way Pomelo can be closed and the cars can be lined up, the Historic Society can participate as well, the Fire Department can get involved and it can be a great event. This is something that has not been done in a while. Also stated that we received the Uplands Funding through FWC which is money that was applied for, where they will come in with a contractor and remove invasive plants and bamboo from the Mackay Gardens and Lakeside Preserve. He talked about the bridge that is also at the Mackay property, that was damaged and it has now been restored. **Chairperson Johnson** shared a story of the bridge when he was a child. For the final item, he said that the City submitted for a grant through the Florida Historic Department to purchase the Gardner House. It will not be until next year that the City hears back if the grant is approved or not.

**Board Member Thornton** had a question. She asked if there can be a fence put up by Lake Swoope at the park there for children because it is so close to the waters and there are gators there. It looks dangerous, and anything that can be done to help with that would be appreciated.

**Parks and Recreation Director Weed** answered that maybe he will get a "special projects line" in the capital to be able to take care of things like these, but he does not know if it was put in or if it will be for next fiscal year. But he is doing the same thing there as at the Lions Park to have some kind of buffer with getting rid of the tall grass.

**Chairperson Johnson** asked if there were any comments or remarks. He also asked for a motion to adjourn. **Board Member Roach** made the motion, seconded by **Board Member Thornton**.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anaeli Quinones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'A'.

Anaeli Quinones  
Parks and Recreation Administrative Assistant