

LEISURE SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

February 8, 2024

9:04 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Amanda Glugover called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM.

DEVOTION

Luke McCoy

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All

ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT/ABSENT

Zone 1 – Amanda Glugover - Present

Zone 2 – Linda Smiley - Present

Zone 3 – Theresa Quattrociocchi -Present

Zone 4 – Carol Kilian - Present

Zone 5 – Malcolm Williams - Absent

Zone 6 – Devita Bonner – Present

At Large – Luke McCoy - Present

OTHERS PRESENT

Keith Willis – Director of Parks & Rec.

Sharonda Irvin – Secretary

Captain Jeremy Nikolow – Beachside District

Captain Leonardo Conde –Mainland District

David Waller- Public Works Director

Amanda Glugover –

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

January 11, 2024

COMMISSION MEETINGS:

Keith Willis – No Update

OLD BUSINESS:

None

BOARD COMMENTS:

Theresa Quattrociocchi- (To Capt. Nikolow) What is going on with the takeover of the parks by the homeless people. I want to know what the game plan is for the homeless issue on the beachside. You

could go to City Island Park as a woman, you cannot use that women's bathroom because there's always homeless men standing in front of it.

Capt. Nikolow - So we can't do anything about the homeless in the park. There's absolutely nothing we can do. If someone is sleeping, the only thing we can do is we can provide a warning for them not to sleep. If they choose to not heed the warning and go back to sleep, we could arrest them, which rarely happens. Usually, they either decide they'll stop sleeping or they'll move along. Sometimes we offer the first step shelter. I can tell you that probably at least I would say 90% of the homeless people we offer their shelter to don't go. And maybe of those 10% you can talk maybe 1 out of 10 into going to the shelters. It's very rare. As for the police department, it's not an issue that we refuse to handle. In fact, we've been asking for stronger ordinances. We've been asking for a relaxation of the Pottinger restrictions, which I don't know if you're familiar with the Pottinger case. This case is what really kind of handcuffs us, no pun intended to what we can do with the homeless. So, if they're in the park after hours and they're homeless again, we just have to provide them a warning. But what I can tell you is that we do patrol a lot of these parks very, very frequently. We've had four guys on the bicycle unit, and we just added two more, and that's pretty much the last couple months. That's all they've done is just hit the parks.

Theresa Quattrociocchi- Why haven't Lenox Park been hit yet?

Capt. Nikolow - People from the community, I've got emails, people have approached me saying "Hey, we saw your guys doing briefing down there". We have briefings at 4:00 AM 5:00 AM 6:00 AM sometimes they all wait until eight or 9:00 AM and then at nighttime we'll have a briefing at 4:00 PM and 6:00 PM. Sometimes they might wait and do it at 8:00 PM. So, it's all over the place.

Theresa Quattrociocchi- Why doesn't the City hire security down there?

Capt. Nikolow - I know the city manager is thinking about some type of park ranger type service, but that is probably like three steps above my level. You're talking to the wrong person for that. We do as much as we can within the legal parameters that City Legal lets us do. The city has a lot of resources for the homeless. There's a lot of tourism here. So again, this is not a situation we'll ever arrest our way out of it is not a police problem.

Amanda Glugover - I realize you have priority shootings or domestic violence or things like that going on over the homeless issue. So, we were just talking about hiring as they have at Brown and Brown, like some security.

Capt. Nikolow -

So, the city manager was considering something like that for the parks. We also had a meeting probably I want to say six or eight weeks ago with some people from the Beach Street business area. And they talked about going in together to hire the same security company that the Esplanade has to also kind of walk the Beach Street area. While the Esplanade is now changing their security. I know it was a discussion to have the City Foot some of that bill. Um, but that top kind of stalled out on the side of the beat street business owners and not really on the city side. And the last meeting that we had, uh, with the chief and the city manager was with the guy who owns the zip line company in Tuskawilla Park. And at

that meeting, the city manager had said something to the effect that he was thinking about some kind of city or park ranger.

Amanda Glugover - That's what we want and need.

Theresa Quattrociocchi- What happened to the Cop that was there at Breaker Park all the time.

