



**PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD  
ZEPHYRHILLS, FLORIDA**

**THURSDAY, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
6:00 P.M.**

**Zephyrhills  
City Hall  
Council Chambers  
5335 8<sup>th</sup> St.  
Zephyrhills, FL 33542**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Parks and Recreation board call to order**

Chairman Dave Walters time 6:05

**Roll Call:**

Amy Knoechelman called roll.

Present: Chair David Walters, Lindsey Mohler, Tracy Mahon, Norman Scheuerman and Nicole Hamilton

Absent: Gary Hatrick

City Council Present: Mayor Melonie Monson, Lance Smith, Charles Proctor, Jodi Wilkerson and Steve Spina.

**Staff Present:**

City Manager William Poe, Public Works Director Shane LeBlanc, CRA Director Gail Hamilton, City Clerk Lori Hillman, PIO Kevin Weiss, Amy Knoechelman, James Lyon, Jacob Hood, Audrey McGuire and Stephanie Boice

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

Lead by Shane LeBlanc Public Works Director

**First Order of Business**

Order of business was announced by Chairman Dave Walters and Gail Hamilton CRA Director was first to speak about the evenings Business:

Gail Hamilton CRA director welcomed all the people that came out to discuss the Park. She addressed the rumors that have been going around. There are no plans to get rid of the Veterans Memorial. WPA Bridge and fountain will be honored and will not be moved. The children's play area will not be smaller than it is now it will be made 3x bigger.

What we are looking for is what to do with the Park which is 50 acres in size. In 2016 the city did a survey and they had 800 responses. From 2016 to now do we still want the same things? This is the start of the Zephyr Park Plan. We have a \$5 million appropriations request in to the state legislatures at this minute. Every grant every appropriation wants a shovel ready project. We want input on what you like what you don't like.

Gail Hamilton CRA Director then introduced James from Kimley Horn. James discussed the where want to go, project history and timeline, what we did starting back in 2016-now, review survey results (which were online and open house), conceptual master plan, existing conditions of the park today, look at the program elements that are there.

May 2016 online survey and open houses.

June 2016 compiled results and presented them and from that drew up some early concept diagrams

November 2016 presented the conceptual master plan and then made some minor changes to that master plan and that is what many of you have seen and what was shown on the flyer for the meeting.

Went over what people envisioned the park in the future.

Gail Hamilton CRA Director let's all agree with those comments (hear agreements in the background) of things that were notated in 2016. Gail also noted city council members in attendance. It is not city staff that picks what the park becomes it will be decided by the City Manager and the City Council members.

James from Kimley Horn then went over other answers from the survey: demographic of the park, who bring to the park and visual preference survey. Integrating water and art. Modern Play equipment, splash park/water play integrated splash pad feature, integrating water and art, opportunities to celebrate the lake asked if these are still elements we wish to have (from the crown some yes and some no).

From a stormwater standpoint we need to make a way for the water to be as clean as possible before it works its way thru the stormwater system.

A lot of the park features people chose traditional features.

They also asked how many people go to the park, when people visit the park, design afternoon need shade shaded pathways etc. How do we get to the park answer mostly Vehicles, 40% with a dog and 30-90 minute visit is average and how did you hear about the park. We had people rate quality for each item currently.

Gail Hamilton CRA Director got back on the mic after James was finished. This is the first of many meetings as we refine in 2023 what we want to see at the park.

Chairman Dave Walters asked how from all that did we get to the elimination of Alice Hall and the tennis courts.

City manager William Poe spoke up and said he wanted to clarify the Veterans Memorial is not moving, the tennis courts are not being discussed to be relocated and Alice Hall that conversation will be a completely different conversation and that is do we leave it where it is and remodel or do we do a demo and rebuild at either the same location, move it or put it at a different park. That will be discussed thru a Parks Master Plan that has been discussed amongst the council it is on his list for the next fiscal year to present to council.

Chairman Dave Walters agreed that he answered a lot of questions.

A Vietnam Veteran stood and voiced his concern. City Manager William Poe answered him by saying there was a conversation about the possibility of relocating the Veterans memorial to Veterans Park it was a conversation. His dad was a veteran and there is a bench there in his honor. He is 100% vested in honoring the veterans. It was never the intent to dishonor or disgrace any of the veterans. That conversation has been tabled.

