

TOWN OF PALM BEACH

Information for Town Council Meeting on: January 11, 2022

To: Mayor and Town Council

Via: Kirk W. Blouin, Town Manager

From: Nicholas Coniglio, Recreation Advisory Commission Chairperson

Re: Recreation Advisory Commission Annual Presentation

Date: December 22, 2021

GENERAL INFORMATION

The contents of the annual Recreation Advisory Commission (RAC) report include:

Commission Membership/Meetings

COVID Response

Par 3 Golf Course

Tennis Operations

Morton and Barbara Mandel Recreation Center

Lake Trail/Seaview Avenue and Cocconut Row Intersection recommendation

Commission Membership/Meetings

The RAC is comprised of seven regular members. In January 2021 at the regular Town Council meeting, Ordinance No. 02-2021 was approved, eliminating the requirement for three alternate member positions (this was done through attrition), and providing for a seven member commission. This has worked out quite well, as there is no longer confusion among the members as to their voting and participation status. Each member serves a three-year term, with a chairperson and vice-chairperson selected as necessary. The Commission held four regular meetings in calendar year 2021 (February, May, September and December), all being held virtually, except December. The current Commission membership is as follows:

Commissioner	Position	Term Expires
Nicholas Coniglio	Chair	4/23
Grier Pressly	Vice-Chair	4/22
Peter Harris	Regular Member	4/23
Pamela McIver	Regular Member	4/22
Kristen Schonwald-Vila	Regular Member	4/23
Susan Watts	Regular Member	4/24

Leslie Wyrzes	Regular Member	4/22*
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*not eligible for re-appointment

Ms. Watts was the only new appointment to the Commission in 2021.

COVID-19 Response

Covid-19 continues to affect all operations of the Recreation Department. The Recreation Advisory Commission was kept abreast of the programmatic modifications required due to the pandemic. The impact was particularly felt at the Mandel Recreation Center with limitations on participation for indoor enrichment programs and Fitness Center attendance. Each division of the Recreation Department adapted or developed operational plans and procedures in order to offer recreational opportunities for residents as the regulations and recommendations evolved. Overall, the department performed exceedingly well and had record participation and/or revenue in several areas. Staff is committed to staying vigilant with best practices and communicating consistent messaging as well as modeling best practice behavior until the restrictions are further reduced or eliminated.

Par 3 Golf Course

The Par 3 Golf Course had a tremendous year with over 52,000 rounds of golf played during fiscal year 2021. This is 34% higher than our previous play high in FY2019. The popularity of golf lessons and clinics increased and patrons have consistently provided positive feedback concerning the quality of the lessons and the instructors.

Outstanding course conditions are a priority at the Par 3, and the members of the Commission have provided input on several aesthetic and practical applications put in use. Additionally, janitorial and clubhouse services remain of high importance and staff are constantly working to improve the experience for guests. Additional staff time has been required to keep the clubhouse in good shape with the increased traffic.

Course maintenance has been a huge priority with the increased play; we have continued the practice of closing the course on Tuesdays until 11:30 a.m. allowing grounds staff to work on the golf course. The greens were dryjected three times, which improves the health and extends the life of the turf as well as aerated the course twice.

Some notable improvements to the golf operations this year:

- A new fleet of carts were put into play in January 2021
- A new registration, tee sheet and POS service provider system, Club Caddie, was implemented resulting in over \$60,000 in direct revenue increase
- Extremely compact plug-and-play grow lights (assists the turf in repair and growth during the night)
- Sound system installed with music capabilities in the bathrooms, pro-shop, and north and south sides exterior of the clubhouse
- New cart path along #18 (Oceanside) provides a much more scenic path (and players note the wind generally works with you vs. against)

- The new website features include the ability to send e-mails to specific zip codes, so residents are offered reduced rates as well as preferred booking up to 30 days out
- The exterior of the clubhouses were painted
- Enhanced staff time to focus on custodial and light maintenance duties
- Concrete work was completed on the patio
- California Closets were installed in Pro-Shop storage closet, improving storage capabilities and greatly enhancing its appearance
- Maintenance offices were repainted inside and all new office furniture was acquired
- Staff painted the piping in the pump station along with replacing the manifold

In FY2021 the revenues were more than \$3.6M (including more than \$400K in pro-shop sales), \$1M more than projected, and we were awarded the South Florida PGA Merchandiser of the Year award due to the outstanding sales and excellent reviews.

