

FROM: Parks and Recreation Advisory Council

SUBJECT: Monthly Meeting

DATE: June 3, 2015

LOCATION: Chapel Hill Library 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; Allan Green; Daniel Siler; Rachel Massai

MEMBERS ABSENT: none

STAFF PRESENT: David Stancil; Lynn Hecht; Dan Derby

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I. Beginning time of meeting: 6:30.

II. a. Meeting Summary (5/6) No comments.

b. Additions or Changes to the Agenda. Hecht and Williams Reid asked that we add a discussion related to the picnic. Bench asked that it be more family oriented. Bench spoke of how the picnic/meetings in the past had been with hotdogs and sides with the meeting going on simultaneously. Khan would like to invite other staff members. Williams/Reid spoke of a BOCC member talking about the money spent on the "barn" (Blackwood Farm Park), so invite them to give them a chance to learn more about what we do, that this park is more than just a "barn." Stancil said that September's meeting could not accommodate a large group, but maybe a few guests due to budget restraints. Another thought, Stancil said, is that other boards have meetings with the BOCC. Maybe once a year we can invite the BOCC.

III. Report of the Chair.

a. Welcome to New Members. Introductions were made. New members Daniel Siler and Rachel Massai were introduced. Bench mentioned the passing of the 2030 Master Park Plan and Stancil explained, especially for the newer members, about the plan.

b. Prior Membership Recommendations Status: all positions are now filled.

IV. New Business

a. Draft CFE Letter to Board of Commissioners on Parks/Open Space. A letter that the CFE (Commission for the Environment) wrote was shared with the group. The

idea is that CFE thinks that other items should be on the bond referendum, not just schools. Rhodes agreed that if the PRC doesn't request items that are needed, the BOCC won't add them. It is the largest bond referendum in Orange County. Massai asked if this bond involves the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP). Stancil commented that at present, no, but there might be other funding measures to get some of the work started. Much of the PRMP is beyond this window of time. Greeson asked what amount parks and recreation projects might get. Stancil noted this was unknown, and that staff likely needs to look at phasing-in projects. He added spreading it too thin can be limiting in that it may not provide sufficient funds to do meaningful projects. Green added that the board needs to piggyback on and cheer on CFE's letter, or write its own, if they want money for the parks and recreation projects. Stancil stated that there are other ways to fund projects. Williams-Reid added that it would be wrong for PRC to be silent about this. Silence is not the right answer. Bench suggested writing a simple letter in support of parks and recreation projects related to the bond. Green asked if a motion was needed. Motion to draft a letter with email approvals was made by Williams Reid; Siler seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Chair Bench and Vice Chair Williams Reid will get the process going.

- b. The Manager's Recommended Capital Investment Plan and FY 15-16 Budget includes the following - money towards conservation easements; Upper Eno Preserve; acquisition of land at Soccer.com Center; Hollow Rock Nature Park; River Park; Little River Park; and miscellaneous repairs and renovations. Funding for a Community Center Coordinator; and a 0.25 position to help staff Blackwood Farm Park (BFP) was added.

## V. Old Business

- a. Blackwood Farm Park – Update (Dan Derby.) Derby spoke about the trails, shelter and developments of the new BFP. The picnic shelter is first come, first serve with the onset of the opening (no reservations will be taken at first.) He spoke of the schedule. It will be manned by a park manager and a seasonal employee. Derby wants to take good care of the beautiful trees there. The old Chapel Hill/Hillsborough Road goes through there, with the trail being incorporated into it. Massai asked about biking and Derby said that the trails are predominantly meant for hikers. There is interpretive signage. Daniel asked about the Friday-Sunday schedule and if the school nearby would use it. Derby said they purposely will involve the schools. Green asked when we can have 24-hour backpackers allowed through the park. Derby said there is not staffing for this. Green wanted a different perspective of backpackers looked at by the staff. Bench noted the risk management concerns related to this.
- b. Mountains to Sea Trail (MST) Master Plan – Update/BOCC Letter. Green spoke on the MST. Segment 11, the Orange County segment, was proposed to be in a long term planning state, not near term, expecting connectivity further down the road. Green spoke of a long segment that would require lots of property

easements in order to have protected corridors. MST trails should not be on roads and this is one of Orange County's problems. Green says that OWASA needs to be involved. He feels that the County needs to develop a MST plan unique to the county. Williams Reid agreed that the NCDOT does not want pedestrians on the roads. Bench says we should have this on our August agenda. Stancil suggested that the Council wait to see what the State does in the final version of the master plan, due this summer. He added that staff discussion to date had identified the segment from Seven Mile Creek preserve into Hillsborough will be the easiest section to tackle.

VI. Report of the Director (Stancil)

- a. Update on Other Projects and Activities. Hollow Rock Nature Park. The BOCC approved an Inter-local Agreement for the development of Hollow Rock Nature Park (between Durham/OC/Chapel Hill). Hollow Rock Nature Park should open in early-spring 2016. River Park in Hillsborough will now be affected by a new section of Churton Street pedestrian improvements where a bus stop/crosswalk will come out right at the park. The park will likely need to accommodate those coming into the park from this new entrance.

In other notes, the annual fishing rodeo is this Saturday. This Saturday is National Trails Day. Little River Park will be holding a trail workday project as part of this national event.

VII. Council and Committee Reports

- a. Items from the Council. None.
- b. Intergovernmental Parks Work Group (Khan). None.
- c. Friends of Orange County Parks and Recreation (FOCPR) report. Green reported that the State has either not received or lost the application (and fee.) He has since resubmitted the application for non-profit status. There are currently 4 board members, all from the PRC. The group needs at least one more member. Khan is the Chair of this committee. From State non-profit status, the group applies for Federal 501©3 status.

**8:15 VIII. Adjournment 8:20pm**

Next Meeting – **August 5, 2015** (Environment & Agricultural Center, Hillsborough)

Meeting adjourned at: 8:20pm

Name of Notes Taker Lynn Hecht