

MINUTES
Parks and Recreation Board
Tuesday, January 19, 2010
7:00 PM, Town Barn

PRESENT: Chair Bryant Warren (arrived at 7:40 p.m.), Vice Chair Steven Whitlow, Mary Donegan, Robb English, Nancy Espersen, Mike Gering, and Jennifer Weaver.

ABSENT: Kevin McKenna, Emily McNally, and Vicky Wilson, absences excused.

STAFF: Planner Stephanie Trueblood.

ITEM 1: **Call to Order, Roll Call, and Confirmation of a Quorum.**
Vice Chair Stephen Whitlow 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.**
No adjustments or changes were made to the agenda.

ITEM 3: **Approval of minutes from the October 20, 2009 meeting.**
Ms. Weaver indicated that under the report on Turnip Patch Park on page 2, the word “wedding” should be changed to “weeding.”

MOTION/

VOTE: **Mr. English** moved to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2009 meeting as amended. **Ms. Weaver** seconded. The vote was unanimous.

ITEM 4: **Reports and Updates:**

- **Town Board:** Mr. Gering said the Town Board had adopted at its last meeting a policy for events management, which would impact reservations for park facilities. He said they had received a staff report regarding the Wayfinding Signage program which was moving forward, and they were awaiting a response from Orange County their willingness to pay for some portion of the signage since a significant portion of the signs actually directed people to county facilities.
- **Planning Board:** Mr. Whitlow said the Planning Board had interviewed and recommended appointment of a new member, and had continued discussion on the ordinance rewrite. He said the first draft had been received and would be discussed at their next meeting, noting it was 350 pages.

Ms. Trueblood said there was a difference between an update and a rewrite, and a rewrite would entail reorganizing what you already had, and an update would be used to update to current planning practices. She said they were actually doing both at the same time, and that this draft appeared to be the rewrite portion of that work. Ms. Trueblood said the draft had been put into a new format. She said in the draft everything that would be updated with new information was highlighted in yellow, and what the consultants wanted direction on was if the format was appropriate and if the areas in yellow were areas that the Town really wanted to tackle in the new UDO.

- **Orange County:** Mr. English said Orange County had released its new program guide, which covered January thru August recreation events and programs. He said the fields at the new soccer complex were getting a lot of use, and the County was trying to find ways to stay on top of the maintenance with that heavy use. Mr. English said they were beginning to discuss budget issues, and because it would be another tight year they did not expect any big changes.
- **Walkable Hillsborough Coalition:** Ms. Espersen said that Thursday at 11 a.m. they would have a meeting with the consultant regarding Safe Routes to School. Ms. Trueblood said that meeting would be at the new Orange County offices, noting this was the Safe Routes to School grant program to have a consultant come in and evaluate Cameron Park, Stanford and Grady Brown in terms of walkability. She said they were using information from the Town's Connectivity Plan as a base and would make specific design recommendations for such things as improving crosswalks. Ms. Esperson said they would also discuss how to work over multi-jurisdictional areas.

Mr. English asked why those schools were selected. Ms. Espersen said those schools were chosen by those who wrote the grant, and because those schools encompassed other schools. Ms. Trueblood added the grant had to be used for young children of middle school age and younger. She said that Stanford and Grady Brown were chosen because it got to other schools, and Cameron Park because it was in the downtown area. Ms. Trueblood said that Hillsborough and Central were not chosen because there was already a planned and funded sidewalk for both of those elementary schools.

- **Park Stewards:**

Gold Park – Mr. McKenna was not present so no report was given, but Ms. Trueblood indicated she would provide information about Gold Park during Staff Updates.

Mayo Park and downtown sidewalks – Ms. Espersen stated she walked that area almost every day but had not noticed any issues worthy of attention.

Murray Street Park – Ms. Donegan stated as of last month it was in good shape.

Turnip Patch Park – Ms. Weaver said she had visited it a couple of weeks ago and the sand box could use some more sand.

Hillsborough Heights Park – Mr. Warren wasn't present.

Kings Highway Park – Mr. Whitlow stated he had visited that park today and was still the ongoing issue of cars getting back into places where they did not need to be. He said on the north side of the road there were fresh, muddy tracks, and on the southern side a fairly severe rut had developed that needed to be addressed.

- **Staff Updates:** Ms. Trueblood said there had been problems on the soccer field at Gold Park caused by poor maintenance and trash and debris that was rising to the surface. She said after some research, it was decided to shut the field down for a

year to remove the debris and improve the surface. Ms. Trueblood said they would be regrading and improving the crown with top soil, and planting the field with Bermuda grass as opposed to fescue. She said better maintenance practices would be put in place so that a contractor experienced with caring for athletic fields would be retained to care for the field. Ms. Trueblood said that work would begin in the spring, adding that funds had been identified in the current budget to refurbish the field. She said once the field had been seeded some kind of fencing would likely be installed to keep people off of it until the grass was established.

