

## **The City of Durham**

Parks & Recreation Department

### **Recreation Advisory Commission**

*RAC Annual Breakfast and Appreciation Meeting*

Wednesday, January 8, 2020

DPR Training Room (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)

7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

#### **Members Present:**

Rebecca Reyes, David Green, David Fellerath, Frank White, Lesley Stracks-Mullem, Marcella Scurlock-Jones

#### **Members Excused/Unexcused:**

Kakou Nayo – excused

Jessica Slice – unexcused

Eric Tullis - unexcused

#### **City Council Liaison:**

Council Member Alston –not present

#### **City Staff Present:**

Joy Guy, Rich Hahn, Rhonda Parker, Lynda Merritt, DCM Ferguson

#### **Introduction/Call to Order:**

7:30 am – 7:45 am – a buffet breakfast was enjoyed by all.

David G. called the meeting to order at 7:46 am wishing everyone a Happy New Year and provided a welcome!

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

Frank made a motion to approve the December 11, 2019 meeting minutes; seconded by Rebecca; *No further changes, whereupon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously adopted*, the minutes were approved as presented.

#### **Adjustments to the agenda:**

No adjustments.

#### **Annual DPR Accomplishments Report:**

Rhonda talked about the importance of celebrating our accomplishments. She pointed out that this report is not a reflection of everything that DPR is doing. We use this annual report as one way to tell our story. Some of the highlights shared were:

#### **Hillside Park:**

- Renovations to Hillside Park were made possible through a partnership with the Tamia and Grant Hill Foundation, FILA USA, and DPR. The renovations included three outdoor basketball courts, new backboards, and updates to the fencing and landscaping.
- The courts were redesigned with colorful artwork by a local artist. New fencing and goals were also added to the park.

- It was a great experience and FILA is planning to return to this area to discuss an additional project for the Durham community.

### **Environmental Education Pavilion (EEP) – Tom**

- EEP was built at West Point on the Eno Park in July of 2018. The construction was funded through donations made to the Durham Parks Foundation.
- The Outdoor Recreation Unit offers a variety of new programs for the Durham community at the EEP. These include programs such as: Muddy Boots, Outdoor Recreation’s pre-K environmental and education program, which continues to be a popular event and is consistently full with waitlists. Other popular programs include Fourth Friday Fires, the most popular of the season was owl-themed and had over 75 participants; Floats with Floats/ and Nature drop-in hours.
- Staff conducted their first controlled burn to begin the process of restoring the habitat around the EEP to a field of native Piedmont Prairie.
- Jason provided some history on the management of this area which is now managed by DPR’s Outdoor Recreation staff.

### **Grant St. Park Playground**

- The old degraded and broken playground was replaced.
- Staff met with the community, gathered feedback and responded to their input.
- The children living in the community shared their ideas, we gave them options and they selected the playground design.
- The chain-link fence along the street side of the park was replaced with black aluminum fencing.
- DPR worked with Durham CAN and the neighborhood to hold a reopening of Grant Street Park (Playground) This project was a great example of a community partnership.

### **Duke Park Bathhouse:**

- The bathhouse at Duke Park was deconstructed. A ceremony was held at Duke Park to commemorate the Bath House history prior to its deconstruction and removal.

### **East End Park:**

- basketball courts renovated with CIP funding
- bathroom – renovated with ½ penny funding
- large cleaning of undergrowth
- Private funding – convert a tennis court to futsal court (BCBS funding & soccer foundation)
- 2019 planned shelter repair, vegetation clearing, improved fencing – ½ penny funding

### **Community Partnerships:**

- The RAC plays an active role in building community partnerships by making recommendations on fee waivers for community and athletic groups using City park facilities.
- The Bull City Roller Derby team taught a class to the MyDurham participants, along with helping to maintain the Futsal Court area. The Bull City Roller Derby team used the gym and Futsal Court for practices in exchange for their volunteer services, as part of the department’s cooperative programming.
- Jason highlighted partnership with Habitat for Humanity to host One Giant Leap: 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Apollo 11 Lunar moon landing at the Environmental Education Pavilion. It was a fun and educational evening designed to educate participants about what it took to get to the moon.

### **My Durham:**

- Digital Brilliance Hour – The “My Durham” teen program continued with another successful year. The program expanded and added two additional sites at Holton Career and Resource Center and the Durham Teen Center at Lyon Park. One of the most popular programs offered was

Digital Brilliance Hour which focused on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) in which participants were guided through the process of creating music and video games.

