

Minutes of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting

June 16, 2016 Regular Meeting

The June 16, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board was convened at 7:02 pm in the Social Room of the Oak Ridge Civic Center with Alan Tatum, Chair, presiding.

Roll Call

Present: Steve Dittner, Ray Garrett, Fay Martin, Dan Robbins, Ken Rueter and Alan Tatum.

Absent: Naomi Asher, Kevin Hoyt, and David Kitzmiller.

Approval of the April 14, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes

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

Appearance and Citizen Comments

Doug Colclasure provided a positive review of the recent 2016 Secret City Festival.

Department Presentation

Senior Center – Linda McGhee, Senior Center Manager, provided an overview of Senior Center operations and programming to the Board.

Unfinished Business

Consideration of a letter of support for the Gallaher Bend Trails initiative. Ken reported that he and Carol Evans (Legacy Parks Executive Director) had met with John Shewairy of DOE to discuss the proposed trail network that Ken presented to the Board at the April meeting. Ken noted that the two design teams had proposed a mix of hand built and machine built trails that would offer a diversity of trails for riders of every skill level. The new trails would allow Oak Ridge to offer over 100 miles of trails within the City limits. Currently, only a few cities in the United States provide that kind of mileage. Mr. Shewairy was receptive to the proposal and said that he would forward it on with a request for a license agreement between DOE and Legacy Parks. Ken also talked about a meeting with Randy Boyd, State of Tennessee Economic Development Commissioner. Mr. Boyd told Ken that there may be tourism grant funding available for the machine built trails, pending a license agreement. Ms. Evans has also told Ken she is confident about Legacy Parks ability to fundraise for the project.

Overall, DOE was more receptive to the proposal than had been anticipated. The work on the Sinkhole trail had mitigated environmental concerns. The biggest concern is actually the proximity of the proposed trails to the DOE security line – the project will require a security assessment.

Ken anticipates a response from DOE some time over the summer. He discussed the value of the letter of support from the Park Board when DOE evaluated the Sinkhole Trail request and asked that the Board provide a similar letter of support for the Gallaher Bend initiative. Steve then presented a revision of the draft letter Ken sent to the Board previously. Dan made a motion to approve the letter and Ray seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to provide the letter of recommendation as drafted by Steve.

Ken then went on to report that the discussion with John Shewairy shifted to Clark Center Park. Mr. Shewairy asked Ms. Evans about a possibility of Legacy Parks engaging in a public/private partnership to shift operation of the park to another entity. DOE is no longer able to fund the park operation with its congressional appropriation. They discussed the possibility of Legacy Parks assisting with funding of capital improvements, citing examples of other parks where Legacy has done similar work, like IC King Park in Knox County. Ken then requested that Carol Evans be invited to the July meeting of the Park Board to discuss what Legacy Parks has done elsewhere and what they might be able to do for Clark Center Park. Alan noted that the key to the transfer is to identify a public entity that is able to take on the management of the park.

Dan made a motion that the Preschool site recommendation passed by the Board in April be sent on to City Council and the City Manager. Ken seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Alan will email the recommendation to them.

New Business

None

Board Work Plan

Bell Update:

- Alan - The Bell Committee had a busy booth at the Secret City Festival, with a few donations collected.
- Alan met with Niki Nicholas, acting Superintendent of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park (MPNHP) to discuss the integration of the Bell into the National Park. She told him that the Park Service loves the Bell and is very receptive to its inclusion in the Park. Alan also discussed the reasons behind the delays in progress on the Bell project, including the ongoing discussion of its role in the Park.
- Alan - Fundraising activities are ongoing. The committee hopes to have \$400K committed by major donors when the public fundraising campaign kicks off in October.
- A discussion followed about the physical location of the Bell. It will probably remain in AK Bissell Park due to the uncertainty about plans for the permanent Park headquarters.

