

MINUTES
Parks and Recreation Board
Tuesday, September 15, 2009
7:00 PM, Town Barn

PRESENT: Chair Bryant Warren, Vice Chair Steven Whitlow, Mary Donegan, Robb English, Mike Gering, Kevin McKenna, Emily McNally, and Jennifer Weaver.

ABSENT: Nancy Esperson and Vicky Wilson, absences excused.

STAFF: Planner Stephanie Trueblood.

ITEM 1: Call to Order, Roll Call, and Confirmation of a Quorum.

Chair Bryant Warren called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Planner Stephanie Trueblood called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

ITEM 2: Consideration of changes or adjustments to the agenda.

Mr. Gering added a discussion of possible road reconfigurations for access to Gold Park. Ms. Trueblood indicated that she would provide information regarding that during her staff updates, so a separate discussion may not be necessary, and Mr. Gering agreed. No changes or adjustments were made to the Agenda.

ITEM 3: Reports and Updates:

- **Town Board** – Mr. Gering said the Town Board had met last night, and approved the amendment to the Master Plan for Waterstone for the UNC Hospitals. He said significant conditions placed on that approval included that financial details be worked out between now and the SUP process for dealing with fire and police protection, as well as the tax exempt status for office buildings. Mr. Gering said the Town Board had also approved the smoking ban for all Town parks effective January 2, 2010, but it excluded prohibiting the use of smokeless tobacco. He said the Town Board had discussed issues associated with parks and major events and the impact on Town services, primarily police and fire protection, and that would be discussed in more detail at the upcoming Workshop on September 28. Mr. Gering said key issues were what constituted a major event and what fees should be charged for such events. He said the expectation was that in the next session of the General Assembly the Town would be seeking enabling legislation for an occupancy tax which would provide funding for the Town to support particular events.
- **Planning Board** – Mr. Warren said the Planning Board at its last meeting had recommended to the Town Board approval of a rezoning request to R-10 for .83 acres on the west side of Nash Street where there had been 3 mobile homes, and that 12.24 acres on the north side of East Corbin Street

be rezoned to R-15. He said the Planning Board had also recommended to the Town Board approval of the Master Plan amendment from UNC Hospitals to amend the land use for pods 12, 13, and 22 of the Waterstone development from Retail and Mixed Use to Medical campus with several conditions added. Mr. Warren said they had also considered several text amendments which were referred to the Town Board for action.

Ms. Trueblood said that the East Corbin Street rezoning had come before the Parks and Recreation Board, in a previous incarnation, regarding recreation area, but the rezoning had been denied. She said the Town Board had now granted a rezoning, so this Board would likely see it for subdivision review at some point in the future.

- **Orange County** – Mr. English said that the County had opened up the Eurosport Soccer Complex on August 25 with the eight fields being heavily used. He said that the PARTF grant application for Fairview Park had been awarded in the amount of \$500,000, and that construction would begin in October and would be completed sometime next year. Mr. English said the County was beginning some new recreation program initiatives using existing resources and they would soon be holding focus groups to determine interests and needs for recreation programs. He said that Orange County had just launched a new Website that was much easier to navigate and invited the Board to visit it.

Ms. Trueblood said she believed the County's new Public Market House was now available for reservations, and believed the fee would be the same as that charged for a County picnic shelter.

- **Walkable Hillsborough Coalition** – Ms. Trueblood said that Ms. Esperson had provided her with an update, and reported that the International Walk to School Day was Wednesday, October 7, and the community could participate by meeting at the corner of East Corbin and North Cameron Street at 7:15 a.m. and then walking to Cameron Park School.

- **Park Stewards:**

Gold Park – Mr. McKenna said he had visited Gold Park and found nothing to report, but noted that there were more dogs making use of the dog park. He stated that a citizen had reported to him that the gate had being left open all night on several occasions.

Mr. Warren said he had seen the gate open at 10 p.m. at night and had informed Ms. Trueblood. Ms. Trueblood said she had forwarded that information on to the Police Department. She said there had been some graffiti in the restrooms but it had been removed.

