



MEETING MINUTES

Huntersville Parks and Recreation Commission

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

Members Present: Kathy Lewis, Kent Curran, Ash Munro, Tige Chiesa, Janelle Harris, Kendyl Brown.

Absent: Frank Freeman, Telisa Johnson.

Guests: Maria Cepeda (Parks & Recreation Events Coordinator), Mayor Clark, and Brenda Lee.

I. CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was called to order by Kathy Lewis, Chair, at 6:30 p.m.

II. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Kathy confirmed that a quorum of commissioners was present at the meeting.

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Kent moved to approve the minutes, as amended, for the January meeting; Ash seconded the motion. All approved.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Michael gave an update on current parks' projects.

- North Meck Park Splashpad – This is on schedule to be completed in June.
- Richard Barry Park Parking Lot and Restroom Project – Delayed due to the rain. It should be completed in April.
- Holbrook Park – There are discussions to convert more tennis courts into pickleball courts. We have an agreement with Lake Norman Charter where they have access to our fields in return for us having access to their gyms. They use the tennis courts at Holbrook Park. There is currently one tennis court that is reserved for open play. We can change that tennis court into two pickleball courts. There are also plans to convert the tennis court at Waymer into three pickleball courts. Michael suggested that we see how having the pickleball courts at Waymer deals with the crowds, and then we will decide if we should convert the open play tennis court into pickleball. Tige asked about the utilization rate on the tennis courts. Michael replied that their numbers are up, but their use at Holbrook is lower since there are only four courts.

- The spreadsheet handout shows all the parks, amenities, and lease agreements. Kathy suggested that we add North Mecklenburg Park Splashpad to the spreadsheet. (See attachment).

V. PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Ash reported that his son Jackson, a boy scout, had just completed his Eagle Service Project by constructing a Gaga Ball Pit at Richard Barry Park. Michael commented that he already saw people using it, and it was just completed on Monday.



Tige asked what percentage of recommendations made by the Parks and Recreation commissioners did not make it through the Town Board. Michael replied that about ninety percent was approved. The most recent in a while that didn't make it was removing the ballfield from Abernethy Park. He still agrees with the PRC's recommendation that it would be best to remove it because with a new basketball court and playground, now at the rear of the park, there will be very limited parking when there's a ball game or practices. Michael also updated the group that Abernethy Park is almost done, except for the last three fitness stations and the fencing. The park is already getting a lot of use.

Kathy asked about replacing Taylor since she had resigned from the commission. Michael replied that her term would end in December, so there are only eight meetings for the new person to attend. Mayor Clark suggested that Catherine contact the other applicants we received in December to see if they are still interested in serving.

VI. PROGRAMMING REPORT

Athletics

- This summer we are offering half-day, sport-specific, athletic camps for kids of all ages. There will be Mini-Athletes with our coaches Adam and Nicole, a volleyball

Camp with coaches from Hough High School, a Soccer Camp with our friends at Charlotte Independence Soccer Club, and a Tennis Camp with our friends at Altitude Tennis Academy. Registration opens March 1st.

- We currently have a full lineup for Mini-Athletes this spring that includes – Basketball, Baseball, Soccer, Cheerleading, and Flag Football (ages 3-5).
- Nothing But Net, Youth Volleyball, and Men's Softball, Co-ed Softball, and all three Senior Softball leagues (50+, 65+, and 70+) all will start over the next three weeks.
- Our first indoor pickleball league for ages 50+ is two weeks in and going great!

Recreation & Events

- Adult Game Night – March 8th at the Rec Center.
- Get your Zen on with Kind Karma Yoga at the Arts & Cultural Center on March 13th, (Sound Healing and Gong Bath) 16th, and 20th.
- Fly Fishing Trip – Intro to Fly Fishing – March 15th.
- Video Game Night – March 15th at the Rec Center.
- Kids Creafting – Kids Charcuterie on March 16th.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS, REQUESTS OR PRESENTATIONS

Maria Cepeda – Downtown Events and Facilities Coordinator.

Maria shared with the group all the events that are taking place this year. Spring events are planned out. We plan them months in advance. The big event for the summer is Hello Huntersville, a music and arts festival that draws about eight to nine thousand people. We would love to incorporate more schools and new partnerships at this event.