Ms. Trueblood said all of the parks had now been signed to inform the public that the parks were “smoke free.” She said three signs had been erected at Gold Park, two on the playground and one by the picnic shelter.

Ms. Trueblood said the park reservation permits for Gold Park were now available on the Website, so people would no longer have to come into the office to fill out the paperwork. She said people would still need to come into the office to pay the fee and retrieve their permit, but they no longer had to visit the office twice. Ms. Trueblood encouraged the Board to visit the new Website, noting it was much improved with more capabilities for electronic communication.

Ms. Trueblood said the Margaret Lane sidewalk from the Fire Department to the new library was now funded, 50% by the Town and 50% by the County. She said the cost was \$14,500 for the design and \$80,000 to construct, which included a brick paver surface to match what was at the library and at Weaver Street. Ms. Trueblood said that project would also improve stormwater drainage in that area, as well as crosswalks with pedestrian signals across the south side of Churton Street. She said she had seen a preliminary construction drawing and they were able to make the turn at the corner by Robin Taylor-Hall’s building without having to acquire additional property for right-of-way. Ms. Trueblood said the sidewalk was on grade with the street, which meant they would be removing the 4 parking places near Hillsborough Plumbing.

Ms. Trueblood said the Wayfinding signs had been installed at the new library, noting the County had been given permission by the Town Board to use the Wayfinding design at County facilities in the town limits.

Mr. Gering said he had noticed that a blue library directional sign had also been installed on the east side of Churton Street. Ms. Trueblood stated that that sign would come down once the Wayfinding signs were installed and that it was temporary.

Ms. Trueblood said in regards to Wayfinding, they were working on a Preserve America grant to fund that program, and they were hopeful to receive some funding from Orange County. She said the Town had to be designated as a Preserve American city to be eligible for the grant, but you could apply at the same time which was what they were doing. Ms. Trueblood said they had applied for that designation once before and had not been successful due to an abrupt end to the program.

Mr. Whitlow asked about the grant amount. Ms. Trueblood responded it was \$115,000 with matching funds for the Wayfinding program. She said the funds

could be used for marketing your town, and Wayfinding signage was considered marketing.

Ms. Trueblood said the downtown parking study draft was available on the Town's Website for those interested. She said this was the first phase of the parking study, and the second phase would take place this summer after the Justice Facility opened up.

Ms. Trueblood said the Town Board's budget planning retreat was scheduled for January 30 and top priorities would be discussed at that time. She said that was why review of priority budget items was on tonight's agenda, and once that discussion was completed she would forward the priorities to the Planning Director who would then take them to the Town Board at the planning retreat.

Ms. Trueblood said that Cornwallis Hills was working hard to develop a community garden, noting they had a core group of people that was overseeing the project. She said the largest issue outstanding was they were not able to pay for the water hookup, which was close to \$2,000. Ms. Trueblood said she believed that group had asked the Town to waive the fee, which she did not believe was a possibility but it might be possible to have the fee paid over an extended period of time.

Ms. Trueblood said that the Master Plan update items would be going to public hearing this week, and would then go to the Planning Board for recommendations to the Town Board. She said if the Town Board approved the updates, then the Master Plan would be updated and copies would be provided to this Board.

Ms. Trueblood said in regards to the covered walk easement from Calvin Street and ending at Gold Park, it was not good news. She said she had tried every possible avenue to work with the railroad on using the existing maintenance road and every avenue had been closed. Ms. Trueblood said the President of NCCR was unwilling to consider allowing the Town to use the maintenance road. However, she said, they were willing to let the Town build a path that was further to the east which would need to be constructed through what was now a forested area next to the stream buffer. Ms. Trueblood said a general site plan and design would have to be created in order to determine what the cost might be, so at present they were working on a survey and design for that easement in order to determine an approximately cost.

Mr. English asked if the Town had an estimate of what the improvements to the soccer field at Gold Park would cost. Ms. Trueblood said around \$15,000.

Mr. Whitlow asked if that included the dog park that had glass and other debris coming up through it. Ms. Trueblood said the dog park had already been regraded and six inches of mulch was added. She said the debris on the soccer field was the result of years of flood waters from the river being deposited in that floodplain area, and what they were seeing was small pieces of glass, metal, twine, and the like. Ms. Trueblood said the big pieces were removed when the contractors had first graded the field.