Capt. Nikolow - It could have just been a patrol officer doing a check. That patrol officer could have been assigned from a different unit. It could have been a specialized unit. It could have been one of the guys on the bicycle. So sometimes we don't have the staff due to staffing shortages. And we can hire part-time officers to do periodic checks. So about four times a month I get a part-time officer who just kind of walks up and down the boardwalk, Breakers Park, in the band shell and the pier. And just to try to make the presence known. So, communication helps out a lot from city employees or from the residence because we just can't be everywhere at once. We do as best as we can.

Theresa Quattrociocchi- So, you're telling me all the parks get patrolled every day?

Capt. Nikolow- I have to go back and pull all the activity. I can't tell you that every city park gets visited every single day. But I can tell you that all of them get patrolled very frequently.

Amanda Glugover – Is the staffing issue getting any better since the last time that you came?

Capt. Nikolow- We've got an academy class right now with 20 and we're trying to start another one in April of another 20. Correct me if I'm wrong, but if this academy class of 20 make it, which they all won't that's just a numbers thing. I'm optimistic here. That would bring our numbers to 210 or 220.

Capt. Conde- I mean the objective is obviously to become not only full staff, but to increase our staffing levels. Because the last staffing, the numbers that we currently have are from like 2005, 2006 from before I even started here. So ideally in a perfect world we would have at least 300 sworn. We're only growing. I do want to let everybody know is that compared to the last meeting we did add two additional officers to the bicycle unit. Because they're four, we have them on a schedule. They report to a specific platoon, but their sole objective is to address the quality-of-life complaints, which more than half of them come down to the city parks. So, depending on if they're in district one on this day or district two on the other day, they do go to the parks. Obviously, there's a lot of different parks in the city. So, it depends on what we have going on. In addition to that specifically I can speak to Tuskawilla Park. I do have the officers going out there and they do conduct briefings out there.

When I'm able to, I'll pull on some of the reserve officers and reserve officers will go down there and patrol the park and make contact with the owner of the zip line. One thing I did propose a while back and I haven't heard back is this. Bethune Cookman University uses Sunnyland Park, and the zip line company uses Tuskawilla Park. What I proposed was, if we are able to structure a contract with them so that when they are utilizing these parks, that the city may write it off as a donation, the city may adjust their pricing. Whatever the city ask is structured into the contract. So, they have absolute authority over that park for the time being. So, the zip line park is open five days a week from Wednesday through Sunday. They're closed on Monday and Tuesday. So, from Wednesday through

Sunday, if we make an agreement with the zip line park, that means that the zip line park has complete authority over that park.

Capt. Conde- So, say a homeless person does agree to go to the FIRST STEP SHELTER. We are now required to take this person, search them, conduct an inventory of their property. If they have too much property, then we have to not only transport them from wherever they are to the First Step Shelter, then we'll have to go to the police department and submit all of their property as safekeeping until they get out. So now I pulled an officer from the road for well over an hour conservatively. So that is one less officer that is able to address priority calls for service.

Amanda Glugover - But is there some way that we could get some kind of security team, or a specialized training team that could do all those things you were talking about. Then the officer can come sign off on it?

Capt. Conde - What it'll come down to is that's a liability on the city. So, God forbid that we do have someone who is cooperative and now does want to go to the shelter, and we are transporting them in a police vehicle. God, forbid if we get into accident, now we're responsible for the medical costs and any potential civil liability from that person.

Theresa Quattrociocchi- I was told that you all have a transportation company that comes out and takes them. And the only reason why they took my mother is because she was 80 years old. That you guys have somebody that you have to call that actually does only the transportation because the police officers don't have the time to do this.

Capt. Nikolow - We don't. We have not hired any transportation company. It would be up for the first step shelter to hire someone to do this. Unless he/she was talking about the prisoner transport wagon. Maybe they thought would transport people. Sometimes they'll take someone to the hospital. Maybe that's what she was thinking. But the First Step shelter has a van. So maybe he/she was under the assumption that there's a van out there, but the van takes people to and from mental health appointments and doctor's appointments and to job interviews. But not transporting to the shelter. Mrs. Fahlberg makes those decisions on who brings people out there and who doesn't. It's very strict out there. This is not a low barrier shelter and to the point where she doesn't want people just showing up. Then it would just become a dumping ground. So that talk about transportation really has nothing to do with us, that will have to do with if the city wants to hire that and if the director of the First step shelter wants to allow it.

