

FROM: Parks and Recreation Council
SUBJECT: Monthly Meeting
DATE: August 5, 2015
LOCATION: Environment and Agriculture Conference Room

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; Chris Sousa

- I. Beginning time of meeting: 6:30. . Bench asked for a roll call. All were present. He then asked for all to introduce themselves and the areas they represent.
- II.
 - a. Meeting Summary (6/3) No comments or additions.
 - b. Additions or Changes to the Agenda. None.
- III. Report of the Chair. None
- IV. New Business
 - a. Millhouse Road Park-Initial Proposal (Draft) for Master Plan. Stancil directed everyone's attention to a map posted in the room. Millhouse Road Park is a 79 acre site purchased several years ago. Initial thoughts at the time were to make this another soccer complex, though this has not been formally addressed. Additionally, trails were envisioned for the back portion of the property which abuts Duke Forest. The construction of a park at this location is in the County's capital investment plan. It is expected, through both Orange County and Chapel Hill's Parks and Recreation Master Plans that this will be a joint park project. There was a joint meeting of the Orange County and Chapel Hill boards many months back and at the time, those boards asked the departments to move forward with planning for this park. Stancil and Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Director Jim Orr, have met and developed a proposed a timetable and process. The draft plan is to begin in October of this year and to finish by the spring of 2016. It is expected that the park will be developed in phases for funding reasons. There will be an agenda item on the September 1 BOCC meeting to share the proposed plan. Williams Reid asked about how the soccer fields will be used compared with

existing fields. Stancil indicated that this hasn't been decided, and he noted that preliminary work indicates there could be 4-6 full sized fields. The question of natural grass or artificial turf is also likely to come up. All these issues will be decided in the park planning phase. Green asked about the potential of these trails connecting with the Duke Forest trails in the nearby Duke Forest. Stancil pointed out that this area of Duke Forest has few organized trails within it. However, the possibilities are great for future trails and connection to trails to the south through the old County landfill and Greene Tract to town greenways, and northeast along Millhouse Road toward the Johnston Mill Preserve. The proposed concept planning process would call for members from the Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Board and the PRC to make up a planning committee for this park. The current proposal is for three members from each board represented on this committee. Stancil noted that staff will be asked to identify volunteers to serve at the next meeting. The project design would be staffed by both County and town staff, and utilize County Landscape Architect Marabeth Carr who will work with the group to develop a plan for the park.

- b. RiverPark - Plans for Construction and Implementation. The grassy area between the Courthouse, District Attorney's office and the Eno River is known as RiverPark. A master plan for this park was completed and approved when the Justice Facility Expansion was built several years ago. This plan several components, including a stage and festival lawn in the location where movies are currently shown. There is a need to update the "Riverwalk" bridge over the creek, and the Occoneechee Village will be renovated and to some degree rebuilt. The County has approved \$300,000 for this project. Related to this park plan is the Town of Hillsborough planned work on Churton Street for pedestrian improvements. There will be a new bus turnout and crossing from the Weaver Street Market which comes out at the edge of the park, and this will create a new entryway of sorts, with some slope which will have to be addressed. There may be some storm water implications from this bus turnout lane, as a new drainage pipe will be put in. Because this bus stop adjoins the park, new trails from this entrance will likely need to be built. The County is will be working with the Town on this. Best guess at this time is that this work may be an early spring 2016 project. The Town's Riverwalk goes through this park, which is also a part of the Mountains to Sea Trail (MST). Riverwalk is a Town of Hillsborough trail, although it passes through RiverPark.

V. Old Business

- a. Letter to Board of Commissioners on 2016 Bond. The Council expressed its thanks to Allan Green for penning the letter to the BOCC about the upcoming bond. Bench asked the Board for a vote to send this to the BOCC. Greene moved approval, Bulkley seconded the motion and all voted in favor. In response to a question it was noted that a final decision from the BOCC on the bond will occur in the spring of 2016.

