



Hendry-LaBelle Recreation Board
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LaBelle, FL. 33935
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February 15, 2024

A regular meeting of the Hendry-LaBelle Recreation Board was held on the above date at 5:30 PM at the Hendry-LaBelle Recreation Office, 310 Cowboy Way, LaBelle, Florida.

City Commissioner/Chairman, Daniel Akin, called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Opening Prayer was led by County Commissioner, Emory “Rowdy” Howard.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members present were City Commissioner/Chairman Daniel Akin, School Board Member Paul Samerdyke, County Commissioner Emory “Rowdy” Howard, County Commissioner Mitchell Wills, City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt and Director Steven Lynn.

Chairman Akin started with:

Bids: None.

Consent Agenda: Approval of the Minutes of January 18, 2024 and the bills.

County Commissioner Mitchell Wills made a Motion to approve the January 18, 2024 Minutes and the bills. City Commissioner Bobbie Spratt seconded. All were in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Paul Samerdyke
Schoolboard Member

Emory “Rowdy” Howard
County Commissioner

Mitchell Wills
County Commissioner

Bobbie Spratt
City Commissioner

Daniel Akin
City Commissioner

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Awards, Appearances and Presentations: None.

Correspondence (FYI): None.

Staff Reports: None. However, an open forum of discussion took place for quite a while with all the board members asking general questions and making comments on several of the parks. Commissioner Howard stated that the Rodeo Grounds looked good with all of the trash being picked up by the Rec Board team.

Commissioner Spratt asked Director Lynn if there was an update on Forrey Park. He replied, “no, I have the park shut down due to the Southern Swamp Gala.” She also asked about when the Kid Jones Park playground equipment would be installed. Commissioner Wills replied, “next week.”

School Board Member Samerdyke asked if baseball is still in practice. Director Lynn replied, “opening ceremonies is March 9, 2024.” Director Lynn stated that Kyle Owens asked if we were allowing soccer to practice at Davis Pratt in the common areas. Director Lynn said that he answered Kyle with, “the Board had approved that over a year or so ago.”

Director Lynn wanted to thank the City of LaBelle staff for their helping him at the Rodeo Grounds this week with re-keying an electrical box. Director Lynn added that he had been doing some hydro seeding research. He found out that there is something called Bluemuda which is a cross between Bermuda and Kentucky Blue grass which isn’t much different in price than Bermuda.

There was some discussion about the possibility of acquiring a “reel” mower and it’s benefits with regard to the baseball field turf. Director Lynn and Commissioner Wills stated some of its attributes.

Commissioner Howard asked if preparations were being made for Black Heritage Festival. Kim replied, “yes, the paperwork is ready for the President, Ray Johnson, of Ford & Sunset Community to come in and sign the Agreements and pay the fees. However, he has not yet called back to schedule an appointment.” Commissioner Howard stated that their community meeting is March 11 and would like for Director Lynn to attend.

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Kim mentioned Earth Week in April at the Nature Park and Captain Hendry House. Director Lynn advised that we were working with the Rotary Club to help clean up out there and we would be donating 2 port-o-lets, 1-2 recycling bins, tables/chairs, coolers, ice, cups and the banners.

Hearing of the Public: Commissioner Hugo Vargas wanted to know if there were any updates since the last meeting about the fencing for the pickleball court at Civic Park. Director Lynn stated that there was a Donar in the past but they never came through. He also mentioned that the Rec Board was in possession of some 4' high chain link fencing. Discussion ensued about the proper height of the fence and whether or not a 4' chain link fence would just be more of an obstacle for the players chasing after the balls. Someone suggested batting cage type material to be used as temporary fencing since the ball is not at a high rate of speed as it is in tennis. Director Lynn said he would check into that.

City Commissioner Spratt wanted to know if pickleball lines could be painted on the tennis courts at LaBelle Sports Park. Director Lynn replied that he was waiting to see if the tennis courts were going to get moved to the lot across from Civic Park or were we just going to wait for the courts to be built at Forrey Park. City Commissioner Spratt said we should not have to wait a whole year for lines to be painted... further stating that it doesn't cost that much. Director Lynn stated that he spoke to a few of the high school officials and their regulations do not disallow pickleball lines to be painted on a tennis courts.

Commissioner Vargas went on to add that he wanted to thank Director Lynn and the Rec Board for the new golf pads out at the driving range behind the Rodeo Grounds. Several people had reported to him that they were very thankful for them. He further stated that at a time when going to a golf course can be quite expensive, it's nice to have that driving range right here in LaBelle to use free of charge. Director Lynn replied that he had a bucket of golf balls at the shop he would give them to use out there.

Chairman Akin asked how Director Lynn was doing with getting all of the parks' operations figures together in order to get the "Joint Meeting" scheduled. Director Lynn said he is still waiting for some quotes from suppliers but is hoping to have it all to Jennifer Davis by the end of March so that the meeting can be scheduled for April.

Reports & Other Business: None.

Agenda Additions: School Board Member Paul Samerdyke read a letter from a concerned citizen regarding the condition of the LaBelle Sports Park. Specifically, the removal of the two (2)

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playgrounds and the poor condition of the concrete running track. This person would like the Board "...to consider allocating the necessary resources for the restoration of the playgrounds and the running track." Commissioner Wills stated that new playground equipment starts around \$250,000. He also stated that not only does the public need to be protected but so does the Rec Board, pertaining to safety/liability issues. Chairman Aiken said this is an old landfill and there is now constant settling happening. Commissioner Wills stated that this park has to be more than 20-30 years old. Much of this has been brought up in past meetings and is documented in the Minutes of those meetings. A response will be made by the Rec Board staff to this concerned individual's email next week.

County Commissioner Wills made a motion to adjourn the meeting. City Commissioner Spratt seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Akin adjourned the meeting. Meeting was dismissed at 6:15 p.m.

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