



City of Greenville  
**Recreation and Parks Commission**  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, September 14, 2022 @ 5:30 PM  
Drew Steele Center

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

- Gordon Darragh, Chair
- Darin White, Vice-Chair
- Byron Aynes
- Derrick Clark
- Kevon Gainer
- Montez Bishop
- Deborah Sheppard
- Najiyah Lewis

**STAFF:**

- Don Octigan
- Mark Nottingham
- Courtnee McGrath
- Dennis Vestal
- Heather White
- Council Member Monica Daniels

**AUDIENCE PRESENT:**

Two members were present in the audience.

**MEETING AGENDA, DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS:**

The meeting opened at 5:42PM and the following items were addressed:

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. INTRODUCTIONS**

Don Octigan introduced Courtnee McGrath as the new Administrative Assistant. She briefly explained her background and how she is excited for her new role. Don Octigan also introduced Deputy City Manager, Michael Cowin, and Councilmember Blackburn.

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made to approve the September 14, 2022 agenda as presented.

Motion: Darin White  
Second: Byron Aynes

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made to approve the June 8, 2022 minutes as presented.

Motion: Darin White  
Second: Deborah Sheppard

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**VI. STAFF MONTHLY REPORTS**

A) Director, Don Octigan

- 1) The Little League Softball World Series was held last month and it was great for the City as well as the department. Staff maintained Elm Street Park during the tournament which saw 2,000 people at peak attendance. This year did not have any COVID-19 restrictions and

was a great learning experience for staff. Various other departments volunteered and supported this event as well.

- (a) Commissioner Byron Aynes asked about the economic development impact and Director Octigan stated that Andrew Schmidt will be giving City Council a presentation.
- (b) Commissioner Gordon Darragh asked if there could be more bleachers added to the third base line and Director Octigan informed the commissioners that there has been discussion adding more seating, lighting, and restrooms but nothing has been decided yet.

2) The NCRPA conference will be held in Greenville October 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> and already has over 400 attendees registered. Staff will be involved with volunteering as well as attending sessions. There will be two nights that attendees will be going to the Uptown area which will hopefully impact economic development.

- (a) Commissioner Sheppard asked about the hours and Heather explained that they vary due to the session times.

B) Superintendent, Heather White

- 1) There were 15 different summer camps that lasted eight weeks where 1500 children attended. Staff did an amazing job as many of them doubled up on duties due to being short-staffed.
- 2) JR NBA started July 11<sup>th</sup> and AmeriHealth sponsored the event which allowed for new jerseys and a party.
- 3) The fourth Friday of each month at Eppes Recreation Center there is a teen's social night. There have been two successful ones with pizza, fruit, video games, etc.
- 4) The Special Olympic 5x5 team brought back the silver medal.
- 5) Wildwood Park has been activated with several great events recently including a treasure Hunt, a concert, and an active adult social day. Megan Howard as well as River Park North staff collaborated on these efforts. The Active Senior Social saw over 70 adults who participated in different programs including: Trail Hikes, Zumba, Pickleball, and Arts.
- 6) Movie in the Park kicked off the summer series at Thomas Foreman Park. Other outreach events included Heart of the City Vol. 2 with Deborah Sheppard, Healthy Hoops at Eppes, and multiple back to school events. Staff is excited about the expansion of partnerships.
  - (a) Commissioner White praised staff for their efforts since there is stuff to do.
  - (b) Councilmember Daniels asked about Trunk-or-Treat and Heather confirmed.

