



City of Greenville
Recreation and Parks Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 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
- Derrick Clark
- 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 5:35PM via ZOOM and the following items were addressed:

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. INTRODUCTIONS

None.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made to approve the March 10, 2021 agenda as presented.

Motion: Darin White

Second: Gordon Darragh

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| 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 |
| Commissioner Mike Saad | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Derrick Clark | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Kristian Williams | <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 February 10, 20201 minutes as presented.

Motion: Darin White

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
Commissioner Mike Saad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Derrick Clark	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Kristian Williams	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VI. DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT

A. Four days from now will mark 14 years since my first official meeting with the Recreation and Parks Commission, with members Sue Aldridge, Sandy Steele, Lillian Outterbridge, Jimmy Bond, Wilson McDowell, Wilbur Bennett, Jerry Clark, Gary Hassell, and Sydney Womack. Chip Little was the liaison. It's now 5,103 days later and there have been 130 Commission meetings since then. When I interviewed for job back in 2006, I was asked how long I might stay and I answered 8-10 years. But thanks to the efforts, visions, and support of so many people, my staff were able to continually accomplish some very impactful things. That's continued through Covid, and that made hanging around a little more appealing. This will be my last Commission meeting as Director, but fortunately it is also Don's last Commission meeting as Assistant Director. Your next meeting will be his first serving as the Director.

That certainly pleases me and I'm grateful the City Manager saw his potential and his dedication to our department and our profession. Every promotion Don has received on his way to this one required sacrifices, and there's nothing like being able to hand off the baton to someone I know can and will successfully continue the race. With almost 51 years in the Parks and Recreation profession, I've had the opportunity to work with some truly solid and dynamic people. But I'm not sure I've ever been blessed with one quite this dynamic. He knows what we do and why we do it. He does what it takes to get the job done. And he doesn't whine.

During my career I've never been able to leave a department head position knowing who will follow me in that position, who will take the reins next, so this is a first for me, but knowing that now will make our efforts towards a smooth transition a lot more effective than they would be, or even could be, otherwise. And we'll be working together on that for the next four weeks.

B. We're pleased our employees have been offered the chance to get their Covid vaccinations, thanks to the additional vaccines available through Johnson & Johnson. Last Friday and Saturday the auditorium in the Arts Center was set up at Jaycee Park for inoculations and many City employees received theirs. This is a major step towards being able to return to somewhat of a normal operation. Though Don's had some supportive people at his side, he more than anyone else has been at the forefront in planning and organizing the department's response to Covid and many of the services and facilities have remained accessible to the public as a result. Our Covid response has clearly been a team effort, but team needed a leader and Don's been it.

C. As I prepare to transition into retirement, I am gratified that the Wildwood concept, the adventure park on lake lands along the Tar River, is rapidly moving towards reality. Commissioner Darragh recently mentioned to me how long ago it was the Commission

visited the eastern Wildwood property, with hopes it could someday be a dynamic addition to our City's park system, but not really sure that could ever be possible. Quite a few years later, the City acquired some of the acreage we'd visited with the help of a donor's generous gift and year later acquired the land west of Greenville Boulevard with more support from the same donor. Others saw the vision as well, and 6 or 7 decades from now people probably won't know who supported the development of Wildwood, but they will know it's a popular impactful park that's a great component of our park system and is one of Greenville's attractions, kind of how we look at Elm Street Park today. We hope that in the months to come we can identify businesses and individuals who might like their company or family name to be associated with a Wildwood Park feature, like a cabin, picnic shelter, elevated canopy walk, or zip line. Staff is in the process of assembling materials and videos about the Wildwood Vision and sponsorship opportunities that will become available as the park develops. We are anxious for the time when we'll be able to share the Wildwood story in-person and when that time comes, formal presentations on Wildwood will be offered to service clubs, neighborhood organizations, business groups, and whoever else asks.

- D. My career has included "tours of duty" in a variety of cities and counties. I'm a military brat and my younger days of moving from place to place every few years kind of carried over into my career, and until Greenville, I'd never lived in any specific community for more than 9 years. We've been in Greenville for 14 years, and it's truly become "home." I am grateful for the professional opportunity that brought me here and for all of the terrific people we've gotten to know in the process.

