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Rebuilt board is making waves at Benderson Park in Sarasota

Your Observer – When Michael Taaffe, a partner with Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, took over as the new chair of the Nathan Benderson Park Conservancy in September, his rebuilding of the board could best be termed as "aggressive."

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In his two previous years on the board of the former Suncoast Aquatics Nature Center Associates, a nonprofit that ran the park for Sarasota County, Taaffe said not much was getting done.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic could be partially to blame, Taaffe said the board had little diversity and he was going to change that fact quickly.

The Nathan Benderson Park Conservancy announced its name change March 7, along with its five new board appointments (two-year terms).

"I looked at the board like I was managing a small company," Taaffe said. "I wanted to recruit people who have knowledge of our products."

Taaffe was a founding member of Sarasota Crew and has coached the sport as well. His four kids all were national team rowers. He was asked a few years ago if he wanted to be the chair, but he didn't want to miss his kids' races. With his kids graduating from college, he now has the time.

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