



City of Greenville
Recreation and Parks Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 10, 2021 @ 5:30 PM
ZOOM Meeting

This meeting was held electronically via ZOOM.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Nikki Caswell, Chair
- Gordon Darragh, Vice-Chair
- Darin White
- Byron Aynes
- Jaimie Yahnker
- Mike Saad
- Kristian Williams
- Carrie Watson

STAFF:

- Gary Fenton
- Don Octigan
- Laura J. Davenport
- Mark Nottingham
- Dean Foy
- Heather White
- Councilmember Monica Daniels

AUDIENCE PRESENT:

None.

MEETING AGENDA, DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS:

The meeting opened at 5:43PM via ZOOM and the following items were addressed:

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. INTRODUCTIONS

None.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

You may recall that the Wildwood project just missed PARTF funding last year, as it was tied for #17 out of 80 applications, and available dollars allowed for funding the top 17. The other #17 received the grant, however, because they were asking for less than we were and there were enough dollars to fund their project, but not ours. This year's deadline is 5/3 and our applications need both Commissions and City Councils approval.

A motion was made to amend the agenda to add PARTF Grant Application for Wildwood Park under New Business.

Motion: Gordon Darragh

Second: Byron Aynes

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Vote: Commissioner Nikki Caswell | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Gordon Darragh | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Byron Aynes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Jaimie Yahnker | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Carrie Watson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the January 13, 2021 minutes as presented.

Motion: Jaimie Yahnker

Second: Carrie Watson

Vote: Commissioner Nikki Caswell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Gordon Darragh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Byron Aynes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Jaimie Yahnker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Carrie Watson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

5:47PM Commissioner Darin White joined the meeting via phone.

VI. DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT

- A. Director pointed out that if the department didn't have some truly dynamic, determined employees on staff at GRPD, they might have folded up in the face of Covid-19. It's been a long road and it continues to do be so, but staff has endured, doing whatever's required, and though Don and Heather have led that effort, most effectively; there aren't too many people in the department who haven't had some part in that. It affects everybody. Actually amazed at the number of services staff has been able to maintain over the past year, without putting staff or customers at risk. But getting that done has required a truly heroic effort, and I'm proud of our staff.
- B. I'm also proud of their response to the City's Socks and Glove Drove, which concluded yesterday, with collected items being turned over to Pitt County Schools for distribution to kids who need them. Participation was phenomenal and included all city departments, as well as Greenville Utilities Commission, other groups, and many individual citizens. What started as a simple effort to collect 150 pairs of socks and 150 pairs of gloves ended up with 3,491 pairs of socks and 1,450 pairs of gloves, plus 50 hats and 10 scarves, totaling 5,001 items. This project included a friendly competition between participating groups, three of which collected over 1,100 items each (City Hall, The Police Department, and Recreation and Parks), but in the end it was our department who won the competition with a total of 1,186 items. The real winners are the children of Pitt County who will receive these socks and gloves.
- C. After years of hoping, the City finally closed on 18 acres north of the river and immediately West of Greenville Boulevard, to become the Western half of Wildwood Park. As you recall from last month, we were able to move forward with the acquisition thanks to a generous donor who covered 90% of the sales price, sharing our vision of just how impactful Wildwood Park can ultimately be for Greenville and Pitt County. In the months to come, staff hopes we can identify other businesses or individuals who might like their company or family name to be associated with a specific park feature, such as an enclosed picnic shelter, elevated canopy walk, the observation tower, a zip line, nature playground, boardwalk, a bridge, treehouse, or cabin. No question, Wildwood will different from any other park in Greenville and we will be assembling some educational materials and video programs about the Wildwood Vision and sponsoring opportunities that may be available there and hope the time will come when staff can share the Wildwood story thru in-person presentations to area service clubs, neighborhood organizations, and business groups. Staff also hopes to secure some smaller, individual contributors much like we did for the Sycamore Hill Gateway Plaza project at the Town Common, where 129 donors each gave \$250 or more in support. It doesn't generate huge money for the project, but it does generate a supportive partner who believes in the value of the project and has a vested interested in its success. Staff will be scheduling a small, socially distanced groundbreaking in mid-March to commemorate the fact that we now have the land and the project is underway and to introduce the vision for the park to some potential sponsors.
- D. You are all aware that come 4/9 I'll be stepping down as the Director, after a little over 14 years serving in this position. The decision didn't come easy, as I take great satisfaction in

