

# TOWN OF PALM BEACH

## Information for Town Council Meeting on January 14, 2025

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To: Mayor and Town Council

Via: Kirk W. Blouin, Town Manager

From: Grier Pressly, Recreation Advisory Commission Chairperson

Re: Recreation Advisory Commission Annual Presentation

Date: January 14, 2025

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### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

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

Commission Membership/Meetings

Par 3 Golf Course

Tennis Operations

Morton and Barbara Mandel Recreation Center

#### **Commission Membership/Meetings**

The RAC is comprised of seven regular members. Each member serves a three-year term, with a chairperson and vice-chairperson selected as necessary. The Commission held three regular meetings in the fiscal year 2024 (October, January, and April). The current Commission membership is as follows:

Commissioner	Position	Term Expires
Grier Pressly	Chair	4/30/25
Peter Harris	Vice-Chair	4/30/27
Millie Dayton	Regular Member	4/30/25
Henry 'Budge' Jamison	Regular Member	4/30/25
David Missner	Regular Member	4/30/26
Devon Roush	Regular Member	4/30/26
Susan Watts	Regular Member	4/30/27



## Town of Palm Beach Recreation

### Overview

Fiscal Year 2024 was a transformative period for the Recreation Department, marked by record-breaking achievements, impactful facility upgrades, and expanded programming that underscored its commitment to enhancing the quality of life for residents. Over the past five years, the department has seen unprecedented growth in both participation and revenue across all divisions, culminating in an exceptional FY24 that set new revenue records—recreation surpassed \$1 million for the first time, tennis exceeded \$532,000, and golf topped \$5.3 million. While significant, these milestones also reflect the resounding success and community impact of the department’s offerings, which continue to earn praise for their high quality and accessibility. Building on these financial achievements, robust programming, and strong community engagement, the department is well-positioned to sustain its success and drive continued innovation for years to come.

### Par 3 Golf Course

Before 2024, the Par 3 made a deliberate decision to reduce traffic on the course to improve conditions and ultimately enhance the golfer experience. Timely rainfall in January, June, and September supported this strategy, yielding slightly fewer rounds than last fiscal year (52k vs 55k), but higher customer satisfaction. Over the past year, the golf course continued to excel in both financial performance and operational efficiency, showcased by record revenues, course improvements, and the introduction of cutting-edge maintenance technologies.

Under the management of Sabrina Gordon, the golf shop reached a new milestone with sales surpassing \$890,000. Instructional programs also prospered, generating nearly \$500,000 in gross revenue—fueled by popular junior clinics and specialized short-game training sessions. Meanwhile, the on-site restaurant continued its climb by setting another sales record in FY24, highlighting the enduring appeal of its food, service, and the scenic views it provides.

### **Maintenance, Projects, and Course Conditions**

A key component of Par 3’s success is its focus on maintaining pristine course conditions. Superintendent Tim Campbell and his team worked tirelessly on several notable projects, most prominently the Sox erosion initiative along the pond on holes #1 and #15, which not only combats erosion but enhances the visual appeal of the landscape. The choice of paspalum, a saltwater-tolerant grass, has further strengthened the course’s year-round condition by conserving water and thriving in the seaside setting.

Extensive improvements complemented these maintenance efforts. The bathroom partitions in the clubhouse were replaced, earning numerous compliments for their upgraded look. Palm trees were meticulously trimmed across the grounds, while 50 fan palms and 15 silver buttonwoods were planted along the A1A corridor to reinforce the course's tropical charm. The putting green was nearly doubled in size and opened in January, and the parking lot expansion on the northwest side was completed in October. Additional landscaping was also introduced to create a natural separation between the expanded lot and the tee box on hole #9. Throughout the summer, the course underwent three aerifications and dry-jetting, preserving optimal playing conditions and demonstrating Par 3's commitment to comprehensive upkeep.

### **Operations and Innovation**

The Par 3 has made strategic operational decisions to offer players the best possible experience. Residents receive preferred tee times up to 30 days in advance, while the general public can book 9 days prior. In addition, one tee time every hour is designated exclusively for Palm Beach residents. The adoption of TurfRad soil moisture mapping and the initial rollout of a couple robotic mowers highlight the golf course's emphasis on innovation. These technologies optimize water usage, reduce environmental impact, and improve overall maintenance efficiency. More robotic mowers are planned for in the FY25 budget, and hopefully, an even greater investment will be made in FY26.

Instructional offerings at Par 3 remain in high demand. The course is home to eight renowned instructors—former PGA Tour player Trevor Dodds, Gene George, Tim McCoy, Bob Hite, Brad Costa, Don Beatty, Dan Tzvanis, and Kellie Stenzel—who conduct daily clinics and private lessons for players of all ages and skill levels. Customer feedback, solicited through regular surveys, informs ongoing improvements to these programs and the course to help maintain the Par 3's reputation for excellence.

The Par 3's digital presence continues to grow, with its Instagram account (@palmbeachpar3) now exceeding 6,090 followers. Professional photographs of the course are posted weekly, showcasing both the pristine playing surfaces and the striking ocean views.

