



TOWN OF PALM BEACH

Recreation Department

RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING

November 8, 2006

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – A meeting of the Town of Palm Beach Recreation Advisory Commission was held on November 8, 2006, at the Recreation Center. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Michael Spaziani, Chairman at 9:00 a.m. Commission members in attendance were Mr. Spaziani, Mrs. Milissa Agnello, Mr. Michael Andrews, Dr. Timothy Coffield, Ms. Danielle Hickox, Mr. Kenneth Schechet and Mr. Stuart Shulman. Alternate members in attendance were Mr. Joseph Della Giustina and Mr. Henry Jamison. Absent from the meeting was Mrs. Rita Taca. Staff members in attendance were Director Mr. Jay Boodheshwar, Assistant Directors Mr. Alan Brown and Mr. Rod Gardiner, Tennis Pro-Manager Mr. James Hay and Office Manager Mrs. Lisa Walkowich.
- II. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA** - Mr. Spaziani asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Hickox made the motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Mrs. Agnello, all were in favor.
- III. **APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 13, 2006 MINUTES** – Mr. Spaziani asked for a motion to approve the September 13, 2006, minutes. Mr. Della Giustina made the motion to approve the minutes. Seconded by Dr. Coffield, all were in favor.
- IV. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - A. **Seaview Tennis Court Usage** – Mr. Boodheshwar stated that at the September commission meeting there was a discussion regarding some concerns brought up by members of the community. He said that there was the perception from these individuals that the morning doubles group was receiving preferential treatment when booking courts and in particular the booking of court number one. Also at this meeting it was identified that there had been a couple of isolated incidents where staff was not consistently following the booking procedure, this problem has been corrected. After a lengthy discussion and comments from residents it was decided that staff would uphold the current booking policies and that no court would be set aside for any group or player. Mrs. Hickox made the motion that we uphold the rules as so stated, first come first serve, for tennis courts on the Town of Palm Beach Tennis Courts, Seconded by Dr. Coffield, all were in favor.

B. Seaview Tennis Center Master Plan – Mr. Boodheshwar gave an overview of the steps that had been taken over the years regarding the project including the recent concerns from residents regarding the scope and length of the project. Mr. Boodheshwar said that staff was requesting direction from the Commission to evaluate the merits of the arguments for and against the current Seaview Master Plan project and direct us to either move forward as planned or revise the scope of said project if necessary. He also reported that the Breakers had made a commitment to provide access to their tennis facility for our permit holders during a large portion of the construction period. Mr. Boodheshwar stated that final details of the partnership were in the process of being finalized.

Mr. Spaziani then opened the meeting up for comments from the public. Mr. Fishman read his letter that had been previously sent to Mr. Boodheshwar into the minutes. (This letter is attached.)

Mr. Saul Letterer a resident and member of the morning doubles group, stated that he agreed with Mr. Fishman. He felt that to have a plan that reduces the number of courts is the opposite of what everyone expects and that 6 months was too long for the project.

Mrs. Johnston, a resident who is opposed to the projected stated the following points:

1. The space between the courts hasn't dissuaded people from playing and the same number of courts should remain.
2. She had been around Town talking with older residents who are not aware of the project being proposed.
3. She felt that the Breakers proposal is very generous but they might not be as generous once season starts.
4. This is not the time to undergo this project. With the construction of the new public school there are a lot people getting assimilated back into the community, people who are mostly out of town residents who might be using these courts and to cut up the courts right now is not the best idea because we are just starting to see those students coming back. Maybe they would go to Howard Park or somewhere closer to where they reside and once they go back there they won't return to Seaview.
5. Just because we are given funds to do a project does not mean it is the best for the public. She suggested doing a minor upgrade.

Mrs. Kaufman stated that she was in favor of the plan. The argument that we are going to lose a court was not accurate. She felt that the hard courts were primarily used by the pros for lessons. She felt that we needed to look at this as gaining a har-tru court. She agreed that the project was going to take a long time but she was willing to be inconvenienced to have a much improved facility that in the long run would benefit the community.

Mr. Neil Aronstom, a new resident, stated that he was against the proposed project and felt that the scope of the project should be lessened.

Mr. Phil Smith, from West Palm Beach was opposed to the project stating that there was nothing wrong with the facility.

Ms. Monique Ogilvie a resident suggested that the Commission study the possibility of allowing construction to take place later into the night if it would help reduce the number of months to complete the project.