Keith Willis – We have summer camp there at Sunnyland Park from June to August. When we tell them that they can't be there during the camp hours of 7:30am – 5:30pm they usually comply. But at Dickerson Center they don't comply. But it's not only the Homeless it's the Community as well. Just recently we had a dog bite one of the kids at the Boys and Girls Club. So now, they don't use the park. And it is a shame that they made that decision that the YMC, the Boys Girls Club don't use the playground. So, they just kind of use the gym. We can't control the community park, but we are there the hours that the park is open. But like I said, we don't have that issue at Sunnyland, they comply and then at 5:30 they come in and they kind of kind of help you guys out because we don't make calls

for help. But I have the staff to sweep the area because of the needles and the condoms and whatever else may be out there.

Carol Kilian – I talked to the captain about this a while ago. The lighting situation in a lot of these parks and how you probably could use more lighting to help with the security and your job as well. And he said that it's on the table with the city manager. Is that the kind of thing that we could do as a board to pressure them to go ahead and try to get this lighting for you? Would lighting help you at all?

Capt. Nikolow - Lighting always helps deter crime for sure.

Carol Kilian - So that's something that this board can actually do and put some pressure on the city manager, et cetera to get the funding for that.

Capt. Conde - I can tell you for a fact that there's an entire science dedicated to environmental factors reducing crime. It's called CPTED, Crime Prevention for Environmental Design. And it's a comprehensive analysis of the entire property and it takes into consideration lighting, security cameras, natural barriers, manmade barriers, signage, community outreach. And it just analyzes it from a very broad scope and fencing the way, uh, landscaping is maintained. Sidewalks, you know, seating arrangements. The lighting obviously is one of the most important. And cameras are obviously the most important.

Carol Kilian – That is something that we need to be talking about as a committee.

Theresa Quattrociocchi- What about the cameras for those areas?

Keith Willis – There is still no funding for it.

Capt. Nikolow – The only lighting that I know of in that area was a lighting study that I think Andy Holmes did on the basketball Sea Breeze area. There was some extra lighting slated for there. There's the Sea Breeze Camera project, which is hoping to be done by June or July. From what it said the poles should be in in March. They're hoping to have most of the cameras up by June or July. So, the lighting is definitely important, and the city has to go out and do a lighting study to see what we can and can't put in there. And that's really outside of our purview there. But you know there's some places that you can only illuminate so much.

Carol Kilian - Do the homeless just kind of move from park to park when you tell them to just move? Daytona is probably one of the worst areas. Maybe we could learn from some of the other coastal cities, about how they've dealt with this issue. I know I'm not bringing up something that's new

Capt. Nikolow - A lot of other coastal cities do face it. And there's a lot of them that are actually way worse than Daytona.

Banter from all about the many services given in Daytona to the Homeless population.

Capt. Nikolow - We can't enforce the panhandling ordinance because it's being challenged in court.

Capt. Conde - And one thing I can tell you, because the first step shelter is in my area of responsibility, we have people that are being dropped off from hundreds of miles away. I can tell you a handful of times a month you'll see a sheriff's office or another police department from like Pinellas County, St. John's and they're asking for information about the First step shelter. What they do is they get the homeless a bus ticket and they ship them down here. And their legs will only go so far. So, they're going to stay right within our lovely city limits unfortunately.

Carol Kilian - We are an advisory board here. That's all we are is an advisory board and we said we would try to listen to what's going on everywhere. We have a platform. They may not listen to us, but if you had one or two things that you would put on a bucket list that we could maybe help you with, what would those be?

Amanda Glugover - What is the procedure meaning could you arrest the homeless for at least blocking the walkway or something? I get asked that all the time from people

Capt. Nikolow - No! I'll give you my top one and that would be if we could have like some kind of park ranger type service. And it doesn't need to be one person per park. It could be some kind of paid position. I don't think you need one per park. But if you had maybe a couple of people with vehicles and they just went from park to park to park every single day. I think maybe during the peak times, I think you would find that would help. But you know, again that's a money issue.

BANTER about cameras in the parks are much needed.

Capt. Nikolow - I know Collins Park is a constant request for cameras and down off of university. So, but just comes down to money.

Theresa Quattrociocchi - It's kind of a catch 22 with neighbors, the people I live with. We have two benches back there where you can't see them because it's so dark back there. But the problem is nobody wants lighting because they don't want the lighting shining in their houses. So, it's like, complain about this, but you can't, but then when you have a solution, they don't want the solution.

