

FROM: Parks and Recreation Advisory Council

SUBJECT: Monthly Meeting

DATE: May 6, 2015

LOCATION: EAC conference room

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MEMBERS PRESENT: Neal Bench; Tori Williams Reid; Joel Bulkley; James Carter; Evelyn Daniel; John Greeson; Betty McDade Khan, Haywood Rhodes; Rob Robinson;

MEMBERS ABSENT: Allan Green (Excused)

STAFF PRESENT: David Stancil; Lynn Hecht; Chris Sousa

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- I. Beginning time of meeting: 6:30. Introductions were made as Daniel, Greeson and Rhodes were new board members in attendance for the first time. Prior to the meeting, the board had a tour of our northern most parks and the new members were provided a brief board member orientation.
  - a. Meeting Summary (3/4) No comments on the March notes.
  - b. Additions or Changes to the Agenda: No additions were requested.
- II. Report of the Chair.
  - a. Welcome to New Members, all introduced themselves.
  - b. Prior Membership Recommendations Status: the board still has an at large position after an applicant for this position did not work out.
  - c. Consideration of Cheeks Township position: Rachel Massai is a new applicant. The board looked at her application for this position. Daniels moved to recommend, Greeson 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All voted in favor. All the other applicants were then up for the at large position. Bill Kaiser was noted as since appointed to another advisory board. Daniel Siler is chair of Carrboro Parks & Recreation Board. Both were still the strongest applicants, however, the board did not move either name forward. Bench asked if Stancil can talk with Kaiser about wanting to be involved and provisionally include him if he is interested. The board will forward Massai's name to the BOCC for recommendation for the Cheeks Township Position (along with Kaiser's if he is interested).
  - d. The BOCC is watching attendance closely now. Members need to attend 2/3 of the meetings. Each quarter, the attendance of the board is turned in to the BOCC.

### III. New Business

- a. Discussion with Recreational Bicycling Group Representatives, Alex Castro, Jr and Clifford Leath, from Bingham Township. One issue is bicycling in the rural areas. There have been incidents of riders getting killed or injured. The group wants the department to put bike paths into the Park plans, specifically bike paths through the parks. The representatives would like for the board to look at Hollow Rock and Millhouse. Can biking be included in the MTS trail in Orange County where suitable? Something similar to the rails to trails. Castro and Leath added that they would like to see the County organize a community event where there is a big ride including a segment of a road, and all levels of riding expertise with policing at intersections. Castro provided the council a copy of his remarks. Project ENGAGE is a program for Senior Citizens, letting seniors know in Orange County know what all is available. 50% of seniors live in the rural community. Many ride bikes still. This group would like to educate riders and drivers as to how they should work together. If there were bicycle paths in parks, they might get off the road. Greeson did not think this would solve the problem of the typical bicyclist using slim tires. Williams Reid said this would not work for her type of riding because of the slim tires she uses. Education is the foremost solution. Pelotons are a problem group to work with as they are dangerous in their riding styles of riding in large groups. Rhodes asked about the length of the trail that they are thinking of. At least 2 miles was the answer. Bench said, for example, if there is an outer 4-mile loop at a park, then it could be multi use. The board thanked Leath and Castro for their presentation.
  
- b. River Park's Concept Plan and FY 2015-16 Improvements. Staff explained the planned improvements to Churton Street. As a result, Stancil noted that River Park is likely going to jump up on the list of priorities. With the previously-planned funds, a performance shell would be added to the site, trails and bridges improved, and the Occonecchee Village would be restored to some degree. The Town of Hillsborough is going to do some improvements on Churton Street, with a bus turnout at the park across from Weaver Street Market is planned, connected by a cross walk where it meets RiverPark. At that point, the land grades down quite a bit. Right-of-way will be requested by NCDOT and the Town to build the bus turnout lane. This lane and the lack of guardrail will effectively create a new entrance into the park. Staff will need to figure out what to do with the park patrons entering from there. There might need to be a new trail connection to either River Walk or to the Farmers Market Pavilion, since those are likely destinations. Greeson asked if the County could bring in money by having performance within a gated off section or would it be open and free? Stancil said that activities in the park cannot be charged a fee, but that was something to think about. He added that down the road, Weaver Street Market might want to do something like their Carrboro location does with performances on the lawn by the building. Bulkley asked if the County could sell alcohol. Stancil said yes, with approval from the County Manager. \$300,000 capital funds are in the plan for its

improvements, and this will be considered as part of the CIP and budget next month..

In terms of other concept planning, fall will probably be a time when a plan is begun between Chapel Hill and Orange County for the Millhouse Road Park. Staff is meeting with Chapel Hill counterparts on this in coming weeks.

- c. Schedule Adjustment – The June meeting will be the Council’s cookout meeting instead of May. The staff is hoping to have the meeting at Blackwood Farm.

#### IV. Old Business

- a. Blackwood Farm Park – Update. The park is under construction now. The parking lot and driveway improvements are underway. Picnic Shelter, table and amenities need to be added. Trails are largely completed, but signage is awaiting installation. Tentatively, May 29 is a possible date for a soft opening with official opening perhaps to be Friday, June 12 (subject to change). Ribbon cutting will happen at that time.
- b. Mountains to Sea Trail (MST) Master Plan – the Draft Master plan is out. The State has been working on a plan for the whole state. Orange County has the most difficult segment of the plan with almost 19 miles, much of it cross country in the southwestern section of the county. In particular, the stretch from OWASA land at Cane Creek Reservoir travels up to the County’s Upper Eno Preserve (Seven-Mile Creek Access) with cross country path, no natural features to follow, and multiple landowners. Further east, RiverWalk in the Town is part of the MST trail. County staff thinks that an initial focus on refining how to get from Seven-Mile Creek access back to Oconneechee Mountain/River Walk would be the best first section to address. Bench asked that this be placed again on the June agenda. Discussion took place related to use of water at Moorefields and Seven-Mile Creek for the MST, and how that would work.

#### V. Report of the Director (Stancil)

- a. Community Centers; Fairview Park; Updates on Other Projects.  
March’s Council discussion on Community Centers and the writeup from that meeting was helpful at a recent BOCC meeting. The Manager and Board seem supportive of addressing resources to these centers. Staff are in a good place to have Cedar Grove and Efland Cheeks Community Center up and running in the early part of 2016. Construction is in progress at Cedar Grove, opening projected for March 2016. Fairview Park - Discussion has taken place about the potential annexation of the park into Town of Hillsborough. The department has an inter-local agreement with the town that is up for renewal soon.

VI. Committee Reports

- a. Items from the Council. No comments from the Council.
- b. Intergovernmental Parks Work Group (Khan) UNC campus recreation presented on what the new Recreation facility. A new recreation facility is being built. They were not sure where it will be located. It will be somewhere in the Woolen Gym, Fetzer Gym area across from Kenan Stadium. Bench asked who is in the Intergovernmental group. Orange County, Town of Hillsborough, Carrboro, Chapel Hill, Mebane Parks & Recreation Departments; UNC; Triangle Land Conservancy; Schools; Eno River Association, elected officials from all entities; and more.
- c. Friends of Orange County Parks and Recreation (FOCPR) report. FOCPR looking for anyone to join the group. Khan is the chair, Green, treasurer and secretary; and Robinson.

Next meeting is at the Blackwood Farm on 6/3/2015 (tentatively.)

Meeting adjourned at: 8:20pm  
Name of Notes Taker Lynn Hecht