

Minutes of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting

January 12, 2017 Regular Meeting

The January 12, 2017 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, Ray Garrett, Kevin Hoyt, David Kitzmiller and Alan Tatum

Absent: Dan Robbins, Ken Rueter

Approval of the December 8, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes for the December 8, 2016 regular meeting was made by Ray and seconded by Naomi. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Appearance and Citizen Comments

Citizens present: Mary Lou Daughtery, Brad Spears (newly elected Board member, not yet sworn in)

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

- City Blueprint – Jon Hetrick and Alan gave an overview of the upcoming City Blueprint kickoff meeting, to be held Thursday, January 26th, beginning at 4:00 pm at High Places Church in Grove Center. The City's Community Development Department, along with the Planning Commission, will hold a kick-off event to develop a new "blueprint" for future development in the City of Oak Ridge. They have invited other City Boards, including the Recreation & Parks Advisory Board, to staff tables at the event to listen to citizen comments on a variety of topics and to accept written comments for further review.
- Brad Spears reported that the Chamber of Commerce is preparing a report on residential development potential in the City. The Board discussed similar initiatives by other groups in the City, such as Explore Oak Ridge, and the need to coordinate these efforts to avoid duplication and better communicate the message. Alan mentioned discussions he has had with Marc DeRose, Explore Oak Ridge Director, about the development of a promotional video for the Recreation & Parks Department to complement the existing Department Presentation.
- Jon provided an update on the status of the rails-to-trails project, including an increase in available funding for planning and design work through the TPO grant. Because the City of Knoxville declined to move forward with their rails-to-trails projects at this time, the grant amount with match is now \$100,000. City staff are working on a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) for the planning and design work. An advisory board will be created to evaluate the RFQ responses and select a design firm. They will also participate in anticipated public input sessions on the project and assist with design approval. Jon asked that two (2) Park Board members join the advisory committee for the project.

- The Board selected Saturday, January 28th for a work session to develop the Board Work Plan for 2017. Kevin offered to host the work session at the UT Arboretum auditorium. The meeting will begin at 9 am and last approximately two (2) hours.

Board Work Plan

Bell Update:

- Alan provided a fundraising update. Donations are now at about \$600,000, including recent donations from Roane and Anderson Counties. He also stated that initial reports indicate the project will likely receive an award from the Japan Expo Grant in the \$40,000+ range.
- The fundraising committee has not yet begun to seriously solicit small businesses and families, but that effort will begin soon.
- The design proposal from Ziad Demian is being evaluated by staff and is expected to be placed on the City Council agenda for approval.
- Alan asked Kevin to schedule a meeting with Gary Menendez, Landscape Architecture instructor at the University of Tennessee, to discuss a student project to assist with planning the gardens at the Peace Bell Pavilion. Kevin agreed to contact Gary and find a couple of possible dates for a meeting.
- Alan also noted that Ray Smith has a contact with Harry Truman's grandson, who is believed to be able to provide trees from Hiroshima, Japan for the gardens.

Community and Corporate Donations Guide:

- Jon is still working getting the corporate donation guides printed.
- Naomi is evaluating what has been done to this point and evaluating the need for any updates.

Trail Development:

- Ray is continuing to work With Carol Evans, Legacy Parks Executive Director, on an easement through Wayne Clark's property for the East Fork Poplar Creek Trail. He asked for an update on the white paper he submitted for the City Mangers consideration, requesting a commitment from the City to take on management responsibilities in cooperation with Greenways Oak Ridge after the trail has been constructed. Legacy Parks would like to see that agreement in place so they can move forward with grant applications for bridges, signage, kiosks, etc. Jon will provide an update once he receives comments from the City Manager on the proposal.
- Ray has also begun working with Larry Creech to reroute sections of the North Ridge Trail that have been constructed outside of City property.
- Kevin reported that the Arboretum has opened a new trail following the utility easement for the new Arboretum. The trail will be dedicated this spring.

Clark Center Park:

- No report.

Grant Proposals and Opportunities:

- No report

Long Term Strategy/Needs Assessment:

- Alan would like the Board to take another look at the CIP in the upcoming year.

Programming Promotion:

- Kevin will be hosting a climate change lecture on January 19th from 6 – 8 pm at Roane State Community College in Oak Ridge.

