



City of Margate

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Meeting Minutes City Commission Workshop

Mayor Joanne Simone
Vice Mayor Tommy Ruzzano
Commissioners:
Joyce W. Bryan, Lesa Peerman, Frank B. Talerico

City Manager Douglas E. Smith
City Attorney Eugene M. Steinfeld
City Clerk Joseph J. Kavanagh

Wednesday, July 1, 2015

5:00 PM

Commission Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Present: 4 - Commissioner Lesa 'Le' Peerman, Commissioner Frank B. Talerico, Commissioner Joyce W. Bryan and Mayor Joanne Simone
Absent: 1 - Vice Mayor Tommy Ruzzano

In Attendance:

City Manager Douglas E. Smith
City Attorney Eugene M. Steinfeld
City Clerk Joseph J. Kavanagh

1) PRESENTATION(S)

ID 14-1216 PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION MIKE JONES introduced representatives from Heller and Heller Consulting, Inc., Barbara Heller and Dave Bart, who were the consultants for the Master Plan Project. He explained that part of the presentation was going over the current findings of what took place during the public input section of the Master Plan process. He said that what would be shown was the public feedback of wants, needs and desires of the public for Parks and Recreation. He noted that Heller and Heller Consulting, Inc. were also partnered with Hitchcock Design Group that had gone over some inventory and data analysis and park mapping. He stated that all of the data needed to develop and design projects to move the City forward would be seen in today's presentation.

BARBARA HELLER, Heller and Heller Consulting, Inc., thanked the City for the opportunity to attend the meeting. She felt that it was a credit to Mr. Jones and the City to do a study such as this one. She and Mr. Bart felt that 40 percent of the Park Agencies around the Country did a Master Plan. She said that having a Master Plan was a good thing to do because it helped with identifying priorities. She explained that Mr. Jones emphasized the connection to the resident's thoughts, which was important and would drive everything they came up with for the Plan. She provided an Agenda and said that she would review the highlights, survey results and community input. She said that tonight's presentation was a summary of all of the technical pieces to the Master Plan Process. She stated that she was interested in hearing the Commission's thoughts or perspectives. Ms. Heller noted that a large part of the process was community input, as well as Staff input. She added that an online engagement tool was also used called Mind

Mixer and a statistically balanced survey. She said that demographics, trends of what's happening in the industry, parking facility inventories, parking amenity, level of service standards and recreational services were also looked into. She said that Hitchcock Design Group did an inventory map and all park amenities throughout Margate, as well as a natural features map showing diversity of water shed areas, canals and road systems to help with mapping out planning. She noted that Mr. Bart was going to speak about park classifications and some of the level of service standard information.