the work we do here at GRPD. I've had the privilege of teaming up with some dynamic, creative, and generous employees. I will miss those relationships, but between now and 4/9; I'll be working to put a few projects to bed, organizing my electronic and paper files, and cleaning up my e-mails, in an effort to make sure that "hand off" to the next Director can take place smoothly and effectively. My career has given me many opportunities to work with Commissions such as this one, and of course I've always admired people who give themselves for the betterment of recreation and parks services. That's expected of me, I chose it as a profession, but you did not. Nevertheless, you've always been encouraging, and I've always almost found this Commission to be filled with caring and enthusiastic people who understand that what we do in recreation and parks is a heck of a lot more than fun and games. However, I don't want to minimize the importance of having fun, there is a great value in having it once in a while, and you probably don't want to be around people who never have that opportunity. I have been in parks and recreation for decades and at this point I'm thinking back on those youngsters who we have taught to swim in the early years of my career, some whom 9 or 10 year later were out teaching other kids to swim, and those kids soon grew up to teach others to swim, and the beat goes on, year after year, generation after generation. I like to think that this concept is in place for many things staff does in Recreation and Parks, such as a Recreation Center Employee helping keep some young man on the right track, and that young man grows up to do the same thing for someone else. That's what makes our work rewarding - knowing that when we start a program, plan an annual event, or build a park, trail, or recreation facility, that service or facility will continue on decades after we're gone, repeatedly providing its positive impact to area citizens and visitors, some who might not have been born when it was first created. More and more people are beginning to grasp an investment in recreation and parks is not just an investment in today's citizens, but in tomorrows as well, and I find that gratifying. As I said earlier, we have a really good team, we have a good Commission too, that makes it a bit easier to step down, because I know that Recreation and Parks progress in Greenville isn't about to slow down with my departure. It's going to continue decades into the future, and that's gratifying as well.

VII. ASSISTANT DIRECTORS REPORT

A. Promotion Announcement

1. Since 9/1, the Recreation Manager position in Athletics has been vacant. Since then, Heather and I have been managing the division but I am happy to announce the position has been recently filled. Sophie Duncan was promoted to the Manager position and began 2/1. Sophie has been with our department for over eleven years and most recently held the Recreation Supervisor position for Adult Athletics. She brings a lot of experience to the position and we look forward to her leading the Athletics Division as we begin to offer some of our traditional programming, which has been suspended due to COVID-19. We will plan to have Sophie present an update at a future Commission meeting, as there is a lot currently going on within the Athletics Division.

B. Overall Operations Update

1. Recreation Centers still operating with limited capacities and modified operating hours.
2. Winter Programs continue with several safety measures in place
 - a. Face Covering,
 - b. Social Distancing, and
 - c. COVID-19 specific questions?
3. Spring Programs being planned:
 - a. Youth Future Stars Soccer Registration concluded 2/1; 672 players registered
 - b. Several sports clinics have been conducted at South Greenville and Eppes Recreation Center that served 100's of youth.
 - c. Adult Pickleball began at Boyd Lee Park this week; 20 registered.

- d. All with the same safety measures in place.
- 4. Heather will discuss summer camp plans during her update.
- C. Planning continues for the 2021 Little League Softball World Series, which is scheduled for August 11-20 at Elm Street Park. Although the tournament is 6 months away, the excitement is certainly building for those involved so far. As planning continues, we will provide updates along the way and also make you aware of any opportunities you can be involved in as well. There will be plenty of volunteer opportunities during the event and we hope you all will consider helping out if your time allows.

VIII. STAFF REPORTS

A. Recreation Division Report

1. Heather White, Outreach Coordinator

a. City of Greenville Sock and Glove Drive

- i. The Recreation and Parks Department participated in a City wide sock and glove drive for children in Pitt County.
- ii. Participation in this event was nothing short of phenomenal and included employees from all departments of the City, local groups, and many individual citizens.
- iii. It started with asking each department to collect 150 pairs of socks and 150 pairs of gloves in 25 days and city far exceeded that goal. The total number of items collected was 5,145.
- iv. With Recreation and Parks collecting 1,186 of those items! While there was friendly competition amongst departments, the real winners are the children of Pitt County who will receive the socks and gloves! Our collective efforts will truly make a difference for them!