Mr. English said that EuroSport was a very strong advocate of soccer in this community, and Chapel Hill was looking to get some soccer super fund money from the County to resurface a field at Cedar Falls Park for use year round. He said that might give Hillsborough an opportunity to partner with Chapel Hill to use that new field.

Ms. Esperson asked about the trees planted last fall, noting she believed there had been enough rain that they had not required watering. Ms. Trueblood said they had not been watered, so unless they hit a dry spell they would not need to go to the volunteer list for watering until warmer weather hit.

Item 5: Review ranking results of the items for budget consideration and make recommendation of project priorities to Town Board.

Ms. Trueblood stated she had provided the Board with the list based on previous discussions, arranged in order of ranking. She said the list contained maintenance items added by the Planning Director, and included paving the gravel paths with asphalt at Turnip Patch Park. Ms. Trueblood said in terms of new amenities, they had broken those up as new amenities in one section and sidewalk and crosswalk projects as another section which were on a 3 to 5 year plan, and then they also had greenway, trail, and pedestrian easement projects as a separate category also on a 3 to 5 year plan.

Ms. Trueblood said the Town Board liked to look at big projects longer ranged, so getting those bigger projects in their minds 3 to 5 years out it made it easier to get into budget considerations as time went on. She said the new amenities list on the first page were things they would be asking for in FY 11.

Ms. Trueblood said she believed it would be wise to prioritize the Board's top 3 or 4 projects in each category to go forward to the Town Board. She said the Board could put forward the entire list, but believed it would be better received if only the top 3 or 4 were put forward for the Town Board's consideration.

Bryant Warren arrived at the meeting at 7:40 p.m., and Mr. Whitlow turned the meeting over to him.

The Board discussed the priority lists as provided by Ms. Trueblood for all three categories, including whether the priorities should be rearranged or others included. Priorities discussed included:

- Install one trash can at Turnip Patch Park and Murray Street Park, and two trash cans for Gold Park.
- Install bike racks at Mayo Park, the Police Station and Town Hall, or three locations.
- Install a community bulletin board at Gold Park at the restroom building.
- Replace the two deteriorated benches at the Museum and the one at Mayo Park.
- Recommend the priority for a pedestrian easement and trail from the West Hill Street to Riverwalk Phase III, and remove the priority for a pedestrian easement and trail from the Gateway Center to Wake Street.

Mr. English expressed concern that if only 3 or 4 priorities were forwarded to the Town Board, and the Town Board for whatever reason did not like 1 or 2 or more of those priorities, then not including the other priorities did not give them the opportunity to move up on the priority list and be considered.

MOTION: **Mr. Whitlow** moved to recommend to the Town Board the top four budget requests in each category to include the following changes: provide one trash can at Turnip Patch Park, one at Murray Street Park, and two additional cans at Gold Park; remove the Margaret Lane sidewalk from the list because it was already funded; include the brick paver crosswalks; and, leave in the priority for a pedestrian easement and trail from West Hill Street to Riverwalk Phase III, and remove the priority for the pedestrian easement and trail from the Gateway Center to Wake Street.

Ms. Esperson seconded.

Mr. English suggested that the Board recommend the top 4 priorities under new amenities and then all of the priorities in the other two categories, noting there was 6 in one category and 5 in the other.

VOTE: The vote was 5-1, with Mr. English voting Nay.

Ms. Esperson said as the Board went through that exercise they had been trying to identify other funding sources for some items, and that once again showed that Friends of Hillsborough Parks and Recreation was really needed.

Mr. Warren said if anyone was interested in starting up such a group to please contact him. Mr. English said he would be interested in working on that. He said the County was working on the same issue, and wondered about the potential to combine those efforts to have one Friends of Hillsborough and Orange County Parks and Recreation as opposed to having two separate groups. Mr. English said he did not believe that would work because there were two separate government entities involved, but it might be worthwhile to at least look into it.

Item 6: Review FY2010 work plan and discuss upcoming meetings.

Ms. Trueblood said they had received bicycle route recommendations from 5th grade students at Central Elementary who were working on a transportation project. She said in order to qualify for a regional competition they had to make a presentation to a public board. Ms. Trueblood said they wanted to come before this Board and make a presentation about their ideas and ask questions, and she had placed them on the agenda for the February meeting.

Mr. Warren suggested that after the February meeting, that the Board meet only every other month. He said the Planning Department was working hard on the rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance, and staff could use the break. Ms. Trueblood said it may be better to leave the meetings as “to be advised” and she would send out notices if something came forward that needed the Board’s attention.

After a brief discussion, the Board agreed by consensus.

Item 8: Adjourn.

MOTION/

VOTE: **Ms. Weaver** moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Mr. Whitlow seconded. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Trueblood, Secretary