DAVE BART, Heller and Heller Consulting, Inc., gave a PowerPoint presentation and stated that this would wrap up the needs and assessment process before going into visioning and there was no one way to do needs assessments. He said that part of the process was getting input, which was considered qualitative. He added that there were also analytical tools that he thought were more quantitative as a way of determining needs and priorities. He noted that one of the problems with Parks and Recreation was that there were no standards anymore. He showed old traditional suburban classification terms that came from the National Recreation Parks Association guidelines, but they were last published in 1994, which was consistent with how Margate and other communities managed the system. He noted that the guideline would be used; however, the City did not have to use it. He said that different systems showed different sizes of parks and who they served. He showed the inventory, which was important because it provided a basis for determining the level of service and told how many acres and how many facilities the City had. Mr. Bart added that the typical level of service standards used for Parks and Recreation were park acres per thousand population; facilities per population; and access. He explained that there was nobody in the United States who could tell what the levels of service should be. He said that when starting the visioning process, the City would have to decide what the appropriate level of service would be. Mr. Bart stated that if taking the current park acreage and existing classification system, the largest part, approximately 69 percent was in community parks serving a large area, with the smaller part in neighborhood parks could be walked to and mini parks. He noted that the downside of neighborhood parks was that people were bored with them because there were fewer things to do. He noted that with the digital age the kids want to be active and entertained all of the time. He said that whether or not neighborhood parks were relevant anymore was being questioned nationwide. He noted that some communities wanted to get rid of them, but others want to make sure every resident should be able to walk to a neighborhood park. Mr. Bart explained that Margate had approximately two acres per thousand as population for a level of service. He said that across the United States that would be considered low and most communities were in the 6, 8 or 10 acres per thousand level of service; therefore, there was a need to increase that number. He mentioned adding the Greenway with private homeowner's associations, the level of service would increase; however, would there be enough use out of the Greenway for public recreation. He said that the level of service could be increased by the Greenway if the full amount of acres could be used with amenities, walking trails, playgrounds and games. He showed a chart used to comply with the County's requirement. He noted that the County allowed the use of natural lands, which Margate had 289 acres of, but that would make it a less genuine level of service. He said that the number of park acreage used to meet the needs of the residents must be figured out in the visioning process. He explained that by fully developing the Greenway would move in the right direction; however, over time there needed to be a scheme to acquire and develop more park land. Mr. Bart said that the next level of service idea was to determine how far people had to go to safely and comfortably get to a park. He noted that Hitchcock Design Group took the existing types of parks in Margate and determined that 41 percent of the population could easily get to a mini park, 59 percent can get to a neighborhood park and 65 percent could get to a community park. He said that during the visioning process, the determination would be made regarding how far was realistic. He stated that in an urbanizing community where

walkability was being promoted a reasonable distance was needed. He showed that 84 percent had access; however, one task of the visioning was to define how much was walkable, bikeable and how much forces driving.

COMMISSIONER TALERICO questioned why the remaining percentage could not get to a park.

MR. BART said that was because of barriers or canals, as well as distance. He explained that based on what was decided as a group, the maps would be redone during the visioning with regard to how far we think you need to go to get to a park. He added that in the City's Land Development Code, when redeveloping, the distance should be codified and any new development would follow that as well. He stated that he agreed with Ms. Heller regarding one benefit of the Parks Master Plan was to set up a framework for both existing conditions, as well as for new development. Mr. Bart showed a slide that referred to population standards. He explained that over the last 20 or 30 years in Florida all referenced the Florida State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, which used to publish standards stating that every community was required to have a particular amount of tennis courts, swimming pools, etc., for a specific amount of residents. He noted that at some point they quit publishing standards because it was realized that there were no two communities alike; therefore, recreation and lifestyle needs were far more complex. He showed the next slide that indicated when benchmarked against other communities in the area, the numbers in red showed deficiency, which correlated to the amount of acreage. He noted that 90 percent were in red, which correlated to him that the City had approximately two acres of developed park land per 1,000 residents. He said that was consistent because if a City was shy in land it would often times be shy in facilities. He explained that if the Commission agreed that acres, facilities and access should be used, it would then appear that the City was deficient and would become more deficient over time if not developing more land and facilities. He added that a determination of how walkable the City should be was also needed.

COMMISSIONER PEERMAN mentioned the amount of swimming pools.

MR. BART said that the chart indicated three pools were needed; therefore, the City was down 2.8.

DIRECTOR JONES noted that Calypso Cove was one facility with three pools.

MR. BART said that when benchmarking against other communities, the City would not know what they include, such as golf courses, lakes and wetlands. He stated that he wanted Margate to get to an acreage level of service where it had the County's standard and the City owned acres per thousand and would then keep the two separate.

COMMISSIONER PEERMAN asked whether Mr. Bart was referring to the Rock Island Greenway or the Greenway that went along the C-14 Canal.

MR. BART said that he was referring to the C-14 Canal Greenway.

DIRECTOR JONES asked whether the Greenway listed on the acreage was the FPL Greenway on Rock Island Road.

COMMISSIONER PEERMAN agreed.