Liz Lalor, a resident who lives at 224 Colonial is in favor of the renovation. She felt that in the long term it was going to be very effective. She agreed that it was an inconvenience but well worth it.

Phil Johnston, resident and an assistant tennis pro at Seaview, was opposed to the project. He made the following points:

1. The courts did not need to be changed just better maintained.
2. The hydro courts were slippery and he felt that they were dangerous especially to younger players.
3. He felt that players would leave the facility to play elsewhere and not return.
4. Building new courts with shade shelters in between would destroy the sense of community by separating people.

Ms. Cary Levinson a Real Estate Attorney and year round resident, was in favor of the renovation. She felt that the first impression of the facility was not very appealing. She felt that a newer, nicer looking facility would give a lot to the Town.

Mr. Spaziani, thanked the audience for their participation and comments and stated that the Commission would now discuss the matter.

Mrs. Agnello stated that she was in favor of the project. She felt that what mattered most was the quality of the courts. She said that the courts were old and needed to be replaced. She said that she has played at Phipps and never found the courts to be slippery. She felt that the short term disruption was well worth the long term benefit to the facility. The project has to be done, whether it is this year or in five years so we might as well do it now.

Ms. Hickox stated that she was in favor of the project. She said that she has played at the Seaview facility as well as other parts of the country and on courts in Europe and that she was embarrassed that Seaview was her home facility.

Dr. Coffield stated that he felt that the commission should make every effort to arrange play at alternate facilities while we are under construction.

Mr. Della Giustina said that he was in favor of the project and disagreed with Mr. Johnston. He said that he played every morning at the Phipps facility and felt that it was a great facility.

Mr. Jamison said that he was in favor of the plan. He hoped that we could minimize the disruption, but he would like us to have the best possible facility.

Mr. Schechet said that he had been in favor of this plan for quite some time. He said that he also has played at other facilities in the area and agreed that in many ways the Seaview courts were an embarrassment. He said that he was also very concerned with the lack of a firm plan of what we are going to do during this transition period. He stated that he was not comfortable voting for this without a definite plan.

Mr. Shulman said that it seemed to him that there were a number of young people in favor of the plan and they were the ones who were going to benefit by it and we should go through with it.

Mrs. Ogilvie, a resident asked if there could be a cap on the amount of time the contractor could take and had the suggestion that possibly some of the instructors could teach on private courts. She said that she knew of one member of the community who lends her court to a pro a couple of times a week to teach lessons.

Mr. Boodheshwar said that there would be penalties for late completion of work as well as a possible incentive to the contractor to finish the project early. He said that there are some communities where projects like this go 24/7, so that it can be completed quickly but that would be something that would be a special exception, a variance that the Town Council would have to consider.

Ms. Hickox asked Mr. Hay how he felt about the project. Mr. Hay stated that there were plusses and minuses but that for the long term benefit to the community, the project should move forward as planned.

Mr. Jamison said that it was his understanding that new courts took less time to dry after a heavy rain and that noon time maintenance would be eliminated. Mr. Hay said that Mr. Jamison was correct, however there would still be maintenance required during the day but it would never completely close the facility as it does now.

Mr. Della Giustina made the motion to move forward with the current plan, seconded by Mr. Shulman. Dr. Coffield asked to amend the motion to include that staff explore additional playing and teaching alternatives for the tennis patrons and professionals and to finalize the transition usage plan as soon as possible. Seconded by Mrs. Agnello, all were in favor.

Mr. Spaziani said that in summary, “We have outdated tennis courts that need to be renovated and we will try whatever we can, to make everybody as comfortable

and work with all these different groups for scheduling and we will make whatever opportunities we can via public and private courts to supply the needs of the tennis community.”

- C. Recreational Development in Parks** - Mr. Boodheshwar said that over the past couple of meetings there was some discussion regarding recreational playground structures in other areas of Town. He said that commission had received a memorandum regarding a meeting that he had with Mr. Paul Brazil, Director of Public Works. Mr. Boodheshwar said that Mr. Brazil expressed his interest in working with the Commission, when we are ready to move forward with a more formalized plan to develop recreational playground sites.

V. NEW BUSINESS - None

VI. ANY OTHER MATTERS

- A. Director’s Report** – Mr. Boodheshwar stated that he wanted to touch on a few items that were in the report.