Capt. Conde - The only other thing that I would add to that list is maybe it could be a combination of responsibilities. Whoever the park ranger would be, is them being afforded the opportunity to transport those that are willing to go to the shelters. Because if they're able to at least make contact with somebody and they can say, "hey look, they're willing to go, we will transport". I swear to you, if I need to go down there myself to do the paperwork, I'll do it myself. As long as we have the ability to have somebody there that's going to be able to transport, then we can free up a unit to go handle the paperwork. Then they need to be checked by law enforcement for warrants and then conduct a search for the safety of everybody, obviously. However, the way that area is set up is there's two options. There's the safe zone and there's the first step shelter. So, the safe zone is for those that simply want to get out of the cold for the day or for the night. And then they get taken out there. They spend the night out there in a controlled, safe environment. And then once sunlight starts coming up, they're all, pushed out.

Carol Kilian - Where are the safe zones located?

Capt. Conde – Inside the First Step Shelter.

Theresa Quattrociocchi- So what can we do to help not only the Police but also the tourist?

Capt. Nikolow - Well one of the other things that we have been working on with the chief and he's trying to work on this year is looking at land development codes and codes of ordinances. We've already penned some of our suggestions and given them to the chief in terms of problem businesses, sidewalks, right of ways sleeping, camping as it relates to Pottinger compliance. So again, we are at the mercy of city legal.

Davita Bonner – There needs to be an A, B, C, D, step procedure on how to help the homeless in these situations. We can't just send them out there and say fend for yourself, and not give them the tools to do so. You can only educate the people through resources.

Theresa Quattrociocchi- Is there actually going to be a park built next to the first step shelter?

David Waller - There's is a consultant they're going to hire to do a concept for a sports complex. It would be adjacent to it if at all it's just a concept.

Luke McCoy – Mr. Waller when you were here last it was going to be some changes with enforcement at Joe Harris Park in the parking area. Where are we on that? And with Daisy Stocking Park are we nearing a completion date?

Amanda Glugover - Can I table this for one second? Because if we're going to be asking him questions, can we do that and let the officers go?

Capt. Conde - What I can tell you is we actually do have the signs installed. So, at 8:00 PM we have our officers respond and secure the gates and the signs are brand new. They're nice and large. They're at the three points of entry and exit at the park. So, any vehicle left past the closing point is going to be towed.

Carol Kilian – What district is the Homeless Shelter in?

Capt. Conde – It's in District 1. Railroad tracks is a dividing line between district one and district two.

Luke McCoy – Not zone one but district one. Don't get that mixed up.

Banter from all about future help from the board to the police dept.

Capt. Conde - We'll take some ATVs which would actually make life a whole lot easier to patrol them. No, honestly, because you have a lot of the parks that you can't access with a vehicle. So, you have ATV's and have the officer get out on foot. I think an at ATV would expedite the process.

Amanda Glugover - Why isn't that something we can talk about too. Maybe there is a volunteer group that would like to go to the parks and do a cleanup thing. You know, be the cleanup be crew.

Carol Kilian - I don't know why we can't do that, because we have a volunteer police patrol that's an organized thing. So why can't we do something like that to help these parks.

Luke McCoy - We wanted to do a proposal from this board to adopt a park. As of right now I can only speak about my fraternity. Our contract with the adopt road is up and it is no stretch of roadway close to our community now. So, we're looking to do volunteer hours and, and stuff like that. And if we did, do something and I know it'd have to go through legal and all that stuff to adopt a park or something like that.

Amanda Glugover – I could see legal saying what if they picked up a needle and stuck themselves, would the city be liable.

Luke McCoy –We are usually on the side of the highway with cars going 80 miles an hour. So, what they did, they provide you with a picker stick and a vest. And you can't throw your trash away. You have to take pictures of your trash and then call them, and they come pick the trash up. That's proof that you completed it.

David Waller -We used to partner with Salvation Army. We paid them for what they called it the Streets team. And it was part of their homeless outreach program. Yes, they put persons who were in their program out and they did cleanups in the CRA areas. The CRA paid a fee which it was nominal, but it helped support the programming. The Salvation Army did. But we have volunteer groups that do litter collection pick up through Public Works. Not super often, but Emory Riddle does some collections out around Clyde Morris and Bevel Road. And every year, it seems like every year we get groups that ask for parks to do cleanups in like Round Earth Day. They've done Riverfront Park, they've done Butts Park, Buddy Young.

