

Minutes of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting

March 11, 2021 Regular Meeting

The March 11, 2021 meeting of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board was convened at 7:00 pm in the Large Meeting Room at the Oak Ridge Senior Center.

Roll Call

Present: Mark Cantrell, Jake Greear, David Kitzmiller, Kelly McCampbell, Melissa McMahan, Dan Robbins, Brad Spears, Michele Thornton

Absent: Chris Melhorn

Approval of the December 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve: David; second: Michelle. The December 10, 2020 meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Appearance and Citizen Comments

- Doug Colclasure, Greenways Oak Ridge, shared photos of a Poplar Creek cleanup effort from February, 2020. He expressed a desire to have the "City Healthy Waters" crew conduct further cleanup of the creek.
- Several citizens in attendance expressed interest in the outdoor pool planning.
- City Council member Ellen Smith reported that she is looking into opportunities to use recently approved Federal COVID relief funding that the City will be receiving.

Updates and Observations (Non Action Items):

- None.

New Business

- Election of Officers:
 - Chairman: Dan Robbins nominated Brad Spears; Michele Thornton nominated Jake Greear. Jake was elected Chairman in the first round of voting.
 - Vice-Chairman: Brad Spears nominated David Kitzmiller; Michele Thornton nominated Brad Spears. David was re-elected Vice-Chairman in the first round of voting.
 - Secretary/Treasurer: The staff representative will continue to fulfill those duties.
- Work Plan Discussion: Staff representative Jon Hetrick suggested the Board consider moving the work plan development work session to the mid-year (June/July) timeframe. This would allow Board members newly elected in January an opportunity to learn more about the Board before engaging in work plan development. The Board generally agreed, though no formal vote was taken.
- David made a motion to amend the current Board Work Plan to clarify the objectives of the Outdoor Swimming Pool item. Michele seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Brad will draft an amendment to the work plan for Board review.

Unfinished Business

- None.

Board Work Plan

Rails to Trails:

- Right of Way plans are under review by TDOT; the City's design contractor, AMT, is addressing comments as they are received.
- Right of Way plans have also undergone site review by City staff; AMT is finalizing responses to comments from staff.
- Staff hope to be able to schedule a public input session soon. It will likely be modeled after the recent Gateway Project public input sessions, which were done entirely online to address COVID safety concerns about public gatherings.
- Doug Colclasure noted that a group of University of Tennessee Engineering students is working with City staff to development plans to improve bike & pedestrian access from the proposed greenway to Jefferson Middle School. This study is part of their Senior Design program.

Blueway Development:

- Jake is serving on the Roane County Tennessee Riverline 652 project focus team. While this project primarily focuses on recreational development along the Tennessee River, there will probably be opportunities to look at additional development along tributaries like the Clinch River and Poplar Creek.

West BORCE Resolution:

- No report

Oak Ridge Outdoor Swimming Pool:

- In May, Aquatics Manager Vonda Wooten is planning to request Board review and comment on a user survey she is developing for pool attendees. The survey will gather information about their views on pool renovation/replacement. She will also provide the Board with an overview of what it takes to prepare the pool to open every year.

City Position & Policy on E-Bikes:

- Michele shared information she found on TN state law regarding E-bikes. Jon Hetrick added that he received information at a recent Regional Greenways Council meeting, indicating that TN state law requires that class I & II E-bikes be allowed on any trails where bikes are permitted. Other Board members expressed concerns about E-skateboards and E-scooters, which are more recent developments. Dan expressed concern about the speeds of some riders on "regular" (non-assisted) bikes on the greenways.

Parks & Recreation Stewardship, Maintenance and Trail Development:

- CVTA has new project underway to install name signs on all Haw Ridge trails. The signs may also incorporate coordinates for emergency response.
- Planning is underway for a Poplar Creek work day along East Fork Riparian Trail.
 - Concerns have been expressed about liability due to pollution exposure.
 - Ellen Smith advised that the element of concern, mercury, is in the flood plain soils, rather than the creek bed.
- Dan expressed concerns about the ongoing TVA substation construction project adjacent to a portion of Melton Lake Greenway.

- David noted that there was discussion at the recent City Council meeting of a new conservation easement on Pine Ridge, with fifty (50) acres proposed for donation to the Legacy Parks Foundation. It's unclear who would ultimately be responsible for long-term management of the conservation easement.

CIP Review:

- Jon Hetrick will send the current Planning Commission CIP recommendation to the Board for review.
- The Board discussed the process and schedule for evaluating input into the Recreation & Parks CIP process for the next fiscal cycle.
- The Board will review the issue further at the planned summer work session.

Secondary Objectives:

- Velodrome
 - Brad reported that the project appears to be "dead on arrival". He recommended it be struck from the next Board work plan.
- Community Events
 - Upcoming events include the Louisville Cardinal Invitational Regatta, this coming weekend; Egg Hunt (March 27th); Graduation Celebration (May 27th); USA Cycling Time Trails (June 17th); Summer Camp (June & July)
 - Dan reported that the shoreline cleanup along Melton Lake is scheduled for March 27th. He also made a plea for subscriptions to the Oak Ridger to save the newspaper.
- Development Opportunities for Disc Golf & Soccer on Tuskegee Dr. Parcels
 - Jake noted the booming popularity of disc golf and the Mounds course in particular. Jon Hetrick discussed the challenges of maintaining consistent communication with user groups to facilitate course development.

Director's Report:

- Jon reported that Arbor Day would be celebrated the following day, March 12th, at Linden Elementary School.

Future Agenda Items:

- Pool user survey review and pool opening overview (May)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 PM.

Jake Greear
Chairman