Mayo Park and downtown sidewalks – Ms. Trueblood said that Ms. Esperson stated there had been no issues this month, but reported that the new sidewalk had been installed by the Courthouse as part of the improvements to the Justice Facility.

Murray Street Park – Ms. Donegan said there were some low-hanging tree branches that needed to be addressed. Ms. Trueblood said she would pass that information on to Public Works.

Turnip Patch – Ms. Weaver said she had not visited the park for several weeks, but had noticed that the water bowl appeared to be clogged with sand. Ms. Trueblood said she would pass that information on, and noted that she often visited the park and the new landscaping was now installed which included drought tolerant species.

Hillsborough Heights Park – Mr. Warren said the fence was up and the gates were installed front and back. He said the fence looked good, but the flowers that had been planted at the corners had died. Ms. Trueblood said those plants had been donated, and believed that the hope was that the neighborhood watch group would take over the maintenance. Mr. Warren suggested contacting that group to determine if they were interested in doing that.

Kings Highway Park – Ms. Trueblood indicated she would provide an update during her staff updates.

- **Staff Updates** – Ms. Trueblood said that the PARTF grant had been awarded for Riverwalk Phase 2 land acquisition, which would match the funds the Town needed to purchase the properties for Riverwalk Phase 2. She said they had been awarded the full amount they had requested which was \$392,000.

Ms. Trueblood said regarding Kings Highway Park, she had talked with Tom Magnusson about the trails being overgrown. She said he had agreed to work with the Boy Scouts to maintain those trails. Ms. Trueblood said that Public Works had gone out to spray for poison ivy.

Ms. Trueblood said that Planning Director Margaret Hauth had received requests for improved facilities in the dog park at Gold Park, and many were for mulch because of junk coming up through the soil. She said two dogs had been reported injured due to metal working its way up to the surface, and Public Works was working to clean that up. Ms. Trueblood reminded the Board that the site had been used in the past as a dump, so it was not surprising that some materials would make its way to the surface. She said because other requests had been coming in for mulch and other dog park amenities, Ms. Hauth had suggested prioritizing what was most important since there was not enough funding for everything. She said Ms. Hauth had

developed a survey form that included suggestions from the public as well as staff suggestions, noting that it would be posted on the Town' Website and available at the dog park where people could rank the categories.

Ms. Trueblood provided the Board with a copy of the survey form, and asked for any feedback they may have including whether or not they agreed that a survey form would be a useful tool as well as any addition or changes to the survey form itself. She noted that to mulch the entire dog park would cost in the range of \$3,000.

After a brief discussion, the Board agreed that the survey form would be useful to prioritize how available funding should be spent. Ms. Trueblood said once priorities were identified, Ms. Hauth would likely send those recommendations to this Board for comment before sending it to the Town Board for approval. She said that Ms. Hauth also wanted to develop a press release to remind the public about the dog park as well as to clean up after their pets.

Ms. Trueblood said that Public Works would be installing the new signs at Gold Park this week, which were the trail map sign, the dog park rules sign, the constructed wetland information sign, and the preservation and historic information sign.

Ms. Trueblood said that Ms. Hauth would take the next month to put together a proposal for the Town Board to consider on how to deal with park reservations and special events, and had invited the Parks and Recreation Board to brainstorm and offer any recommendations to be included in that proposal.

Ms. Donegan said it seemed that one of the rules should be that events would be limited to a certain amount of space, in that they could allow a large event to rent the larger shelter and the fields, but the other shelters had to be left clear for others. Ms. Trueblood agreed, but suggested that perhaps they would want to visit the park during the Saturday event to see what was taking place and how it affected others coming to use the park.

