

Minutes of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting

February 11, 2016 Regular Meeting

The February 11, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board was convened at 7:03 pm in the Social Room of the Oak Ridge Civic Center with Alan Tatum, Chair, presiding.

Roll Call

Present: Naomi Asher, Steve Dittner, Ray Garrett, Kevin Hoyt, David Kitzmiller, Fay Martin, Dan Robbins and Alan Tatum.

Absent: Ken Rueter.

Approval of the January 14, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes for the January 14, 2016 regular meeting was made by David and seconded by Ray. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Approval of the January 30, 2016 Work Session Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 30, 2016 Work Session was made by Ray and seconded by Fay. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Appearance and Citizen Comments

Members of the Blankenship Foundation in attendance were introduced, as was Mary Lou Daugherty, representing the League of Women Voters.

Election of 2016 Officers

Ray nominated Alan to serve another term as Chair, with a second from Fay. Alan was unanimously reelected. Dan then nominated Steve as Vice Chair, with a second from Fay. Steve was elected unanimously.

Presentation by the Blankenship Field Revitalization Foundation on a Local Park and Recreation Fund (LPRF) grant application for synthetic turf for Blankenship Field

Mike Mullins, Oak Ridge Schools Athletic Director, presented on behalf of the Blankenship Field Revitalization Foundation. The Foundation requested a vote of support from the Park Board for an application for a Local Parks & Recreation Fund (LPRF) grant from the State of Tennessee. The Foundation has requested that the City apply for the grant on their behalf. A motion of support from the Park Board is required for the grant application. The grant, along with a match from the Blankenship Foundation, would be used to build a synthetic turf field at the high school football stadium. See the attached outline of the presentation. A question & answer session followed the presentation, with questions from the Board about total cost, safety and workload added to the

Recreation & Parks Department to assist with the grant application. David made a motion for a vote to support the proposal, with a second from Steve. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Work Plan – Final Reports for the 2015 Work Plan

Bell Update:

- Alan reported that the Bell Committee had a booth at the National Park Service public input meeting on the Manhattan Project National Historical Park, held February 1, 2016 at the Oak Ridge High School. At least five Park Board members were in attendance. The committee distributed a new one-page brochure, which will also be available at the NPS temporary headquarters inside AMSE.
- Alan stated that the Bell Committee continues to develop the fundraising strategy.
- He also reported that the committee continues to evaluate the timing of the project and how it can be coordinated with the development of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park. It would be very desirable to have the Bell permanently housed within walking distance of the Park headquarters, but no one knows when the location of the permanent headquarters will be determined. Some potential major donors to the project have recommended waiting on the Park Service decision.
- David asked if consideration has been given to constructing a temporary structure for the Bell. Alan said there has been discussion, but no decision has been made.

Bike/Ped Committee:

- North Ridge Trail – Ray has scheduled a hike to look at areas where the trail leaves public property. When the trail was built there was little development on the north side of the ridge, but recent development has pointed out areas where the trail was built outside the City greenbelt.
- East Fork Poplar Creek – No response yet from the City Attorney on questions about the easement agreement and no response yet from the Schools on use of the Robertsville property. The walk-through scheduled for February 27th has been postponed due to scheduling conflicts.
- Dan mentioned the upcoming 50K Tree Day event, a state-wide effort to plant 50,000 trees in one hour on Saturday, February 27th. The Oak Ridge tree planting will take place in an open area adjacent to Melton Lake Greenway and Haw Ridge Park.
- Steve added that there would be a trail building day at Haw Ridge, also on the 27th, to complete the trail around the south side of the Life Development Center. Sign-in will be at 8:30 am with trail work to begin at 9 am.
- Dan stated that he has spoken to Lance Austin about property taxes related to the abandoned CSX rail line that the City would like to convert to a rails-to-trails project.

Community Funding Opportunities Committee:

- Jon reported that brochures have been placed in distribution boxes in several locations.

Long Term Strategy/Needs Assessment:

- No Report.

Trail Stewardship:

- Steve is in the process of creating an informal coordinating committee for trail work.

Grants:

- Alan reported that the letter to Mr. Watson from the Board is ready to send.

Programming:

- Alan is continuing to work on a condensed version of the Department presentation.

Unfinished Business:

- None.

New Business:

- Kevin stated that he has contacted TWRA and they are interested in assisting with a Free Fishing Day in Oak Ridge, as he had suggested at the work session. It may not be feasible to organize for June of this year, but he will begin laying the groundwork on developing a plan for the event in the future.

