

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Minutes

June 17, 2020

Members Attending

Shirin Jenkins – Co-Chair
Erika Robertson
Ingrid Corbi
Andy McGlinn
Emily Morgan
Hunter Holland

Members Absent:

Marissa Bryant
Megan Mullins
RJ Hogan – Chair
Will Bordeaux
Zach Gilbert

Others Present:

Davina Bell
Margaret Isbell – Admin

CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER

Shirin called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 2020 MINUTES

Andy made a motion to approve the February 2020 minutes, Erika seconded the motion, all approved.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Davina introduced our newest board member Hunter Holland. He works at UNCW in the recreation department and teaches recreation programs.

NRPA STATEMENT

With RJ not able to attend the meeting, she shared a statement from the president and CEO for NRPA, Kristine Stratton. This statement was about social equity and inclusion. “Our communities are visiting our public spaces in record numbers to find the physical and mental health solutions that parks, and recreation uniquely provide.” Most of Davina’s staff attended the 3 sessions cohort that was offered by NCRPA in the equity paradigm. It was called the Racial Equity Learning Cohort, which Davina just finished the virtual online course.

The feedback from staff was that it challenged them to think about who they are as individuals, past behaviors and present behaviors and future behaviors. Davina’s staff has shifted their programming goals to try to provide equitable and diverse programs. One of the perks of participating in the cohort is a \$1,500.00 grant that the city has applied for to implement a Wildlife Explorers Program, to introduce inner city youth to nature and get them outside. Typically, African-Americans are less likely to be involved in outdoor programs.

Right at the beginning of COVID-19, Davina and Hunter met to discuss ways to partner with the University. Hunter is going to help with the Wildlife Explorers Program, regardless if the city gets the grant or not. Hunter will be doing the research and how we can build the Wildlife Explorers Program that is a program offered through NRPA.

They are hoping to implement the program in the Spring and then have a recreation festival and do some camping activities. They initially talked about doing some camping in the park but knowing there are very inexperienced people participating we wanted to introduce those activities use that as a

steppingstone to do more outdoor skills. This could build up to the camping in the park or to one of the local campgrounds. Davina would like the advisory board to be more open to volunteer for various programs. Shirin volunteers with the Cape Fear Audubon Society, she is part of a sub-committee that goes to the elementary schools and teaches about birds, she has most of the presentations memorized and would love to participate. A former employee is working with Kim Adams and is having a Zoom meeting the day after the advisory board meeting. The Wildlife Explorers program is a predesigned program from NRPA. More skill based programs, setting up a shelter or tent during a camping trip. We are doing this with, or without the grants. They plan to purchase backpacks with everything needed for a camping trip.

RE-OPENING PLANS

Planning, cleaning, catching up. Monday – Friday posting videos called RecTime. We are looking for more ways to engage the public. For Empie park, leagues are schedule to resume on the 26th. They have modified. All tournaments have been cancelled for 2020 by the Tennis Association.

They have been working with legal to draft waivers for participation and COVID-19. This is a big concern for legal and they want to make sure there is a little liability on the city as possible. It has been a long couple of weeks going back and forth with legal on what we can and cannot do.

In addition to the virtual programming staff is providing numerous resources on our website and sharing with our partner websites for both youth and adult. Just different activity to do alone or with adults. They have put together packets and shared with the Housing Authority, YMCA, and Voyage.

Summer Camp is a big question for many people. At this time, we are planning a virtual summer camp at MLK Center, supplies are being provide. For Maides Park the first week of camp will be virtual, this is scheduled for next week. Waiting to hear from the city attorney and hoping they will have in person camp the first week of July, this is because at Maides Park its smaller and able to contain smaller groups of kids then at the MLK Center. Everyone is eager to get back into the centers. There is also PPE in place at all centers and cleaning practice in place.

Sports Camps, we are able to do outdoor sports camps. Archery is the first one and a new one. We are at the beginning stages planning for Fall. Come up with items A-J and go from there. Davina is hoping to have better information in the coming weeks.

Davina touched on what was happing with the pools. They WMCA has really gotten together with the new aquatics director. Robert Strange Pool will be opening on July 22nd by reservation only. They will section off the pool for groups of 10 and for laps. Groups will have a 1 hour time shop, they will be closed for 30 minutes to clean.

NORTHSIDE POOL REPAIRS

The pump house is in the process of being repaired due to damage from Florence.

OLD BUSINESS

PORTIA MILLS HINES PARK

Basketball courts have been painted with new nets installed. The basketball courts have also been seal coated, event scheduling signs have been installed. The conceptual design has been completed and design development is underway. The next step is to hold a public meeting to display the current conceptual design to the public. A total of \$725,300 has been funded to complete this project. Within the course of a couple of weeks, they have asked to replace the walking track with a shelter. Currently waiting on a few quotes related to the shelter.

SPORTS COMPLEX

City staff met with the design team to review the project cost estimate in order to get clarification and have questions answered about line items. The design team will be writing out the specs for the city to put the request out to bid. Site grading plans will be shared with the city before meeting with NHC and CFPUA. Design team is working great with us and our budget constraints.

GYMS AT MAIDES & MLK CENTER

After assessing the MLK gym as a candidate for a project to be built to withstand category five winds, a determination was made to proceed with requesting a cost estimate to design as originally scoped with an alternate design for a public safety building standard. After reviewing cost estimates, staff has directed the consultant to proceed with the original scope of work. Construction documents have been submitted to purchasing for the gym at Maides Park, the contract has been awarded to Boudreaux Construction. They have 250 days to complete the project, project manager is saying they will have it done before that. Land has been cleared at Maides Park, the groundbreaking is on June 26th.

NORTH WATERFRONT PARK

Construction has begun, with an estimated completion in date in May or June of 2021. Full concert season should begin in 2021.

MUNI

RFP has been posted.

NEW BUSINESS

Back to the conversation that RJ and Davina had. He wanted everyone to brainstorm and come up with an idea each for something they would like to do to be more involved. We can discuss at the September meeting. Looking for members to be more supportive of the Parks & Recreation.

Erika asked what the status was for the intern for the park history and historical information. The last email exchange Davian had with Ken, a professor in History, he has a student in mind that is an undergrad then COVID hit. There was talk about having them start in the Fall. Davina will follow up with Ken, and have an update at the September board meeting.

Ingrid asked if there was any update on Echo Farm park. This is a county park so there is no real update that Davina has. Erika recommended that each one of us “adopt” a park.

ADJOURNMENT

Ingrid made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Hunter made the first motion to adjourn, Emily seconded, all approved.

****Next meeting: Wednesday, August 19, 5:30 pm. There will be a Sports Complex Public Meeting following the board meeting. Location to be determined.**