BANTER about the areas that gets a cleanup done.

Amanda Glugover – Can we put that on the website to ask for volunteers to do cleanups?

Keith Willis – I'll ask Susan Cerbone.

BANTER about what happened to the Salvation Army Group after they moved, it just fizzled out.

Keith Willis – David, did we find a parking line between Tuskawilla and the Church?

David Waller - I spoke with the church. We're clearing all the way to the parking lot. So, we think the line is actually there. I went and spoke to the person who runs the school program there. And then they had no objection to us encroaching on their property if we needed to. That should be done today. We started doing some under brushing at Tuskawilla to try to create more views, clear views through the park and remove some brush. Some residents that live back in the back we're not sure how much of it we'll get to do. It's about 22 acres.

David Waller - We work very closely with PD. These two guys. I mean they are incredibly responsive and dedicated the two captains. I talked to the both of them several times a week. Our crews report problems to them, and they respond. They assist us. I mean, maybe not every day, but at least three times a week. They assist us with moving people so that we can do our work. A lot of times it's not in the park, it's under a bridge or in a right of way or just in private property that we get tasked to help move folks along. But, those two guys, they compare to the command that we've dealt with in my career here. These two guys are the best we've had. So, I mean they are passionate and responsive, they really want to do more. But their hands are quite tied by the legal processes that are in place. The precedents and the courts in the country are very homeless oriented.

We run a real tight balance in trying to provide facilities that are usable by the intended audience and doesn't encourage too much activity. That's not the intended audience. And some of it is driven by amenities. You know, parks that have restrooms and covered pavilions and stuff attract more of that activity. But they also attract more of the intended audience too. So, you got to kind of balance the need. And lighting, PD is really pro lighting.

David Waller - I haven't done a lighting project yet that is agreed upon. We, we try to split the middle because neighbors don't want lights. They don't want it to spill over in there backyards. They don't want to see it through the windows. People are very sensitive to lighting. And so, we've lit some parks. We've added, what we typically do in our parks is we light the improvements. So, we really increase the lighting that is in pavilions so that it's not dark in the pavilion. Even if it creates dark areas along the perimeters. When we light the restrooms, we light the parking lots, we light the pavilions and docks. But you end up with that shadowed areas in the perimeters, because the spillover is a problem for a lot of our neighbors and it's their park too.

Amanda Glugover – Are we doing anything about the lighting at the Schnebly Rec. Center?

Keith Willis – We are not doing anything else with Schnebly at this time. We have done the restrooms, new playground, new windscreens and a ramp in the back and two new treadmills. I am working to get some more new equipment over there.

BANTER about the lighting again for the Pickle Ball Courts at Schnebly.

David Waller - Completion date for Daisy Stocking is the middle of March. We're on track for that. We are committed to, and the contractor's committed to the parking lot being in an open condition for Bike Week the first part of March, but contractually he's got through the middle of March. And the only thing that I think will be hanging is there was an addition request for fence to be installed that was not part of the original contract that'll go to the commission, I hope in two weeks. And the lead time on that mean it'll probably be installed after the opening of the park, but we're working to try to find a product. The first request was an eight-week lead time, which we do in the end of March or end of February.

Amanda Glugover – Are you working on the Dickerson Rest room project now?

David Waller - We're currently working on two restrooms right at the front entrance of Dickerson. We should finish the demo of the existing today, or this week at the latest. And there'll be two unisex stand alone, ADA compliant, accessible restrooms that will serve the building. And when we finish that one, we're going to move to the activity building and do one at a time in there so that they have continue to have restrooms available. And we'll work on that. That'll be done this physical year. I don't have a timeframe because we've got to fit that in. We're doing it with our in-house staff. So, we've got to kind of massage the other demands as it comes along. But the intention is to finish the ones inside the actual Dickerson building, then go to the Mickel Brown building and do the two that are in there.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

NONE

ADJOURNMENT

February 8, 2024, 10:16 am

Amanda Glugover- Assistant Chair
Parks & Rec. Advisory Board

Reviewed by: Amanda E. Glugover 3-14-24
Amanda Glugover, Assistant Chair Date

Transcribed by: Sharonda Irvin, Board Secretary