1. The Annual Business Plan Update – Staff was revising and expanding the report to provide more information that we felt will be useful. The report was being presented to the Town Council at their December meeting and staff would bring the report to the Commission’s January meeting. Mr. Boodheshwar stated that the report was being presented to the commission for their information and did not require any action.
2. The Tennis Newsletter – Mr. Boodheshwar stated that during the assessment process staff identified as one of their goals was to engage with our public on a more consistent basis. In addition to the Annual Program Update a Tennis Newsletter has been created. Staff has received very positive feedback from the newsletter, as our patrons appreciate the information and being kept in the loop.
3. The Golf Course – Recently a newspaper article was run in the Palm Beach Daily News regarding national recognition the golf course had received in several magazine articles. In addition the golf course is involved in the pgafloridagolf.com initiative. The PGA has partnered with the states major tourism organizations to promote golf to tourist here in Florida. We are one of 25 golf courses that are listed on this interactive website.
4. New Employees – Mr. Boodheshwar announced that Linda McDonald, who has been a part time employee in the Tennis Division for the past 10 years, has transitioned to full time status. In addition Mr. William Mazone has been hired as our first ever full time maintenance worker for the tennis division. Mr. Edward Fiondella will be starting with us in early December as a new Recreation Supervisor. He will be taking over and expanding the athletics

program as well as starting a teen program. The staff is really excited to have him on board. Mr. Fiondella has been working with us part time for about 10 years and has been a full time teacher at the Palm Beach Day Academy.

This report is attached and provides additional details on the aforementioned subjects as well as other information.

- B.** Mr. Shulman suggested that the Commission re-consider, for the future, organizing a charitable golf tournament with the proceeds to go to the new medical facility that was being proposed for the Town. Mr. Spaziani said that he had spoke in front of the council regarding this subject and the Council thought it was a good idea for an individual or outside organization to organize an event that would utilize the golf facility. Mr. Schechet said that he thought there had been the idea of approaching the Citizen's Association to hold a tournament. Mr. Spaziani said that no one wants to take the reigns, you need to have a coordinator who wants to take on this task. He said that he felt that it was not in the Town's best interest to spend employee's time to raise a few thousand dollars.

Mr. Boodheshwar said that he recognized Mr. Shulman's point, that there is generosity in this community that is being funneled towards this project. He said that he did not feel that at this time that we should isolate ourselves on a tournament such as we did years ago. Mr. Boodheshwar said that there are some major changes happening for the golf course, changes in our market that we need to react to in order to lay a foundation for years to come. There are ideas in the works to try to partner up with some big names that will bring the golf course recognition. He said, "We want to make the golf course a destination site, to make it one of those golf courses that people say, if you're ever in Palm Beach you've got to go there and play." Mr. Boodheshwar said "That's what we are working towards. Yes tournaments and different things like that add to that reputation and I think it's a matter of timing, we got to get the foundation laid before we begin an event." Mr. Shulman said that all he wanted to do was to get the commission to think in terms of golf other than just thinking of tennis.

- C.** Mr. Della Guistina asked if we ever have any USTA tournaments. Mr. Hay said that we run approximately 5 tournaments a year that are more Town serving. He said that the USTA tournaments do not lend themselves to club players and in the past it was felt that to shut down a whole facility for two or three residents, who may participate, was not in the best interest of the town and the Town's tennis community.

VII. ADJOURNMENT - The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
Record of Attendance 2006

<u>Regular Members</u>	1/11/06	3/8/06	5/10/06	9/13/06	11/8/06
Mr. Spaziani	P	P	P	P	P
Mrs. Agnello	P	P	P	P	P
Mr. Andrews	E	P	P	P	P
Mr. Bone	P	E	----	----	-----
Dr. Coffield	P	P	P	P	P
Ms. Hickox	U	P	P	U	P
Mr. Schechet	----	----	P	P	P
Mr. Shulman	P	P	P	P	P
<u>Alternate Members</u>					
Mr. Della-Giustina	P	P	U	P	P
Mr. Jamison	P	P	U	P	P
Mrs. Taca	P	P	P	P	U

LEGEND: P = Present
 E = Excused
 U = Unexcused
 A = Absent Pending Classification as "Excused" or "Unexcused"

**RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
Conflict of Interest Record 2006**

<u>Regular Members</u>	1/11/06	3/8/06	5/10/06	9/13/06	11/8/06
Mr. Spaziani					
Mrs. Agnello					
Mr. Andrews					
Mr. Bone					
Dr. Coffield					
Ms. Hickox					
Mr. Shulman					
<u>Alternate Members</u>					
Mr. Della-Giustina					
Mr. Jamison					
Mrs. Taca					

LEGEND: X = Conflict of Interest