

APPROVED

Minutes of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting

June 7, 2012 Regular Meeting

The June 7, 2012 Regular Meeting of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board was convened at 7:03pm in the Social Room of the Recreation Center with Gerry Palau, Board Chair presiding.

Roll Call

Members present included: Sherith Colverson, Bob Cushman, Bridgette Ellis, Gerry Palau, Laurel Patrick and Dan Robbins. Absent were Frank Chmielewicz, Allen Eubanks and Cathy Toth.

Approval of the May 10, 2012 Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the May 10, 2012 minutes was made by Bridgette Ellis and seconded by Sherith Colverson. The minutes were approved by a 6-0 vote.

Appearance and Citizen Comments

No one addressed the Board.

Committee Reports

Bike/Ped Committee- Sherith Colverson

Sherith Colverson discussed the overlap between the Bike/Ped Committee and the Traffic Safety Advisory Board. Both groups are dealing with intersection improvements, sidewalks and implementation of the City Council approved Bike and Ped Plan. The committee also wants to work closer with TSAB to establish a City position with respect to cell phone usage by motor vehicle drivers. Sherith was asking for input from the Board on how to proceed. Sherith expressed the desire to establish a more formal connection between TSAB and the Bike/Ped Committee.

Two options were discussed: 1) ask City Council to expand TSAB to include a seat for a Park Board representative or start attending TSAB meeting; and 2) getting minutes/agendas and participating in discussions as relevant topics arise. Since the TSAB meetings are open to the public, attending meetings and participating in discussions could be a good informal way to engage more actively in communications – and it would not require any formal actions by City Council. Josh Collins encouraged Sherith to contact Steve Byrd, City Engineer/TSAB Staff Liaison, to establish a source of information on upcoming agenda items of interest to the Committee.

Sherith reminded the Board that the Bike/Ped Committee does not intend to be an event sponsor or planning group. They do not want to be organizing bike events in the City – though the group's membership may actively participate with other organizations that are organizing events.

Dog Park Committee- Bridgette Ellis

Bridgette Ellis encouraged the Board to go on line and vote for Oak Ridge on the Pet Safe web site. One city will receive \$100,000 and two cities will receive \$25,000 apiece toward the construction of a Dog Park. City Council will have a resolution on Monday's agenda supporting the Dog Park. The City is pledging land and support for a dog park at Big Turtle Park. About 550 votes have been cast. Bridgette encouraged Board members to email the web link to friends and vote for Oak Ridge.

The committee has now heard from three benchmarked cities regarding dog park operations. Recreation and Parks Department staff sent inquiries to Rec and Parks Departments in the state asking about dog parks. Nine municipal departments with dog parks responded to the initial inquiry. A more detailed inquiry was sent to gather information on operation and construction of the parks. Three cities sent detailed information and offered to answer additional questions. The online survey will be taken down in late June. With the help of these dog park cities, the committee now has a set of realistic rules that have been successful in other cities that should work in Oak Ridge as well.

Work Plan Deliverables

Chairman Palau discussed the Board's progress on the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Work Plan Dashboard (see attached) and highlighted several items including the Master Plan for the Waterfront (1-B), the recently completed Dog Park Benchmarking (2-A) and Laurel Patrick's outstanding article on the Melton Lake Greenway IV is an example of Positive Press Opportunities (8-A). Based on the FY 2013 Capital Projects Budget, funding for the proposed waterfront master plan appears in question. Although funding the master plan out of the Recreation and Parks Department General Fund Budget was suggested several months ago, this option was eliminated when savings from staff turnover was applied to the cost for pavilion amenities. The master plan will be discussed in more detail at a future meeting.

Dan Robbins noted that the new flashing sign at the Riverside Grille is not consistent with his understanding of the theme and ambiance that the Board would prefer for future waterfront development. Gerry Palau noted that since the current sign apparently meets the City zoning and signage ordinance requirements, the current sign doesn't fall directly within the Parks Board purview; however, as part of future waterfront master planning, the Board is certainly at liberty to propose changes to the current signage standards as a way to encourage future

waterfront development that's more consistent with a community recreation and parks ambiance.