MS. HELLER noted that Mr. Bart was a recognized National expert on level of service work. She stated that many firms doing level of service use the old fashioned standards,

which was a narrow viewpoint. She said that the National Recreation of Parks Association had a database that they were asking all agencies in the United States to send in all of their lists of amenities and park acreage so that comparisons could be done. She noted that Cities would be able to look at comparable Cities to see what they had in the way of amenities; however, there were some limitations. She explained that there were about 12,000 Parks and Recreation agencies, but only 600 had completed the information. She showed an example of a park inventory spread to show the level of detail that was done with regard to categorizing the parks, amenities, the development history and the uses and approaches to parks. She said that it would provide an idea of what improvements were needed. She stated that Firefighters Park was the most frequently and most popular park in the entire system. She gave an overview of the survey results, which helped identify priorities. She spoke about Leisure Vision, and explained that it was a subsidiary of a larger firm called ETC Institute. She noted that they did transportation surveys and customer satisfaction for City surveys, but they also did Parks and Recreation needs assessment surveys. She stated that they did over 600 of such surveys in the United States. She said that the survey was focused on the needs of the community both for park acres, park amenities and programs.

COMMISSIONER BRYAN questioned how many surveys were mailed out.

MS. HELLER stated that there were 2,000 surveys mailed out, and that 21 percent was a good return. She reiterated that Firefighters Park was the most popular park in Margate with regard to usage. She noted that 58 percent of the residents had no response or had not used a park, which was a high figure. She said that response was due to lack of land and amenities. She explained that the physical condition of parks received good scores, and that 84 percent felt the park conditions were either excellent or good. She said that only 14 percent of the residents had participated in a recreation program, which was a low figure because the national average was 34 percent. She added that 44 percent of the residents were pleased with the quality of the recreation programs. She said that the goal was to move the residents that rated the parks at fair quality to a higher direction of good or excellent. She noted that during the public input sessions many people spoke about going to other communities for their recreational services. She said that fees did not appear to be an issue. She explained that households were asked to note what facilities were needed, and the largest response was for walking and biking trails. She stated that the indoor response for activities was for exercise facilities. She said that residents were asked what needs were not being met and what areas needed improvement, and the response was walking and biking trails and indoor fitness. She noted that 7,226 households out of 21,400 had a significant need for walking and biking trails. She said that building additional trails in the City would be very popular. Ms. Heller explained that the third component was to ask residents the most important needs, and the response was for skateboarding parks. She said that it was important to put into context how many households actually had a need for skateboard parks.

COMMISSIONER PEERMAN said that she heard from residents every year about wanting a skateboard park.

COMMISSIONER TALERICO said that it was not hundreds of people asking.

COMMISSIONER PEERMAN explained that it was usually five or six people requesting something, and that a skateboard park was discussed in the City for a long time. She noted that there was previously an indoor skateboard park that was privately run; however, it was now gone.

COMMISSIONER BRYAN mentioned that if looking around the City, many children with

skateboards were seen.

MS. HELLER explained that many programs were listed on the survey, and people were asked to check off those programs their household had a need for. She said that special events and adult fitness and wellness scored highest. She noted that special events were sometimes expensive to produce and required a lot of manpower and labor. She said that adult fitness and wellness scored 42 percent and adult programs for 55 years and older, water programs and nature programs were trending higher in all communities.

MR. BART referred to a slide and explained that one need most often heard by elected officials was for athletic fields, because of the rise in traveling teams. He said that sometimes there was a disproportionate amount of phone calls and demand to what the overall population felt was important. He noted that people did mention wanting some ball fields built; however, the dilemma was how far the City should go to meet athletic field needs at the potential expense of other activities that most residents feel were more important. He stated that this was a significant part of the survey, because the Commission needed to realize there was a need for athletic fields; however, the residents felt there was a much higher need for other facilities. Mr. Bart explained that while evaluating the Town Center proposals, the needs must be looked at, as well as the criteria of whether the Town Center was providing adequate space for meeting special events and hosting abilities.