Ms. Trueblood said she had met with the Vice President of the NC Railroad regarding the easement from Calvin Street down to the park. She said they had flagged out a line that NC Railroad would allow the Town to have permanent pedestrian access across, but it was not the existing maintenance road. Ms. Trueblood said the flagged line was about 15 feet to the east of that road that was essentially a parallel path. She said she had walked it twice, and only a few trees would need to come down and the grade was pretty good although there was one bank that would need to be leveled out. Ms. Trueblood said she believed it would be possible to achieve ADA compliance with the new alignment; however, it had not been surveyed or engineered and they had no budget to build it. She said the budget had been

for making minor improvements to the existing road, and having to actually design and construct a new route would be more expensive.

Ms. Trueblood said at least NC Railroad had agreed to the easement, and she would be meeting with a landscape architect, Michelle Kimpenski, to determine exactly what would be needed to move forward with the easement. Ms. Trueblood said did not know how long it would take to get the new path constructed, noting they would need to figure out how much it would cost, engineer it, design it, and then raise the funds. She said it may be worked into Riverwalk Phase 2, or the Town Board may be able to identify other funding next year.

Mr. Gering said that Rachel Royce had shared with him an idea to improve bicycle access to Gold Park from Dimmocks Mill Road under the railroad trestle. He said the idea was to convert the Dimmocks Mill segment from Eno Drive to Alison Street to one way, and then have traffic going the other way routed to Bellevue, over the railroad tracks, down Eno Drive, and back to Nash Street. Mr. Gering said one lane would be closed off, so the other lane could be used as a bike lane. He said that could be used until access was achieved off of Calvin Street.

Mr. Warren said his only concern was that whenever that underpass was mentioned, the people in the area tended to get into an uproar. He said one issue was that when a freight train came through, the periods of waiting could be long. Mr. Warren said even doing a one-way would still require waiting for trains to pass through, and did not know how the residents in the area would react to a one way. Ms. Trueblood commented that Dimmocks Mill was a State road, so NCDOT would be involved.

Mr. Whitlow said he liked the idea of a one-way, noting he felt strongly that pedestrian/bicycle access should be provided to Gold Park as soon as possible.

Ms. Donegan said her concern was that when coming from west Hillsborough there was really only two ways to get downtown, and that was either using King Street or coming down Eno Drive. She said if you were to close one of the lanes under the trestle and force cars to constantly go around the overpass you would get some angry drivers traveling too fast, and it was not the safest street to walk down now. Ms. Trueblood said if you were forcing incoming traffic to come across at Bellevue as opposed to Nash, then there was a chance that the traffic impact on Bellevue would be high, depending on which lane was closed. She said she believed they would need more detailed information regarding what effect a one way would have on traffic.

Mr. Whitlow said he believed they would need to study that in conjunction with the railroad, noting the railroad had indicated a desire to close as many

crossings as possible. He said that was a broader theme, and they may be able to get a better designed underpass if the railroad could get the Bellevue and West Hill trestles closed.

Mr. Warren said since they were talking about a temporary solution, he did not know if they needed to get that in depth with the discussion. He said if they temporarily went to one-way traffic, then once they received the easement from the railroad everything would open back up.

Mr. Whitlow said he believed there were ways to achieve better access other than the one way idea, and believed they should investigate as many as could be identified.

Mr. Warren said he believed they should talk with NCDOT, noting that Dimmocks Mill was a dangerous road in that there was a drop off just as you came out of the curve, and he had seen several cars wreck in that area.

Ms. Donegan said if cost and time were not prohibitive, it might be worth looking into more broadly. She said one reason was that even if a one way was a temporary solution, it seemed that people coming from West Hillsborough would still want to use that entrance even if there was access from Calvin Street.

Ms. Trueblood said she would have more information once she met with Ms. Kimpenski tomorrow, as far as what the project would entail. She said if the project turned out to be fairly simple then they may be able to get the easement more quickly, but that would not address the long term concern of how people from the west side actually accessed Gold Park, which was the bigger question.

Mr. Warren commented that there was a sidewalk planned for Alison Street up to the bridge. Ms. Trueblood said that the Nash Street sidewalk would go down Calvin from Bellevue Mills.

