

**Howey-in-the-Hills
Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting
Town Hall, Thursday, February 16, 2023
6:00 p.m.**

Call to Order: 6:02 p.m.

Attendance: Mary Arnold, Josh Huseman, Stacy Broad Mauro, Morgan Cates, Jim Steele, Vicki Steele
Guests: Officer Azure

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. The January Parks & Rec Board minutes were reviewed.
Stacy made a motion to pass. Mary seconded. Minutes were approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

2. Parks Assessment

- Mary reported that Sara Maude Mason Nature Preserve is still closed. Morgan has update on repairs.
- Staci reported the cemetery looks good but there is a slight bend in the sign. There was a discussion on a bench in the back part of the park regarding landscaping needs.
- Vicki provided Morgan with a report on Griffin Park identifying completed projects, new concerns, and ongoing projects. She also provided information on Put-in-Cups to be used for future fence displays.
- Jim reported that Blevins Park looks good.

3. Staff Park Update

- Morgan shared that mulch has been ordered for both Central Park and Griffin Park.
- The Citrus sign (for Griffin park) is being remade.
- The Nature Trail in Sara Maude Mason Preserve is open. The boardwalk is blocked off.
- Morgan is still collecting prices for playground shades for Central Park stating that the buried utility lines could create a problem for their installation.
- Morgan and Jim re-evaluated the basketball court with the goals of having it leveled, (possibly extended,) resurfaced, and readied for dual use.
- The 4-square cement pad is to be removed and turned into a tot lot for basketball. Different surfaces were suggested.

NEW BUSINESS:

4. Discussion: Discussion FEMA Update – Sara Maude Mason Nature Preserve

- Officer Azure (who with Morgan has been working with FEMA) gave an update of the town's efforts to secure funds from FEMA for the restoration of the Sara Maude Mason boardwalk. An application was submitted. The site was reviewed by a structural engineer and building inspectors. Our application was approved for repair with funds being shared between FEMA

(75%), the State (12.5%) and Howey (12.5%). We also met the criteria for mitigation seeking two grants that would provide funds for upgraded materials so the structure would be stronger for future use.

- Morgan made a request to the Board asking that the \$100,000 (set aside for the upgrades to the entrance to Sara Maude Preserve) be reallocated and used to repair the entire boardwalk. Josh made a motion to approve the reallocation of the funds and send our recommendation to the Town Council. Mary seconded the motion and the motion passed.
- A discussion followed suggesting the purchasing of the parcel of land at the (former) back entrance to the park. Morgan and Officer Azure will speak to Town Council.

5. Discussion: Boat Ramp/Griffin Park Expansion

- Morgan led a review of the proposed expansion drawn up by the town engineer which would utilize three different grants to improve or expand:
 1. The boat ramp, parking area, and restrooms
 2. The finger piers.
 3. Treatment ponds/baffle box to help keep the lake clean.

Board Comments: A discussion was held about purchasing a larger town Christmas tree.

Public Comments: None

Adjournment:

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to adjourn the meeting. The meeting ended at 7:00 p.m.