

**Minutes of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting
November 9, 2023 Regular Meeting**

The November 9, 2023 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.

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Present: Jake Greear, Doug Bataille, Terri Daugherty, Michele Thornton, Ann Miller, Dan Robbins, Alissa Jones, Kelly McCampbell

Absent: Chris Melhorn

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

Also Absent: Seth Rodgers, Recreation & Parks, Special Projects, staff liaison

3. Approval of November 9th Agenda

No change to agenda order.

Agenda approved.

4. Approval of October 2023 Meeting Minutes

Approved as drafted/printed (unanimous).

5. Officer reports: None.

6. Committee Reports / Board Work Plan:

• **Oak Ridge Pool**

- The geotechnical report is in. Jon says we had a meeting with the consultants. It was really pretty positive. It's not any greater risk of a sink hole than anywhere else in TN. But there is high level saturation. They are coming up with three concepts to present, hoping to do that in January. They'll incorporate estimated costs.
- Michele – was survey to see mostly if you could identify serious issues, or something regarding where the water is going. Jon – they did coring, to check saturation. Didn't find any cavities which was what we were afraid there could be, but there was not any evidence of that based on the coring's they did. So that was a good result. The results are pretty encouraging. Michele – are four holes enough. Jon – they did electrode imaging, where they set up grids, that

are representative of the entire area under the pool and adjacent to the pool. Coring locations were selected based on that data. Ann – question about under the pool vs. adjacent. Jon said that data is in the report, he's not sure of the specifics. Jake may be able to decipher it.

- Survey has closed. Waiting to get feedback.
- When they do a coring, they actually put up a section from under the pool, and you can see the content. Once they hit rock under it then they go to another spot to drill.

- **CIPs Review**

- Planning dept. that oversees CIP development has opened up the portal for next year. Jon and Seth are reevaluating Rec and Parks CIP and will bring it back to the Advisory board. There are a lot of projects that are not on the CIP, and there are place holder items. Will include some of those, so they show up as having been on the CIP.

- **North Boundary Greenway**

- Jon has heard that there is a new development plan for Horizon Center parcel 7, which the NBG goes through. They don't expect the trail to be impacted. Jon's understanding is that whatever the development is, it doesn't require the entire parcel to be developed.
- The footprint that they're using shouldn't interfere with greenway.

- **Greenway System**

- Nothing new right now
- New City Manager started last week. He's been scheduling meetings with all senior department heads.
- Jon and City Manager had about an hour meeting yesterday. This evening they had a swearing in ceremony. Jon thinks he is very much on board, so that should help with funding for the Greenway plan. He requested a full day to tour the park system. Doug B - City Manager spent a significant amount of time talking with him and Jon about the Greenways and a master plan for the Greenway.
- Michele- TCWP signs for the North Ridge Trail – are those installed? Jon – yes.
- Michele – anything to report on renaming of North Ridge Trail? Jon – no, not yet. Not sure if City Council or City Manager would have to approve. Not sure if we have a formal policy. Typically for a larger thing like a building, it would go to the City Council. But for smaller things, they usually go to the City Manager. Michele – it went through a formal designation. Jon – National Recreational Trail. Michele – when that happens, would like to get the science division from the lab involved. Jon – may also involve changing the signage on the trail. Michele – maybe an adjacent sign; lab may be interested in sponsoring that.

- **Parks & Rec Stewardship, Maintenance and Trail development**
 - Dan – inquiry re friendship bell. Jon- not sure about who cleans bronze bells. That's the primary maintenance thing that needs to be done. The person that was previously suggested by a community member will not work out, because that business doesn't carry liability or workers comp insurance, which is an issue that prevents the City from contracting with them. Jake – need to brainstorm who can clean the bell.
- **Secondary & Long-Term Objectives**
 - Facilitating community events.
 - Halloween' - Oct. 27th at the Civic Center. Had about 2,500 people. There was a fun costume contest, Jon was one of the judges. Great turn out. Weather was fantastic. It was a very good event. Parking wasn't bad, some of the Parks guys were directing traffic. Tweaks for next year – two big displays at the entrance, kind of created some back up. Next year need to move them apart a little, maybe move one further down the trail. Some long lines at the hayrides and the restrooms. Parks and Rec staff worked hard and staff from other depts. It was very successful.
 - Tree lighting ceremony –
 1. Melissa was involved in sponsoring last year. Jon showed a draft of the press release. Jake will get in touch with Melissa about making plaques for awards and about Y-12 sponsoring. If Y-12 doesn't do it, then it would fall back to us to organize.
 2. **Volunteers to man the hot chocolate table- Ann, Ali, Kelly, Terri**
 - The parade is Saturday the 9th.
 - Rails to trails
 - Jon- TDOT currently has several openings right now and have not replaced our point of contact. New City Manager is on board with trying to help get things moving with them.
 - Advisory support for conference center design
 - They ran into a few hiccups and are a little behind right now. Had to re-do a few things. Working on slabs for the floor. Structural steel is ready to be delivered. Working on electrical infrastructure. Putting door in the kitchen, so you can go straight down the hall to the conference center without having to go through the social room.
 - Plaza – UT students had a public forum a few weeks ago. Had about 17 people show up and provide comments. Will have another meeting in a few weeks -Monday the 20th at 4 pm. Weather permitting will be on the plaza.
 - Support Melton Lake bridge preliminary design
 - Nothing new
 - Support continued development of the peace bell pavilion