VII. ASSISTANT DIRECTORS REPORT

- A. My comments tonight are very brief, but I do want to take the time to thank the Commission for all support of our staff, programs, and events. Several of you reached out to me since Mr. Fenton announced his retirement, and I personally appreciated all the support.
- B. As I stated in my comments last week in the press release, I am truly honored for the opportunity to lead this department and the many committed employees we have. Sometimes they don't get the credit they deserve but one year ago this week, everyone's responsibilities changed and they had to adapt due to the pandemic. Programs and events were cancelled and hundreds of refunds were processed. Staff did an outstanding job working through the many challenges and eventually were able to recreate programs and events. Through it all, staff were able to create positive, safe experiences for our community. Heather, who played an important role in the department's response to COVID, will share some of those success stories in her report.
- C. I look forward to working with Mr. Fenton to ensure there are no loose ends once he retires April 9th. As for Mr. Fenton, I want to congratulate him on his retirement. This department has had many successes during his 14 years in Greenville. He was always good about bringing a different and creative perspective to various situations or challenges being faced by the department. We have all learned a great deal from Mr. Fenton and we are thankful for his leadership and his many stories throughout the years. His career has spanned over 50 years and he has plenty of great stories to back that up. We look forward to Mr. Fenton visiting the office and sharing the many stories of retirement in the future.

VIII. STAFF REPORTS

- A. Recreation Division Report
 - 1. Heather White, Outreach Coordinator
 - a. 2020 Year in Review
 - i. Youth Athletics had a successful fall youth soccer clinic. Staff concentrated on teaching fundamental skills to more than 200 participants over the 5-week clinic.

- ii. For 6 weeks, participants went through extensive training focused on speed, agility, dribbling, shooting and passing in our Basketball Showcase League. Players put their skills to the test, by competing in various basketball challenges to track their progress, as well as competition within the league.
 - iii. Winter Quickstart Tennis nearly doubled our anticipated capacity and needed an additional instructor to handle the demand. Thirty children ages 5-10 were taught basics for 11 weeks this winter.
 - iv. Creative Oasis is an expressive arts class for individuals with disabilities. In 8 sessions, participants focus on painting, theatre, culinary, education, adaptive PE, woodshop, and much more.
 - v. After much anticipation, aquatic exercise classes resumed on 02.22.2021 at GAFC. Members enjoy the health benefits of these low weight bearing workouts to improve or maintain their mobility, strength, and fitness.
 - vi. Even in the unprecedented times, staff preserved and dodged all obstacles in an effort to offer a creative summer camp in 2020. Our Adventure Awaits Summer Camp was held at seven locations in the City and was packed with fun-filled activities and happy faces.
 - vii. The Center for Arts & Crafts offers morning and evening sessions of “Learn to Throw” throughout the year. This program teaches adults how to create functional and sculptural pieces of pottery on the potter’s wheel. Creating a piece of pottery is a 2-week process and the finished product is something your certain to be proud of.
 - viii. Caravan to Candyland was a creative and unique recreational opportunity in the midst of a pandemic when it seemed everything fun was canceled! The drive thru Halloween event included 20 local organizations who decorated vehicles and gave out candy to nearly 130 families who attended.
- b. 2021 Spring Programs and Program Guide
The spring edition of the program brochure is now available online featuring programs open for registration from now through May. GRPD staff are working on a summer only brochure that will be released with information about summer camps, summer recreation programs, and special events should be published online next week.
- i. We continue to offer an online-only publication which allows for timely updated throughout the season as programs are added, modified, or canceled due to guidance from state and local health officials.
- c. Bites on the Bridge
Many of you may remember the Bites on the Bridge event that took place in November of 2020. Well, it’s coming back! Greenville Recreation and Parks staff, in collaboration with the City Manager’s Office, will be hosting our next Bites on the Bridge event on Thursday, 04.15.2021 from 5-9PM. This event will feature a variety of food trucks, live acoustic performance, a beer garden and seated dining on the bridge. A grab and go option will also be available. We are hoping for a nice evening on the Town Common! Our event plan is to hold bi-monthly events at Town Common in an effort to foster use of the pedestrian bridge. So stay tuned for future events!

B. Parks Division Report

1. Dean Foy, Parks Superintendent

- a. Greenway has been cleaned. Town Common parking lot and pier will be cleaned tomorrow.
- b. FROGGS had a clean-up and Wildwood and the trails were cleaned up tremendously.