#### **Afterschool Highlights**

- DPR experienced a 51% increase in enrollments of After School participants within the past 2 years, increasing from 91 participants in FY17 to 139 participants in FY19.
- Joy reported on the progress of the transportation pilot which included service at five schools. Staff anticipates expanding this service in the future.
- Several sites were at capacity last year.

#### **Programs: Walltown Park Recreation Center**

- Staff hosted the 2018 Mature Adult Prom on May 5 at the Durham Armory. There were 50 registered participants who enjoyed the event.

#### **DPR hosted the US Tennis Association NC 40 & Over State Tennis Championship**

- The tournament was played at several venues across the city.
- This tournament brought in approximately 1,200 players from across the state to compete and required over 100 volunteers locally to assist with the tournament.
- The economic impact for Durham was \$409,153.
- The agreement is for 2 years, so they will be back in 2020.

#### **Bimbe' Cultural Arts Festival**

- Bimbe' boasted a record 20,000 attendees as it celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> year, May 18, 2019.
- Six events were held during the week leading up to the festival.
- The economic impact for Durham was over \$1.4 million.

#### **National Accreditation**

- DPR has been accredited by the Commission for Accreditation for Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) since 2008.
- There are currently 175 accredited park and recreation agencies in the US and 12 in NC.

#### **Awards:**

- A Great Place for Public Art: DPR was awarded the Great Places Award for 2019 in June from the NC Chapter of the American Planning Association for the renovations of the basketball courts at Hillside Park.
- Winnie Family Favorites Awards: Two DPR sites were chosen by parents as award winners for 2018. Edison Johnson Recreation Center received "The Are We There Yet?" Award for Best Family Destination. Duke Park received the "Fun in the Sun" Award for Best Outdoor Play Space.

#### **RAC Accomplishments**

- Rhonda recognized members for their contributions and community support for DPR and the residents of Durham.
- This year's report to City Council was well received and the RAC was well represented. Lynda did a great job of pulling the report together and David Green's presentation and delivery was very professional. Rhonda thanked members for attending many of DPR's Employee Recognition events. It really means a lot to staff. She also thanked DCM Ferguson for his support.

#### **Professional Staff:**

- Many staff maintain certifications that are essential to the daily operations of the department.

#### **Community "Give Backs"**

- In December 2018, DPR staff collected donations for the Ronald McDonald House
- Walltown Park Recreation Center Teen Camp and staff volunteered at a DPR Fun Caravan event and did a litter clean-up project with Keep Durham Beautiful.

- Volunteer hours recorded by DPR employees through the City's Volunteer Leave Policy = 142.25 hours.

**Employee Appreciation:**

- Staff participated in numerous events during the year designed to motivate, engage, and thank staff for their hard work.

**Park Maintenance**

- Rhonda recognized the park maintenance unit for their ongoing work and efforts.
- DPR is a year-round operation and DPR couldn't do what we do without maintenance staff. They also work on special projects during the winter months.

**Open Discussion:**

- Rebecca inquired about the data we collect and how do staff use the percentages of populations served to address the needs of our inclusive population. Staff responded that we do know we're serving more of the Latino population than ever. Joy talked about the challenges that we face. How can we start integrating the refugee community in our programs? There was some discussion that it might be helpful to track certain types of data. We need to look at the demographics of our community and see if we can identify underserved (Samolian or Asia) populations.
- Frank – Park maintenance does an awesome job. Frank recommended we include the Operations Facility in our RAC Park Tour or maybe coordinate a RAC meeting there. Lynda suggested possibly starting our tour at the Operations Center.
- DCM Ferguson provided a formal introduction. Bo makes it a tradition to attend this meeting and thank RAC members for the tremendous work, leadership and feedback they provide to DPR. The RAC is the face of parks and recreation for the department. Your work is important and you are a critical component of the work we're doing here. Thank you for your guidance, feedback and for taking part in community discussions about parks and recreation.
- David G. thanked DCM Ferguson for attending and for sharing the positive feedback.

**RAC Reporting Items:**

No items reported at this meeting.

**RAC Action Items – Fee Waiver Requests**

Fee Waiver Request - Rich Hahn

David G. recommended approval by consent unless there was discussion about the fee waiver organizations or questions about recommendations made by staff. Marcella made a motion to accept all fee waivers as recommended by staff; seconded by David F. All in favor, motion passes unanimously.

