

**GREATER BOCA RATON BEACH & PARK DISTRICT
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
November 17, 2025**

The MEETING took place at the Swim & Racquet Center and was live-streamed for viewing & listening through Zoom. Chair Wright called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Craig F. Ehrnst
Steven M. Engel
Robert K. Rollins, Jr.
Susan Vogelgesang
Erin Wright

PUBLIC REQUESTS:

Robert DuKate – Thanked the Commission for stopping the surf park and urged restarting planning with golf as the priority. Emphasized affordability, concerns about public-private partnerships, and recommended a driving range location closer to parking to avoid traffic issues.

Brianna Hagquist – Asked the Board not to destroy the forested area at Sugar Sand Park due to the presence of gopher tortoises and other wildlife. Expressed strong concerns about traffic congestion and urged locating ballfields elsewhere.

Harold Chaffee – Recommended adding a “compatibility” category to proposal evaluations and suggested giving golf proposers clear specifications instead of issuing a new RFP. Stressed the importance of affordability and preserving green space through golf.

Regina Ecklund – Advocated for an 18-hole executive golf course with a driving range and learning facility, stating it would complement existing city courses. Urged the Board to preserve green space and follow long-standing community requests for golf.

Greg Galanis – Thanked Commissioners who supported changing direction on North Park and encouraged others to follow community preferences. Highlighted high demand at the city golf course and urged creating a smaller course and practice facility to meet growing needs.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETINGS:

MOTION was made by Commissioner Vogelgesang and seconded by Commissioner Engel to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on November 3, 2025, at 5:15 p.m.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

REGULAR BUSINESS:

1. 2026 District Board Meeting and Holiday Calendar

Executive Director Harms presented the proposed 2026 District Meeting and Holiday Schedule for the Board’s consideration. After discussion, the Board agreed to amend the following two meeting dates:

- Move the March 16, 2026, meeting to March 23, 2026
- Move the June 15, 2026, meeting to June 22, 2026

MOTION was made by Commissioner Engel and seconded by Commissioner Vogelgesang to adopt the 2026 District Board Meeting Calendar, as amended.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

2. North Park Deed Restriction Discussion

District Counsel Jacob Horowitz provided an overview of the history and legal analysis related to deed restrictions on the North Park property. He noted that multiple legal opinions—prepared by District counsel in 2017 and 2020 and by the City of Boca Raton’s Attorney in 2017—have consistently concluded that deed restrictions are contract rights, not property rights, and therefore are not enforceable against governmental entities when land is acquired for a public or recreational purpose.

Mr. Horowitz explained that this conclusion is supported by longstanding Florida Supreme Court cases (Manalapan, 1982; Bay Harbor Islands, 1955). He further noted that an updated third-party opinion recently obtained from the Nason Yeager law firm reaffirmed this interpretation and referenced a 2024 Fourth District Court of Appeal decision out of the City of Hallandale Beach reaching the same result. He stated that Florida law is clear that deed restrictions do not run with land owned by a government agency for public use, and therefore do not apply to the District or the City.

Discussion: Counsel confirmed that the District is an independent special taxing district and a governmental agency, meaning it is afforded the same legal protections and exemptions as other government entities.

3. North Park RFP Discussion

Executive Director Harms provided an update on the North Park west-side RFP process, noting that Kemper Sports will provide its financial information next week and that an agreement with Jerry Ford is expected to begin financial analysis of all proposals. Commissioners engaged in an extensive discussion regarding long-term planning for the west side of North Park, emphasizing the need for a clear process and coordination with the City of Boca Raton.

Commissioners highlighted shifting community needs—including limited gym and field house space, existing city investments in golf facilities, and the need to avoid duplicating or conflicting with future City plans. Director Harms reported recent meetings with the new City Manager and recreation leadership, who expressed interest in jointly updating a statistically valid community recreation survey, as previous survey results showed strong resident preference for trails, preserves, playgrounds, and family amenities, while golf ranked low at that time. Commissioners agreed that community needs may have evolved and that a new survey is necessary before making decisions on the remaining undeveloped land. Several commissioners expressed caution regarding golf development without a coordinated plan, while others noted significant resident input requesting golf amenities.

The Board further reviewed funding already allocated for field house design, DeHoernle Park Phase II planning, and the Sugar Sand covered facility, noting that these ongoing commitments also factor into timing for North Park decisions.

