



MINUTES OF THE ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
OF THE NORTH COASTAL OVERLAY DISTRICT
Wednesday, March 8, 2023
Permit Center Conference Room 1

Members present: Linda LaCerva (Chair), Jean Miller, Kathleen Floryan, Jane Norton, Rita Clare-Salzler

Members absent: Sacha Martin

Staff present: Lex Taylor, Deputy County Attorney; Teresa Bishop, AICP, Planning Division Manager; Sloane Stephens, Planner

LaCerva called meeting to order at approximately 4:00 PM.

LaCerva read the Public Notice Statement.

LaCerva reminded all present that the purpose of the North Coastal Design Review Board is to determine if the proposed structures are in compliance with Section 3.09 of the Land Development Code.

LaCerva called for public comment not on the agenda. No comments.

Agenda Item #1 - LaCerva opened Item #1, NCDRB 2023-01 North Beach Park Improvements. Ex-parte: all present Board members stated they had each visited the site.

Jamie Baccari (Assistant Director, SJC Parks & Rec) and Brian Kelsay (Project Manager, SJC Parks & Rec) introduced the project by giving an overview of the motivation for the project, explaining that new beach parks, beach access, and parking were some of the top priorities of the Comprehensive Plan. John Grady (Engineer), and Brian Sawyer, further presented the specifications of the project. Priority objectives of the project were to balance increasing parking, ADA accessibility, preserving trees, and creating a new park amenity space. Throughout the presentation, Grady seemed to address many of the public concerns that were received prior to the meeting. He discussed how the auxiliary parking area was planned in a way to be able to keep as many of the oak trees as possible. He also stated for safety, there would be defined walkways and lighting throughout the site. The architectural aspects of the project were described for all structures, and were modeled after the Florida Vernacular style.

Baccari informed the public that there will be a community meeting regarding the project on March 30th at 6pm, where they will be able to discuss the arrangement of the site plan, and the public will vote to decide on which playground will be implemented.

Public comment:

Approximately 35 Vilano residents were present to voice their concerns with the project, a majority being children who frequently use the green space and trees towards the rear of the property. Staff notes some of the concerns stated do not fall under the jurisdiction of the NCDRB, and it was recommended that the community voice those concerns at the March 30th community meeting regarding the project. The following points summarize public concerns stated during the meeting:

- Many aspects of the new design are appreciated - new bathrooms, showers, pavilion – however, general consensus has concerns with the removal of greenspace and existing trees at the rear of the property
- Concerns with drainage issues the property may face
- Playground in the middle of the parking lot appears to be a safety issue
- Shade over the play structure should be maximized
- Suggestions to incorporate a new playground into the existing trees

LaCerva - stated that there is a clear need for additional beach parking, but perhaps a different site design would better accommodate parking and the greenspace. Has no problems with the design of the proposed structures; stated they don't seem much different from what is currently existing.

Miller - quoted the purpose of the Overlay District from LDC Sections 3.09.01 and 3.09.04. She stated that the playground in the middle of the parking lot goes against the goals of the non-urban pedestrian-oriented character of the Overlay District and that it should be contiguous with the trees; not surrounded by the parking. Traffic and exhaust fumes pose potential hazards. The site currently has scenic views indigenous to the area. Compared playing on a playground vs. playing on trees - very different experiences for children. Another point to having the playground contiguous with the trees would be to provide natural shade. The current playground has four slides of varying sizes and seems to provide good design in a smaller space. Also suggests putting the new playground in the southern corner by the beach walkover. Bike racks would be a fantastic addition.

Floryan - the overwhelming amount of people coming to the beach has led to dangerous parking situations (parking on the grass, in the street, etc). Stated she thinks as much parking as possible should be provided close to the beach. How will parking be controlled to keep people from parking on grass? Would angled parking provide more spaces? Has no problems with the design of the structures themselves.

Approved: April 12, 2023

Clare-Salzler - counted auxiliary parking spaces (37 spaces). Perhaps they could be relocated to the main parking area – this would increase saves greenspace, and change the shape of the parking area to be squared off (not “race-track” style). Can the elements of the play structure and be placed in the greenspace sporadically to deflect the children from climbing the trees?

Baccari - the current play structure has met its life cycle and will need replacing. Parks & Rec does not promote youth playing in the trees as it is a safety concern, which is why the original plan was to have the playground away from the trees. The restroom structure needs to be relocated (does not currently meet site setback requirements), hence putting all amenities in the center of the site. Respects and appreciates the comments on saving the greenspace and will work to make site plan changes to better accommodate both the parking and the greenspace. Trying to be respectful to Villages of Vilano by providing as much buffering/screening as possible. We cannot put play structures just on grass as each component requires a protected fall space, that would take up additional greenspace. To control the parking, there will be parking bumpers along the perimeter of the parking areas. Assessment will be ongoing, and if people are not obeying the parking areas, vegetation will be planted. The changing rooms are being added to alleviate pressure on the restrooms.

LaCerva: Motion to approve NCDRB 2023-01 for the construction of the new restrooms, pavilion, changing room, and refurbished signage, with second by Miller. Motion passes 5-0.

Minutes - Clare-Salzler: Modification to the January 11, 2023 minutes, fourth paragraph, to insert *adequately sized* for mixed-use.

LaCerva: Motion to approve the January 11, 2023 minutes as amended, with second by Clare-Salzler. Motion passes 5-0.

No further business | Meeting adjourned approximately 5:50 PM.

Staff Action Items – This section will be present on all future meeting minutes for organizational and accountability purposes.

Per the Board’s motion at the prior January meeting, Staff investigated and created an online link on the County Website for the upload of meeting minutes. Previous agendas and approved minutes from 2022 have been uploaded, and the link was emailed to the members of the Board. Minutes will continue to be uploaded as they are approved: [North Coastal Design Review Board \(sjcfl.us\)](https://www.sjcfll.us)