

## **Minutes of the Fairhope Recreation Board**

The Fairhope Recreation Board met Wednesday, March 20, 2019 at 5:15 p.m. in the Rec Center at 803 North Greeno Road.

Present: Bob Keyser (left meeting at 6 p.m.). Michelle Smith, Cathy Hudson, Tom Kuhl, Derek Thomas, Vann Saltz and Charlie Langham. Absent: Jay Robinson. Gayle Fogarty took minutes at the meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Vann Saltz at 5:18 p.m. The minutes of the February 20, 2019 meeting minutes were considered and approved on a motion by Bob Keyser, seconded by Derek Thomas, none opposed.

Old Business: There was general discussion among the board members regarding the applicants for the open Recreation Board position.

Derek Thomas moved to recommend to the City Council the appointment of Corey Martin to the Recreation Board. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Charlie Langham, motion passed unanimously.

There was general discussion regarding the Pickle Ball franchise agreement submitted by Bruce Cuddy. Tom Kuhl stated that the Pickle Ball courts will be built this year at the Mike Ford Tennis Center. He is comfortable with the franchise agreement for Pickle Ball and feels there is a need.

Derek Thomas moved to recommend to the City Council acceptance of a franchise agreement to teach Pickle Ball at the Recreation Center and the Mike Ford Tennis Center submitted by Bruce Cuddy. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bob Keyser, motion passed unanimously.

There was general discussion regarding reappointment of a current Recreation Board member.

Bob Keyser moved to recommend to the City Council the reappointment of Michelle Smith to the Recreation Board. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Derek Thomas, motion passed unanimously.

There was general discussion among the board members of the Recreation Board's 5-Year Plan.

Charlie Langham moved to recommend to the City Council the acceptance of the Recreation Board's 5-Year Plan. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bob Keyser, motion passed unanimously.

Vann Saltz stated that he will work with Bob Keyser to present the 5-Year Plan to the City Council. Additionally, there was general discussion among the board members to invite the City Council members to an upcoming Recreation Board member. Vann asked that Gayle Fogarty contact the council and invite them to the next meeting.

### **Updates:**

Tom stated that concrete for the softball batting cages has been poured, and that opening day ceremony is coming up. Also, a topographic study of volanta will be done, Tom added that he has no updates on the property that is being considered for purchase by the City of Fairhope for recreation use at this time.

Bob Keyser stated that the Buccaneer Bash went well. He commented that the Booster Club will help the City of Fairhope with Priority 3 on the Recreation Board 5-Year Plan: *Refurbish the visitors concession stands at Majors Field.*

Michelle Smith stated that April is “Adult Learn-to-Swim Month.”

Cathy Hudson stated that FAST registration begins April 6 and after school swim begins on May 6.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

## **Fairhope Recreation Board Five Year Plan (2019-2024) Draft**

**Recreation Mission: To grow, inspire and support the recreational opportunities for Fairhope citizens of all ages and abilities by providing the best and safest facilities in all sports and leisure.**

The Fairhope Recreation Board updates its Five Year Plan biannually to provide recommendations to the Fairhope City Council on capital investments in recreational facilities. The Plan was developed with input from the recreational community, including concerned individuals and league officials operating sanctioned recreational programs at recreational areas. Among organizations providing input were Fairhope Youth Football, Fairhope Youth Baseball, Fairhope Tennis Association, Fairhope Soccer League, Fairhope Youth Softball, Fairhope Master Swimmers, Fairhope Youth Basketball, Fairhope Pickleball Association, Fairhope Flag Football League and the Fairhope Pirate Booster Club.

Much work has been done in making capital improvements to city recreation facilities over the past several years. While the Five Year Plan laid out below identifies a recommended potential path forward for investment in capital improvements in recreation facilities, it should be noted that progress in this arena has been ongoing. In the past 2 years, the following investments and improvements have been made:

1. Opening of the Fairhope Soccer Complex on CR 13.
2. Construction of a new main concession stand at Majors Field.
3. Pickleball courts have been incorporated into the existing tennis courts at Stimpson as well as the basketball court at the Recreation Center.
4. Construction of 6 new Hydro tennis courts at the Mike Ford Tennis Center at Stimpson Park.
5. Installation of air conditioning in the visitors' concession stand at Majors Field.
6. Construction of a new playground at the Youth Baseball fields at Volanta Park.
7. Replacement of fences at the Founders Park softball complex with netting which reaches higher to better contain foul balls.
8. Construction of a new playground at the Fairhope Soccer Complex.
9. Repainting of the indoor pool area and installation of new starting blocks
10. Completion of a proposed facility master plan for Volanta Park

Routine operation and maintenance activities continue to be strained by program growth within the city's recreation programs. Current registrations show baseball with over 900 participants, soccer with over 900, football with over 300, softball over 200, and basketball over 150. The Fairhope Area Swim Team, Fairhope Master Swimmers and Fairhope High School Swim Team keep the city pool in constant demand. The high volume of users of facilities has produced a nearly year round need for facilities. The Volanta baseball and Founders softball fields are used throughout the spring and early summer, and resume in September with fall ball. The Barnwell football fields are used from mid-summer to early winter. The soccer fields at Founders Park are used year round with approximate 2 week breaks in June and December for maintenance and refurbishment. The new soccer complex is in use virtually nightly with only short breaks in early summer and early winter. This heavy usage drives more frequent mowing, painting and minor repair of equipment, which will be difficult, if not unsustainable, given level or diminishing resources. The Stimpson Tennis courts are experiencing steady usage, and are inadequate to support participation in league play. Pickleball has continued to grow in popularity, and now has a need for access to dedicated outdoor space to play.