Updates and Observations (Non Action Items):

- CVB – no report.
- Dan reported 800 volunteer hours from Greenways Oak Ridge in 2015. He noted that the Parks crew has been dropping hazard trees along Melton Lake Greenway and Emory Valley Greenway. He also asked about getting a new Cedar Hill greenway sign at Blankenship filed to replace the sign that disappeared when the visitor bleachers and adjacent fencing were replaced. Jon will check on the sign.
- Fay reported that the CVB is considering moving from the Wildcat Den to the Chamber of Commerce building. She stated that the buildings other tenant, the Oak Ridge Historic Preservation Association (ORHPA) cannot afford to stay in the Wildcat Den without the rent from the CVB.
- Dan reported that the PEAK Racing Series has donated proceeds from a North Ridge Trail race to local groups, including Greenways Oak Ridge.

Director's Report:

- Jon reported that the new Aquatics Manager, Vonda Wooten, began work January 19th. She has hit the ground running in her new position and is quickly working to evaluate pool operations and implement improvements.
- He also provided an update on planning for the Secret City Festival, noting that the Special Events Board had its first meeting February 4th. He also stated that the headline entertainer for Friday night has made a verbal commitment and that the Executive Committee is waiting on a signed contract. The Committee is still working to find a headline act for the Saturday show.

Future Agenda Items:

- The Board will present its annual report to the City Council at the March meeting. That meeting will be held on Monday, March 14th at 7 pm in the Municipal Building.
- Parks Division supervisor Billy Pickett and Crew Chief Wade Cordell will provide a report to the Board on the Parks Division of the department at the March Board meeting.

Fay made a motion to adjourn and Naomi seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm.

Alan Tatum

DRAFT

Blankenship Field Revitalization Foundation

Synthetic Turf Project

LPRF Grant Presentation 2/11/16

- Blankenship Revitalization Project

- Blankenship Revitalization Foundation
 - A 501(c) (3) non-profit, public benefit organization
 - Led by State Senator Randy McNally and a Board of Directors comprised of 18 other private citizens
 - Foundations sole purpose is to secure funding and oversee the renovation of Blankenship Field and Jack Armstrong Stadium
 - Completion of the Foundation's work will result in a multi-million dollar capital improvement project for the City of Oak Ridge and the Oak Ridge Schools.
 - This multi-use venue for sports, music, and community events will be an extension of the Alexander Guest House and Jackson Square projects. It will truly revitalize the area into a central gathering place that brought the world into the atomic age.

- Project Participants
 - City of Oak Ridge
 - Oak Ridge Schools
 - Blankenship Field Revitalization Foundation
 - Wildcats

- Project Progress to date
 - Replaced Visitor's Side Bleachers and Contouring of East Bank- \$500K- (ORS)
 - Contouring and Landscaping of North Bank- \$35K- (ORs) (OR Qb club)
 - Installation of Visitors Steps-\$15K- (ORS)
 - Renovation of Broadway Ave. Parking Lot-\$250K- (COR)

❑ Local Parks and Recreation Fund (LPRF) grant

- **One of the initial steps in securing the LPRF grant is for the applicant to present the project to their Parks and Recreation Board and receive a motion of support for the project.**
- LPRF is a 50%/50% matching grant funded through Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation
- Maximum Grant Award- \$250,000
- Minimum Grant Award- \$25,000
- Any county government or incorporated municipality may submit **one** LPRF grant application per cycle
- LPRF grant is awarded every two years
- LPRF Eligible Match Funds-\$200K- In-kind gifts toward the synthetic turf project. Matching funds will come from private monies
- LPRF Eligible Development Projects: Athletic Fields

❑ Current playing surface at Blankenship Field

- Hybrid Bermuda grass from Tifton, Ga. Tiftgrass. Similar to Neyland Stadium
- East Tn is at the northern most climate zone for Bermuda grass to thrive

❑ Artificial Turf vs. Synthetic Turf

- 1960's & 1970's concrete-like **Artificial Turf** (Astroturf) Green, thin carpet
- 1990's- Latest generation of **Synthetic Turf** replicates lush natural grass in appearance and function

❑ Synthetic Turf Sample

❑ Advantages of Synthetic Turf

- Lower maintenance costs \$35K vs 5K
- Pesticide Free- doesn't require treatment with pesticides and fertilizers
- Saves water- 50,000 gallons of water per week during the growing season
- Increased playability: Much more durable than grass; because playability is much higher, allow a broader access; can be played on all of the time; allow middle schools and youth organizations a venue they might not otherwise have; eliminates the problem of spring and fall rains which result in cancellation of numerous games slated for grass

- Fewer injuries; Durability and an consistent, even playing surface mean fewer injuries

❑ East Tennessee schools who have synthetic turf or who are scheduled to get it

- Kingsport Dobyys-Bennett
- Science Hill
- Greeneville
- Morristown West
- Morristown East
- Gatlinburg-Pittman
- Sevier Co.
- Northview
- Pigeon Forge
- Seymour
- Rhea Co.
- Maryville
- Alcoa
- Farragut
- Bearden
- Hardin Valley
- Karns
- Powell
- Central
- Carter
- Gibbs
- Halls
- Fulton
- South-Doyle
- Austin-East
- Webb
- Grace
- Catholic
- CAK

❑ Questions