### **Seaview and Phipps Ocean Park Tennis Centers**

The Seaview Tennis Center underwent a comprehensive renovation over the summer. Work commenced on June 3rd and was completed in time for reopening on August 12th. During the renovation, the courts were resurfaced, irrigation systems were repaired, curbing was replaced between courts 1 and 2 and between courts 3 and 4, new fencing was installed, and an additional off-court seating area was created next to court 7, along with three additional benches added for viewing. Staff complemented these improvements by replacing all benches on the courts, installing new shade sails, adding updated signage, and setting up a new ice and water machine in the tennis pavilion.

Despite the temporary closure of Seaview, tennis activities continued throughout the summer, with residents and guests utilizing the Phipps Ocean Park Tennis Center. Phipps accommodated a women's summer league team, increased social play, and continued to host lessons and clinics. With the new tennis manager, Dan Stover, on board, staff transitioned to a new independent

contractor model for tennis professionals in July. Lessons remained consistent throughout the summer despite operational changes and the temporary limitation to a single facility.

With the reopening of both facilities, a racquet-specific point-of-sale platform, PlayByPoint, was launched on August 15th to streamline reservations, lessons, and clinics. The platform allows players to book courts and lessons seamlessly online. The platform has been well-received, supporting operations while enhancing clarity and consistency in customer accounts.

Youth tennis programming resumed in September, including the return of popular clinics such as Young Stars, Futures, and ATP Challenger. Adult tennis programs also feature clinics, including "Tennis Fun & Drills for Beginners" at Phipps Ocean Park Tennis Center.

Several notable improvements were made at Phipps Ocean Park Tennis Center, including planting new shrubs next to courts 2 and 3, replacing damaged windscreens, and installing a cabinet and ice machine in the Pro Shop. New scoreboards were also added to each court, and the footbaths at Phipps were replaced to enhance both functionality and appearance.

### **Morton and Barbara Mandel Recreation Center**

It was a busy summer, on August 15, the department launched the newly designed palmbeachrecreation.com website, a new logo for recreation, and a new point-of-sale (POS) systems—DaySmart for recreation. These upgrades significantly enhance usability for residents and guests by providing greater versatility in booking programs and courts online, allowing staff to move away from the outdated reservation processes previously used for tennis and recreation programs. With the new system, program registration can now remain open until the program's midpoint, allowing more flexibility for participants; previously, it closed at the start. Online registration for upcoming family events is also being rolled out, making it easier for families to participate. One of the most exciting enhancements is the ability to reserve indoor basketball and pickleball courts online, a feature not available in the old system. Since the launch of DaySmart, approximately 215 court bookings have been made compared to 137 during the same period last year, with online reservations quickly becoming the preferred method.

### **Fitness**

Fitness Center memberships generated nearly \$132,000 in town revenue for FY24, while also surpassing the 300 active member mark for the first time. This summer, seasonal memberships were offered to non-resident employees on the island, which had a minimal impact on overall membership numbers. Personal training services set records, with 1,292 sessions completed in FY24 compared to 1,100 in FY23. Two additional personal trainers have been added to meet the anticipated demand for training in season. Group fitness classes also remained popular among both seasonal and annual residents.

### **Programming**

Given the Town's size, the range of recreation offerings is remarkably diverse. Here are a list of classes and programs that have been offered during the past year: Italian, Spanish, French, Kids Beginners Spanish, Conversational Spanish, Mah Jongg for Beginners, Adult Cardio Tap,

Ballroom Dance, Mommy & Me Palm Beach, Flag Football, Girls Lacrosse, Soccer League, Hip Hop & Tap Fusion, Mix It Up Art, What's Cooking Kids, Pickleball clinics/lessons, Sound Bath, Bootcamp, Core & Stretch, Yoga, Total Body Conditioning, Systema Karate, Communications Arts Prep, Basketball Skills Academy, Little Hoopsters Basketball, Basketball private/group trainings, Story Time Soccer, Boys Lacrosse, Girls Volleyball, Little Hands Art, Come Cha Cha Slide With Us, Movie Nights, Snowball Dance, Music and Movement Class, Rush Soccer, Tennis clinics/lessons/leagues, private and group Fitness Training, Golf clinics/lessons, After School, Camp Palm Beach, Holiday Camps, Halloween Happenings, Spring Celebration, 4th Birthday Bash, and Coffee & Conversations.

Camp Palm Beach was another hit this past summer with 8 weeks at capacity with 75 kids across three age groups. Thank you again to the Friends of Recreation for providing \$12,500 in scholarships to support children and grandchildren of Town employees to participate in the camp. Participants in the After School Program continue to enjoy various engaging and enriching activities. A highlight was a visit from What's Cooking Kids, where children enthusiastically made delicious pumpkin cheesecake trifles. Counselors have focused on introducing healthier food options each week, featuring fun and tasty activities like making fruit kebabs and strawberry parfaits. The program keeps students busy with themed crafts, exciting group games, and various creative projects encouraging teamwork and active participation.

