

- Restoration of native habitat and landscape
- Parking
- Restrooms
- Shade trees

Depending on the location, participants also concluded that it may not be desirable to include athletic fields, lighting, or a band shell in the new park if these facilities will have negative impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods. The design process for the new park should include a robust public engagement process.

~~Participants also concluded that the park should not include other athletic fields, lighting, or a band shell. Informed by the input collected through the Parks Master Plan, the City should consider developing a master plan for the site. The master plan should include a robust public engagement process.~~

#### **Interlocal Agreement with Sarasota County School District**

As noted in Chapter 2: Park System Analysis, the City of Venice currently has two schools within City limits. Both of these schools contain a variety of active recreation facilities. The City should explore the feasibility of establishing an inter-local agreement with the School District to provide public access to recreational facilities during non-school hours. This access may assist the City in addressing some of the active recreational needs of Venice area residents.

#### **Other City Park Improvements**

As noted previously, during the Needs Assessment process, City of Venice residents provided input on specific improvements that they would like to see implemented in various parks. These improvements ranged from maintenance enhancements, to adding specific facilities, to leaving parks unimproved. Additionally, the Toole Design Group Team added recommendations to improve specific parks based on findings from the park site evaluations and the needs assessment.

Following is list of improvements proposed for specific parks. The City should consider using the improvements identified below as a starting point. While some of these improvements can be achieved through maintenance and/or incremental improvements, others may require the development of conceptual master plans and construction drawings due to the scope of proposed improvements and the significance of the park.

#### **Pocket Parks at Armada, Castile Street, Barcelona, and Pensacola Road**

The Pocket Parks at Armada Road, Castile Street, Barcelona Avenue, and Pensacola Road were part of the original Nolen Plan. The purpose of these parks was to provide residents with close-to-home leisure opportunities, while also facilitating pedestrian access to the beach. Over time, these parks have been forgotten, misused, and even encroached upon. For example, the Pocket Park at Castile Street commonly referred to as the Granada Pocket Park is currently used as a trash dump site. Additionally, one of the adjacent residents constructed a carport on the access-way.



**Trash Dump Site at Pocket Park at Castile Street**



**Residential Car Port Built on Access Way to Pocket Park at Castile Street**

The City should reclaim these parks as an integral part of the Nolen Plan and the City's park system. Additionally, the City should look to improve these pocket parks by adding amenities



According to the City of Venice Comprehensive Plan, the area known as the Northeast Venice Neighborhood comprises about 25% of the total land area of the city. An irregular area, Northeast Venice, also known as North Venice, lies East of Interstate 75. The area extends to the Myakka River on the east border, and is bounded by Knights Trail to the west. It extends northward beyond the Venetian Golf and River Club and southward to Border Road. Roughly.

In this area, there exists one park. The Venice Myakka River Park, a 10 acre public area with picnic tables, short walking trails and a kayak launch.

That's it. 1 park in an area that constitutes  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the city.

And what plans are there for more parks in the area laid out in the Parks Master Plan that calls for 7 acres of parks and green spaces for every 1000 residents? There are none.

In the other 75% of Venice, there are 43 parks covering 481.94 acres. Filling a myriad of wants and needs very well. If 75% of Venice has 481.94 acres in parks, it can reasonably argued that a proportionate and appropriate amount of park land for Northeast Venice would be 160.65 acres. Not the meagre 10 acres as now exist.

The Parks Master Plan did a survey of current residents of the Northeast Venice neighborhoods. Showing a large degree of concern and wont to give input, 59% of those surveyed responded to requests for input by those putting together the Master Plan. A number that indicates a very engaged populous.

When asked what their needs were, in Question 6 of the survey, these folks unequivocally stated the need for small neighborhood parks. Period. End of discussion. The number one need.

So, what does the Master Plan offer to seek this end? Nothing.

Earle Kimmel in his piece "City Mulls Master Plan and Future Park Expansion" January 1, 2017, pressed the City Manager Ed Lavelle and Mayor John Holicon. While not answering as to why there were no plans for park expansion in Northeast Venice beyond the small 10 acre park that exists there now, Lavelle and Holicon responded that the plan "did not take into consideration amenities developers are providing on their own." The example was given that the Villages

of Milano will be offering pickleball courts, a dog park, and bocce ball courts. Toscana Isles promises a boat launch, tennis courts, and a dog park.

But for whom? These are gated communities. The only public that benefits are those behind the gates! This does nothing to serve all the residents of Venice and those coming to visit our city as vacationers or as prospective residents.