The following projects have been approved for execution in 2019 provided there is no emergency that requires reprogramming of the resources:

1. Pave the driveway to the Soccer Complex concession.
2. Resurface the track at Volanta stadium.
3. Replaster the indoor swimming pool (may get pushed to 2020).
4. Land purchase for additional recreation space.
5. Make ADA accessibility improvements to the Volanta stadium.
6. Construct an additional court at the Mike Ford Tennis Center for pickleball.
7. Construct new batting cages at the Fairhope Softball Complex

In recognition of program growth, as well as opportunities for recreational tourism, the Recreation Board recommends the following investments be made in recreational facilities. The investments have been prioritized based on what the board believes to be both the most urgent needs as well as greatest potential benefit. Costs are estimated.

**Priority 1. Purchase additional land for recreational purposes.** Recreational space continues to be at a premium. Football, baseball, disc golf and soccer continue to be pressed for space to practice and play, while flag football and lacrosse are beginning to gain interest and will need space in the immediate future. The recreation board recommends acquiring the most cost effective, usable parcel of land at the soonest opportunity. This acquisition will be key to determining how to best proceed with the master plan for Volanta Park. In addition to a 40+ acre land acquisition for development of athletic fields, it is recommended that a smaller acquisition (5 acres) be made in the Twin Beech Road area for construction of a community park to support that geographic area.

**Priority 2. Complete an engineering study of Volanta Park.** Projected start date 2019. Youth baseball participation has exceeded field capacity at Volanta Park. However, topography, proximity of both the new dog park and the disc golf course, and parking all limit the current feasibility of expansion. A preliminary master plan has been completed on the facility. Engineering is needed to prepare plans and specifications to complete the modifications and improvements that are recommended in the new master plan, as well as incorporate changes that may be prudent based on the new land acquisition.

**Priority 3. Refurbish the visitors concession stands at Majors Field.** Projected start date – Summer 2019. The concession stands in the municipal stadium have been undersized, underpowered, outdated and unfinished. A new home concession stand was constructed to better accommodate both the crowds during football games, and provide more effective and efficient preparation and service areas for the volunteer staff. The visitors concession has been air conditioned, but still requires renovation, as it does not have running water and has limited electrical service. The existing sink needs to be connected to a potable water supply and sewer, and additional electrical capacity needs to be provided to accommodate multiple heat lamps, food warmers, coolers, and the AC system.

**Priority 4. Complete a master plan for the buildout of the municipal pool.** Projected start 2019. Usage of the municipal pools has grown significantly in the past four years. Daily usage has risen to in excess of 600 people, taxing the ability of the treatment systems to keep up. Additional pools and/or splash pads are needed to meet ongoing use, and to support swimming competitions for youth, school and master swim organizations. A master plan should be developed to provide facilities that will meet future needs and optimize the use of space and current assets. The land acquisition (Priority 1) has the potential to

relieve some of the space demands for parking at the stadium, which will allow for expansion of the footprint of the swimming pool and recreation center.

**Priority 5. Implement Phase 1 of the municipal pool master plan.** Projected start date 2020. It is anticipated that the master plan will result in a recommendation for addition of a splash pad/water park as well as the addition of a second lap pool, potentially Olympic sized, with a diving well. It is recommended that the less expensive addition be constructed to alleviate the immediate strain on the existing pools.

**Priority 6. Repairs and Improvements to Founders Park Softball Complex.** Parking along the east side of the fields needs to be paved. The concession stand and press boxes need to be evaluated for space utilization, with consideration of the vacancy of the soccer concession and meeting room at Founders Park.

**Priority 7. Prepare a Master Plan for growth of Disc Golf.** Projected start date 2019. The Volanta Park disc golf course continues to grow in popularity and has hosted multiple tournaments. The engineering study may recommend improvements or alterations to the existing course, and consideration may be recommended for the construction of an additional Disc Golf Course. A master plan should be developed which will allow for continued growth of the sport in the community.

**Priority 8. Develop a Master Plan for Colony Nature Park.** The Colony Nature Park has been transferred to the City by the Single Tax Colony. A master plan needs to be developed for space utilization of this land, including possible walking trails, disc golf course and other improvements.

**Priority 9. Expand the Barnwell concession stand.** Projected start date – 2019. The current concession is becoming too small to service the growth in youth football. Expansion would allow concession space, additional storage on the second floor and additional restroom stalls to accommodate the sizeable crowds at the venue. Along with the expansion would be installation of a new, properly sized HVAC unit that can treat the air in both the concession and in the storage/meeting area to prevent degradation of the stored equipment.

**Priority 10. Add a new racquetball court at the Recreation Center.** Needed immediately, the racquetball court is difficult to schedule due to its popularity. Given anticipated growth in the area, this addition is needed.

**Priority 11. Implement recommendations of Colony Nature Park master plan.** This will provide additional recreational opportunities for the community and relieve the loading on other recreation facilities.

**Priority 12. Construct an Olympic-sized swimming pool (50m x 25 yds) with diving well adjacent to the existing indoor pool.** Projected start date – 2022. This will provide Olympic regulation pool lengths of 25 yds in the winter and 50 m in the summer. In addition to competition length requirements, this size pool will accommodate a variety of water related activities, and allow for both regional and national swimming events. The addition of the pool could relieve the overloading of the existing outdoor pools.