

**Recreation District #1
Board of Commissioners Meeting
May 15, 2024**

Board present: Nixon Adams
Rick Danielson
Shearn Lemoine
John Neill
Ed Bee

Board absent: deShea Richardson
Barrett McGuire

Staff present: Suzanne Reeder – Executive Director
Kia Knight – Assistant Director
Doug McLemore – Assistant Director
Scott Goodwill – Finance Director
Louisette Scott – Park Planner/Environmental Education
Niki Butler – Marketing & PR Administrator
Marie Dupre – Records Manager
Noel Baham – Recreation Director

Staff absent: None

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman N. Adams at 6:37pm. Niki Butler, Board Secretary, called the roll. Five of the seven current Board Members were present, which represents a quorum.

Welcome Visitors: N. Adams welcomed the visitors:

- Grant Schlueter with Foley & Judell, LLP
- Stephanie Ferry with Raymond James & Associates Inc.

N. Adams extends a warm welcome to Suzanne Reeder, who has recently been appointed as the Executive Director of Recreation District #1/Pelican Park. He introduces her to everyone present at the meeting, emphasizing her notable accomplishments in the past. The Board expresses its excitement and enthusiasm about her joining the team in her new role as Executive Director.

Open agenda to proposed new items:

J. Neill motions to open agenda for a youth sports committee meeting update and ask for a vote on a proposition from the Board Members. Second by R. Danielson.
Vote 5-0. Motion passes.

Approval of the Previous Month's Board Meeting Minutes:

- John asked to clarify his previous month's motion from page four, during the personnel committee meeting update. He would like to correct the verbiage he used and change it to say, "to reclassify the identified employees from exempt to hourly in accordance with the Park's interpretation of the Fair Labor Standards Act guidelines."

Motioned by J. Neill to amend the April 17th meeting minutes to be clearer and to accept the amended minutes with no other changes, seconded by R. Danielson. Vote 5-0. Motion passes.

Motion by R. Danielson to approve the previous month's minutes with the amended change, seconded by E. Bee. Vote 5-0. Motion passes.

Financials:

- N. Adams mentions that the payroll expenditure have been well below budget and we may have some surplus to move to our Capital Projects. S. Goodwill discussed the updates on the insurance payments and policies that have been paid since the end of April.
- N. Adams reviewed the bank statements, and all the balances are accurate with no discrepancies.
- S. Lemoine reviewed the credit card statements and did not find any discrepancies or have any questions.

Motion by J. Neill to accept the financials as presented. Second by S. Lemoine. Vote 5-0. Motion passes.

Reports in Brief: None**Resolutions:****2024-005- Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire Receipt and Compliance**

- N. Adams reads the resolution acknowledging receipt and compliance with Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire for audits engagements of Governmental Agencies from the Legislative Auditor's Office. The Board of Commissioners of Recreation District #1 of St. Tammany Parish, have voted that the answers to the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire for audit engagement of Government Agencies have been reviewed and the answers properly reflect to the best of their knowledge, the present fiscal policies and procedures of the Recreation District.

Motion by R. Danielson acknowledging the receipt of the Compliance Questionnaire. Second by S. Lemoine. Vote 5-0. Motion passes

2024-006- Millage Results

- N. Adams was excited to report that we received 65% of the votes for the millage combination and then proceeds to read the resolution out loud providing for canvassing the returns and declaring the results of the special election held in Recreation District No. 1 of the Parish of St. Tammany, State of Louisiana, on Saturday, April 27, 2024, to authorize the levy of a special tax therein. **Discussion.**

Presentation:

- Grant Schlueter from Foley & Judell, LLP, and Stephanie Ferry from Raymond James & Associates Inc. provided information and a status update regarding the 20-year extension on the limited tax bonds. They elaborated on how the District can leverage the tax for borrowing purposes, offering a general cost estimate. Currently the District's two self-funded debt issues have interest rates of 2.7% (Hancock/Whitney) and 1.3% (Chase).

Motion by R. Danielson to approve the resolution and adopt the resolution providing for canvassing the returns and declaring the results of the special election held for Recreation District #1 of St Tammany Parish, on Saturday April 27, 2024, to authorize the levy of a special tax therein. Second by J. Neill. Vote 5-0. Motion passes.

