

## Meeting Summary – November 5, 2025

**Attendee:** Darryl Joseph, Director of Parks and Recreation

**Topic:** Department Operations, Workforce Development, and Facility Maintenance

During the meeting with Director Darryl Joseph, we discussed the department's current projects, the costs associated with maintaining park facilities, and the various responsibilities of the department's 110 maintenance team members. Director Joseph highlighted the ongoing challenge of workforce shortages as veteran employees retire, emphasizing the need to attract younger applicants.

We both mentioned the idea of pursuing potential collaborations with trade schools to connect young people with opportunities in the Parks Department through internships or apprenticeships, leveraging existing trade programs in Jacksonville. Director Joseph expressed interest in partnering to establish life skills classes at community centers to inspire youth to pursue city employment and trade careers.

We reviewed current capital improvement projects, including the construction of new athletic fields. Football and soccer turf fields cost approximately **\$1.2 million**, while turfed baseball infields range from **\$350,000–\$450,000**. These facilities are being prioritized in high-traffic parks that regularly host tournaments.

Director Joseph clarified that while the department manages essential maintenance—such as trash collection, safety standards, and facility cleaning—individual athletic associations are expected to assist with ongoing field care. He noted the success of the **Adopt-A-Park Program** in helping maintain park conditions and keep parks regularly utilized.

Concerns about inconsistent mowing and landscaping schedules at athletic parks were also discussed. We noted that some of this work is contracted to local landscape companies and JSEB members. To address these issues, I have scheduled a follow-up meeting with the **Chief of Mowing and Landscaping** on **Wednesday, November 12**, to review the city's contract and bidding processes.

This discussion aligns with the **TRUE Commission's mission** to ensure that Jacksonville taxpayers see meaningful results from their contributions—through well-maintained parks, clean neighborhoods, and a city that works efficiently for its residents. A detailed report from the upcoming meeting will be shared at our next session.