- c. Focus Group Comments
 - i. Commissioner Williams – Fishing poles and equipment can be used at River Park North.
 - ii. Commissioner Aynes - Skatepark improvements are taking place at the Extreme Park, effective 03.16.2021.
- d. Bradford Creek Golf Course Update
 - i. Who Manages the Course – Antares Golf Management, LLC, formerly doing being as Billy Casper Golf, LLC
 - ii. Reports are received by Recreation and Parks on the 15-18th for the previous month.
 - iii. Rounds played:

January 2021 – 1,006	January 2020 - 859
YTD 2021 – 13, 299	YTD 2020 – 8,560
 - iv. Income:

January 2021 - \$30,300	January 2020 - \$22,822
YTD 2020 - \$386,856	YTD 2020 - \$238,213
 - v. Expenses:

January 2021 - \$39,948	January 2020 - \$41,729
YTD 2021 - \$316,710	YTD 2020 - \$338,552
 - vi. Net Income: YTD 2021 - \$70,146 YTD 2020 – (\$100,309)
 - vii. Commissioner White recommended an Advisory Group like they had before.
- 2. Mark Nottingham, Parks Planner, CIP Projects
 - a. Eppes Recreation Center Improvements
 - i. Bids due 03.25.2021.
 - ii. City Council to consider contract award on 04.05.2021.
 - iii. Construction expected to take 6 months.
 - b. Community Pool Update
 - i. 03.05.2021 95% construction plans will be submitted to the City.
 - ii. 04.16.2021 Begin soliciting bids for construction.
 - iii. 05.07.2021 Construction bids due.
 - iv. 05.24.2021 City Council to consider construction contract award.
 - v. Mid-June – Break ground, construction will take 12 months.
 - c. Wildwood Park
 - i. 03.18.2021 Groundbreaking for Phase I improvements. Constructions will take 4 months.
 - ii. Wildwood Park Development Plan – Open House meeting 03.11.2021, 12:00-6:00PM at the Town Common. Survey is active online.
 - iii. Phase II Design work – Kick-off on 03.19.2021 (bridges, boardwalk, canopy walk, and observation tower).

IX. NEW BUSINESS

None.

X. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSINERS

- A. Gordon Darragh – Welcome Commissioner Clark, fond farewell to Commissioner Watson. Accepted retirement with mixed emotions, made great strides in the department, but need a break. Will be remembered for the greenways, the development of Town Common and Wildwood Park. Done a fabulous job with the staff at Recreation and Parks in making new leaders. Sorry to see you go and will see you around town. Don, congratulate you for getting the Director position. Looking forward to working with you in the future.
- B. Jaimie Yahnker – Thrilled with Gary and will be in touch before you leave. Congratulations.
- C. Byron Aynes – Bid farewell to Carrie and her family. Look forward to getting to know Commissioner Clark as well. Gary, really enjoyed being on this Commission and learning a lot from you how the City and you work. You are passionate about what you do. You

always put together a great poem at Christmas. Look forward to getting to know Don better. Great direction for Greenville.

- D. Carrie Watson – Thanks so much, being a part of the Commission has been exciting. Have enjoyed being behind the scenes and what a City does. Glad Commissioner Clark is getting to join in. Gary, enjoyed learning from you and your passion for recreation, the City, and the service you provide. Don, have friends excited for you in other cities with recreation and parks.
- E. Mike Saad – Thank you Commissioner Watson for your assistance. Commissioner Clark welcome. Mixed emotions about Gary’s news. Joined a few years back and Gary welcomed me with open arms. Have enjoyed the facilities and recreation. Has been the best ambassador for Greenville. Has put in the time to create a wonderful culture. This will be Gary’s legacy. Look forward to working with Don and his visions. Greenville’s lucky to have you in the leadership position.
- F. Kristian Williams – Welcome to Derrick. Carrie wishing you and your family the best on your move. Gary, have always been passionate and open, great spirit to be around. Don, hear a lot of positives, look forward to working with you in the future.
- G. Darin White – Carrie, good luck. Welcome to Commissioner Clark. Don, this Commission was probably one of your biggest cheerleaders behind the scenes. Believe in your vision and follow it. Gary, was a friend. Had a servant’s heart. When met one on one, it was always about the parks system. Loved his passion. Not losing a friend. Looking forward to him working part-time and spending time with his wife and family. This park system was good and has become great, as well as its staff.
- H. Derrick Clark – Thank you for welcoming me, grateful for the opportunity. Struck up a conversation with him on an airplane home from OH last year. Now see myself supporting the City of Greenville on this Commission. Look forward to what it means, learning and growing. Also walking under the new leadership of Don.
- I. Nikki Caswell – Gary, meeting in Ohio, saw the observation tower – never imagined Greenville could have such a thing; but you had the vision and now it’s coming to fruition. You saw the vision. Excited for you and your next steps. Excited for Don and his vision. Excite for Carrie and Derrick. Thanks to all of the other staff, 2020 has been a good year.

XI. MOTION TO ADJOURN

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 6:36 PM.

Motion: Gordon Darragh

Second: Darin White

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
Commissioner Mike Saad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Derrick Clark	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Kristian Williams	<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