

TOWN OF WINDERMERE

Lake Street Park Workshop Minutes

July 26, 2022

CALL TO ORDER:

Present were Mayor Jim O'Brien, Council Members Bill Martini, Mandy David, Tony Davit, and Molly Rose. Town Manager Robert Smith, Town Clerk Dorothy Burkhalter, Police Chief Dave Ogden, and Public Works Director Tonya Elliott-Moore were also present. Council Member Andy Williams was absent.

Mayor O'Brien began the workshop at 6:00pm and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. OPEN FORUMN/PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

2. SPECIAL PRESENTATION/PROCLAMATIONS/AWARDS

None

5. NEW BUSINESS

f. Other Items for Consideration

- i. Lake Street Parks Presentation
- ii. Parks and Recreation Committee Recommendations

Mayor O'Brien introduced this item. He then turned the floor over to Manager Smith. Manager Smith gave a presentation regarding Lake Street Park and the current issues that have increased significantly recently. He stated that unruly behavior, the number of patrons, alcohol/drugs use, and noise have become a big concern. Manager Smith encouraged all that if they see something, to say something. Manager Smith stated that the Town has increased signage (park rules/no parking) installed security cameras, increased patrol, added spilt rail fencing, is working with Orange County EPD, BCLAC, FWC and OCSO on establishing additional No Wake or Motorized Watercraft Exclusion areas along portions of the park, and passing of more strict Ordinances relating to commercial activities as well as additional citation process for civil infractions (jumping off dock, parking, etc.). He then commented on the FRDAP grant and paying it back, amending the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning, installation of fencing/a gate, restricted parking at park entrances, and gate systems/codes. Manager Smith stated that the discussion items are: creating a swim area or not, removal of the roof and/or docks, amended times for access to the park, and restricting the amount of people allowed at the parks. He then stated that the following feedback was received at the two previous public sessions; make parks resident-only, payback or forgive the FRDAP monies, approximately \$25,000.00 - \$30,000.00 for fencing and gates, work with Orange County on the Lake Down boat ramp access, prohibit smoking/vaping at Town parks, and continue to work with other agencies regarding the "No Wake Zones" and Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zones, and swim area along the park route. Member David stated that the Parks and Recreation Committee recommends paying back the grant and making the park residents-only. Discussion was made regarding enforcement, vaping/smoking, current process for patrolling/enforcement, removing the roof/docks, shoreline enforcement, social media, shutting the park down for a month or two, the immediate need to remove the hazard/the roof, confirmation of FRDAP payback, and exploring a permitted entry. Manager Smith stated that there is common consent to explore privatization of the parks, work with FDEP for repayment of the funds, and work the logistics to incorporate as resident-only parks. Mayor O'Brien added additional support on the vaping/smoking issue, removal of roof tops, and permitted entry. He then opened the floor for public comment. Ms. Theresa Schretzmann-Myers stated that the other parks are having the same problems. She then stated that using social media can reach the most people, as it's the most used. Ms. Schretzmann-Myers also stated that the Youth Committee could be beneficial as well with social media. She then suggested having athletics activities to keep the teenagers busy. Mr. Richard Irwin commented on the docks that were built in two stages. He questioned if the grant covered both docks or one. Manager Smith stated that grant covered the entire park. Mr. Irwin stated that the size of the park does not allow for the number of people that are showing up. Manager Smith stated that an argument can be made that this has become a nuisance rather than an amenity. Ms. Christy Huffman of 511 Magnolia Street introduced herself. She commented that area has become an area to avoid. Ms. Huffman stated she is in favor of a park key or whatever is needed for proof of residency. Ms. Penny

TOWN OF WINDERMERE

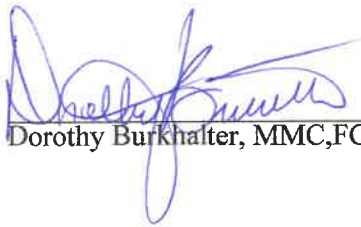
Lake Street Park Workshop Minutes

July 26, 2022

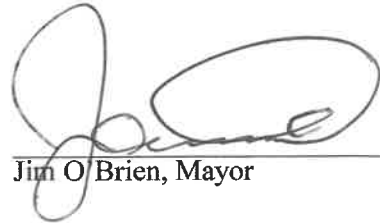
Ford stated she is in favor of shutting the park down for a short period of time (audio was deficient). She suggested building a platform for jumping if the park is for residents-only. Ms. Ford is in favor of some sort of keyed access. She also is in agreement to keep the park for residents-only. Mayor O'Brien commented on past history with non-resident visitors at the park. Member Martini commented on concerns regarding when the Bird Island Ordinance goes into effect, what it will do to surrounding areas, and how important it is to get out in front of this area. Ms. Denise Torney of 326 E 5th Avenue commented on how the park was a beautiful place, and no longer is. She stated she would not like the roof or docks removed, and that strict enforcement is needed. Ms. Torney also agrees with buying back the grant and Member Martini's comment to temporality close the park. Ms. Brandi Haines stated she is in favor of paying back the grant. She then commented on her concerns with having keys and passes for entrance to certain parks/areas. Ms. Haines suggested a master plan for all the parks. She stated that phone readers for access could be used. She then stated she is in favor of keeping the roof and docks. Manager Smith explained the possible key code program that may be utilized for entrance to the parks. Mr. Tom Stroup agreed with Member Martini's closure comment. He then stated for the record that, "this must be the old cop coming out in me I guess, but these kids aren't looking for something to do. They don't need a grant to send them off to some, you know, some boot camp, they know exactly what they're doing." Mr. Stroup stated that the kids need to be told they can no longer do this. He then stated that this is a quality-of-life issue every day that needs to be addressed. He then stated that he agrees with returning the money, and he agrees with Member Martini's closure suggestion. Chief Ogden stated that school goes back in session soon, and he believes there will be a change at the lake as well as Oakdale Street. Mayor O'Brien reviewed the Ordinance passage process.

ADJOURN:

There being no further discussion, Mayor O'Brien adjourned the workshop at 7:19pm



Dorothy Burkhalter, MMC,FCRM



Jim O'Brien, Mayor

00:37:14 Dave Ogden: Dispatch non-emergency # is 407-905-6333 this will go to Dispatch to document calls. This should be used for us to respond to issues.

00:38:23 Dave Ogden: 321-299-2414 is the patrol line. this is to speak to an officer about an issue that is not taking place at that time. The will not answer when on a call, or responding to an incident.

00:39:13 billmartini: Thanks Chief

00:58:55 christinehuffman: If we pay back the loan, would it be possible to station an officer at the park, at least on Friday afternoon, Saturday, and Sunday, and have that person check ID and verify home address. I know it would be a budget issue, but could help get the message out to all that it is a private park.

01:05:44 Theresa Schretzmann-Myers: Would it be possible to write grants for Youth Athletic programs to give these Teenagers a healthy outlet for spending their energy in a healthier way?

01:06:49 Nora Brophy: Parks & Rec has discussed removing the roof and/or the docks before, but we get a lot of pushback on that as well.

01:06:59 christinehuffman: Seems like removing the docks punishes the residents. Imagine if we suggested removing the tennis courts to keep non-residents out.

01:07:40 Robert Smith: Chat is closed at this point to allow for public comment and have appropriate time