

City of Jacksonville

117 W Duval St
Jacksonville, FL 32202



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 9, 2021

10:00 AM

Council Chambers 1st Floor, City Hall

Special Committee on Parks and Quality Life

Council Member Randy White, Chair
Council Member Randy DeFoor, Vice Chair
Council Vice President Terrance Freeman
Council Member Kevin Carrico
Council Member Joyce Morgan
Council Member Ron Salem
Council Member Ju'Coby Pittman

Meeting Convened: 10:00 am Meeting Adjourned: 11:33 am

Attendance:

Committee Members: Chair White, Vice Chair DeFoor, CM Salem, CM Freeman, CM Carrico, CM Pittman

Excused: CM Morgan

Also: CM Boylan; Peggy Sidman, Office of General Counsel; Trista Carraher, Council Auditor's Office; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

1.CALL TO ORDER

After convening the meeting, Chair White said that members of the public wishing to speak may go before or after the agenda items. One representative from Greenscape spoke about the importance of trees for shade and resiliency. Board Member Cindy Pearson - District 3 spoke about coordination and collaboration between Parks Department programs and school programs.

2.PRESENTATION FROM DIRECTOR OF PARKS, DARYL JOSEPH TO DISCUSS:

- a.Existing Park Conditions**
- b.Existing Park Programming**
- c.Parks Master Plan**

Daryl Joseph, Director of Parks, Recreation & Community Services, gave a presentation about the current state of park facilities and an overview of the parks system. In Duval County, the largest urban park system in the US, has 80,000 acres of parks total, with 10 state parks, 5 national parks, 392 city parks: 36,831 acres, 2 oceanfront parks with camping, 59 miles of paved trails and 141 miles of unpaved trails. There are 195 playgrounds and 34 of those were replaced in the last 5 years. The average lifespan of the equipment is 20 years, with common issues occurring due to deteriorating materials, flooding, and vandalism. Some of the park replacements have led to the installation of inclusive playgrounds and restrooms that are ADA compliant. There are 137 parks with courts (167 basketball courts;171 tennis courts) and 114 courts were replaced, renewed or resurfaced in the past 5 years. Public art is being incorporated into the design in several locations.

There are currently 33 outdoor pools and 1 indoor aquatic center. All outdoor pools are 30+ years old and have aging infrastructure. Pool Plaster has a lifespan of 10 years and the department has funding to replaster 3-4 pools per year (cost to replaster a pool averages \$150,000).

The Parks Dept. has 44 community centers throughout the City - 16 are operated by the Department and 28 are operated by partner associations - and the centers are of varying ages and conditions and offer youth and adult programming for the community. CM Salem asked about shifts in neighborhood demographics, specifically age related, and how the department accounts for those changes. Mr. Joseph said that demographical data is utilized in park planning, and that the master plan provides direction for each neighborhood. Several CMs asked about pickle ball, and Mr. Joseph said it will be included in the park planning process.

CM DeFoor asked about private funding for park upgrades, and Mr. Joseph said that such funding does occur in some areas. CM DeFoor questioned the fairness of this process, which could leave out some parks in less advantaged neighborhoods.

Jill Enz, Chief of Natural and Marine Resources, spoke about the Park Master Improvement Plan. Ms. Enz noted that parks are centers of community life, even more so during the COVID 19 pandemic. There have been three previous iterations of master plans, in 1969, 1979 and 2002. A new master plan will be included in the funding request.

Mr. Joseph said that there are 60 playgrounds, and 46 courts, rated as "poor" quality as of now. Mr. Joseph said that the department is requesting roughly \$20 million at this juncture, which would upgrade the "poor" graded playgrounds and courts, remodel/improve 140 restrooms and also provide funds for a 2021 Park Master Plan.

3. COUNCIL MEMBERS COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

CM Salem asked if the Master Plan can be funded through the CIP, Mr. Joseph said yes. CM Salem asked about the partnership with DCPS regarding pools. Mr. Joseph explained that there are joint use agreements with the schools, wherein the City pays for maintenance and the schools provide the facilities and pay for utilities. CM Salem also asked about community center upgrades and Mr. Joseph said that those are not included in this request.

CM DeFoor noted that this funding would effectively be a catch up, and asked what would be next after these parks are elevated out of the "poor" category. She also asked for a list of the parks impacted in this funding request, which will be provided by Mr. Joseph.

CVP Freeman spoke favorably about school-park partnerships, and in support of raising private funds for park upgrades that benefit the public.

CM Pittman asked about the responsibility of developers to contribute to any new parks or community centers near or around the new development. She also commented on the crime deterrent nature of parks. CM DeFoor suggested developer endowments that could cover the cost of future park maintenance.

CM Carrico asked about park programs, which are not included in this request from Mr. Joseph.

CM Boylan talked about athletic associations that contribute to park maintenance, and about promoting river access in parks.

CM White asked for a list of projects included in this request, mapped throughout the city. Mr. Joseph said that the playgrounds/courts impacted are located in each council district.

CM Salem made a motion to approve the funding request. There was some discussion about getting the project list first. The committee approved the funding request by a unanimous hand vote 6-0.

4. DISCUSS NEXT DATE FOR MEETING

The next meeting will be October 6, 2021. Mr. Joseph will provide details about the projects, more information about maintenance costs, additional big concept park ideas and will discuss some thoughts about what projects will be next. Peggy Sidman, OGC, will coordinate with Mr. Joseph on the legislation required for the funding, which would be co-introduced by the committee.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Carnell Oliver spoke about developer impact fees to enhance revenue, and about state funding for parks.

Ms. Powell talked about riverfront parks and coordination with other entities working in the same areas (DIA, DuPont).

Stanley Scott shared his support for the committee's actions, and encouraged 'thinking big' on future park projects.

6. ADJOURN MEETING

With no further business, Chair White adjourned the meeting.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research
CHampsey@coj.net 904.255.5151
Posted: 9.14.2021 5:00 pm