

Recreation District #1 of St. Tammany Parish



Chairman: Nixon Adams
Vice-Chairman: Shearn Lemoine
Commissioner: Rick Danielson

Commissioner: John Neill
Commissioner: deShea Richardson
Commissioner: Barrett McGuire

Commissioner: Ed Bee
Executive Director: Suzanne Reeder

Recreation District #1/Pelican Park Board of Commissioners Meeting September 18, 2024

Board present:

- Nixon Adams
- Shearn Lemoine
- Rick Danielson
- John Neill
- deShea Richardson
- Barrett McGuire
- Ed Bee

Board absent: None

Staff present:

- Suzanne Reeder – Executive 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 Manager

Staff absent: Catherine Barbier, Tracy Roskins, Ray Duplantier

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman N. Adams at 6:30pm. N. Butler, Board Secretary, called the roll. All seven of the current appointed Board Members were present, which represents a quorum.

2. Open agenda to propose new items:

R. Danielson motions to exchange the Amended Reserve Policy draft in the original Board packet to the newest version. Second by d. Richardson Vote 7-0. Motion passes.

3. Welcome Visitors: N. Adams welcomed the visitors

4. Bobby Seese, Eagle Scout Project Update

- Bobby Sesse provided an update on his Eagle Scout Project. He reported the successful installation of peanut allergy awareness signage at all dugouts and concession stands in the Park. Bobby's initiative aims to enhance safety and awareness for families regarding peanut allergies. J. Neill presented and read a full proclamation recognizing Bobby Sesse for his hard work and dedication in completing this important project. The proclamation congratulated Bobby for his commitment to community safety and inclusivity. Bobby noted that his next

steps will be to submit his application for the project, which will then be reviewed by the Eagle Scout Board.

5. Approval of Minutes

- **5.A. Board of Commissioner Meeting Minutes – August 21, 2024**, Recommendation: Motion to approve the meeting minutes for regular Commission Meeting held on August 21, 2024. Motion by R. Danielson to approve the previous month's minutes as presented with no changes, Seconded by E. Bee. Vote 7-0. Motion passes.

6. New Business

- **6.A. Ratification of Emergency Declaration**– Sponsor: Recreation District #1 and Cleco, S. Reeder, Executive Director recommends that the Board approves the Emergency Declaration for Hurricane Francine. Motion by S. Lemoine to ratify and approve the Emergency Declaration for Hurricane Francine, as signed by the Board Chairman and authorized by the Board of Commissioners on September 10, 2024. This declaration enacted emergency procedures and authorized the necessary actions to ensure public safety, facilitate the use of Pelican Park by Cleco for staging emergency response vehicles, and address any required operational measures for the park and facilities during and after the storm. All actions taken under this declaration comply with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. Seconded by J. Neill Vote 7-0. Motion passes
- **6.B. Commercial Ceiling Fans – Castine Center** - Sponsor: S. Reeder, Executive Director submitted a request to install four logo free BAS fans in the Castine Center. The objective of this installation is to enhance airflow and reduce the temperature within the facility by at least 10 degrees. **Discussion.** Motion by B. McGuire to approve the purchase and installation of four 20' Powerfoil fans from BAF for the Castine Center. Second by S. Lemoine. Vote 7-0. Motion passes.
- **6.C. Finance Reserve Policy** – Sponsor: Scott Goodwill, Finance Director, gathered feedback on the proposed reserve fund policy, which follows guidelines from the Government Finance Officers Association. After discussions at the Finance Committee meeting last Friday, September 13, 2024, the staff and committee members made revisions based on the input received. The proposal suggests setting an initial funding level of 15%, to be taken from the strategic planning fund. This funding will help support various projects, including the installation of fans in the Castine Center. The reserve fund will consist of money that is not allocated to any specific projects. This proposal meets the standards required by bonding agencies and gives the board flexibility to use the funds as needed. The proposed policy states that this reserve will be restricted, meaning it can only be used for emergencies or specific situations outlined in the policy. The staff is asking for a checking account to be set up to keep the reserve to keep track of it easier. **Discussion.** This funding will be reassessed and adjusted to start at 15% and will eventually progress to 26%. Motion by E Bee to open a new checking account to add the Reserve Fund. Second by d. Richardson. Vote 7-0. Motion passes. Motion by B. McGuire to specifically authorize S. Goodwill, to open a new checking

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account explicitly for the Reserve Fund that follows the guidelines of the Reserve Policy. Second by John Neill. Vote 7-0. Motion passes.

