



City of Greenville  
**Recreation and Parks Commission**  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, June 14, 2017 @ 5:30 PM  
City Hall – Council Chambers  
200 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

- Garrett Taylor, Chair
- Jaimie Yahnker, Vice-Chair
- Hasan Hilliard
- Audrey G. Nealy
- Nikki Caswell
- Gordon Darragh
- Mike Saad
- Elizabeth Seda
- McLean Godley, City Council Liaison

**STAFF:**

- Gary Fenton
- Don Octigan
- Bershuan Thompson
- Chasity McCurdy
- Sara Caropreso
- Laura J. Davenport
- Lamarco Morrison
- Graham Stallings
- Brent Harpe
- Debra Vick-Nobles
- Dean Foy
- Dennis Vestal
- Jordan Richardson
- Christopher McFarland

**AUDIENCE PRESENT:**

John Person, Dr. Jim Decker, Jim Gallahan, David Fields, Tom King, Heather Deck, Becky Finelli, Howard Vainright, Wade Scales, Councilmember Rick Smiley, and Sam Summerlin.

**MEETING AGENDA, DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS:**

The meeting opened at 5:30 PM and the following items were addressed:

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. INTRODUCTIONS**

Recreation Manger Dennis Vestal introduced new Recreation Assistants Graham Stallings and Jordan Richardson who recently began work at H. Boyd Lee Park. Both Recreation Assistants shared their backgrounds.

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made to approve the June 14, 2017 agenda as presented.

Motion: Audrey G. Nealy

Second: Hassan Hilliard

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made to approve the May 10, 2017 minutes as amended.

Motion: Audrey G. Nealy

Second: Elizabeth Seda

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING THE TOWN COMMON BOAT RAMP**

- A. John Person – Has lived in Greenville since 1982 and has used the Town Common Boat Ramp since 1986. Mr. Person shared the history of the boat ramp. He feels the citizens are being denied access to the river and it's a safety issue to reach people if fishing north on the river if there is no boat access at the Town. Common. Mr. Person expressed his concerned about the parking issue and in February when he took his boat out it was extremely crowded in the parking lot. Pedestrian safety is an issue. Commissioner Nealy asked Director Fenton if a structural assessment had been completed to check the soundness of the ramp and Director Fenton responded that there had not been a structural assessment completed. Mr. Person commented

there was nothing wrong with the boat ramp. The concern of trailers dropping off the edge of the ramp was discussed between Mr. Person and Director Fenton. It leads staff to believe the ramp was not designed for large boats. Mr. Person stated the boat ramp needed to remain open for motorized boats. Commissioner Nealy moved to add a discussion of the boat ramp problem and a possible solution to the July Commission agenda. Second by Commissioner Nikki Caswell. Motion carried unanimously among those present.

Commissioners Garrett Taylor and Mike Saad arrived at 6:15pm.

Discussion ensued regarding concerns that the lower portion of the boat ramp (underwater) is gone and the stability of the ramp (assuming deterioration). The current Master Plan does not call for replacement of the boat ramp, and deterioration of the ramp and shallow depth related to silting. Port Terminal was built and is operated by the NC Division of Wildlife Resources on City property. The popularity of the new playground at Town Common has surpassed projections and as a result, pressures for parking are extreme at certain times (weekends and some evenings). The main concern is young children crossing the parking lot and running into the playground.

- B. Howard Vainright - Stated he uses the river frequently and his concern is loss of accessibility to the river. From Falkland to Port Terminal the river access has dropped from five to two locations.
- C. Wade Scales – The community perception is it's a community resource. Asked the City to not take away an enjoyment of the community.
- D. Jim Gallahan – Shared concerns about heavy traffic at Port Terminal. Smaller boats are better for the Town Common, which makes a huge difference getting in and out of the water quickly.
- E. Heather Deck – Works as a Pamlico-Tar River Keeper with Sound Rivers. She agrees with the speakers concerning access points to the Tar River and is willing to work with the City for possible new access points.