b. Summer Job Recruitment

- i. Summer job recruitment is underway with job postings going live on Monday, 2/1. Our department collaborated with Human Resources to secure 2 static and 1 digital billboard to advertise summer camp job offerings which are located at the intersection of 264 and NC 33, Greene Street, and the digital billboard near Sam's Club.
- ii. Recruitment banners are now visible in various locations throughout the city.
- iii. Summer camp job offerings can be found on the City of Greenville's webpage and will remain available online through 4/16.

c. Summer Camp Registration and Program Details

- i. Families can now start making plans for summer camps, as registration opened on Monday, 2/8. In-person registration will be accepted at Jaycee Park, M-F from 8am-5pm business hours and at all other Recreation and Parks facilities by appointment. Payment plans are also available.
- ii. There are 7 camp sites available, offering activities for ages 3-15.
- iii. Just as last year, GRPD staff have the health and safety of staff and participants in mind while preparing activities for camp. We will continue to follow and practice all COVID 19 guidelines provided by local and state health officials.

6:03PM Councilmember Monica Daniels joined the meeting via ZOOM.

B. Parks Division Report

1. Dean Foy, Parks Superintendent

- a. Has been spending more time at Bradford Creek to learn more information about the new contract. Revenues have exceeded expenses by \$80,000. Will provide a detailed report in March.

- b. Parks Division is currently planning for spring programs, tournaments, and the Little League Softball World Series.
 - c. Pleased Sophie Duncan was promoted to Recreation Manager for Athletics. Also wanted to recognize other employees who were part-time and now are full-time, Assistant Director Don Octigan, Recreation Supervisor Lewis Holloman, and Recreation Manager Dennis Vestal.
 - d. Wish Mr. Fenton well in his retirement. Mr. Fenton allowed him two promotions within the department he loves and wanted to stay with.
2. Mark Nottingham, Parks Planner, CIP Projects
- a. Eppes Recreation Center
 - i. 95% construction documents are being reviewed now.
 - ii. Reviewing finishing details now (colors and materials).
 - iii. Advertise for bids first week of March.
 - iv. Construction expected to take 6 months.
 - b. Community Pool Update
 - i. Project is on Schedule
 - ii. Staff has received 50% construction drawings for review.
 - iii. 100% construction drawings due in mid-March and then will advertise for bids.
 - iv. Construction scheduled to begin in May/June and last 12 months.
 - c. Wildwood Park
 - i. External permits obtained; internal permits still required
 - ii. Construction to start at the end of February, first of March
 - iii. Phase I Improvements
 - Parking
 - Beach Water Access
 - Floating Dock
 - Shelter Improvements
 - Trails
 - Camping Platform
 - iv. Groundbreaking mid-March
 - v. McGill and Associates will assist with a Park Development Plan
 - vi. City Council approved the design contract with Kimley-Horn for Phase 2 improvements on Monday, 2/8.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. PARTF Grant Application for Wildwood Park

A motion was made to recommend that City Council approve submitting a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grant application in support of Wildwood Park.

Motion: Gordon Darragh

Second: Jaimie Yahnker

Vote:	Commissioner Nikki Caswell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
	Commissioner Gordon Darragh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
	Commissioner Byron Aynes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
	Commissioner Jaimie Yahnker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
	Commissioner Carrie Watson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
	Commissioner Darin White	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

X. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSINERS

- A. Gordon Darragh – Thank staff for all the hard work you put in. Great to hear part-timers have moved to full-time and the positions they have. It’s a feather in the management’s hat. Would like to reserve comments for next month on Gary’s retirement.
- B. Jaimie Yahnker – Agree with Gordon, couldn’t have put it better.
- C. Byron Aynes – Thank you for the hard work. Hope Gary enjoys his retirement.
- D. Carrie Watson – Thank you all. Family is moving to Denver, Colorado in April. Last month will be the last meeting. Has enjoyed learning behind the scenes.
- E. Darin White – Reserve comments for Gary next month. Thanks for patience getting on. Look forward to working with new leadership.
- F. Councilmember Daniels – Echo what everyone else has said. Continuously doing a great job. Will reserve sentiments for those leaving until next month.
- G. Nikki Caswell – Continue the hard, creative and innovative work.

XI. MOTION TO ADJOURN

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 6:23PM.

Motion: Gordon Darragh

Second: Carrie Watson

Vote: Commissioner Nikki Caswell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Gordon Darragh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Byron Aynes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Jaimie Yahnker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Carrie Watson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Darin White	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura J. Davenport
Administrative Assistant
Recreation and Parks Department