The restaurant, al Fresco, at the Par 3, remains a favorite dining destination for residents and guests alike. With in-person dining permitted, al Fresco followed protocols and safety precautions allowing for steady business, which increased monthly. Town staff works closely with al Fresco staff to address any operational issues, which may come up. The popularity of the golf course and the restaurant continues to be a testament to outstanding service, which has become the hallmark of this remarkable facility.

The installation of beehives in 2020, on the left of tee box on 12, continues to be a huge hit! Native plants provide a buffer for them and a place for pollen distribution. The “Hole in One” honey is harvested and sold at the golf and tennis pro shops and the Mandel Recreation Center. It sells out very quickly and many have commented the quality of the honey has, according to the buyers, matured into a smooth and sweet flavor and is a favorite gift item.

Of special note was a feature on the popular You Tube channel Skratch, with an “Adventures in Golf” episode posted in September 2021. Host Erik Landers posted “World’s “Sweetest” Public Par-3 Course”, about his trip to the Par 3. It has garnered over 130,000 views and was a tremendous piece of positive earned marketing.

Seaview and Phipps Ocean Park Tennis Centers

The Town’s tennis resurgence continues. Since the courts re-opened in May of 2020 (with play restrictions at the time to singles only), tennis participation has increased with many residents continuing to either return to their love of tennis or discovering/rediscovers our high-quality courts. This continued into 2021. Resident play represented 72% of players, 67% of juniors and 85% of adults. The last year also saw the return of a few events, notably the Town of Palm Beach Championships - doubles, singles, and mixed doubles in January, February and April, respectively. In addition, a full slate of teams (six) are again representing the Town, including two senior league teams.

Revenue was at an all-time high in FY21. Revenue was up 44% from FY20, which had been the previous revenue record. Teaching revenue from the contract with DM Tennis Enterprises was up over 44% and merchandise sales up 38% from the previous year - both new revenue highs. Participants and residents continue to provide positive feedback about the quality and

professionalism of the instructor team, our pro-shop staff, and the excellent playability of the courts.

Player amenities and marketing efforts included upgrading the apparel at both tennis centers and adding televisions in each pro-shop, which run tennis announcements and promotions. Both pro-shops, while small, feel open and cheery with large windows providing natural light, quality merchandise, and helpful staff.

Daily court maintenance continued to be a priority for both in-house staff and contractors to keep the courts in excellent condition. With play up, our maintenance staff has been challenged, but has responded well and worked diligently to limit downtime. Projects of all sizes were completed at both tennis centers to enhance the playability and welcoming nature of the tennis centers, including:

- Staying on top of routine items to limit court downtime:
 - adding clay, replacing lines, net post maintenance, net repairs, windscreen maintenance, edges are being scraped and re-conditioned, gate repairs
- Irrigation enhancements
- Landscape beautification
- Replaced all the fence connectors at Phipps Ocean Park Tennis Center, which were rusting prematurely
- New tables and chairs at Phipps have been ordered
- Both centers have had their water fountains replaced, repaired and/or repainted
- New trash receptacles with a ball drop added for recycling at Seaview
- Both pro-shops received a refresh and expanded lines of apparel

A \$5k gift was received to offset the cost of junior tennis lessons to those in need as well as an additional \$5k gift for operational purposes for Seaview Park/MRC.

Morton and Barbara Mandel Recreation Center

RAC members and their families make regular use of the Mandel and amenities within Seaview Park. Practical suggestions, marketing assistance and general positive support all combined with staff efforts to create a very successful year for the Mandel.

The Mandel Recreation Center staff continues to follow a comprehensive strategy to ensure the well-being of patrons and staff through strict adherence to CDC and Town of Palm Beach guidelines and implementation of specific procedures for COVID-19 safety. Staff utilized two foggers, one electrostatic, to disinfect high touchpoint areas such as the fitness center and the After School Room. The disinfectant used is one recommended and used by Palm Beach Fire Rescue. While programming is still limited indoors, staff is working extremely hard to provide as many activities as possible while adhering to CDC and Town guidelines.