Gail Hamilton stated that this is just the beginning of the discussion of what we are going to do with the park, it is a beautiful park, it is our central park. We need to make sure that what we do with it honors not only the current residents, but our past residents and our future residents as well.

Tracy Mahon- the board had no clue ahead of time of what was going on with the park. They found out like everyone else. Her father was a veteran, her father-in-law was a veteran and he son is an active service man now. The veteran's area was her concern as well and she is glad to hear that is not happening. We need to remember that this is for our community and our children. Tonight think about what you are saying but how you are saying it as well.

Norman Scheuerman He heard about this at work from coworkers. Veterans run deep in his family and he agrees that they would not let anything happen to that area. Whatever we do needs to work for children and adults but don't forget about middle school age kids that is usually forgotten. We need to try to put some stuff in for the middle school and high school kids.

Someone from the crowd asked about the Purple Heart area Gail answered that is included in all of it.

Lindsey Mohler- All of this hit their desk as it hit social media. Their family is out there all the time. Her family has veterans she is a veteran. She wants to see stuff for all kids including ADA.

Nicole Hamilton- stated she agreed with what the other board members had said.

### **Citizens Comments:**

Luther Goodwin address 11451 Sally Rd, Dade City FL- Luther expressed how much he wants to keep the tennis courts and the memorial plaques. He thanked the City Manager for stating those would not go away.

Erica Freeman 37519 8<sup>th</sup> Ave Zephyrhills, FL- Erica's concern is upkeep we don't maintain what we have now. How do we know this park won't have the same fate as the current park?

Barry Herscovitch 4416 Sentry Palm Loop, Zephyrhills FL- It was a surprise to him to hear that the courts were going and that's why he was there. He was angry but now he is not.

R. James Stevens 35332 Whispering Pines Dr, Zephyrhills, FL- He spoke earlier on behalf of the veterans. He used to walk with his wife at the park 1-2 times a week. They would always see little kids, adults but what about the kids in the middle.

Andrew Frazier 34605 Sandy Pine CT, Zephyrhills, FL- He was glad to hear that the veteran's area is not going to be torn down. He would like the Park to find things for the teenagers to do. There needs to be a police presence to keep the riff raff from tearing the place up. He's hoping the city will work on getting more police.

Gary Metz 3325 Sandy Dr, Zephyrhills, FL- The Park needs repairs. There are not enough workers it's a lot to keep up with. The pavilions have birthday parties every weekend they are not really cleaning up after themselves. He thinks there should be a deposit made to hold the pavilions. Needs artful focal point.

Wendy Henderson 5041 Anthony CT, Zephyrhills, FL- She agrees with keeping the memorial there she is a veteran her parents are/were veterans. We are missing that could help the teenagers and the Jr High kids. Why don't we start a garden and use waste by making compost. If we aren't going to use the veterans park maybe a corner could be used as a community garden.

Andrew Wnagy 5548 23<sup>rd</sup> St, Zephyrhills FL- He is confused as of an hour ago the implications according to the CRA meetings and City Council meetings the implication was that there was going to be something done with Veterans Park that is a matter of public record over the last 5-6 months. As President Regan said Trust but Verify. He will be at the Council meetings and the CRA meetings to make sure that that vow tonight is honored.

Michelle Gard 7011 Ryman Loop, Zephyrhills, FL- She is at Zephyr Park daily. Her concern is the homeless. They are trouble makers they are always constantly trying to fight with people and causing trouble with people. There needs to be police presence

Jan Spivey 3105 Diana Dr, Zephyrhills, FL- Her family loves that park. Except for the bathrooms. They need torn down and rebuilt. She thinks the money needs to go to Krusen Park. They are having to pay \$18,000 per year to rent the fields at Sam Pasco. They would love to move back to Krusen there is room to put in at least 3 more fields and lights. All they need is a building to put their stuff in.

Shaun Silcat 7323 Andre Dr, Zephyrhills, FL- What he doesn't like is the communication. We need more free stuff for the kids to do.

Eileen Westermann 5522 17<sup>th</sup> St, Zephyrhills, FL- Alice Hall would be a good place for a boys and girls club. It could be a great place for a police substation so that they had a presence in the park or even a snack bar. We don't need another dog park. We do need more staff.

Shane Barker 14232 17<sup>th</sup> St, Dade City, FL- When the first image came up on social media there were about 700 comments within 38 minutes. He mentioned disc golf.