- **6.D. Scott issued a Request for Proposal (RFP)** to all auditors in St. Tammany Parish and received three responses. S. Goodwill evaluated the submissions based on pricing and staff qualifications using a scoring matrix. S. Goodwill and staff recommend awarding the RFP for Financial Audit Services to the highest-ranked firm, Ericksen Krentel. The contract will be effective for two years from the date of the award, with an option to extend it for an additional two years. B. McGuire wants to commend S. Goodwill for the professional scoring matrix model that was used for this RFP, and he believes this matrix should be used for all professional services, so the criteria are based on past experiences and company specialties. R. Danielson also gave a brief history on the auditing going back 11 years ago, St. Tammany Inspection General recommended that all governmental agencies should rotate their auditing firms at least every 5 years. With this process, the Recreation District #1 has done a great job rotating. Motion by B. McGuire to award the RFP for Financial Audit Services to the highest-ranked firm, Ericksen Krentel. The contract will be effective for two years from the date of the award, with an optional contract to extend it for an additional two years. Second by d. Richardson. Vote 7-0. Motion passes.
- **6.E. Personnel Policy – Unpaid Leave of Absence** – LyKinda Thibodeaux, HR – People Operations Manager, presented a draft for the Unpaid Leave of Absence Policy, recommending that the Board review and potentially approve it at the upcoming meeting on October 16, 2024. This policy aims to provide protection for staff who are on FMLA or standard leave but have exhausted their available leave. Employees will need to be employed for at least 90 days to qualify. LyKinda collaborated with the attorneys for Recreation District #1 to ensure that the policy supports the retention of our most valuable asset—our employees.
- **6.F. Inclement Weather – Gym/Facility Usage for Practices Policy** - Sponsor: Dr. Noel Baham, Recreation Director, Dr. Noel Baham, recommended the implementation of a policy to allow coaches whose team practices are canceled due to inclement weather to reschedule their practices indoors when space is available. The recreation team would set up the gym space and provide a password to displaced coaches, enabling them to access RecDesk for re-scheduling their practices. Motion by S. Lemoine to approve and implement Policy REC008.2.2 – Inclement Weather. Second by John Neill. Vote 7-0. Motion passes.

7. Financials

- **7.A. Monthly Summaries-** Reported by S. Goodwill. Current projections estimate a surplus, which could be allocated towards reserves, or any other needs. With several employee openings, including salaries and benefits there will be reserves to be used. Two important Financial Committee meetings are scheduled for discussion later this month.

- **7.B. Bank Statements** - 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.
- **7.C. An initial budget overview** was presented by S. Goodwill, he emphasized that this is not the actual budget hearing; that will occur next month. He has presented just the draft that has been compiled based on input from various departments, and feedback will be solicited over the coming weeks. The current budget reflects improvements and is 100% better than previous years. The Board thanks Scott Goodwill, for his extensive information and appreciates having these documents ahead of time to focus on the budget for a longer period of time to review.

Motion by R. Danielson to accept the financials as presented. Second by S. Lemoine. Vote 7-0. Motion passes.

8. Committee Updates:

- **8.A. Insurance Committee** – 8/22 Erik with Assured Partners and Brian gave a An update from the Insurance Committee meeting that was held on August 22. Erik Dewitt and Brian Morton were present to discuss insurance requirements and certificates. Brian will meet with the team this Friday morning to review specific characteristics and update contracts accordingly. This discussion pertains to property insurance, not health insurance. An on-site meeting with Travelers had to be rescheduled due to a conflict with the NRPA Convention in Atlanta. Travelers will now visit on Wednesday, November 6, from 1:00 PM to 4:30 PM. A calendar invite will be sent out for this meeting.
- **8.B. Finance Committee** – 9/13 Two important Finance Committee Meetings are scheduled for this upcoming week and the full update will be at the next board meeting.

9.Division Monthly Reports

- **9.A. Administration:**
Discussions are underway with representatives from the disc golf community to relocate Hole 6 due to the construction of the skate park. There is also potential for a new course in Phase 6 of the park, with preliminary layouts already completed to ensure compliance with environmental regulations, particularly concerning the red-cockaded woodpecker.
- R. Danielson spoke of a productive lunch meeting that was held on Monday, September 16th, with Parish Council Member Joe Impastato, Council Clerk Mary Burchell, Louissette and Nixon. The discussions focused on cooperative endeavors with the Lacombe District, current initiatives, and future expansion plans, including the timeline for the skate park was a key topic, with efforts underway to expedite the project's completion. This will allow not only the local youth access to the park but also provide a temporary facility for children prior to the park's full opening.
- Cleco was a great partner during the storm, they were in and out with no issues and they were out in enough time so that the Castine Center could hold a Homecoming rental for one of the local High Schools on Saturday.
- **9.B. Master Planning:**
 - **Event Stage** - The construction of the event stage is progressing well and remains on schedule. Roofing work is expected to be completed by tomorrow, with additional panels being installed. The surrounding sidewalks will be addressed after the stage work is

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finished, with concrete expected to be poured next week. Once the stage area is prepared, sod installation is planned for the first week of October, allowing time for the Bermuda grass to establish before upcoming events.