MOTION was made by Commissioner Wright and seconded by Commissioner Engel to reject the Boca Sports and Entertainment proposal

Discussion ensued.

An Amended MOTION was made by Commissioner Ehrnst and seconded by Commissioner Rollins to reject all proposals received for the development of the west side of North Park, with

the exception of the proposal from the Boys & Girls Club, which may continue to move forward for consideration. The District, in coordination with the City of Boca Raton, shall undertake a new, statistically valid community needs assessment to evaluate golf demand and identify any additional recreation priorities reflective of Boca Raton's changing demographics and community preferences. Upon completion of this needs assessment, the District shall develop and issue a revised RFP aligned with the updated community data.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

MOTION was made by Commissioner Ehrnst and seconded by Commissioner Engel to terminate the cone of silence associated with the North Park west-side RFP process.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

APPROVAL OF PAYROLL AND INVOICES:

MOTION was made by Commissioner Ehrnst and seconded by Commissioner Engel to approve the payroll and invoices as presented, totaling \$253,675.40.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Executive Director:

RFP for Design-Build at Sugar Sand Park

The District has issued an RFP for a design-build of the Multi-Purpose rink cover at Sugar Sand Park. The proposals are due back on January 16, 2026.

Plant A Park- Skate Park Public Workshop

Plant-A-Park continues design work on the skate park at North Park. As part of their commitment to public engagement, they will hold a second public workshop on December 3 at 6:00 PM at the Boca Community Center Annex to gather community input.

Patch Reef Park – Pickleball and Tennis Court Reconstruction

Reconstruction of the existing pickleball and tennis courts at Patch Reef Park has officially begun. Work will proceed in phases, starting with the pickleball courts to ensure those are completed and reopened efficiently.

Patch Reef Community Center – Approved Improvements

Design drawings for the previously approved improvements at the Patch Reef Community Center are nearing completion. The District expects to receive construction pricing from Shiff Construction in December, along with visual renderings for Board review.

Sugar Sand Park – Roofing Projects

Roof replacement at Sugar Sand Park is underway. The Field House roof is expected to be completed during the first week of December. Once this phase is finished, contractors will move on to the additional buildings near the ball fields throughout the following month.

Commissioners:

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Commissioner Engel clarified that the District originally explored a public-private partnership for a golf course because golf construction costs are extremely high—referencing Delray Beach’s \$34 million renovation—and a partnership would allow the project to move forward more quickly and affordably. He stated that any Public-Private Partnership pursued by the District would be narrowly focused on specific recreational uses and would not include unrelated private development, such as restaurants, apartments, or hotels. He further noted that any tree removed at Sugar Sand Park must be replaced under the law, ensuring there would be no net loss of trees. He emphasized the importance of avoiding misinformation that can slow progress and create unnecessary division within the community.

Commissioner Ehrnst stated that residents will benefit from having multiple pickleball options—outdoor at El Rio, covered at Patch Reef, and indoor at North Park—providing access at different price points. He also shared that he recently participated in a beach cleanup supported by the City and encouraged continued support for volunteer cleanup efforts. Additionally, he stated that he would like the City to reconsider its dog ordinance, noting that many residents own pets and suggesting that the current restrictions may be overly restrictive.

Commissioner Wright stated that while she supports making parks more dog-friendly, she is concerned about allowing dogs on athletic fields due to hygiene and safety issues. She added that any request to change the dog ordinance should be brought directly to the City Council.

Commissioner Rollins expressed concern about allowing dogs on rectangular athletic fields, where owners may let them run freely, potentially creating issues. He stated that Sugar Sand’s wooded areas show little visible wildlife based on his recent visits. However, environmental studies will provide clarity, and noted that the City must ensure all tree-replacement requirements are met for the proposed softball quad. He emphasized that future planning, particularly for North Park, should be more clearly defined to prevent public frustration and strengthen coordination with the City.

Commissioner Vogelgesang asked whether the new City Manager could be invited to attend a District meeting to speak, and also inquired about an email received regarding the egress and entrance to the pickleball facility.

ADJOURNMENT:

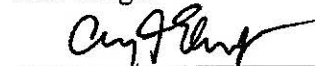
MOTION was made by Commissioner Engel and seconded by Commissioner Rollins to adjourn the meeting at 6:29 p.m.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Signed by


Erin Wright

Chair



Craig F. Ehrnst

Secretary-Treasurer