Gail Hamilton CRA Director- Disc Golf could not be added to Hercules there just isn't enough room. But it will be added to Zephyr Park.

Kim Barker 14232 17<sup>th</sup> St, Dade City, FL- She thinks that Zephyr Park should be a priority. Hercules Park will have less an effect as Zephyr Park. You spend your money where it will have the widest impact and

improve the lives of the most people. She stated there should be a director of Parks and Rec a full time person devoted to that, band stand and amphitheater and make them unique.

Madonna Wise 32907 Leonard Rd, San Antonio, FL- She wrote the grant for the existing water park. She took her grandkids there about 8 months ago. They were all excited. That place is a mess. She is sorry she left it. It needs help. She stated we need to look at staffing we need to find a way to monitor that beautiful park.

Beverly Holmes 39324 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, Zephyrhills, FL- The Marine Corps League has their services there on 9/11, they also have Memorial Day at the cemetery and a Veterans Day ceremony at the park. They would like to see some more participation. Maybe we could get a tasteful sign out on 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Joyce Burgess 38228 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, Zephyrhills, FL- Joyce is concerned about the cars and the children. People use 4<sup>th</sup> St as their cut thru from 301 to get to 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. They go very fast. She has seen kids almost get hit. She would like to have speed bumps or a more police presence to prevent that.

Richard Wingo 3430 Lanier Rd, Zephyrhills, FL- One thing he feels was left out is the homeless situation. It has been overlooked for many years and that is why it is there. He thinks some of this money should be spent figuring that out.

Lawrence Vickstrom 38516 Goodland Dr, Zephyrhills, FL- He is concerned about the homeless.

Beth Aker 9744 US HWY 301, Dade City, FL- Also is concerned about the homeless in our community and the need to do something about it.

Chris Dester 38021 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, Zephyrhills, FL- He would like it to be considered that there be an inclusive recreation area for the handicap.

Stacy Hester 20930 Hunter Hill Dr, Dade City, FL- We have to do free stuff for our kids, we need to have things for them to do that the families can afford. People who grew up here are having to move out because they can't even afford to live here. Women and children are living in their cars and in the woods because they can no longer afford to live here. They can at least go to the park and be family. There is no communication and that is where it starts. She hopes that the people and the board hears the heart of the people and does what's right and stewards our city and our money well.

Al Stone 5101 5<sup>th</sup> St, Zephyrhills, FL- A lot of people walk to the park. We need to put speed bumps down somewhere on 5<sup>th</sup> St.

Gail Hamilton CRA Director thanked people for coming out. She stated to reach out to the City if you have ideas. Help them create the best park we possibly can.

Audience member- How is the best way to reach someone? She invited Kevin Weiss to answer the question as he is the Public Information Officer for the City.

Kevin Weiss Public Information Officer- Stated he will just hand out his business card to anyone that wants it. Just email him and he will forward it to the right people.

Chairman David Walters- Thanked people for the passion of the people. In the event the appropriations do not go thru. Is there City money that can go towards this?

City Manager William Poe- There are dollars that would need to be discussed at the budget cycle. There is money that is unallocated at this time.

Chairman Dave Walters- The funds for 22-23 fiscal year the fund for parks what money was allocated for different projects? What are they and where are we with them?

City Manager William Poe- There were Hercules Park \$4.3 Million, \$300,000 for Zephyr Park for design, \$200,000 general park upkeep did a few things at Krusen Field, there were some renovations at the dog park, \$175,000 allocated for a play ground

Chairman Dave Walters- So there is money allocated for upkeep but nothing for improvements.

City Manager William Poe- No nothing for this year.

Chair Dave Walters- He is at Krusen Park 2 nights a week there are over 300 kids there a week. 500 kids signed up for little league this year. They would love to see some improvements out there.

City Manager William Poe- That will be a conversation to have with council. He will say Ms. Spivey said this but the city does not charge for those fields. Sam Pasco by Pasco County does charge. Any appropriation dollars are specific to that particular request. So if that appropriation goes thru it is only for Zephyr Park.

Chairman Dave Walters- What are the next steps.

Gail Hamilton CRA Director-Next steps are we will take your comments go back put together some concept and get ideas for the Park and how it is laid out. See you soon.

Chairman Dave Walters closed the meeting at 7:45 PM