National Park Service Collaboration:

- Kevin will be meeting with Niki Nicholas this month to look at programming collaborations between the Arboretum and the Park Service.
- Brad mentioned Doug Colclasure's letter to the Park Service with regard to interpretive trails, especially in the North Boundary area. There is also interest in looking at the Haw Ridge silo, which predates the Manhattan Project. Development is limited by resources, but this may provide an opportunity for collaboration.
- Kevin asked if the Park Service office would be relocated with AMSE when it moves to the Main Street development in a year. No one was able to answer that question.
- Alan asked that Jon invite Niki Nicholas to a future Park Board meeting.

UT Arboretum/City Trails Integration:

- Kevin and Jon will schedule a meeting to walk the former driving range site on Union Valley Rd and develop a plan for integrating it into an Arboretum 5K Fun Run. The Union Valley site would provide participant parking and a start/finish line area that can be linked to the Arboretum trails. Parking at the Arboretum is too limited to host the event.
- Jon has talked to Lisa Kendall with Explore Oak Ridge about helping to plan events at the site. Lisa organizes the Secret City Half Marathon, among other events.

Updates and Observations (Non Action Items):

- With Steve Dittner's departure from the Board there is a need for a new representative for the CVB Board. Naomi serves on both Boards, and was considered the natural choice to serve as the liaison. David nominated her to serve in that role, with a second from Kevin. The Board approved unanimously.
- Ray reported on plans to extend the Cumberland Trail to surrounding communities, including Oak Ridge.
- David noted that, as a citizen rather than a Board member, he plans to address City Council about non-resident fees.

Director's Report:

- See attached report.

Future Agenda Items:

None

Naomi made a motion to adjourn at 8:35 pm., with Ray seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Alan Tatum

Park Board Directors Report

- Very high level of activity for the Department right now
 - Administrative staff moved to the Scarborough Community Center.
 - Remodeling of the Civic Center by the Public Works Department is ongoing – will have to continue to work on it after the move is complete.
 - Senior Center move scheduled for January 23rd. Senior Center activities will close for the entire week while offices, equipment are set up.
 - Planning for the Badger Rd building renovations and the permanent Senior Center facility will follow the transition into the Senior Center.
 - Centers, Camps & Programs Manager Pat Sloan will be retiring in February. She has been unable to work, so Athletics Manager Matt Reedy is acting CCP Manager until a permanent hire is made.
- 8th Lane update – the retaining wall is complete. The contractor is finishing the last bank shaping and rip-rap stabilization work and prepping the walking trail base. The trail will be replaced with poured concrete over the next few weeks, as weather allows. Once the trail is complete a rail will be installed along the edge and the project will be substantially complete.
- Peace Bell – working on the proposal from demian/wilbur architects for design & engineering services while the committee continues with fundraising and collaboration on the design details.
- Secret City Festival – Secret City Celebration Chair Mike Brown made a presentation to City Council last month to accompany the Board’s request for \$50K sponsorship from the City, which Council approved. Many questions remain about the details of their plan for the event, including what level of City Services in-kind support will be requested and approved.
- Blankenship Field – LPRF Grant award letter has been received. Been spending a lot of time working with the Foundation to try to craft an RFP for the installation of the turf and running track. Additional projects include installation of a fence around the field, unspecified “trailhead improvements” for the Cedar Hill Greenway access adjacent to the visitor bleachers and construction of a restroom at the trailhead. Issues to be addressed include scheduling around graduation & the football season and properly following the formal bidding process as required by State and Federal law.
- ORHS Tennis Court Resurfacing – currently working with the Legal Department on bid documents for the resurfacing of the West side tennis courts at ORHS. Work is scheduled to take place in June 2017.
- Outdoor Pool filters – working to finalize the contract so that work can be completed by the end of March to allow time to prepare the pool for opening in May.
- Mowing Contract Rebid – Rebidding the mowing contract, which has not been out to bid for 10 years. This contract covers virtually all park and recreational facility properties (Emma Spray Garden and the Secret City Commemorative Walk are managed under a separate contract, as are the soccer game fields).
- ADA Improvements – evaluating the lists of needed ADA upgrades to prioritize and determine what can be accomplished with the available Capital Maintenance funding (\$50K).