

Meeting Summary – Parks and Recreation Council June 1, 2022

Bonnie B. Davis Environment and Agricultural Center- Hillsborough, NC

Members Present: Mikki Fleming (Vice-Chair), Jessie Birkhead, Chris Colvin (via Zoom), Greg Hughes, Rod Jones, Tim Tippin, Becca Truluck, Xilong Zhao.

Members Absent: Gina Reyman (Chair), Natalie Ziemba, Bob Smith

Staff: David Stancil, Kalani Allen, Chris Hirni

Vice-Chair Mikki Fleming called the meeting to order at 6:31pm. David Stancil asked Fleming that a change in the agenda be made, to allow Christian Hirni present the MST update first under New Business. Fleming allowed the change to the agenda.

Review of Meeting Summary/Additions to Agenda:

- a. No changes or additions to meeting summary. The Council accepted the meeting summary from the May 4 meeting.

Report of the Chair:

- a. **Welcome to New Members**– Fleming welcomed three new members, Jessie Birkhead, Rebecca Truluck, and Roderick Jones. She asked all members to introduce themselves. Fleming explained that there is currently one vacancy on the council, Chapel Hill Township.
- b. **Update on Recruitment Efforts/Vacancies**- Members were given handouts of the Spanish and English translation recruitment flyers. Kalani Allen gave an update on the additional translations in Mandarin and Burmese. Beth Young, communications manager for DEAPR will reach out to another vendor source to get flyer translated. Allen said that once done, it will be emailed to members.

New Business:

- a. **Mountains to Sea Trail Update (*Chris Hirni, Land Conservation Manager DEAPR*)** - Christian Hirni, the evening's speaker, was introduced by Stancil. Hirni provided a brief history of the Mountains to Sea Trail (MST), Stancil mentioned Howard Lee as the concept's founder. Hirni supplied a memo handout, which was presented to the BOCC. He described the phases of the MST as follows: Oconeechee Mountain to Seven Mile Creek Natural Area, Cane Creek Reservoir Area, Buckhorn Road to Seven Mile Creek Natural Area, and Eno River State Park to Durham County. During his presentation, he emphasized the need of staff collaborations with Friends of the MST (FMST), OWASA, Eno River Association, and different landowners willing to provide trail easements to expand the MST across Orange County, with a focus on hiking trails. He reviewed easement language that had recently been approved by the BOCC such as the Draper-Savage Foundation conservation and trail easement, and landowner donated trail easements in the Cane Creek Reservoir Area. Xilong Zhao asked Hirni if there were construction standards for the trail such as measurements for width of the trail path. He also asked if there would be any plans to have educational stations along the MST about safety, information on mini gardens etc. Hirni explained the trail plans in the County's rural jurisdiction include a three foot natural path. He said that currently there are no plans to have an educational information to be displayed along the trail unless landowners specifically request or allow for this to be done while acquiring easements. Stancil noted that such educational signage may be present at waystations and trailheads on County-owned land. Greg Hughes inquired if the path was intended to be a day hike. Hirni noted that the intention is similar to the Appalachian Trail for both day hiking and

through hiking. Stancil also stated that there are plans to build waystations along the MST in Orange County, including near Seven Mile Creek and NC HWY 54 in Alamance County.

- b. **Gameplan for P&R Master Plan 2030 Mid-Plan Review-** Stancil went over the expectations for the mid-plan review. Members were given printouts of the timetable for facilitated discussions and identification of new or changed conditions, which includes evaluating racial equality principles as they apply to park sites, recreations, survey accessibility, and prior goals such as the establishment of a public pool, survey subjects, and the connection with Orange Sportsplex. Tim Tippin asked as to what the Council might do to prepare for the September meeting, as per the mid-plan review schedule. Stancil asked members to review the survey findings from 2014, and that other food for thought questions would be forthcoming. Jessie Birkhead proposed the idea of a structured way to put suggestions and ideas into a shareable file for members to add input. Becca Truluck questioned the staff rating of incomplete on the recommendations for the Master Plan and Stancil provided an overview of the reasoning of what incomplete meant as it related to the plan. Greg Hughes raised the question of whether the Council has ever discussed the Master Plan with other advisory boards and committees. Stancil answered that there was review when the plan was created, and there are opportunities for the Council to have subcommittees and joint meetings with additional advisory boards.

Old Business:

- a. **Plans to Recruit Youth Delegate Member**– Allen gave a summary of the meeting she, Beth Young and Tara May of the BOCC Clerk office had on the recruitment and application for the youth delegate. During said meeting questions were raised as it relates to privacy concerns with minors home addresses being online. May said she would speak with Todd McGee, Orange County Public Information Officer, to get insight with this matter. Allen explained to the Council that the idea of a fillable form application, instead of the traditional application found on Orange County advisory board website was decided at the meeting. She said the goal is to have applications for delegate by September.
- b. **Potential Items for Fall Joint Advisory Boards Meeting** – Stancil mentioned the main potential item for discussion would be the relationship between County, Towns Parks and Recreation and county/city schools.

Report of the Director-

- a. **Project and Budget/CIP Updates-** Stancil reported on the budget presentation given by department heads. He said the BOCC had questions about the Perry Hills goal for a park, community center and tennis courts rentals and support of a new staff member position for the Blackwood Farm Park. He gave a target opening date for Blackwood Farm Park with a soft opening in September and updated the Council on projects at the park.
- b. **August Meeting Items**– New member orientation, Perry Hills park proposal, disc golf component for Blackwood Farm Park.

Council and Committee Reports:

- a. **Intergovernmental Parks Work Group** (next mtg October 12)
- b. **Items from the Council-** None
- c. **Friends of Orange County Parks and Recreation (FOPR)** – None

Adjournment: Fleming adjourned meeting at 8:07pm.

Next Meeting: August 3, 2022 at Bonnie B. Davis Environmental and Agriculture Center.