C) Superintendent, Dennis Vestal

- 1) Three HVAC units at Eppes Recreation Center has been replaced. One of the HVAC systems is now on the roof and the previous location will be converted into a safer storage room.
- 2) Additional improvements are being done at the Extreme Park at Jaycee Park and the hours have been modified.
- 3) The new facility manager, Ross Peterson, has worked to develop a monthly landscaping plan for staff to follow and allow supervisors know the schedule.
- 4) New turf and clay has been installed at Guy Smith Stadium. The next part of the improvement project will be to paint the dugouts and backstop wall.
- 5) Staff assisted with the Little League Softball World Series by prepping the field, custodial staff, and cleanup. Since power is limited at the stadium a contract for electrical service was done to provide power for the cooling tent.
- 6) Playgrounds are inspected weekly. FROGGS donated two benches for the Green Mill Run Greenway. Before this there were no benches in this section.
- 7) The Outdoor Aquatic Center had a very successful first summer. Over 13,000 people attended with the goal to increase attendance and expand services next summer. The most recent hire was Josh Cockrell, whom filled a job that has been vacant for two year.
  - (a) Commissioner Lewis asked about winter lifeguard training sessions and Dennis informed the group that the training sessions will begin in the fall.
  - (b) Commissioner Darragh asked about the wait time and Dennis explained that the pool did get at capacity at time, which is 25 people per lifeguard.

- (c) Commissioner Sheppard asked about staffing and Director Octigan explained that there were 18 lifeguards at the beginning of the summer which grew to 35-40.
  - (d) Councilmember Daniels said it could be great to recruit teens at the teen social who have leadership skills and want to serve the community.
- D) Parks Planner, Mark Nottingham
- 1) The welcome center and playground project at Wildwood Park has begun with the project completion date being spring 2023. The contract for the Chris Smith Mountain Bike Trails has been awarded.
  - 2) Awarded \$360,000 from the PARTF grant in 2022, which the City will match. This will allow a new parking lot, restrooms, a challenge park, and playground style zip lines to be added to Wildwood Park.
  - 3) The 2022 Comprehensive Master Plan will allow the department to be more competitive going after grants. There will be a survey for the community to fill out with feedback.
    - (a) Councilmember Daniels asked about the timeframe and Mark explained there are eight more months.
  - 4) ARPA Projects:
    - (a) Town Common Bulkhead and Esplande Replacement
      - (i) Reached the end of its lifespan since the metal has broken down. A contract was awarded from City Council for different options to replacing it. Design options and costs will be shared at upcoming meetings.
    - (b) Greenfield Terrace/Barnes-Ebron-Taft Community Center
      - (i) A contract was awarded to this project and will look at adding a fitness center to the building, improving walking trails, additional trees and lighting, and resurfacing the basketball court.
        - (i) Councilmember Daniels inquired how old the restrooms are and staff will research for a date.
    - (c) Dream Park Community Building
      - (i) City Council allocated 1 million dollars to the facility. The goal is bring the building up to code, make it safe, and usable for the community. Ross Peterson is leading this project and a design contract will be presented to City Council in October.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

- A) Director Octigan explained the department puts together a yearly report. The report includes average rentals, camp participation, facility highlights, nature programs, art programs, memberships, special events, community outreach, activations, Greenways, and capital improvement projects from the last three years.
  - 1) Commissioner Darragh inquired more about Bradford Creek and Dennis explained that the revenue was higher than previous years but the golf rounds were down.
  - 2) Commissioner White explained that this public course is a huge benefit for our City.
  - 3) Commissioner Aynes asked about the RFP for Sports Connection and Director Octigan explained that the individual changed careers. The facility is getting a new AC unit and new gym floors installed.

## **VIII. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS**

- A) Commissioner Aynes: Great job to staff, it is overwhelming the amount of programming which is great. Took employees out on the Tar River with Riverside Recreation and it was a great Atmosphere.
- B) Commissioner Sheppard: Thanked staff. Excited for new projects and moving in the right direction with different partnerships.
- C) Commissioner White: Thanked commissioners for the energy being brought. Thanked staff and Don for his energy.
- D) Commissioner Darragh: Excited for the future and that we will be a destination point.
- E) Commissioner Lewis: Thanked staff for all the great work. Great summer programs and excited for all the activities that have started.

F) Councilmember Daniels: Thanked staff for their work. The growth of the parks and projects are amazing.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:09 PM.

Motion: Darin White

Second: Najiyah Lewis

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Courtnee McGrath", written in a cursive style.

Courtnee McGrath  
Administrative Assistant

Recreation and Parks Department