Committee Meeting Updates:

- **Youth Sports Committee Update:**

- J. Neill gives an update on the last Youth Sports Committee meeting. They discussed the poor condition of the volleyball standards, nets and equipment that has been the same for the last 20+ years. The Youth Sports Committee is asking the Board to approve replacing them with a new design that cannot only service the adults and youth heights, but also the younger age groups like the 7/8's that we have been incorporating into bounceball/volleyball. At this point the staff are constantly taking down the nets for the younger age groups and adding a small pickleball net on the court. With the newly designed standards and nets, they can go down to the younger age group, special population, wheelchair games and still accommodate the adult volleyball size net. **Discussion.**

Motion by J. Neill to approve the funds for the new volleyball equipment that will be coming out of Capital Replacement. Second by R. Danielson. Vote 5-0. Motion passes.

- **Strategic Planning Committee Update –**

Rick provided updates to both the staff and the Board from the latest Strategic Planning Committee meeting. These updates included all current projects and outlined the next steps following the millage renewal. Plans were discussed to approve the old batting cage area into the sand volleyball complex, Doug outlined the adjustments that would need to be made for the disc golf course to accommodate this expansion. Additionally, a series of meetings are scheduled in the coming weeks to explore potential collaborations with the Children's Museum of St Tammany and Southeastern regarding future plans for the Science Center/Planetarium. Speaking with Billy Nungesser, Louisiana Lieutenant Governor over State Parks, has expressed interest in also being a part of the Master Planning process at Rec District #1 as well.

The Board expressed interest in organizing a staff and Board Planning Retreat to delve into future planning ideas and financial considerations for our ongoing projects.

Division Reports:

- **Park Planning-** Louissette Scott followed the Strategic Planning Updates to include all of the Park Planning Construction updates. Construction is currently underway for the Groves Event Stage, with bi-weekly construction meetings scheduled throughout the duration of the project. Regarding the Skate Park/Pump Track, the permit application for site development was submitted to the Parish on April 25th. While Parish permitting has been obtained, the project is currently awaiting final approvals. As for the Pickleball and Water Well projects, NSI has recently received surveys of both sites from Randall Brown. Once this phase is completed, NSI will commence the review of preliminary designs in collaboration with the Park. Additionally, progress has been made with the Sand Volleyball project as Bob Mora from Batture conducted an on-site meeting with Doug and Ron to determine utility locations for specified sites. This information will be important in estimating project costs moving forward.
- **Environmental Education-** Regarding the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program Grant, there have been no updates to report thus far. In terms of the Southeastern Louisiana University Native Plant Class, Dr. Eva Hillman from the Department of Biological Sciences at SLU has confirmed her plans to conduct her class, utilizing Pelican Park and the Northlake Nature Center as host sites. This semester-long project, spanning 8 weeks, will involve four site visits. Dr. Hillman, who serves as a Graduate Faculty Instructor at SLU and is affiliated with the Pontchartrain Conservancy, has been coordinating the details of the class. A meeting was held on April 7th, 2024, with Dr. Hillman, Larry Burch from the NNC, and John Broderick at the Park to discuss logistical aspects. Larry's guided tour showcased various plant communities, including potential study sites such as old growth longleaf pine areas. As part of the class project, students will develop a digital library to be shared with the Park, and will be a great contribution with valuable data to add to our ongoing GIS project.
- During the Wild Ones meeting, The Louisiana Iris Conservation Initiative reported the completion of a successful iris season by being the 4th largest iris display in Southern Louisiana. For the Purple Martin Colony, nest checks were conducted on April 26th and May 6th and Pelican Parks Purple Martin gourds are totaling 13 nests and approximately 65 eggs to date, with an expected incubation period of around 15-18 days. As for the Apiary, the original bee order was canceled due to vandalism; however, alternate arrangements have been made, and it is hoped that two nucleus colonies will be provided by the week of May 13th, 2024.
- **Parks-** (Report included in official minutes on green paper)
 - ADT was called to repair the fire alarm at Brown Gym, a service covered under the maintenance agreement.
 - Rowland Seals Roofing and Waterproofing solutions are repairing concerning areas of the Castine Center roof.
 - Ron and Doug participated in Trimble training sessions and are ready to start mapping out infrastructure for GIS in the coming week.
 - Doug, Niki, Louissette, Andrea, Carly & Doc attended the LRPA at the state capital.
- **Recreation-** (Report included in official minutes on blue paper)

