

Minutes of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting

March 10, 2022 Regular Meeting

The March 10, 2022 meeting of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board was convened at 7:00 pm in the Oak Ridge Recreation Center Social Room with Chairman Jake Greear presiding.

Roll Call

Present: Mark Cantrell, Jake Greear, Alissa Jones, Kelly McCampbell, Melissa McMahan, Chris Melhorn, Dan Robbins

Absent: Brad Spears, Michele Thornton

Also Present: Jon Hetrick, Recreation & Parks Director, staff liaison

Approval of the January 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve: Dan Robbins; second: Kelly McCampbell. Dan made a motion to amend the language in the second-to-last and last bullets under "North Boundary Greenway"; the motion was approved unanimously. The amended January 13, 2022 meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Board Work Plan

Oak Ridge Swimming Pool:

- Jon Hetrick reported no progress on planning a public input meeting on the project. Planning will be discussed further at the April Park Board meeting.
- City staff are currently reviewing a revised survey, expected to be distributed soon. Chris Melhorn recommended that the public input session be held after results from the survey were available.
- Jon Hetrick reported that lifeguard staffing challenges continue to be a concern, with few returning guards expected this summer. Recruiting continues; in the meanwhile staff are preparing the pool for reopening.

North Boundary Greenway:

- Dan reported that the Horizon Center power line was discussed at the most recent City Council Work Session. Dan then requested that the motion on the subject passed by the Board in January be formally submitted to the City Manager, City Council and the Planning Commission. Jake Greear pointed that the Park Board's role is that of an advisory board to the City Manager and City Council, not to other organizations. The Board then discussed the appropriate distribution process. Jake will work with staff liaison Jon Hetrick to complete the distribution.

Greenway System:

- Rails to Trails Project
 - Jon Hetrick reported that the project engineers with AMT met with the City's floodplain manager to develop a plan to resolve the outstanding issues related to the Ernie's Creek hydrology. It was determined during that meeting that AMT has yet to receive a response from TDOT to the submittals regarding crosswalk ADA compliance, so that issue remains outstanding.

- Greenway Master Plan Support
 - Jon Hetrick provided an overview of the project to revise the City's Comprehensive Plan, recently initiated by the City Planning & Development Department and the Planning Commission. Future transportation and recreation needs, including greenways, will be included in the revised plan. The Knoxville TPO has submitted a draft concept plan for greenway connections across the city, which will be presented at a Comprehensive Plan work session after staff review.
- Roadside Safety Evaluations and Advocacy
 - Dan Robbins requested that the white fiberglass delineators that are missing along Melton Lake Greenway at the pull-off south of Calhoun's be replaced for pedestrian safety. Jon Hetrick responded that the flexible delineators were not intended to provide a physical barricade for pedestrians, but were installed to discourage vehicles from parking on the greenway when using the pull-off as a parking area. Jake Greear asked if there were white lines at the edge of pavement; Jon Hetrick responded that he was not sure, but he would look into it. Dan Robbins then requested that boulders be placed along the edge of the roadway, between the road and the greenway. Some boulders had been there previously, but had been removed. Mark Cantrell pointed out that the boulders would provide a danger to drivers and a liability to the City.

Blueways Initiative

- Jake Greear asked if there were any updates on the transfer of Clark Center Park to TWRA. Jon Hetrick responded that it was expected to be a multi-year process. The recently signed Letter of Intent between DOE and TWRA was just the first step.
- Dan Robbins reported that the annual draw-down of Melton Hill Lake would take place in April. Greenways Oak Ridge will organize a cleanup effort. Dan Robbins will distribute the date to the group when he has it.

Parks & Recreation Stewardship, Maintenance and Trail Development:

- No report.

Secondary Objectives:

- Community Events
 - Jon Hetrick reported that the City Egg Hunt would take place April 9th. He also provided a brief update on Graduation Celebration planning.
 - Dan Robbins reported that he would be leading bird walks for ORICL again this year and he encouraged everyone to sign up.
 - Jon Hetrick also reported that the department had received a special event application for a Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA) tournament at the Mounds course at Groves Park.
- Development Opportunities for Disc Golf & Soccer on Tuskegee Dr.
 - No report

Unfinished Business

- None.

New Business

- Peace Bell Funding Resolution: Dan Robbins made a motion for the Board to support Pat Postma's request (at the January Park Board meeting) that \$40,000 be added to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to provide matching funds for proposed additional work at the Peace Bell pavilion. After discussion, the motion was restated as "The Recreation & Parks Advisory Board endorses the proposed scope of work for completion of the Peace Bell Pavilion Project." The motion passed unanimously.

- Ray Evans, an economic development consultant to the City, provided an overview of conceptual plans to develop a conference center at the Oak Ridge Civic Center.

Appearance and Citizen Comments

- Roger Macklin introduced himself as the co-VP of Greenways Oak Ridge (GWOR) and citizen representative to the Great Smoky Mountains Greenway Council.
- Doug Colclasure requested that the Park Board develop a plan for trail development in the BORCE and he provided an overview of surrounding trails systems. He then reported that CVTA had recently funded \$12,000 worth of professional trail work at Haw Ridge Park, concluding with a discussion of potential economic benefits of trail development.

Updates and Observations (Non Action Items):

- Dan provided an update on the bluebird boxes GWOR has installed on Melton Lake Greenway. He noted that some have signs on them indicating they are owned by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), but it's unclear why those signs have been installed. Roger Macklin, who works for TDEC, volunteered to try to find out more. Dan also reported finding 18 fire ant nests this year to date.

Director's Report:

- Seth Rodgers has been hired to fill the Manager position at the Recreation Center. Most recently Seth worked with the City of Pigeon Forge; he brings extensive experience in recreation management to the position.

Future Agenda Items:

- Scheduling a work session in June or July to develop a new work plan.
- Board officer elections in April.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 PM.



Jake Greear
Chairperson