Mr. Gering said he agreed with Mr. Whitlow that all of that should be considered in a larger context. He said the question was did a short term solution provide the first small step towards the long range solution, and what would NCDOT and NC Railroad think was the longer term solution for that segment of the road. Ms. Trueblood said she would contact Chuck Edwards the NCDOTR Division Engineer and report back to the Board.

Mr. English left the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

ITEM 4: Finalize process for park resource requests.

Ms. Trueblood said last month the Board had looked at the form and suggested deleting the requirement for signatures and indicate that signatures were

suggested as a means of indicating the number of people in support of a park resource.

Ms. Weaver said she had thought that the Board had indicated at last month's meeting that they would not require that a person making a request for a park resource would have to live within that park district. Ms. Trueblood said that was correct, and she had overlooked deleting that language from the front of the form.

**MOTION/
VOTE:**

Ms. Weaver moved to approve the Park Resource Request form as amended to delete the requirement that a person making a request for a park resource would be required to live within that park district. **Ms. McNally** seconded. The vote was unanimous.

ITEM 5: Review staff recommendations for updates to the Master Plan and make edits; and

ITEM 6: Discuss new resources to be included in the Master Plan update.

Ms. Trueblood said she had included in the packet staff recommendations for things that were out of date and needing edits, and asked the Board for any feedback.

Mr. Warren asked about the reference to Lake Orange. Ms. Trueblood said that was referring to the reservoir, and that question had come directly from a kayaker/attorney in Hillsborough who owned a strategic piece of property for Riverwalk. She said he had asked about future recreational use of the reservoir, noting that when the paperwork was done for Riverwalk Phase 1 development there was a box that you had to check if you were going to have recreational use or not, and that box did not get checked for Phase 1. Ms. Trueblood said part of the reason it had not been checked was because it would require that you have a full-time staff person on site at all times, and that was not something the Town was interested in doing.

Mr. Gering said it would have also entailed a lot more, including regulations against no motorized craft as well as a lot of provisions to protect the quality of the water. Ms. Trueblood said that was correct, and that box had intentionally not been checked for Phase 1, and there was no way to go back and do so once the application had been completed. She said it could be checked for Phase 2, but that was years away.

Mr. Warren said he had questioned that as well, noting that other communities had good recreation systems in place and no motorized crafts were allowed on the lakes, but they were still heavily used. He said when Phase 2 was imminent they should do some research to determine if they should check that box and allow limited recreation on the lake. Mr. Warren added it was possible it could generate some income for the Town.

Mr. Gering said he believed it was worth considering and having that discussion again. He added that when it had been discussed six years ago, it had been discussed in the context of Phase 2, not Phase 1. Ms. Trueblood said the reason it had been added under new resources to be considered was because it came up from time to time from citizens.

Mr. Whitlow asked about the change in Duke Forest, in that it had been listed as a natural park. Ms. Trueblood said they had listed it as a recreational resource, but there were Do Not Enter signs posted there so it did not seem appropriate to have it listed as such. She said they had discussed not taking it out entirely, but listing it as a 'possible' recreational resource.

Mr. Whitlow asked about using recreational areas at schools after school hours, and should that be listed in the inventory. Ms. Trueblood said that recreational areas at schools were included in the recommendations under Organized Sports.

Mr. Whitlow said in regards to p. 21 where New Amenities were listed, he asked once a new amenity was listed how you determined what the remaining need might be. He said for example, if you had listed a dog park as a need and then a dog park was provided, how you would determine if and when another one was needed. Ms. Trueblood said they used the national standards to make that determination, noting those standards were based on population.

Ms. Trueblood provided a brief description of how certain areas were included in the park districts and why others were left out, noting that she believed they needed to talk about adjusting the boundaries. She said they had tried to make sure that none of the park districts crossed barriers such as interstates or rivers so that they would remain walkable. Ms. Trueblood said whether to place Hampton Point, which was not walkable from anywhere, in a park district was a challenge. She reminded the Board that the park districts were created by the Board to use to think about whether they were providing or encouraging recreational resources in the various neighborhoods. Ms. Trueblood said she did not believe they should be leaving out areas in the ETJ, because it would mean they were ignoring potential connections.