- Youth Sports:
 - Two weeks left of regular season games and then tournaments.
 - Summer Registration starts on May 20th – June 4th.
- Rentals include:
 - YBOA Basketball Tournament – (May 25th & 26th)
 - No Heart Left Behind Pickleball tournament (May 11th & 18th)
 - Aboriginal Disc Tournament – (May 4th)
- Special Events:
 - Cruisin' the Castine: Postponed due to lack of participants.
- **Castine Center**- (Report included in official minutes on pink paper)
 - Super busy lately with a lot of turnarounds and unfortunately one of our newest full time employees has quit, so Kevin has been working hard and Doug has sent some of his workers to fill in the gaps along with some temps that will be coming in soon.
 - One of Kia's favorite events, Fins, Feathers and Furs is coming back and they are working on the contract now.
 - Children's Hospital would like to have an event for education about heatstroke, gun safety, fire trucks, etc. and may possibly be at Gold Complex.
- **Park Planning / Environmental Education**- (Report included in official minutes on gold paper)
 - **Park Planning:**
 - **The Groves Stage**- The building permit has been issued and RCL has issued the Notice to Proceed effective Monday, April 15, 2024. The contractor has 180 days to complete the project, with completion expected on or before October 12, 2024. The site area has been fenced and ready for the start of construction.
 - **Skate Park/Pump Track**- The current schedule is still on track and will be closed around the first of July and hoping for the completion of the skatepark by the end of 2024. N. Adams asked to possibly donate the old equipment to other recreational districts that are in need of equipment.
 - **Pickleball**- NSI submitted amendment to original proposal reflecting the approvals of the Board from the March meeting.
 - **Sand Volleyball**- meeting with Batture tomorrow to start the programming work to evaluate the site reports for the next board meeting.
 - **Environmental Education:**
 - Pelican Park is ranked #4 of the 20 listed on the Louisiana Iris Conservation Initiative (LICI) website. We should expect several groups and visitors.
 - Purple Martins are back and the Park on its third year with approximately 10 nesting pairs this year. Once the babies are born, we will have them banded again through Wildlife and Fisheries.
 - Through Wild Ones connections, we have been in communication with Dr. Eva Hillman, Ph.D. in the Dept. of Biological Sciences at SLU, and she is interested in conducting a plant survey at Pelican Park with her class. She teaches a Native Plants of Louisiana class which will have a summer session and she would like to use Pelican Park as a learning opportunity for the class - possibly

a semester-long project identifying the dominant plant assemblages that would result in a report/ppt for you detailing our findings.

- **Administration Update:**

- Kia expressed her sincere gratitude to Niki Butler for her outstanding contribution during the millage renewal process. Niki's dedication in coordinating extensive print work, advertising and mailings for several community distribution was remarkable. Her efforts significantly contributed to our successful election outcome with a 65% majority.
- NRPA registrations are complete and hotel rooms are booked. Does the Board want the staff to book the flights to make sure that they can travel together for driving and planning purposes?
- Kia's plan for the next few weeks is to come in for 2 weeks and then every other week and the last week of June she will work at home and will be available during this time by phone.

New Business: Cooperative Endeavor with Lacombe Rec. District #4.

- Will discuss next month and continue discussing arrangements with donations of our current skatepark equipment. This discussion will continue alongside the progress of construction for our new skatepark pumptrack. Joe Impastato, Parish Councilman of Lacombe, has been actively engaged in dialogue with the Board and Director of Lacombe's Recreation District to draft a governmental agreement regarding this matter. Two separate agreements will need to have a cooperative endeavor to transfer equipment and intergovernmental agreement.

Motion by R. Danielson to develop and approve a cooperative endeavor agreement with Recreation District #4, Lacombe to transfer skateboard equipment. The receiving party will agree to move all donated equipment at their own expense for removal and travel expenses and must be removed during the agreed upon timeframe. Second by J. Neill. Vote 5-0. Motion passes.

Old Business:

Public Comments: None

Board Notes:

- Next Board of Commissioner Meeting, Thursday, June 20th (NOTE: It's on a Thursday due to the Juneteenth holiday being on that Wednesday)

Meeting Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn at 8:45 pm by J. Neill. Second by S. Lemoine Vote 5-0 in favor.

*All attachments, item lists and Reports in Brief documents are included in the official minutes.