MAYOR SIMONE noted that the water fitness program rated high; however, nobody came out when previous programs were planned.

MS. HELLER said that it might have been a lack of awareness, which would need further review to determine why.

MR. BART said that people will say they have a need for something; however, once it was built they did not do it anyway.

MS. HELLER said that the last program session questioned what the most important program areas were to the residents. She stated that the response was again adult fitness and wellness and special events. She said that the residents were asked about additional indoor space, and the response was for a walking and jogging track, exercise facility for adults 50 and over, weight room, aerobics, space for meetings, parties and banquets, arts and crafts, nature centers and leisure pools. She said that the residents were questioned on overall satisfaction levels and a lot of people scored neutrally; however, a lot of people were very satisfied especially with the number of parks and the maintenance of the parks, as well as the quality of the programs at the parks. She explained that the survey results indicated that the services that needed the most attention were availability of information about programs, the number of walking/biking trails, continuance of maintenance of parks, quality of adult programs and the amount of nature conservation areas. Ms. Heller explained that most Cities had a program guide or brochure to help advertise, which was either mailed or distributed at key locations. She noted that roadside banners were very important, as well as word of mouth advertising. She said that a fairly healthy percentage of people were getting their information from the website. She noted that fewer people were reading newspapers, but flyers were also used. She stated that the level of support to approve facilities was also questioned and suggestions were made for adding trails, improving existing parks and facilities and creating a new indoor community center. She noted that though there was a need for additional park land, development and acquiring land on the survey was not significant to the community.

MR. BART felt that the phasing plan should have the City focusing on connectivity and adding amenities to the existing parks, as well as making the residents aware. He said that the next phase would be over the next 10 to 15 years, which would include continuing to grow with additional park lands.

COMMISSIONER PEERMAN questioned whether the growth should proceed if the City received the opportunity to acquire land.

MR. BART said that land banking never was cheaper; therefore, it should be done anytime it can be and the land can be set aside.

MS. HELLER proceeded and explained that the survey asked which items should the City should pay most attention to, and trails, connectivity and improving existing parks were good areas to concentrate on activating parks and amenities. She said that the residents were asked how much they were willing to pay, and the survey response was that there were more people who would pay more than nothing. She stated that the overall satisfaction with the value offered was 31 percent; therefore, more usage was needed to build that response.

MR. BART said that those percentages did not mean the City was doing something wrong, but that the residents did not believe the parks were relevant. He said that the City needed to determine how to meet more people's needs in the parks so people were excited about living here.

MS. HELLER gave a summary of the survey comparisons. She stated that the greatest level of satisfaction was maintenance of parks and the number of parks. She said that the walking and biking trails, indoor fitness were the most important needs. She added that special events were really important. She said that low recreation program participation of 14 percent compared to the Leisure Vision national benchmark. She stated that 75 percent satisfaction of program quality compared to 88 percent nationally. She said that 53 percent of households typically would find out about programs from a program guide or brochure. She stated that Margate was not creating good awareness because they were not currently providing the program guide or brochure. She stated that 19 percent of those surveyed responded that Margate was the place they went for recreational needs, which was low to the national figure of 49 percent. She noted that overall satisfaction was 52 percent compared to the national average of 67 percent. She added that lack of awareness to services was the biggest barrier. She stated that the most attention should be given to availability of information, number of trails and park maintenance. She showed additional slides including the Mind Mixer, which was an online engagement tool that people responded to. She noted that there was a 9 page report from the Mind Mixer; however, she gave a few highlights. She stated that most people using the system were either very satisfied with Parks and Recreation, but most people did not participate in programs. She said that people were asked what amenities they would like and the amenities mentioned were nature programs, environmental education and water safety instruction. She noted that the majority of the residents indicated that their households did not currently participate in the affiliate programs or athletic programs. She said that people were asked how they would spend \$100 digital dollars, and kayak, canoe and boat launches, community gardens, baseball fields and off leash dog parks were mentioned. She explained that there were 414 survey responses, which was statistically valid. She showed slide results for community input that indicated that residents recreated in a variety of different places other than Margate. She said that the improvement needed survey referred to shade, amenities, athletic field upgrading, lower fees and resolving parking issues. She said the reason the facilities were not used was because there was nothing attracting the residents, transportation needed, not much to