**1. South Durham Little League**

Event Little league softball games and practices

Facility Request: Herndon Ball Fields & Southern Boundaries #2

Date(s) of Event: February 17 – June 30, 2020

Fee waiver application approved by consent at 100% (staff recommendation)

**2. Long Ball RBI – Baseball Season**

Event: Long Ball summer baseball program (games & practices)

Facility Request: Crest Street & Hillside Baseball Fields

Date(s) of Event: April – August 2020

Fee waiver application approved by consent at 100% (staff recommendation)

**3. Long Ball RBI - Tournament**

Event: Regional teams participating – tournament play

Facility Request: Valley Springs Softball Field & Crest Street Practice Field

Date(s) of Event: July 16 – 18, 2020

Fee waiver application approved by consent at 100% (staff recommendation)

**4. DBYAL**

Event: Baseball & soccer season

Facility Request: various DPR athletic fields

Date(s) of Event: April – July, 2020

Fee waiver request approved by consent at 100% (staff recommendation)

**5. Walltown Community Association**

Event: Community meetings

Facility Request: Walltown – Mature Adult Center

Date(s) of Event: February 17, - November 16, 2020

Fee waiver request approved by consent at 100% (staff recommendation)

**Public Comment:** No public comment.

**Old Business:**

RAC Officer Elections for 2020

Board Elections – Chairman and Vice Chairman

- Nominations were made from the floor.

RAC Chairman:

- A nomination was made by Frank to elect David Green as Chairman; a second was made by Rebecca and the nomination was unanimously carried.
- David Green will serve as RAC Chairman until January 2021 when new elections will be held.

RAC Vice Chair:

- A nomination was made by Frank to elect David Fellerath as Vice Chair; a second was made by Lesley and the nomination was unanimously carried.
- David Fellerath will serve as RAC Vice Chair until January 2021 when new elections will be held.

**New Business:**

RAC Goals and Priorities 2020 (review and revise)

- Lynda reviewed the proposed changes that Lesley submitted. A decision was made to defer this business until the February RAC meeting.

RAC Bylaws (review and approve)

- Lynda recommended we defer this item until the February meeting.
- She suggested members review the bylaws prior to the next meeting; and be ready to discuss and approve them.
- Lynda proposed adding a statement which allows teleconference calls in emergency situations.
- A decision was made to defer this business until the February RAC meeting.

RAC Retreat & Tour (planning for 2020)

- Members were reminded to send Tom or Lynda any parks or facilities they'd like to visit during the tour.
- Tom pointed out, this is your tour and he recommended they review their interests, see if there are any commonalities, and we can plan accordingly.
- Lynda proposed starting the tour at the Maintenance Operations Center.

- David F. suggested a holistic look (East Durham, Long Meadow Park, East End, Goose Creek Trail, East Durham Park, Kelly Bryant Bridge. Drew Granby).
- Tom mentioned including Herndon Park maybe.
- There was some discussion on who will be allowed to participate in the tour. Rhonda reported that transportation is being provided only for the RAC, DPF, DPR staff and City Council members.

RAC Subcommittee Ideas & Discussion:

- Ideas were shared about the need for additional subcommittees. It was determined that we wait until we develop a plan and observe how the Park Safety Committee is working. Moving forward, we can continue looking for ways to increase community perspective.

**Committee Reports:**

DOST Report - Frank White

- No report at this meeting.

Park Safety Committee – Frank White

- No report at this meeting.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) – David Fellerath

Presentation from Bike Durham – key takeaways

- Their focus is on aggressive makeover of city streets of protected bike lanes across the city. Bikes should have equal access to roads.
- Some discussion on inviting Bike Durham to one of our meetings. Would there be any benefit? Staff pointed out that transportation doesn't look at trails the same way DPR does.
- DPR is responsible for the trail network. Our focus is pedestrian network versus bike lanes.
- Tom provided some information on the various types of trail funding. The Trails Action Group meetings are very productive and they include all departments working together for the benefit of the whole. They're all working together on trails and roadways and all competing for funding. DPR is well represented at BPAC and DOST meetings.
- Frank summed it up: from a funding standpoint; the matrix is different for federal funding than it is for a CIP project. They don't look at trail planning from a recreational side but more of a corridor to commute standpoint. Federal funding is dictating where the trails go, deviating with federal funding and competing with CIP projects.
- This topic would be a great discussion at a future RAC meeting.

Hillandale Advisory Committee - Rebecca Reyes

- No meeting – no report.

**Open Discussion:**

- No open discussion.

**Next RAC Meeting:**

Wednesday, February 13, 2019

7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

DPR Training Room – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Lynda Merritt:*