



City of Greenville  
**Recreation and Parks Commission**  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, November 9, 2022 @ 5:30 PM  
Drew Steele Center

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gordon Darragh, Chair   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kevon Gainer  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Darin White, Vice-Chair | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Montez Bishop |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Byron Aynes             | <input type="checkbox"/> Deborah Sheppard         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Derrick Clark                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Najiyah Lewis |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joel Sweeney            |   |

**STAFF:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don Octigan, Director                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dennis Vestal, Superintendent          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mark Nottingham, Parks Planner                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heather White, Superintendent          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Courtnee McGrath, Administrative Assistant | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Member Monica Daniels, Liaison |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Member Marion Blackburn            |  |

**AUDIENCE PRESENT:**

Council Member Blackburn was the one individual present in the audience.

**MEETING AGENDA, DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS:**

The meeting opened at 5:35 PM and the following items were addressed:

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. INTRODUCTIONS**

Director Octigan introduced the newest Commissioner, Joel Sweeney. Commissioner Sweeney gave his introduction and interest with Recreation and Parks.

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made to approve the November 9, 2022 agenda as presented.

Motion: Najiyah Lewis

Second: Kevon Gainer

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made to approve the October 12, 2022 minutes as presented.

Motion: Najiyah Lewis

Second: Kevon Gainer

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**VI. STAFF MONTHLY REPORTS**

A) Director, Don Octigan

- 1) Staff has been working on the FY24 budget for City Council to consider approval in June. City Council approved the salary true up and has impacted 92% of the department with increases in salaries. Heather and Dennis are meeting with their respected employees who have been impacted.

- 2) Mark Nottingham is not here tonight. His updates are as follows:
  - (a) Wildwood Park is on schedule with the playground and Welcome Center.
  - (b) Pump track and skills course are moving along.
    - (i) Commissioner Gainer asked if the skills course will be open to the public, and Don confirmed it will be.
  - (c) Received the PARTF Grant with more information to be shared at future meetings.
  - (d) The Town Common Bulkhead kickoff meetings have begun. Four concepts should be received in January for an internal review followed by a review from City Council at a workshop.
    - (i) Commission Darragh inquired about the longevity and Don informed him that Bulkheads typically last for 50 years, while the one at the Town Common is 55 years old. Don also informed the Commissioners that sustainability of the river and the environment is important for this project.
    - (ii) Councilmember Daniels asked about the design, Don said it could look similar.
- B) Superintendent, Heather White
  - 1) Youth Arts Festival was the last weekend of October. This partnership with Emerge and Pitt County Schools brought an estimated 3,000 people to the Town Common.
  - 2) The teen initiatives at Eppes Recreation Center are ongoing and free for the public.
  - 3) Specialized Recreation is hosting a tennis clinic with help from the ECU Women's team.
  - 4) South Greenville Recreation Center will host their Christmas Giveback and Eppes Recreation Center is partnering with HeARTascope for their Holiday event.
    - (a) Councilmember Daniels said she would love if these events can happen north of the river as well.
  - 5) Greenville Gives will be December 2<sup>nd</sup> at Five Points. This year there will be 10 nonprofits, trolley rides, Santa, snow, a vendor market, and more.
  - 6) Festival of Fright was October 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> with Movie in the Park on Friday and bounce houses, food trucks, and the haunted trail on Saturday.
    - (a) Commissioner White said he is proud of everyone's work, and we are impacting lives.
- C) Superintendent, Dennis Vestal
  - 1) There are two retirees in the Parks Department. Chris Battle with 30 years of service and Mark Dixon with 44 years of service.
  - 2) Parks assisted with Festival of Fright prepping the trails, fueling generators, fencing and more.
  - 3) Parks staff is planting flowers at several facilities to enhance more beautification efforts.
  - 4) Water aerobics is thriving, and staff is looking at hiring additional staff with more availability.
  - 5) There are 80 participants registered for swim lessons.
  - 6) The member workout challenge is ongoing and during the holiday season for a chance for members to receive a reward.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Land Donation Request
  - a. Resident would like to donate a parcel to the City for recreational purposes.
    - i. Parcel is located between Charles Blvd. and Evans St. by the Greenmill run.
    - ii. City owns small parcel for parking. SignSmith owns the parcel north of the parcel that is being requested as a potential donation.
    - iii. Parcel is 7.76 acres and \$840 per year taxes and can be donated for recreational purposes.
    - iv. Future uses:
      1. Expansion of parking
      2. Potential dog park
      3. Primitive trails and create loop through the property and reconnect back to the current greenway.
    - v. Since it is in 100-year flood plan, it would require environmental permitting.
  - b. Commissioner Aynes said this is the hidden gem of the greenway.

- B. The Recreation and Parks Commission recommends to City Council that they accept the land donation.  
Motion: Darin White  
Second: Gordon Darragh  
Motion carried unanimously among those present.
- C. 2023 Commission Schedule
  - a. Director Octigan reviewed the 2023 schedule with the Commissioners and councilmember Daniels.
  - b. The Recreation and Parks Commission approved the Schedule as is with additions coming.  
Motion: Darin White  
Second: Kevon Gainer  
Motion carried unanimously among those present.

**VIII. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS**

- A) Commissioner Gainer: Thank you for the valuable information, and even with the cold weather it is great seeing things being programmed.
- B) Commissioner Lewis: Great job for staff and excited to hear about the raises for staff. Great feedback from Facebook in the community.
- C) Commissioner Darragh: Great ideas from staff. Thank you for all the work you're doing and reaching out and stepping above and beyond.
- D) Commissioner White: Thank you for doing your part that the City is inclusive. This Department brings everyone together.
- E) Commissioner Aynes: Great to hear all the exciting things and great exposure for Greenville from NCRPA.
- F) Commissioner Sweeney: Excited to be here and to see the passion behind everyone's work.
- G) Councilmember Daniels: Thanks for everyone who came to BET for the public input meeting and staff for everything they are doing great work.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 PM.  
Motion: Darin White  
Second: Kevon Gainer  
Motion carried unanimously among those present.

Respectfully Submitted,

Courtnee McGrath  
Administrative Assistant  
Recreation and Parks Department