### **Seaview Park**

Staff have continued efforts to enhance the appearance and efficiency of the park. Since August, a robotic mower has been tested on the athletic field, resulting in notable improvements in both the field's appearance and health due to its twice-daily mowing schedule. Following the success of this six-week trial, the acquisition of a robotic mower for the field and an additional one for the front lawn will proceed as budgeted for FY25. Additionally, staff have installed Outdoorlink, a remote monitoring and control system for the tennis court lights. This system enables the lights to automatically turn on at sunset and off at a designated time, with the flexibility of remote access for adjustments outside of preset schedules. In May, all horizontal hard surfaces in the park underwent pressure cleaning. New plantings have been added along the sidewalk on the south side of courts 1-3 and the west side of court 7.

Some additional highlights from 2024:

- Facility rentals were popular in FY24, the Mandel Recreation Center and Seaview Park, hosted a number of private and community events, including The Palm Beach Civic Association's Welcome Back Community Forum on November 7<sup>th</sup>
- The fitness center team put on 7 coffee and conversation events for residents throughout the year, focusing on a different aspect of fitness or wellbeing during each session
- The Seaview Café, which opened in May 2023, continues to grow in popularity. Residents and guests are enjoying the grab-and-go fresh food options, smoothies, and fresh-pressed espresso drinks.
- The Mandel Recreation Center is the central polling location on the island and held the Town's general election on Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>

- The Valentine Family Social held on February 9, saw families dancing and enjoying light bites, games, and a photo booth
- Family Event Nights gained popularity, included a Ghoulish Game Night and a Winter Wonderland Workshop, created a sense of community and fun for families
- The Mad Hatter Tea Party was held on April 20, which was completed with a visit from Alice in Wonderland
- The rope drainage project, completed in late December 2023, seems to have solved the issue with the amount of water the field was retaining on the east side of the field, making the project a huge success
- Marketing and communication efforts of the department are continuing to grow, with the weekly RecConnect leading the way reaching over 2,701 subscribers. The emails have an extremely high open rate, currently 53%, significantly above the 18% average across all industries. Instagram followers (townofpalmbeachrecreation) are up to 2,862 and counting, resulting in more direct communication with the community
- Staff successfully planted a row of cocoplums along the western border of the tennis pavilion. This strategic addition not only enhances the visual appeal, but also fortifies security measures
- Staff applied a layer of mulch to the playground, achieving a dual purpose: enhancing safety and elevating the overall aesthetics
- The proposed pergola, received ARCOM approval in March, and final preparations are being made in preparation for its installation
- Staff put on the annual Spring Celebration that nearly 300 residents enjoyed as 4,000 candy-filled eggs were scattered across the Oakley Gage Debbs field in April
- Staff put on the Mandel's 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday Bash on January 20, 2024 with around 250 residents in attendance throughout the event that included steel drums, games, a bounce house, and caricature artists
- The Halloween Happenings event had great participation, with over 250 residents
- The Palm Beach County City Managers hosted their monthly meeting at the Mandel in September, with 30 representatives from city managers' offices across the county

### Conclusion

This annual report reflects the comprehensive achievements, forward-thinking initiatives, and unwavering commitment of the Town of Palm Beach Recreation Department in FY24, ensuring its continued role as a vital contributor to the community's quality of life.

Overall, the RAC, working closely with the Department, enjoyed an exceptionally productive year and eagerly anticipates the opportunities that 2025 will bring. Far from resting on our successes, we see this as the start of a journey toward even greater accomplishments.

*Please mark your calendars, the Mandel's 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration will be held Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup> on the front lawn, enjoy brunch bites and family-friendly games and music*

Year-by-year revenue and expenses by division:

Golf	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Revenue	2,288,355	3,651,435	4,342,191	5,096,539	5,324,719
Expenses	1,691,834	1,673,790	2,481,635	2,889,109	3,094,951
Rev – Exp	596,521	1,977,645	1,860,556	2,207,430	2,229,768

Tennis	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Revenue	245,471	348,178	426,063	480,097	532,942
Expenses	403,369	411,623	473,606	503,931	712,657
Rev – Exp	-157,898	-63,445	-47,543	-23,834	-179,715

Recreation	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Revenue	230,911	565,206	821,079	926,179	1,062,210
Expenses	835,642	1,081,014	1,148,916	1,342,403	1,542,502
Rev – Exp	-604,731	-515,808	-327,837	-416,224	-480,292

**Our mission is to cultivate a vibrant and inviting environment through exceptional recreation programs, distinguished facilities, and unparalleled services, enhancing the vitality of our residents and guests by fostering longevity, health, and happiness, all while providing a world-class experience.**



cc: Recreation Advisory Commission  
 Carolyn Stone, Deputy Town Manager  
 Mark Bresnahan, Director of Recreation  
 Rance Gaede, Assistant Director of Recreation  
 Tony Chateauvert, Golf Manager  
 Lauren Bayard, Office Manager