- **Skatepark** - 4 in attendance for the pre-bid. Each bidder's proposal, which included the base bid and alternates, was reviewed. The alternates included:
 - Alternate 1: Entry Plaza
 - Alternate 2: Shade Structures
 - Alternate 3: Bracket Detailing on Sea WallsAll bids, including the base bid, came in significantly under the anticipated budget established for Phase 1. Phase 2 will involve more specialized construction work, particularly for the skate park. We anticipate attracting bidders from across the country who specialize in skate park construction. Adjustments to the budget will be necessary before proceeding to the second phase. A special meeting is proposed for next Wednesday at 11:00 AM to finalize the bidding process.
- **Pickleball** - The design is complete. Neill Schaeffer (NSI) sent the electrical plans for quality control (QC) The project will be ready for final review pending Park approval, at that point the project will be ready for advertisement.
- **Water Well** - Design and QC are complete. Plans will be sent for final Park review by 9/13. Pending approval, it will be ready to advertise for bids.
- **Science Center & Planetarium** - No new updates.
- **Sand Volleyball** - Batture, LLC is currently working on the Schematic Design Phase, including civil, landscape, electrical designs, and sand selection.

Small Projects:

- **Wayfinding Sign Package** – (NSI) has updated the sign package and will meet with the Park for review on the 18th, 19th, or the following week.
- **Trails and Bridges** - NSI has updated the plan and will schedule a meeting with the Park for review on the same dates.

Environmental Education:

- **Lake Pontchartrain Basin Restoration Program Grant** - Forty-one proposals were submitted, totaling over \$35 million. Scoring is complete, and awards will be announced this fall.
- **Apiary/Bee Keeping Classes** - Reid Falconer is organizing a fall beekeeping class for employees and Board members. Dates to be determined.

- **Pontchartrain Astronomy Society (PAS):** - A "Star Party" is scheduled for Saturday, October 5th at 7:00 PM on Orange 2.
- **Wild Ones** - A quarterly meeting was held on September 15, featuring a presentation by Teri Gegenheimer on creating habitats for beneficial insects.
- **NRPA Pollinator Blitz** - Pelican Park is participating in the NRPA Pollinator Blitz throughout September. Participants are encouraged to take photos of pollinators in the park and upload them to iNaturalist. Marketing materials will be shared on social media.
- **Bird Watching Classes** - A series of six bird watching classes is being developed in collaboration with Alex Landry (Northlake Nature Club) for October, featuring three lecture-style sessions and three field trips.

9.C. Parks

- The recent storm report from Hurricane Francine – The Park had 56 miles per hour winds and well over 10 inches of rain with the main issues it caused was low-lying areas experienced root rot due to standing water. To address this, the staff began spraying fungicides to prevent the spread of disease, ensuring that all affected fields were treated twice.
- Overall damage from the storm was minimal, totaling about \$50, including a few blown-over signs and broken bolts.
- The most significant loss was a 30-year-old oak tree that fell and could not be saved.

9.D. Recreation

Sports Update:

- Fall sports are underway, including baseball and softball, with the season starting in late September.
- Registration for Fall Sports will begin on September 23rd.

Facility Rentals:

- The North Shore Vultures homeschool tackle football team is currently using the facilities, ending their season on October 17th.
- FNA events will start this Friday, with make-up days planned for September 29th and October 27th.

Events: Pickleball Registration:

- Registration for the pickleball tournament is going well, with around 165 participants. There will be food trucks and vendors present for the event.
- Upcoming events include the Star Party on October 5th, Halloween Costume Exchange on October 12th, with donations currently being accepted.

9.E. Castine Center:

- The report highlighted ongoing efforts to expand weekday rentals, including examples like the recent rental from Coca-Cola for their meeting.

9.F. Concessions:

- Concession sales have been low but are expected to increase as more events are scheduled and Fall sports begin.

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Board and Staff Updates:

Upcoming Weekend Events:

- A busy weekend is anticipated with multiple events: pickleball, volleyball, softball, soccer, and a disc golf tournament.
- Six sheriff's deputies will be present for security, and a parking plan is being communicated via social media.
- Many Thanks were given by the Pelican Park Board of Commissioners to the current staff for their hard work and leadership in preparing for the busy schedule ahead and all the great changes and improvements that have been made.

10. Old Business:

- None

11. Public Comments:

- None

Next Board of Commissioner Meeting, Wednesday, October 16th, 2024

12. Meeting Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn at 7:43pm by B. McGuire. Second by d. Richardson. Vote 7-0 in favor.

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