- Still looking to find a shed for storage.
- Seth and Billy Pickett, the parks manager, are still looking.
- Explore opportunities for the continued development of disc golf.
 - Continuing to work. Taking longer than expected, but the volunteers are continuing to plug away. The Parks crew are helping when they need to remove big trees.
 - ORHS Cross Country team had a fundraiser at the course.
 - The disc golf club recently had a glow disc fundraiser. Jake went and it was really cool and fun. Jon – they had about 73 players. The pre-registered people were already higher than it was last year, and they had additional people showing up.
- Support Blueways initiatives
 - Now have a mission statement and a new name: Pellissippi Blueway. Next meeting is Nov. 14th from 1-4, in the Social Room at OR Civic Center. There are three committees: access, organization, and publicity. Some of the missions – providing access to clean water, history and local treasures, way finding. A lot of the groups doing this are setting up signage. Providing opportunities to let the public know that it exists. Promoting destinations along the route. Maybe trying to get grants to set up more camping areas. There are places across the river that are convenient places to stop. May end up piggy backing off the river line data for mapping. Our board could help by providing volunteer opportunities or going to the city counsel for requests. Supporting kayak launches. (This is also a CIP item). Part of what has to be done for a blueway is having launch points and points to take out. And would be good to have more kayak launches that aren't near boat ramps and boat traffic. The Solway boat ramp is maintained by the city, but the city has to get permits to do work on them. Question of whether to send a letter to city counsel saying the board support the Blueway initiative. Jon suggests waiting until we have something a little more concrete to request, especially if we are requesting financial support for the Blueways initiative.

7. Unfinished business:

- Parks and Rec annual achievement award.
 - Nominees:
 - Tracy Crossno
 - Youth athletics. Athletics director for Girl's Inc.
 - Rec League Softball Umpires
 - Games after work hours – four
 - Joe Passmore
 - Richard Jones
 - Robert Jones

- Brett Gardener
 - Colin Anderson – president of Oak Ridge Credit Union
 - Has supported secret City half marathon, summer sessions concert series, and other local events. Just recently retired from the credit union. They've also repainted the pavilion twice.
 - Board voted for Tracy Crossno and Colin Anderson to be recipients of the Rec and Parks Award.
- Clark Center Park – whether City can take that on / acquire it. Doug Colclasure brought it up at the last Park Board meeting. Ellen Smith was also there and had discussed in with Jon a day or so before the last meeting. TWRA has a signed letter of intent with DOE that includes the transfer of several DOE properties, like Clark Center Park, to TWRA. As of the last meeting, TWRA had declined to take ownership of Clark Center Park. Discussions of the transfer of the park have been going on since 1979. In 1982, DOE was planning to close it because they were unable to get the City or TVA to take over the park. In 1993, the city again looked at it and found substantial issues. Jon has looked at it in 2015, and most of those issues had not substantially changed. TDEC came out and looked at the wastewater situation. Two restrooms, one on a septic system and that one has to be pumped, sometimes a couple times a week depending on how busy it is. There is no sewer. There's only a 2-inch water line. You need at least a 6-inch water line to put in a fire hydrant. There are infrastructure issues, and the amount of capital that would be needed to bring it up to speed are notable. Right now, there is a federal grant that could potentially help us with recreational facilities, it could possibly be used to help with some of the issues. There are also electrical issues, out of date. Buildings are not ADA compliant. Could be lead or asbestos in the building(s). Most of the buildings, ball fields, and shelters are in disrepair. There's a playground that has a swing set that could hit an oak tree. A lot of the buildings are in really poor shape. DOE has lots of expectations of how they want it managed. Locked at night, unlocked in the morning, regular police patrols. Would have to have it staffed and have regular maintenance. The operating budget estimate they came up with a few years ago was \$400,000 a year just for that one park. It's only about 80 acres that the want to transfer. The park would be more enticing if it included more area. But it doesn't include even the whole hiking trail or fishing areas. It's an oddly cut shape, and there's not a lot of potential to develop it from a parks and rec stance. The new City Manager is interested in going to look at it.
- If the city considers going under contract to obtain the park, then the Advisory board could take a stance on whether the city should take it, if we want to advocate for changes, etc., consider issues of grant funding and capital issues, added staffing, etc. There are a lot of things that the board could chose to advocate for or against. Probably plenty of money for capital improvement, question is whether there is money for operating.

8. New Business:

- Usually in January or February consider the new agenda structure. Wait until we get new board members on.

9. Appearance of Citizen (Non-agenda Items)

None.

10. Announcements

- Dan – got an email from Carol Evans, inviting him to a luncheon at the Seven Islands State Birding Park. \$150. About 2,000 people in attendance. Under a big tent. Tables of 10. Sponsored by organizations like the ORNL credit union. One of the things on the program was that this guy was recognized for giving another 90 acres across the river from when you enter Seven Islands. It was designated the best park in the state. Would be nice if we sent someone, using money from our treasury. Maybe send the chairman and the two award recipients.
- Doug B – trail maintenance underway at Haw Ridge, funded by CVTA. There has been some criticism from some of the really good mountain bikers, that the trails were being simplified too much. Have to keep in mind they aren't just for mountain bikers. Widening some of the trails and making them safer. And improving bridges and draining issues.

Director's report.


- New City manager started, and should be a friend of parks and rec. Seth Rogers went to a Tennessee Recreation & Parks Association (TRPA) leadership forum at Fall Creek Falls State Park this week, followed by the Presidents meeting for TRPA. He is the current secretary for the TRPA Board.
- Getting ready for tree lighting ceremony.

Future agenda items:

- Jake will reach out to award recipients, and work on getting plaques done, and see if we need to provide refreshments or if Y12 will sponsor.

Next meeting: December 14, 2023.

11. Adjournment



Jake Greear, Chair