

Beaches Veterans Memorial Park Historical Background

In January 2003, the City purchased land on the northwest corner of Atlantic Boulevard and Mayport Road from the Jacksonville Transportation Authority in connection with construction of the Mayport Flyover. Later that year, the City Commission agreed to name the property "Atlantic Beach Veterans Memorial Park" to recognize the City's close connection to the Mayport Naval Base and the several retired military organizations in the area. Initial improvements to the park included a playground, grass and irrigation.

After receiving interest for providing funding from the City of Jacksonville, the Oceanside Rotary Club, and several veterans group, the Atlantic Beach City Commission approved a contract for Tat Chan to prepare a master plan for the park in December of 2009. The master plan consisted of two phases with phase one including a stage, a lawn area, a playground, and landscaping, while phase two included a memorial garden to the west of the stage bordering the American Legion property. On April 12, 2010, the City Commission unanimously approved the designs for both phases of the plan while also approving to rename the park "Beaches Veterans Memorial Park" and to name the future garden "Chaplains Memorial Garden" in honor of the 103 chaplains who lost their lives in combat. At this Commission meeting, representatives from several veterans groups gave their pledge to the City Commission to support the park both financially and with "sweat" equity.

In October of 2010, the City of Jacksonville provided \$50,000 in grant funds for the construction of phase one. Further, the Veterans of Foreign War Post #3270 and the Oceanside Rotary Club both committed \$12,500 each for the installation of the 80 foot flag pole. With a total of \$75,000 provided in funding, construction of phase one began. On Veterans Day in 2010, a dedication and flag raising ceremony was held to unveil the new flag pole and plaza area of the park. Construction of the stage area was later completed in time for a second ceremony on Memorial Day of 2011.

On June 13, 2011 the City Commission approved the plans for the Chaplains Memorial Garden, which included a chaplain's monument, engraved brick pavers, and six monuments dedicated to the various branches of the Armed Services. Construction for the memorial garden was completed in 2015, completing both phases of the park's master plan.