Community and Corporate Donations Guide:

- No report

Trail Development:

- Ray – Held a National Trails Day volunteer work day on the North Ridge Trail, with an after-party at Ray's.
- Ray had a meeting scheduled with Carol Evans to discuss the questions posed by a property owner with regard to an easement for the East Fork Poplar Creek trail, but the meeting was postponed.
- Dan asked about the status of the rails-to-trails project. Jon replied that the regional Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) had agreed to provide 80% funding for a master plan for the project. The project has also been added to the TDOT 2040 Mobility Plan, which is the first step in qualifying for Federal transportation funding in the future. There was continued discussion of the utility property tax valuation for the property, which has yet to be determined.

Clark Center Park:

- No report.

Grant Proposals and Opportunities:

- Jon reported that the City was trying to put together an application for a Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program (TAEP) grant for tree planning.

Long Term Strategy/Needs Assessment:

- City Council has approved Capital Maintenance funding for the outdoor pool filters.

Programming Promotion:

- No report.

National Park Service Collaboration:

- Niki Nicholas spoke to Breakfast Rotary about partnerships with the NPS. Dan spoke to her after and she agreed to allow him to drop off greenway brochures at the temporary Park Headquarters. Steve noted that Clark Center Park was a perfect match for the NPS due to its historical significance with DOE. Dan noted that the outdoor pool is also part of that history.

UT Arboretum/City Trails Integration:

- No report.

Updates and Observations (Non Action Items):

- CVB – The Board discussed the Secret City Festival. Overall concert attendance was not as high as last year, but still very strong. The CVB (Explore Oak Ridge) offices will be moving to the Chamber of Commerce building in July. Heads-in-beds numbers are up 12% year-on, compared to a 1% goal.
- Oak Ridge Rowing Association (ORRA) – Scheduling the upcoming spring season, aggressively pursuing regattas.
- Bids for the 8th Lane project came in far beyond engineering estimates. The bids were rejected.

- Dan provided an update on bluebird houses along greenway, encouraged Board members to adopt trees planted during 50K Tree Day and reported that he has found only 7 fire ant mounds this year, vs 40 last year.
- Ken noted the success of the night race held in Bissell Park a few weeks ago.

Director's Report:

- Secret City Festival was a great success. Everyone involved did a great job, worked very hard and put on a terrific event. Next year's Festival will be planned and executed by the new Festival non-profit board created by City Council.

Future Agenda Items:

- Legacy Parks Executive Director Carol Evans will speak with the Board about the ways that Legacy Parks assists other entities with the acquisition and improvement of park land.

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

Alan Tatum

Mr. David Buhaly
Branch Chief, Reservation Management
Department of Energy, Oak Ridge Office
P.O. Box 2001
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

Dear Mr. Buhaly:

Recently the Oak Ridge Recreation and Parks Advisory Board met with the Legacy Parks Foundation regarding their proposal to the Department of Energy Oak Ridge Reservation, requesting a trail use easement or agreement on the Gallaher Bend/Bull Bluff Park and greenway area. We have concluded that the Legacy Parks Foundation Regional initiatives complement our community's land recreation and conservation vision and further enable the preservation of forest and natural areas in the City of Oak Ridge. Furthermore, we believe that given the proximity of the Clark Center Park within the Oak Ridge city boundaries, the proposed trail additions to the Bull Bluff Greenway area could further enhance the beauty and value of the surrounding property. This proposed project, coupled with the Clark Center Park features and the City of Oak Ridge's trails, greenways, arboretum, and bird sanctuary areas, will further help position East Tennessee and the City of Oak Ridge as an outdoor recreation destination.

Thus, on behalf of the Oak Ridge Recreation and Parks Board, we fully endorse and encourage the Department of Energy to grant the Gallaher Bend land parcel use agreement to the Legacy Park Foundation, enabling a multi-use trail network project.

Sincerely,

Alan Tatum

City of Oak Ridge

Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Chair

C: Carol Evans, Legacy Parks Foundation

John Shewairy, Department of Energy