

City of St Johns
Parks and Recreation Board
Meeting Minutes January 15, 2025

Meeting Called to order 6:02pm

Members Present: Fromson, Motz, Butler, Thelen, Pioszak

Members Absent: Gleeson, DeLiso

Staff Present: Director Schafer

Others Present: Rachel Hoten

Approval of the Agenda: Motion by Member Thelen, seconded by Member Fromson, to approve the agenda as submitted.

All in Favor: Butler, Pioszak, Motz

All opposed: None

Approval of the Minutes: Motion by Member Thelen, seconded by Member Fromson, to approve the minutes as submitted.

All in favor: Butler, Pioszak, Motz

All Opposed: None

OLD BUSINESS

A. Fantasy Forest 2.0 Master Plan

Director Schafer stated that they broken down the playground into two separate bids. Bid #1 is the for the main structure equipment, concrete, and PIP. He shared that the Spark Grant needs \$824,000 and the bid came in at \$667,000. He shared that the order was placed for the main structure and on February 6th is the deadline for the actual cost. Director Schafer mentioned that the Fantasy Forest Community Fund hadn't received any new donations since they hit the first goal. He also stated that the grant writer is working with Unlimited Play and trying to find other grant opportunities.

Member Pioszak asked if there is a warranty for the installation and he wanted to make sure the installer would be Little Tikes certified. Director Schafer stated that they had three contractors they were considering. There was discussion of going with the lowest qualified vendor.

Member Thelen asked if the county had responded to the request for \$60,000. Director Schafer shared that they have not heard from them yet. Member Thelen also asked about picket pick up. Director Schafer shared that they are alphabetically organized behind the park building.

B. Park Visit Recap

Director Schafer shared that since the park visit the dead tree branches were removed. He also shared that they have \$15,000 budgeted for fixing the parks and that would go towards wood chips, drinking fountains, painting the toy horses, sidewalks, and disc golf posts.

Member Fromson asked about the band shell expansion. Director Schafer shared that they will be adding a changing room, two doors, and roof addition.

Member Pioszak asked who is collecting money for the band shell expansion, if we will be using parks money? Director Schafer answered that the engineer estimated \$65,000, but to plan for about \$75,000. He shared that the parks would contribute half, and Bill Tennant is raising the other half.

C. Master Survey Plan

Director Schafer shared that the survey has been condensed down to 19 questions. Member Motz said it is important to keep it short and concise. Member Fromson shared that questions 12 and 13 are repeat questions. She also added that we should send the survey as a test to the board.

New Business

A. Capital Improvement Projects

Director Schafer shared that the performance shell is along with replacing the spray park fixtures are upcoming projects, along with replacing the drinking fountains in the neighborhood parks and wood chips for the \$15,000 budget previously discussed. He also shared that the depot has a \$35,000 budget for improvements.

Member Thelen asked if there is an update on the train room and train cars at the depot. Director Schafer shared that the arts council had cleared their belongings from the storage room and there was discussion around selling a couple train cars.

Member Butler asked if there was a plan for the flooring at the depot. He wondered if there would be something to lay on top, he was concerned about preserving the original floor. Director Schafer shared that they were looking into possibly of doing a floor that would lay on top of the current floor.

Member Butler also commented that the DDA might be willing to pay for snow removal if they were to use the Bobcat while they were in town.

Director Schafer also shared that the park house renovations at the Main City Park would need to be submitted to the city commission for approval. He mentioned that they would like to be able to have a kitchen area for fundraising use, but not a full kitchen. He also shared that the softball field fence replacement and a zero turn lawn mower would be needed improvements. Security cameras at the depot, maybe a couple inside, in the pavilion at the main city park, and at the spray park would be more proactive instead of reactive.

B. Grant Applications

Director Schafer said the last grant application didn't score well and he was looking into seeing where that could be improved. He mentioned that he would like to apply for the DNR Passport Grant for the Senior Citizen Park for possibly turning that into pickleball courts, parking, and sidewalks. By making it accessible they could score higher. It was discussed whether it would be better to fill and go over the current court or do a sport court. The deadline for the DNR Passport Grant is April 1st with a December 2025 approval and starting work in summer of 2026.

C. Budget Update

Director Schafer shared that the Zumba and Yoga classes were full. He mentioned that open swim wasn't available this winter because there weren't enough lifeguards to run it. He also shared that the City has closed on the Wilson Center and programming and budgets were being discussed for the Wilson Center. Director Schafer stated that bids for construction of the Wilson Center were due in the Spring with construction hopefully beginning in the summer.

Member Motz asked if we had a relationship with the library for any of the programs.

Director Schafer shared that the library is working with our writing workshop program.

Member Fromson asked if there would be swim lessons still and if there would be enough life guards for that. Director Schafer shared about the lifeguard certification class coming up and hoping to be able to offer swim lessons still.

Director Schafer shared that there was a meeting to discuss connecting the Scott Rd Connector Trail at Townsend Rd to the River Trail in Lansing by connecting to existing trails.

Member Fromson asked if the meeting for the trail would be on zoom. Director Schafer stated that he would get a zoom set up for it.

Adjournment

Move to adjourn by Member Butler, seconded by Member Thelen at 7:20pm