Unfinished Business

Haw Ridge Use Policy

The Board reviewed comments from the "Meet the Board" open house session held prior to the start of the regular meeting. Approximately 20 people attended the open house session including two City Council members, several people who identified themselves as members of the biking community, one runner, and one horse rider, It was noted that despite fairly extensive efforts by staff to engage the horse riding community to attend the session, the member of the horse riding community who did attend noted that people she also contact did not seem to have significant interest in attending the open house.

Other noted comments from the open house session included:

- a race organizer who mentioned "encountering more horses on Haw Ridge while running during wet conditions."
- the member of a local riding club who mentioned using Haw Ridge as often as twice per week to exercise her horse. She also recognized that the trails currently considered suitable for horse use (the two-track, former motorized vehicle trails) represented only 4-5 miles of trail, and were not sufficient for people who want to do a half-day or day ride, or have to pull their horse trailers a significant distance; at best, these trails were mostly suitable for local riders who want to give their horse a brief workout.
- The mountain biking community provided several examples of concerns associated with trail damage from inappropriate trail use by horse rider, horse defecation on trails and in public parking areas, concerns by the Friends of Haw Ridge structural engineer who designs the wooden trail bridges per the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) trail development standards and who has indicated these bridges are not designed to safely withstand the dynamic loading from 1200-1500 pound horses.

In response to the discussion of feedback that Parks Board members received during the open house, Steve Dittner, President of Friends of Haw Ridge mentioned while the Friends group encourages bikers to stay off the trails during inclement weather conditions, horses have less competition and think they can ride all the trails during wet weather.

Ruth Young mentioned hiking at Haw Ridge and noticing how horses have destroyed some of the trails. The horse owners need to consider the damage they are causing to the trails. Greenways Oak Ridge's position, according to Dan Robbins, Board member and chair of the organization, is to ban horses on Haw Ridge trails.

Bob Cushman questioned whether horses could again have access to the North Boundary Greenway? Josh Collins reviewed discussions with DOE prior to the granting of a license

agreement for establishment of the trail. DOE banned horses due to the liability exposure, trail damage, parking and sanitary conditions.

Laurel Patrick mentioned comments from several of her horse contacts she's had outside the open house regarding how Haw Ridge was not designed for horses and was not a favorite place for them to ride.

Laurel Patrick made a motion for an interim suspension of horse riding at Haw Ridge Park until all the communities of users (horse riders, mountain bikers, hikers, runners, etc.) and the City staff can develop a mutually acceptable construct within which safe, effective and environmentally appropriate use of the park by horse riders can coexist with the other park uses in a manner that reduces safety concerns, trail degradation, and sanitation problems. Dan Robbins seconded the motion. During discussion, Sherith Colverson expressed her discomfort at the idea of banning horses in one action of the Board. She wanted more time to decide. Bridgette Ellis wanted to provide the horse community an additional period of time (~3-4 months) to come together and propose an alternative that would not require a permanent moratorium on horse riding at Haw Ridge. Board members reviewed several options to total banning of horses.

Steve Dittner encouraged the Board to consider suspending horse riding until the horse owners put in the time and effort to build horse trails on Haw Ridge.

The motion was approved on a 4-1-1 vote.

New Business

No new business.

Director's Report

Josh Collins gave an update on the planning effort for Secret City Festival June 15/16, the contract award for construction of the Pavilion, Graduation Celebration, the Melton Lake Greenway IV Dedication and the Greenway Run on June 17(see attached).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27pm.



Recreation & Parks Advisory Board Work Plan Dashboard

= Going well
 = Area of concern
 = In Trouble
 = COMPLETE!