do, scheduling conflicts and lack of services for special needs. She said that the next steps were visioning, and that she and Mr. Bart would work with Director Jones to come back and provide focused workshops on each of the themes, which the community would be invited to in order to present the findings to the public. She noted that the final plan would include an executive summary, a review of the process, all community input, technical reports, visioning results and the strategic recommendations phased in over time, cost estimates for projects and the priorities and timeline. Ms. Heller finalized her presentation by explaining that she looked at three attributes; does the household have a need; how well was the need being met; how important was the need. She said that she would then rank those attributes, which ranked with special events scoring as number one, the largest unmet need was special events and the special events were ranked second for most important event. She noted that the ranking was done the same on both the facility side and the recreation program side.

COMMISSIONER TALERICO said that land was scarce in the area and he questioned whether the parks needed to be reconfigured or redesigned in the future.

MS. HELLER agreed and noted that other Cities were converting parking lots into parks.

MR. BART agreed that Margate would be entering the phase of tearing things down. He said that more urbanized Cities looked into what were derelict areas. He also mentioned partnerships; however, the problem with partnerships was they needed to be long term and stable enough to be considered. He said that the City would enter the redevelopment mode, which was where Margate was currently with its commercial properties. He said that it was a natural growth of Cities. He stated that it was not cheap, but there needed to be a long term plan for making some significant investments to the infrastructure. She said that to attract people to the community for high quality of life there was a direct relationship between the desirability of living somewhere and the amenities.

COMMISSIONER PEERMAN said that if the redevelopment proceeded as previously discussed with a lot of open space, accessing the existing lake for kayaking, etc., Margate would then fall into the plan of wants and needs.

MR. BART agreed that would all be looked into.

COMMISSIONER TALERICO mentioned the Greenway from the County and asked whether it would work together with Margate.

DIRECTOR JONES said that the future development and future partnership would be case by case and would be based on what multi-agencies agreed upon. He said that it was an opportunity and was a long process, but can be considered and highlighted as a potentially opportunity. He said that bikeways, walkways and trails could be linked towards transportation grants, funding, etc., which could connect parks with transportation projects.

COMMISSIONER BRYAN asked about the Blueways.

DIRECTOR JONES said that Blueways were separate from the Greenways because Margate had canals and would probably not be dredging new canals as redevelopment; however, the Blueways could be utilized for recreation purposes and not just a collection of water. He said that it might be possible to find new activities for the Blueways with way-finding signs to connect residents to the Greenway and Blueway.

COMMISSIONER PEERMAN felt that good information was provided as a good start

towards a Master Plan and to talk to the residents about their needs and wants. She reiterated that during every election, skateboard parks were brought up.

MAYOR SIMONE felt that the information reaffirmed some things that the City previously discussed, such as connecting the two parks, Winfield and Firefighters Park together with a bridge.

MR. BART mentioned synergy and explained that Tamarac also wanted to install a bridge from the aquatic center to their new town center. He said bridges were good for creating synergy if there was a place to put them.

COMMISSIONER TALERICO added that the money must be found to add the bridge as well.

COMMISSIONER PEERMAN noted that Ms. Heller and Mr. Bart would come back to the Commission with more information, and they both agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Transcribed by Carol DiLorenzo



Joseph J. Kavanagh, City Clerk

Date: 8/22/15