

**MINUTES  
BAY OAKS RECREATIONAL CAMPUS  
ADVISORY BOARD (BORCAB)**

Town Hall  
2525 Estero Blvd.  
Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931  
Tuesday, December 1, 2020

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Simpson.

Members present: Barbara Hill, Lee Melsek, Betty Simpson, Holly Sweeten and Karen Woodson.

Excused: Janna Holmes

Absent: Beth Cherry

Staff: Cultural Parks & Recreation Director Alison Giesen and Recreation Campus Manager Sarah Mayher

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT** – no public comment.

**IV. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

**A. Department Report and Updates**

Manager Mayher reported that a senior luncheon was held outside. A three-day lifeguard certification class would be held for new staff members. A Thanksgiving fun day camp was held for nine children. The weight room participation was steady. Recreation Supervisor Millie started last Monday. A new Youth and Teen Program Coordinator was created and Jimmy Demilia III filled that position. Manager Mayher indicated that Club Rec was open and Fun Days over the Christmas Break would be opening this week.

**B. Friends of Bay Oaks Update – Denise Monahan**

Manager Mayher stated that Ms. Monahan had to cancel, but she would attend the January meeting.

BORCAB Member Hill questioned whether an initiative existed to integrate and promote Friends of Bay Oaks membership and fundraising. Manager Mayher replied that she would bring it up with Ms. Monahan to address in January. BORCAB Member Melsek questioned whether the Friends of the Mound House would participate in lobbying for the Friends of Bay Oaks. Chair Simpson noted they could speak to Ms. Monahan. BORCAB Member Hill commented that the entire community should be involved. BORCAB Member Woodson brought up the Alliance Committee and questioned whether they could be involved. BORCAB Member Hill stated that the Friends of Bay Oaks were

not a part of the Alliance Committee, but they should be. BORCAB Member Woodson noted that she was a member of the Alliance Committee and she would represent BORCAB at the next meeting. BORCAB Member Hill remarked that the Alliance Committee was comprised of non-profit organizations.

Chair Simpson mentioned that BORCAB Members could educate people who expressed interest in Bay Oaks. BORCAB Member Hill questioned whether it was the role of Social Media and Communications Coordinator Dexter to provide consistent messaging to the public. Director Giesen stated that Coordinator Dexter utilized the Town's website to push out information. BORCAB Member Melsek questioned whether she submitted information regarding Bay Oaks to the Observer and The News-Press. He pointed out that the community had to reach a consensus with BORCAB regarding what they wanted for the Island.

BORCAB Member Woodson questioned whether there was another opportunity for a forum to meet in January regarding the changes. She noted that she emailed members of Town Council yesterday but had not heard back. BORCAB Member Melsek encouraged members to attend the M&P Session and Council meetings.

BORCAB Member Hill reviewed previous communication issues and questioned why they were not involved with the 30% design consolidation. She noted there was not a place for an amphitheater in the plan. Director Giesen reminded members that the 30% plan was not final. She understood their frustration with the process, but she wanted them to be positive and move forward. BORCAB Member Sweeten commented that they understood the process, but they expected transparency moving forward.

BORCAB Member Hill stated that they were told to think big and they should stick with the original plan instead of redesigning everything. Chair Simpson agreed and noted that everything fell apart when it went to Council. BORCAB Member Sweeten remarked that they represented the community and they should be able to express opinions without being shot down.

BORCAB Member Melsek questioned who decided that Bay Oaks would get \$5.5 million; when was it decided; was it decided at a public meeting; when was the vote taken and who decided how to split up the funds between the three projects? He questioned why they did not put more into Bay Oaks and who decided they were locked into \$5.5 million?

Coordinator Dexter joined the meeting. BORCAB Member Melsek questioned whether she sent information to the Observer regarding Bay Oaks. Coordinator Dexter replied that she sent news releases after every Town Council meeting. She was unsure whether the original drawing of the Bay Oaks plan was sent to the media, but it was on their Facebook page. She suggested that BORCAB send information directly to the media. BORCAB Member Melsek stated that the Observer did not publish his letter to the editor. Coordinator Dexter indicated that she could send it through the process. BORCAB Member Woodson suggested that each of them includes their contact information with the request to publish the letter in the Observer.

BORCAB Member Woodson stated that Beach Talk radio extended an open invitation for anyone to participate on their Saturday morning program. She mentioned promoting Bay Oaks on the program and BORCAB Member Sweeten agreed. BORCAB Member Melsek revealed that Beach Talk radio published his letter in their newsletter. BORCAB Member Hill suggested that they wait until after the December 7, 2020 Council meeting to appear on the Saturday morning radio program.

Discussion was held regarding the lack of communication and transparency with all three projects. BORCAB Member Hill discussed ignoring the phases for the Bay Oaks design. BORCAB Member Melsek read his letter to present to Town Council and BORCAB Member Hill contributed suggestions. Chair Simpson questioned what part of the master plan could be accomplished.

Town Manager Hernstadt joined the meeting and stated that they would build whatever Town Council directed them to build. He encouraged BORCAB to communicate what they wanted. BORCAB Member Melsek remarked that they gave their plan to Council. Discussion was held concerning phasing projects, the high cost of consolidating the plans and long-term planning.

BORCAB Member Sweeten discussed condensing the amphitheater in the community building without involving BORCAB. Town Manager Hernstadt stated that no Council Member moved to add the extra \$1 million to the Bay Oaks design. BORCAB Member Hill suggested that they dedicate \$6.5 million to the first phase. Discussion was held regarding the original concept versus the scaled back version of their vision. Town Manager Hernstadt summarized that they wanted to go back to the original plan and build what they could afford to build based on the budget Council set.

BORCAB Member Melsek pointed out that phases were not discussed in the meeting with Council and DRMP. Town Manager Hernstadt reviewed previous conversations and diverging approaches. He stated that their original plan would cost around \$20 million and estimated that property taxes would have to be increased to under 2 mills on top of their current millage. Discussion was held regarding whether they could rent out the amphitheater under the terms of the tax-exempt loan.

Town Manager Hernstadt discussed estimates, bids, professional estimates and phasing millage increases over a few years. BORCAB Member Hill mentioned fundraising for the project similar to what was done for Lover's Key. Town Manager Hernstadt replied that they could bring up fundraising. He discussed how much time was spent planning for the redevelopment of Bay Oaks. BORCAB Member Sweeten clarified that the Town Manager expressed their concerns to Town Council. He encouraged members to attend Council meetings.

Town Manager Hernstadt repeated what they had to do to move forward and he discussed grant opportunities. He explained why \$1.5 million was removed from the Times Square project. He provided the current budget for Bayside Park.

Town Manager Hernstadt stated that the bottom line was that it depended on how much money Town Council wanted to spend on Bay Oaks. He reiterated that they must advocate for what they wanted.

Discussion was held regarding moving forward. BORCAB Member Woodson questioned whether Manager Mayher would email the original plan and the recent DRMP conceptual drawing to members. Manager Mayher replied affirmatively.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT** – no public comment.

**VI. BOARD MEMBER ITEMS**

BORCAB Member Melsek stated that he would attend the M&P Session on December 3, 2020 and present at the Town Council meeting on December 7, 2020.

No items by other members.

**VII. FUTURE MEETING DATE – January 5, 2021**

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** BORCAB Member Sweeten moved to adjourn the meeting; second by BORCAB Member Woodson.

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:19 a.m.

Adopted 1/5/2021 with/without changes. Motion by Karen Woodson  
(DATE)

Vote: Betty Simpson Signature: Betty Simpson

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