

**MEETING MINUTES  
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
PARKS, RECREATION AND BEACHES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
FIRE STATION # 2  
528 NW 2ND STREET  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2025 – 6:00 P.M.**

**Cumulative Attendance**

<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Vanessa Apotheke</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Ruchel Coetzee</b> (left meeting at 6:50 pm)	<b>P</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Idan Eckstein</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Sean Fee</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Ronald Goff</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Colette Keno</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Don Mizell</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Lavji Nazir</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Marta Reczko</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Solomon Schoonover</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Anna Vratsinas</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Patricia Zeiler</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Joy Oglesby, Chair</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Janet Moreira</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

**Oct 2025 - Sept 2026**

As of this date, there are 15 appointed members to the Board, which means 9 would constitute a quorum. A quorum was present.

**Staff**

Amy Jean-Baptiste, *Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation*

Dr. Nancy J. Gassman, *Deputy Director & Chief Resilience Officer - Sustainability & Special Projects Division*

Leona Osamor- *Grants and Special Projects Administrator*

**Others**

Nicole Day, Recording Secretary, Prototype-Inc.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Oglesby led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of the October 22, 2025, Meeting Minutes**

**Motion** was made by Solomon Schoonover and seconded by Ruchel Coetzee, to approve October 22, 2025, meeting minutes with corrections. In a voice vote, the motion passed 9-0.

**1. Department Update (Amy Jean-Baptiste, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation)**

A presentation was given regarding department updates. Fourteen events are scheduled for this month, and staff expressed excitement about them. A ribbon-cutting for Abiaka Park is scheduled for December 5 at 11:00 AM, and six holiday light-up events are planned. Additionally, a groundbreaking ceremony will occur, a Holiday Decorating Contest for residents is planned, and a New Year's Countdown event will take place. Early discussions for 2026 events included Martin Luther King celebrations.

The Board discussed replacing or combining fireworks with drone shows for certain events. Board Members Coetzee and Nazir shared differing preferences for fireworks and drones, while Board Member Reczko raised environmental concerns. Deputy Director Jean-Baptiste noted potential noise and environmental impacts and also provided cost information at the Board's request. Board Member Schoonover inquired about total costs and whether additional drones could enhance the show, though Deputy Director Jean-Baptiste did not have that information. The Board discussed programming, environmental effects, and personal preferences, noting that two events in July and December would be affected. Chair Oglesby suggested sending a post-event survey via email to gather community feedback.

**2. An Introduction to the Sustainability and Special Projects Division (Dr. Nancy Gassman)**

Deputy Director Jean-Baptiste introduced Sustainability as part of Parks and Recreation and welcomed Dr. Nancy Gassman from the Special Projects Division, who provided a presentation on the new Sustainability and Special Projects team. Dr. Gassman shared an overview of her career with the City and Public Works and discussed key initiatives, including the Aquatic Center, Beach Experience, and Grand and Special Projects. She highlighted the goals of the Strategic Plan, emphasizing both climate mitigation and adaptation, and described collaborations with Transportation and Mobility on charging stations. Funding for extending solar panel use on city buildings over the next five years, replacement of streetlights with LED lighting, and the ongoing water conservation program were discussed.

Dr. Gassman noted that the City has achieved leadership certification for sustainability efforts and outlined eight community-focused strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Urban Forestry Master Plan was presented, with a goal of planting at

least 10,000 trees across four focus areas. Resilience and climate adaptation efforts, including monitoring sea level changes and temperature shifts, were reviewed. Additional topics included the Artistic Swimming program, Beach Experience goals, updated signage, and current grant applications within the Special Projects Division. She also discussed recent initiatives such as reviewing plastics use at City events and facilities and updating park land use planning.

The Board asked questions regarding the presentation on Sustainability and Special Projects. Board Member Fee inquired about wave wall lighting and its impact on turtles, and Dr. Gassman explained funding availability and procurement plans for the lighting system. Board Member Nazir asked about various initiatives which were addressed by Dr. Gassman. Board Member Mizell asked about grants for swimming team facilities, while Chair Oglesby and staff Grants and Special Project Administrator Osamor provided additional details regarding land use; Board Member Reczko also added clarification. Board Member Schoonover asked if the presentation reflected a reorganization, which Dr. Gassman confirmed, and inquired about the Urban Forestry Master Plan publication; Dr. Gassman noted it should be online soon, and Deputy Director Jean-Baptiste offered to send the Board the publication.

Dr. Gassman discussed meetings, feedback from development initiatives, and tree-related recommendations. Board Member Moreira asked about encouraging developer support, and Dr. Gassman explained how this aligns with the Unified Land Development Code. Reczko asked about new programs and staffing, which Dr. Gassman addressed. Board Member Mizell raised questions about ecological impacts of city pools, including energy costs, water management, and chlorination practices; Dr. Gassman discussed standards, environmental considerations, and potential future changes in international regulations. Board Member Nazir asked which grants might be considered and whether the City needs them; Dr. Gassman explained how grants support Sustainability work and the impact of eliminating certain property taxes on these initiatives

### **3. New Business (Joy Oglesby)**

During New Business, Board Member Fee asked for updates on parks and pickleball courts, and Deputy Director Jean-Baptiste noted she would provide that information. Chair Oglesby requested an update on Huizenga Park, which Jean-Baptiste also offered to provide. Board Member Moreira raised concerns about Jimmy Everett Park, including the lack of tennis bag hooks and overly high shade structures at Holiday Park 5; Jean-Baptiste confirmed these issues would be addressed and noted they would be discussed further at the January meeting. Moreira also raised safety and cleanliness concerns regarding Holiday Park restrooms, especially for women, and asked if increased police presence might help; Jean-Baptiste discussed current measures and budgeted improvements, and the Board reflected on past restroom

Parks, Recreation and Beaches Advisory Board  
December 3, 2025

issues such as people sleeping in the facilities. Fee inquired about the cost of daily activity fees to play tennis, which Board Member Reczko answered, and additional questions about fees were discussed by the Board.

**6. Adjournment (Joy Oglesby)**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 P.M.

[Minutes prepared by JBurnham, Prototype-Inc.]