Mr. Whitlow suggested that south of US 70A on both sides of NC 86 could be a district, and then adding the new development to the Speedway district. Ms. Trueblood said that would basically be Tuscarora over to Forest Ridge. She said that Valley Forge and Hampton Point could be its own district, but it was essentially a non-residential district.

Mr. Whitlow said that Roger Perry's new development was planned for that area. Ms. Trueblood said that was The Truck Stop.

Mr. Warren suggested putting all of that into one district. Ms. Trueblood said at present that was not in the ETJ nor was it annexed.

Mr. Gering said he believed the Interlocal agreement with the County would be signed in October. Ms. Trueblood asked if the Sportsplex could be included in that. Mr. Gering said he did not know, but believed the Paliorous property across from Hampton Point would be a part of the new ETJ.

Ms. Trueblood said that one question was what to do with the Senior Center and the Sportsplex, stating she believed it was more connected to the other area but the people on Tuscarora certainly did not believe that was walkable from their neighborhood.

Mr. Warren said then perhaps Tuscarora and Valley Forge needed to be a district, and then the Speedway new development and the Sportsplex should be put into another district. She said at present they had Waterstone and Beckett's Ridge as one district, and they had done that assuming that if Waterstone was ever built it that it might become two separate districts. Ms. Trueblood said for now they could include those other areas in that district.

The Board agreed by consensus to allow Ms. Trueblood to make some edits based on tonight's discussion and bring it back to the Board for further discussion. Ms. Trueblood said she would email the map so that the Board could provide comments.

Other:

Mr. Whitlow asked for a refresher on the long-term status of Cates Creek, noting he believed the Town would grow in a north-south direction, but it seemed that Cates Creek and getting that pedestrian connection across the river was far off. He said there were two issues, the first being the actual development of Cates Creek greenway and second getting people from the southern end of Town to be able to walk and bike downtown. Ms. Trueblood said that the Cates Creek greenway was a planned but unfunded project. She said the route was planned but no feasibility study had been done and no engineering and surveying had been done, and at this point it was a concept for a greenway. Ms. Trueblood said that concept would be pursued after Riverwalk Phase 3 was completed. She added that there was some talk about combining Phases 2 and 3 because Phase 3 would be easier to accomplish.

Mr. Whitlow said they had had very brief discussions about extending Riverwalk to get it out to Kings Highway. Ms. Trueblood said that was already a part of Phase 3. Mr. Whitlow said he wondered if the Town was developing in one direction, and were they going too far in the other direction. Ms. Trueblood said that Riverwalk Phase 3 included getting from downtown to Occoneechee Speedway and Ayr Mount, and getting from Alison and Occoneechee Mountain to Kings Highway Park. She added that there had been no engineering on that at all, but between the Town, the County, and the State a significant amount of the property was already owned, but the federal restrictions as far as passing the water plant had not yet been dealt with. Ms. Trueblood said that Cates Creek was just a concept of another greenway, and did not believe that the Town Board had taken

a position on whether or not all of Riverwalk had to be completed before Cates Creek was begun.

Mr. Whitlow said he believed that at some future point they should have a discussion about that, because they may potentially have a very large development happening where the Cates Creek greenway would pass through, and there were ways to identify funding in conjunction with that. He said he believed they needed to have a discussion about how far they wanted to go in one direction and how to move priorities around.

Mr. Warren said they had already notified the State that if I-85 was ever widening that they wanted a second pedestrian passage under I-85.

Mr. Whitlow said his main concern was that they were creating two nodes of development, which was downtown Hampton Point and downtown Hillsborough, and that they did not have very good connectivity between the two. Ms. Trueblood said that the Connectivity Plan encouraged bike lanes and sidewalks on all the major roads between those two areas, but when and how that happened was still in question.

ITEM 7: Adjourn.

**MOTION/
VOTE:**

Ms. Donegan moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 p.m. **Ms. McNally** seconded. The motion was adopted unanimously.