## **VII. DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT**

- A. Now have a Recreation Superintendent in place, offering the position to Don Octigan. There were 39 applicants for the position who met Human Resource's qualifications for the position, ultimately interviewed seven good candidates (three internal applicants). Mr. Octigan did a great job in the interim position and it was full of challenges.
- B. Expressed thanks to Lamarco Morrison and Assistant City Manager Merrill Flood for having the antenna at the Town Common removed. The process has taken a long time and involved several people's efforts and communication. Once the turf returns it will be a beautiful improvement and a place where other improvement projects may take place in the future.
- C. Continue to be concerned about the impact on Bradford Creek staff as the City continues to negotiate a possible contract with Billy Casper Golf for the operations of the course. There are many unanswered questions which should be answered as a contract is negotiated. In the meantime, City staff are working to minimize the uncertainties a new initiative can create for existing staff concerned about the possibility of losing their salary and benefits. Director Fenton met with staff at Bradford Creek, as well Parks Superintendent Dean Foy, City Manager, Assistant City Manager and Human Resources Director to discuss options.
- D. Summer camps began on Monday; many of which are full or almost full. Recreation Superintendent Don Octigan will share more during his report.
- E. The City advertised for a position called the Special Projects, Marketing & Events Coordinator, a position that will spend time creating and instituting the department's marketing plan, planning and/or coordinating special events here in Greenville. This position will secure outside resources such as grants, monetary and land donations, and also manage special one-time projects for the department. The department received 80 applicants who qualified for the position and the evaluating process was pushed back by numerous departmental priorities and projects.
- F. Sound Rivers has been constructing camping platforms along the river at River Park North, at the Greenville Utilities Commission (GUC) property on the north side of the river just east of Port Terminal, and the Phil Carroll preserve on the south side of the river, a mile or two west of the Town Common. Two of the three camping platforms have been completed and as work began on the third, a neighbor across the river raised some concerns about the increased noise level and ruining his view. Staff met with the gentleman regarding his concerns, but were unable to come to an agreement. The platform is about 50% complete and should be finished in a few weeks.

## VIII. STAFF REPORT

- A. Don Octigan, Interim Recreation Superintendent
1. Recreation Update
    - a. Programs taking place are Celebration of Youth Expression, Sunday in the Park, Summer Camps, Staff training, Splashpoint at Dream Park, and the Community Pool.
    - b. Programming Updates
      - i. Aquatics & Fitness Center Family Fun Day event held; 100+ attended.
      - ii. Special Olympics Tennis tournament raised over \$400.
      - iii. Adult Softball is concluding. Staff is seeking participant feedback to improve this program.
      - iv. Greenie League Classic (baseball) will be taking place for 7-8 year olds 7/13-18.
    - c. Upcoming Events include:
      - i. 6/17 Bar-B-Grooves Music Festival at the Town Common, 12:00-6:00PM.
      - ii. 6/19 Arts & Crafts camps begin, as well as Youth Basketball Summer League with 43 youth registered.
      - iii. 7/4 Jaycees July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration, Town Common
  2. Chasity McCurdy, Recreation Supervisor, Brent Harpe, Recreation Assistant, and Christopher McFarland, Recreation Assistant – Specialized Recreation.

Chasity McCurdy shared an update on Special Olympics Spring Games and the North Carolina Special Olympics Summer Games where local athletes won a bronze medal and a silver medal for Pitt County. Brent Harpe shared information regarding the Exceptional Community Baseball League, Creative Oasis instructed by Lisa Jordan, and Camp Escape. Information was also shared regarding collaborative programming with the Support Team for Active Recreation (STAR). Future programming plans include a Special Education Tutoring program, paramobiles and internships. The paramobiles have mostly been used at Bradford Creek Golf Course, however River Park North will soon be using one soon for an adaptive fishing day.
- B. Dean Foy, Parks Superintendent
1. Continue to work on a healthy resolution for golf course operations. A meeting was recently held with Bradford Creek staff and city leadership to discuss options.
  2. Facility Improvement Plan Update
    - a. The HVAC installation is completed at H. Boyd Lee Park and the gym has reopened, now with air conditioning.
- C. Lamarco Morrison, Parks Planner
1. Capital Project Updates
    - a. Town Common
      - i. Sycamore Hill Memorial Gateway Plaza and Restroom  
Rhodeside and Harwell (R&H) were the chosen firm for the gateway plaza. R&H is working with the firm of Perkins and Will. A kick-off meeting was recently held to begin development of construction documents.
      - ii. Floating Canoe and Kayak Launch  
Kayak Launch is in the design phase and would not have an impact on the fishing pier or boat ramp. The design phase for the Picnic Shelter is also in progress.
      - iii. Radio Tower Demolition  
Radio tower has been removed from the Town Common.
    - b. Westpointe Village
      - i. Phase I of the project is on the fast track with two playgrounds being installed.
    - c. Tar River Legacy Plan  
Continue to look at two sites for the Extreme Park. A Skate Park design RFQ has been advertised and will stay posted for 30 days. Part of the scope is the vetting of both sites.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**X. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**XI. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

- A. Mike Saad – Excited for the Mayor’s new position and thanked staff for the good work.
- B. Nikki Caswell – Learned a lot about the boat ramp she did not know. Thanked staff for their hard work.
- C. Jaimie Yahnker – Thanked Don Octigan and staff for their hard work.
- D. Audrey G. Nealy – Congratulated Don Octigan and wants to discuss pier issue at next meeting.
- E. Hasan Hilliard – Thanked the audience for the coming to the meeting to discuss the pier issue.
- F. Elizabeth Seda – Congratulated Don Octigan.

**XI. MOTION TO ADJOURN**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 PM.

Motion: Audrey G. Nealy

Second: Hassan Hilliard

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

Respectfully Submitted,



Laura J. Davenport  
Administrative Assistant  
Recreation and Parks Department