- b. Mountains to Sea Trail (MST) Master Plan-Update. In response to a question, it was noted that Riverwalk travels east and meets with some private land and private corporation land. Heading west, the MST travels towards Gold Park, (near Hillsborough Barbeque), then goes towards Occoneechee Mountain and the trail connections to the southwest. There was some discussion following a question by Daniel about the upcoming “Heritage Day” event planned for Hillsborough and whether it would involve River Park. Stancil said it was planned for Town Hall and would not involve RiverPark or the MST. The MST master plan has recently been released by State Parks, and there are new trail segment designations in Orange County. Segment #11 has now been designated as “near term” and Segment 12 has also been deemed “near term”. The first phase from Occoneechee Mountain to Eno River is the lowest hanging fruit and the easiest to address, Stancil pointed out. The areas further south will connect next. Green thinks the area near OWASA could be easy to develop. Stancil noted that there was much “public” land around the lake owned by OWASA. He added that some of this land is very narrow and thus the trail is close to some private property with landowners being very vocally against this trail in recent years. Massai asked about the section including the old Occoneechee Race Track not allowing bikes through there. Stancil says this segment would be in the Town of Hillsborough and up to their rules. There may be a proposal for addressing the orange County segment of the MST by October.
- c. Review of Discussion-Orienteering Group. Green met with several members of the Backwoods Orienteering Klub (BOK), a Raleigh group. He discovered that orienteering as he knows it is not the same as how they look at it. This group develops a detailed map and the competition is to get to different points on the map. This involves map reading, terrain reading and learning how to measure by pacing off areas. His interest in official orienteering has now diminished as a result. This aside, would Orange County be interested in having such a course? Green posited, maybe. This group does not use trails in their orienteering events. Green added that their plans for off trail and full site usage overwhelmed our Park Superintendent. However, Green still says there are still areas of concern for the county. He says it’s a fight for another day. Stancil added that he found the group’s scope of needs to be substantial and included some risks. Stancil stated that he thought staff would be more comfortable with Green’s initial compass course approach.

VI. Report of the Director (Stancil)

- a. New Disc Golf Inquiry/Upcoming Staff Recommendation. The Council has asked staff, after a presentation from a local enthusiast late last year, where could a disc golf course go on County parks? Stancil noted that the staff owes a report on this. He also noted that Ultimate Frisbee organizers have also contacted him about locations. By October, Stancil plans to bring forth a staff report.

- b. Updates on Other Projects and Activities. Fairview Park has been getting a lot of attention lately. In June, the BOCC asked staff to look at parking at the northern part of the park. There has been work since June with the past engineer of the park, as well as the County's landscape architect. The County Manager, Sheriff and staff have been meeting about this concept. Staff will present a potential solution for the parking situation to the BOCC on Sept 1.
- c. Bench asked about the other PRC priorities. Rich Shaw will be coming in October to address land and nature preserves, and will address the Upper Eno Nature Preserve. In response to a question, no decision has been made about primitive camping. The Community Center Coordinator position was approved in the budget, but the nature of that position's job duties is still evolving. There is a meeting August 6 on this. Stancil added that Dan Derby, our Park Superintendent, will speak on the status of all our parks at our next meeting.

VII. Council and Committee Reports

- a. Items from the Council.
 - b. Intergovernmental Parks Work Group (next meeting-October) No report, next meeting in October.
 - c. Friends of Orange County Parks and Recreation (FOCPR) report. Green updated the group. The group is now official as of June 17 when they were incorporated in the State of North Carolina. The next step is to get 501C 3 status. Following this meeting, Green asked if members of the group could meet. Bench, Khan, Green, Daniel, Robinson and _____ are the organizing directors. Massai asked what it the group does, and Green gave a description.
 - d. Recreation Superintendent Chris Sousa was asked if he had any updates. Sousa noted that August 28 "Annie" will be the Movie in the Park. On August 28-30 there will be the Fall Classic soccer tournament, utilizing most soccer fields that can be found in the county including Soccer.com Center. There are two more weeks of summer camps. In the past year, 45 of the 52 weekends saw rentals at Efland Cheeks Community Center. More information on this and all Parks and Recreation programs can be found on the DEAPR website.

8:15 VIII. Adjournment 8:20pm

Next Meeting – **September 2, 2015** (cookout/meeting at Blackwood Farm Park, 6:00pm start)

Meeting adjourned at: _____

Name of Notes Taker Lynn Hecht_____