In the fall, we plan to incorporate some of the Hay Days into Halloween. In the winter, the town tree lighting is always the first Friday of December. Like Hello Huntersville, this is another big event with rides, food trucks, youth group entertainment, vendors, and bands.

Timeline for vendors: It starts with the initial application; we then review and make sure they have all the necessary certifications. Kent asked if vendors apply for the entire year or individual. Maria responded that it's individually. Along with the application, there is an interest form for all events. We are forced to limit the number of vendors due to space restrictions.

Janelle asked how long the vetting process was, from application to approval. Also, how do we pay for events? Maria replied that craft vendor applications take about two months to review and decide on. We try not to have duplicate products and too many food trucks so that the vendors can make money. Michael added that our events are funded through the hotel/motel fund and sponsorships.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Parks & Recreation Survey Update – We’ve received six hundred fifty-four (654) responses to the survey so far. We are getting good feedback. Barry Park and Huntersville Elementary School are no longer in the top ten (10) facilities visited. They’ve been replaced by Rosedale Nature Park and Waymer Park. Kathy asked about the dog park. Michael replied that it is getting good use.
The survey closes at the end of the month, and we will have the results available for the group to review. The greenways that are coming will change the future, with the ability to walk to the parks. The dog park and disc golf are no longer in the top ten requested amenities. New to the top ten amenities are water features and pickleball courts. Greenways and trails have always been numbers one (1) and two (2). More people are participating in our programs. People are more informed now. You can see the top ten comments in this new survey. You can also “like” comments, instead of repeating them.
- b. A joint Parks and Recreation Committee meeting with Cornelius, Davidson, and Mecklenburg County will take place on June 12th at the Northern Regional Recreation Center from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. This is the time to talk about potential partnerships.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Future Capital Projects -

The park bond passed for eight (8) million dollars. When the town board decides when we sell the bonds, we should have an idea of the projects to be recommended.

Potential Future Projects:

Waymer Splash Pad – Should be close to an existing building because of water/sewer. We are hoping to use the same manufacturer to allow us to switch out the components with the splash pad at North Meck Park each summer. Kendyl asked about the water usage and stormwater that comes with having a splash pad. Michael replied that the last board decided on the flow-through system because it doesn’t need to be winterized, can be started if there is one warm day during the winter months, it also does not use chemicals like the water circulation method. Kathy mentioned that we also took cost into factor when deciding to go with the flow-through system. It was about one hundred thousand (\$100,000.00) dollars less to go with the flow-through system.

Ramah Church Park/Fire Station Site – Twenty acres will be allocated for the park. It will not be an athletic complex. We need to get community input before starting the plan and design. Tige, being a resident of the NorthStone community, asked what the timeline for the park would be. Michael replied that planning/design would take a year and construction would be another year, so two years. Ash said that a community garden would be a great addition.

Land Acquisition – The bubbles on the map show the areas we need to acquire more parkland. Kendyl asked Michael to explain the parkland acquisition. Michael replied that most of the land would be needed for development, which includes future park needs because the area is growing.

Bradford Park – We operate this park jointly with the Town of Davidson. The Master Plan is twenty (20) years old and needs to be updated. We briefly spoke about what to add in the next phase of development. The county has purchased the land that backs up to Ramah Church because drivers will not be able to make a left turn on Sam Furr in the future. We would like to get funding to plan and update the design. The driveway alone will cost about a million dollars. We hope to have multiple partners in this project. Tige asked what it would cost to update the master plan. Michael replied that it costs about \$100,000K because it's best to do some surveying when preparing the concept plan. This park has the space to accommodate a lot of amenities.

Holbrook Park Expansion - This would be a passive park, preserving the tree canopy.

Huntersville Recreation Center Expansion and Amphitheater - To hold larger events. We have an agreement with Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) for parking. The plan was always to expand the Recreation Center, the beams are already in place on the existing building.

The Park – We are already committed to this project and will match the grant from the CRTPO. Mayor Clark added that Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO) is approving the bridge over Highway 73 at their meeting tonight. Ash asked about the timing of the tunnel under I-77. Michael replied that the greenway should be done by this summer.

Michael then presented the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, showing the amenity types needed by 2030 with a projected increase in the population. (See attachment). He asked the group to be prepared to talk about future projects at the next few meetings. We will then give a recommendation to the Town Board when the time comes.

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 20th at 6:30 p.m. at Town Center.