TOWN OF PALM BEACH

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION HELD ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2016

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

A Special Recreation Advisory Commission meeting was called to order on Thursday, November 17, 2016, at 11:00 a.m. in the Town Council Chambers. On roll call, all of the appointed officials were found to be present with the exception of Alternate Commission Member Linda Wartow.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chairwoman, Pamela McIver led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. COMMENTS FROM RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSIONERS – Chairwoman McIver welcomed everyone to the meeting then asked Mrs. Beth Zickar, Director of Recreation to share some good news about the department. Mrs. Zickar announced that Mr. Tim Campbell, Golf Course Superintendent had received the Employee of the Year Award. She spoke briefly of his history with the town his accomplishments and his dedication to the department.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS - Mrs. McIver asked that anyone wishing to make comments please wait until after the presentation from staff and the architect Mr. Nelo Freijomel.

V. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA - Motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Roberta Mambrino and seconded by Commissioner John Hartz. Motion carried unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. **Update on Seaview Park Improvements and Community Center** – At the request of Chairwoman McIver, Mrs. Zickar updated the commission on the progress of the project to date which included the time line of public meetings that had taken place and revised designs for the project. She stated that today staff would be presenting a revised modified plan to the commission asking for their consideration. She explained that during the design process there are other processes that are running on a parallel path which will include the creation of a business plan and the creation of a pre-construction cost analysis.

Mr. Nelo Freijomel, architect for the project, gave a presentation to the commission regarding the changes to the design of the building based on feedback he had received from the commission, ARCOM and resident comments.

Commissioner Roberta Mambrino stated she thought the new design was wonderful and asked Mrs. Zickar if there was any information regarding how much revenue might be generated from the fitness center. Mrs. Zickar stated that the vision is to have a membership based facility and it is expected to be one of the larger revenue generating components of the facility but she did not have actual figures at this time.

Commissioner Khooshe Aiken asked several questions regarding the need for a fitness center, the size of the facility and the impact it would have on local fitness center businesses. Mrs. Zickar stated that it would be difficult to assess what impact the fitness center would have on local businesses, but it is our intention to complement services already being provided and to enhance services.

Vice Chairman, Matt Smith stated that a fitness center tends to be the largest revenue generator in a community center helping many of them to break even. He felt that there were enough residents and visitors to the island to share and it would help the bottom line of the Recreation Department.

Alternate Commissioner Nicholas Coniglio stated that he felt that we need a fitness center and it would be a huge asset, however he felt that we might need to compromise on the size of the building to give the residents what they want particularly with little loss of greenspace, adequate parking and a full basketball court.

Commissioner Alexandra Woodfield asked if there would be a charge to use the gymnasium. Mrs. Zickar stated that was a policy decision yet to be made, originally it was envisioned that it could be a fee based usage, for open gym time, it could however be used for a many organized recreation programs.

Chairwoman McIver then opened the meeting up for comments from the audience.

Mr. John Scully of Palm Beach asked questions regarding the green space, the water run off area around the athletic field and the fitness center survey.

Mrs. Sophia Madura of 249 Everglades Ave stated that she was not against improving the existing the Seaview Rec Center facilities and programs. Her concern was the data generated from the original survey was not specific enough and not aligned with what the residents want. She felt that another survey should be done.

Mrs. Julie Araskog of 1490 Via Manana stated that it would be best to slow the project down. She felt the school should be questioned about the project. She wanted to know about the numbers of letters for and against the project. She felt that we needed another survey.

Mrs. Jeri Zenko of 232 Tangier Ave stated that there is a need for this project but at the end of the day the taxpayers will be funding the project and we do not have it quite right. She stated that the commission has not proven or demonstrated in any way from the data that a need exists. She stated that more work needs to be done and asked the commission to please give consideration to the comments that have been made today because there have been some really valid points made.

Mrs. Ethel Steindle of 315 Southlake Drive was in favor of the project particularly a fitness center and asked questions about the fitness center, outdoor restrooms and a kitchen.

Mrs. Azqueta of 101 Wells Road thanked the commission for addressing some of her concerns, particularly the green space, the hitting wall, outdoor bathrooms and the path from the Day School to the field. Her concern was changing the rec center into a community center and felt that it was the only place the kids have to play outside. She felt making the basketball court larger would be beneficial. Her other concern was security and making sure the kids are not getting into trouble.

Following the comments from residents Mrs. McIver announced that Commissioner Howe and Commissioner Coniglio had left the meeting. She then stated that in Commissioner Howe's absence, Commissioner Hartz would be voting.

Chairwoman McIver made a motion that the Commission endorse the general direction of the project, with the expressed concerns, as it moves forward to ARCOM and Town Council, seconded by Commissioner Mambrino. After further discussion, the motioned failed with a 4 to 3 vote against.

Commissioner Aiken made the motion that the Recreation Commission recommend to the Town Council that that another survey be completed, specific to the Recreation Center, seconded by Commissioner Hartz. Mr. Hartz stated he liked the idea of doing it cost effectively and have people come to the Rec Center to fill out the survey. Motion passed with a 4 to 3 vote in favor.

Chairwoman McIver asked Mrs. Zickar how to proceed with the possibility of another survey. Mrs. Zickar stated that there were a lot of unanswered questions that need to be resolved before she could answer, such as how to fund the survey, how long it would take and to make sure that it is statistically valid it would need to be done by an outside consultant. Mrs. Zickar stated that there are no funds in the current recreation budget to cover the cost of a new survey.

Commissioner Matthew Smith stated it was disappointing that two Commissioners had to leave before the vote was taken.

Chairperson Pam McIver concluded the meeting by stating there were a lot of things to think about with so many questions unanswered.

VII. NEW BUSINESS - None

VIII. ANY OTHER MATTERS – None

IX. ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business, Chairwoman McIver adjourned the meeting at 1:36 p.m.