Status	Action / Project	Lead	Target Date	Comments
	1) Re-design and configure the boathouse area along Melton Lake Drive to insure the placement and construction of a new Pavilion donated by UT-Battelle as a linchpin project of the Melton Lake riverfront.			
	a) Support construction and commissioning of new pavilion with reviews/consultation as requested by R&PD		September 2012	
	b) Evolve the Master Plan with available resources (ongoing as resources permit – minimum a written report)		December 2012	Little progress to date; Josh's discretionary funding reduced.
	c) Define a proposed plan for future executable projects (scope, cost estimates, coordination/integration, and ROM schedule		December 2012	
	d) Help staff address existing buildings repurposing/refurbishing with recommendation based on options and ROM cost estimates		October 2012	
	2) Begin planning process and community involvement process for the first Dog Park in Oak Ridge and obtain necessary approvals and recommending budgetary capital levels.			
	a) Benchmark comparable facilities – 1-2 page synopsis		June 2012	COMPLETE!
	b) Identify Oak Ridge community user needs & preferences		September 2012	
	c) Define preferred facility infrastructure		October 2012	
	d) Identify operational controls, ordinances, licensing, user permits, etc.		October 2012	
	e) Propose implementation schedule for construction in light of grants and CIP process		December 2012	

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	3) Incorporate the Bike-Pedestrian Plan premises into all Parks facilities			
	a) Inventory of the proposed bike rack locations for appropriate space and placement ()		March 2012	COMPLETE!
	b) Heart of Oak Ridge corridor and spot location enhancement recommendations; follow-on analysis of optimal ways to segment CSX rail-to-trail project into manageable chunks based on highest & best use of limited funding resources over time.		August 2012	
	c) "TOP 10" list of potential funding sources for 2012 – 2014, for each of the integrated project spot location and corridor projects		October 2012	
	d) Most relevant measure for City of Oak Ridge to make in terms of bicycle and pedestrian friendly policy/procedure (white paper)		August 2012	
	4) Develop planning for Playful City USA designation and integrate public input into community recreational events (i.e. Secret City, Earth Day, concerts, etc.)			
	a) Assist staff in inventory/map play spaces and evaluate play policies		March 2012	COMPLETE!
	b) Assist staff in submittal of Playful City USA application		March 2012	COMPLETE!
	c) Gap analysis in areas of weakness, including feedback from Playful City USA application process; determine priorities needs to enhance Playful City USA posture)		December 2012	COMPLETE!
	5) NEEDS ASSESSMENT: Identify the long-term community needs/investments beyond Council's four tactical initiatives. This is an ongoing,			



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	evolutionary process that helps define mission and vision a) Quarterly open house-style availability sessions (e.g., topics such athletic facilities/programs; parks; human-powered; individual activities (hiking, etc.), city programming		Quarterly	
	b) Working draft of needs assessment (~10 page report for CY-2012) including a spreadsheet containing key data			
	NEEDS ASSESSMENT: Evaluate the current recreation & parks mission & vision a) Consider R&P mission statement; is it to provide a diversity of quality community recreation opportunities for citizens and guests to the city?			
	b) Consider the 5, 10, and 20 year vision for R&P (25 years ago the city's R&P vision was to develop a park system, and resources were focused on that			
	6) Establish a methodology to prioritize projects a) Research 'community ROI' benchmarks in other communities b) Establish 5-10 metrics that would help quantify the costs and value added of CIP investments			
	7) FUNDING FOR GROWTH & IMPROVEMENT a) Develop a menu of 'funding mechanisms'			
	8) INCREASE COMMUNITY SATISFACTION LEVELS & PUBLIC REALIIONS a) Create 10+ new, positive press opportunities b) Identify and target getting on agendas of 3 community groups' meetings			

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	9) Maintain a backlog list of potential of ideas for CY2013 arks Board initiatives that are low/no cost			

= Going well = Area of concern = In Trouble = COMPLETE!