Lavelle confirmed this to Kimel: "The access may be limited to residents of (those) areas." It will be. Ever tried to get into a gated community hereabouts without a realtor? Not happening.

It seems to me that the City Manager and the Mayor are happy to cede this issue to the developers. The Parks Master Plan reflects the same. This is unconscionable and short-sighted.

This Northeast Venice area will be developed. Might it be required that those developers who do so set aside part of their land purchases for public parks? That is how it was done in Fort Collins, Colorado where I used to live. Might the City Manager and Mayor take a drive down Laurel and take notes on the 6 pieces of land for sale out there right now? Might some of these be picked up by the city for parks? Open spaces? Sounds like a better plan than what we have now for Northeast Venice and its dearth of public parks.

Let's hope the Parks Master Plan before it is finalized can address this glaring oversight. Northeast Venice needs and wants city parks to be a part of its growth plans. The Parks Master Plan needs to reflect these wishes with concrete plans.

## Michelle Girvan

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**From:** Lori Stelzer  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 11, 2017 2:12 PM  
**To:** Parks Recreation Advisory Board; Grant Alexander  
**Subject:** City Council action re: Wellfield Park

To Parks and Recreation Board members:

At yesterday's city council meeting, city council adopted the following motion:

A motion was made by Mayor Holic, seconded by Council Member Gates, to direct the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to gather all pertinent data and information on Wellfield Park including number of fields or space used, number of additional fields or space needed, number of participants, number of participants living within city limits, conditional amenities, additional amenities needed, time of day field is in use, season for use, and report back to council by April 15, 2017. The motion carried by voice vote unanimously.

This topic will be on the next agenda for the parks board. This notice is intended to give you a heads up so you would have time to think about it prior to the board discussion.

**BOARD MEMBERS: DO NOT "REPLY ALL". ONLY RESPOND TO ME.**

Thank you!

Lori Stelzer, MMC  
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### **Wellfield Park**

- **Croquet courts**
  - County will start maintenance of new croquet courts 1/3/17
    - Spray tech will scout new courts and plan any pesticide applications needed
    - Fertilizer application will made this week
- **Drainage project completed**
- **Additional internal repairs & renovations**
  - Turf edges on infield edged and hosed
  - Fence lines edged and filter mix added
  - Expansion of warning track in front of dugouts in progress
  - Addition of mar mound clay to batters boxes scheduled for next week
  - Pitching mound rebuild scheduled for this week
- **Softball field #1 & #2**
  - Box leveled both fields
- **Restroom cleaning contract with Boro will start on 1/3/17**

### **Chuck Reiter Park**

- **Field #1**
  - Batter's box renovations in progress
  - Aeration completed
- **Field #2**
  - Clay edge maintenance completed
  - Addition of clay to cut outs around bases completed
  - Rebuilding of pitching mound completed
  - Aeration rescheduled completed
- **Field #3 & #4**
  - Clay and warning track maintenance in progress
  - Aeration completed

### **Venice Beach**

- The post and rope located around the concession/plaza is in the process of being replaced by BWA staff.

- The lights and door locks at the concession/plaza have been shutting off due to the breaker being overloaded. County and City staff are coordinating on a resolution to the problem.
- We are meeting with the RFP committee on Friday and the concessionaire awarded the bid at Venice Beach.
- Seven new wood benches were installed on the beach by county staff. These benches replaced aging wood benches in the same locations.
- City installed new electric door locks on the restroom doors. Amber lights have been installed in the parking lot.

### **Maxine Barritt**

- New mulch spread in various locations throughout the park.
- Many complaints have been received about dogs at this park which is adjacent to Brohard Paw Park. New 'No Dog' signs were installed at strategic locations within the parking lot, along the walking path around the pond and at park access points. Signs were also installed at the beach accesses at South Brohard.

### **Service Club, Sharky's/North Annex, Maxine Barritt, Paw Park and South Brohard**

- Initial site evaluations for the above listed sites have been completed for the Upland Invasive Exotic Plant Management Program (grant) that is administered by FFWCC. It is anticipated that the grant application will be due in April. This is an opportunity to submit a proposal to complete invasive exotic plant removal on the listed sites. Additional sites that will be included in the application are Caspersen Beach and Shamrock Park. It is anticipated that the county will request approximately \$200,000 in funding for the removal of species to include but not limited to: Brazilian pepper, Australian pine, carrotwood, cogon grass, rosary pea and beach vitex.

### **VCC: events**

- Antique Show Jan 7 & 8
- Home Show Jan 14 & 15
- Bee Gees Tribute Concert Jan 20 & 21
- Orchid Show Feb 4 & 5