Even with program participation restricted due to Covid-19, revenue for the Mandel Recreation Center more than doubled from last fiscal year - up 144%, and the \$565,000+ represents an all-

time record for annual revenue. The Fitness Center sold 277 memberships (even with capacity restrictions throughout most of the fiscal year). The Mandel Recreation Center offered 252 programs, with resident adult participation at 95%, and youth at 50%. This past year featured the return of two popular youth programs. The ever-popular After School Program was able to build to a capacity of 30 participants and over the summer, Camp Palm Beach welcomed 65 kids per week.

The Mandel continued to enhance its virtual presence to keep the community engaged, with the well-known RecConnect hitting inboxes at least once a week to keep everyone informed of the schedule around the Mandel and the rest of the Recreation Department along with the popular boredom busters, brainteasers and recipes. The department also greatly increased presence through social media, which has proven to be a great way to engage with the community. There are now almost 1,500 followers on Instagram, so be sure to follow townofpalmbeachrecreation on Instagram and/or Palm Beach Recreation Department on Facebook.

In collaboration with the Palm Beach Civic Association, a weekly, limited edition “WOW” (Word on Wellness) series was produced on PBTv. The segment focused on health tips and wellness information. This collaboration continued with their new PBCivicSpot, a one-stop web portal, for everything Palm Beach, which is a great way to let more residents know about all the programs and opportunities the Recreation Department has to offer.

Two multi-generational events, and Town traditions, the annual Spring Celebration and Halloween Happenings, returned this year. Both events were resident only and by reservation. Many residents noted they were very happy with the return of these family events and even described it as “like coming home!”

Some additional highlights from 2021:

- Popularity of Perseverance Basketball is still through the roof – the leagues, skills academies, little hoopsters, private training, and group training have been a great addition for the community and a boost to revenue
- Select Soccer continues to have great participation and is well set for future growth
- T-ball and baseball clinics were offered last spring
- Lacrosse, flag football, volleyball, adult basketball, Story Time Soccer all continued to have solid and increasing participation
- Enrichment programs, although somewhat limited, had enthusiastic participation for youth and adult in programs: movin’ and groovin’, mix-it-up art, karate, toddler social for youth and adult enrichment such as language arts, mah-jongg, yoga, wellness/exercise classes, to name a few
- Hosted the first ever Wiffle Ball homerun derby to benefit the United Way
- A \$10k gift from Friends of Recreation to cover up to \$500 for each employee who registered their child for a week of summer camp, which was well received and fully exhausted
- Staff worked with Friends of Recreation and the Preservation Foundation to refresh the garden area at the main entrance of the Mandel Recreation Center – it will serve as an educational garden with all native plantings

- Staff held a Family Fun night on September 10, for the After School Program families with a variety of games and activities. The evening was so well received staff plan to make this an ongoing event with different activities each meeting.

Lake Trail/Seaview Avenue and Cocoanut Row

The Commission, led by its Chair and Vice Chair, expressed concerns about the connection from the Lake Trail to Seaview Ave. and suggested putting up signage so residents and visitors know where the Mandel Recreation Center and Seaview Park and its amenities are located.

An even greater concern was brought up regarding the pedestrian safety of the intersection of Cocoanut Row and Seaview Avenue. The full Commission was in support of providing for enhanced safety measures for pedestrians such as a flashing crosswalk or even a stop light to ease the concerns of pedestrian and vehicle interactions in that area. The crosswalk is utilized by a large number of children as well as visitors to Seaview Park. A motion to bring this to the Town Council's attention passed unanimously in the hopes of making this intersection safer for residents and visitors.

Conclusion

Overall, the members of the RAC, in conjunction with the Department, had a very productive year and are looking forward to an exciting 2022. We continue to implement and plan many exciting opportunities for residents and visitors despite any challenges that are thrown our way. The RAC and Department staff are optimistic about the future and ready to capitalize on any opportunities which come our way. We are dedicated to our role of providing feedback and assistance in any way necessary, as the Department plans for an exciting and successful future.

cc: Recreation Advisory Commission
Carolyn Stone, Assistant Town Manager
Mark Bresnahan, Director of Recreation
Rod Gardiner, Assistant Director of Recreation
Tony Chateauvert, Golf Manager
Michelle Pallante, Administrative Assistant