

**The City of Durham**  
Parks & Recreation Department  
**Recreation Advisory Commission**  
Wednesday, August 12, 2020  
Virtual Zoom Meeting  
7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

**Members Present:**

David Green, David Fellerath, Frank White, Lesley Stracks-Mullem, Kokou Nayo, Eric Tullis, Cedric Burke, Karthik Sundaramoorthy

**Members Excused/Unexcused:**

Marcella Scurlock-Jones – did not participate – attendance is marked as present due to the challenges of COVID-19  
Rebecca Reyes – was unable to participate due to zoom related technical issues – attendance is marked as present.

**City Council Liaison:**

No council representation at this meeting.

**City Staff Present:**

Joy Guy, Jason Jones, Rich Hahn, Lynda Merritt, Robert Jennings

**Introduction/Call to Order/Welcomes:**

David Fellerath called the meeting to order at 7:36 am and provided a welcome.

**Special Recognition:**

David Green was presented with an award of appreciation.  
*In Recognition of Appreciation*, DPR presented an award to David Green – Thank you for your years of Leadership, Service and Support to the City of Durham. Presented on this 12<sup>th</sup> day of August 2020. A plaque will be given to David; as stay-at-home orders allow. Members wished him well and shared words of appreciation.  
David G. left the meeting.

**Attendees:**

Toby Berla was welcomed and acknowledged to speak during open comments.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Kokou made a motion to approve the June 10, 2020 meeting minutes with one amendment; seconded by Lesley Stracks-Mullem.; *No further changes, whereupon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously adopted*, the minutes were approved as presented.

**Adjustments to the agenda:**

No adjustments.

**Interim Director's Report:**

Joy Guy

- Durham City Manager, Tom Bonfield, announced his retirement effective Sept. 30, 2020. He was hired in 2008. Bonfield wrote: The challenges Durham now faces – COVID-19, restoring fiscal stability, implementing racial-equity, and future public-safety initiatives will take longer to meet than he expected to stay in the job.
- Virtual Programs: DPR staff have been busy working hard to create virtual programs online! We are currently offering a variety of virtual programs for all ages such as:
  - Basketball Skills and Drills
  - Fast 30 – a full-body workout
  - Fit L.A.B. upper/lower workout
  - Game Time with School-Age Care
  - Kid Fitness
  - Mixxed Fit
  - Muddy Boots
  - Story Time with School-Age Care
  - Stretch & Move: Mature Adult Fitness
  - Yoga
- Virtual Blog Activities:
  - Nature Scavenger Hunt
  - Social Distancing Activities with Parkson Rex
  - Get to Know Sandy Creek
- Our DPR Care Programs unit offered modified half-day summer camp programs named “Summer Connect” during late July and early August. Numbers were lower than we usually serve due to the uncertainty of COVID-19.
- Reopening’s/Closures: As of Thursday, July 9<sup>th</sup> outdoor mass gatherings was limited to 25.
  - Skate parks and ball courts and fields on July 10<sup>th</sup>
  - Tennis leagues have started and adult/youth lessons
  - Playgrounds have not reopened.
  - Picnic Shelters are open for small gatherings of 25, while social distancing guidelines are encouraged. No new reservations for the remainder of shelter season. Shelters are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

In-person programs:

- All Star competition at Hillside Park
- Corn Hole tournament at Herndon Park
- Kick Ball league at Herndon Park
- DPR Soccer Academy at Herndon Park
- Softball Leagues
- All About a Garden at Edison Johnson Recreation Center

Outdoor Programming available at recreation centers

- Joy encouraged members to follow us on social media for the latest on our programs as soon as they’re released.
- Rich reminded everyone that registration is available on our DPR site as well. No drop-in programs at this time.
- Rich provided additional information on our programs.
- Event staff are working on a new series of drive in movies, staff are working out the logistics at the Durham County Memorial Stadium and will begin programming soon.
- DPR Fun Caravan has reported strong attendance at Sandy Creek Park, Lyon Park, and Northgate Park, while wrapping up at East End Park on August 13<sup>th</sup>.

- DPR staff were asked to participate in a series of meetings for Durham HOPE Network to learn more about their needs and see how DPR can assist them.
- The Duke Rotaract has received funding to install a musical playground at Rock Quarry Park. This unique playground will be installed as a part of the larger renovation next spring.
- Updates on Projects:
  - Our DPR Maintenance team has installed a special safety surface at the new Lakeview playground. The safety surfacing is designed to improve accessibility for wheelchairs on the playground. This will improve the drainage and life of the safety surfacing.
  - A new metal roof has been installed on the McCowan House at West Point on the Eno.
- Park Issues & areas of concern:
  - The restrooms at Old Farm Park were recently damaged. A police report was made.
  - Sennett's Hole access trail in West Point on the Eno – there was discussion among members concerning the violation of “no parking” zones located in the area of the neighborhood located off Landis Dr. There have been numerous complaints from residents who live near the park, as this location is easier to reach from neighborhood access points than from parking within the historic core of the park. Staff are working with other City departments and outside partners to address concerns. Jason reported since COVID, we've seen an influx of users swimming, which changed the way the park was being used.
  - West Point on the Eno – (N. Roxboro St. entrance) we're working with The Wildlife Commission to include patrols at West Point. If possible, patrols would be able to enforce things like underage drinking, drug use, illegal fishing, etc. Patrols would not be able to enforce ordinances but their presence alone will be an improvement. Staff are looking at ways to better manage the cars who are illegally parking at West Point on the Eno. This is creating some hazards such as blocking the driveway for emergency vehicles should an emergency occur.
  - There was discussion and brainstorming ideas on signage and looking at ways we can “positively” promote areas and refocus appropriate use.
- Joy provided an update on the final steps of the hiring process for our next DPR director.

**Public Comment:**

Tony Berla – an avid Pickleball Player

- Berla: Pickleball players love the facilities at Bethesda Park and are grateful to DPR for installing a bin to store their equipment in. I'm here to look for solutions on a couple areas of concern. Currently, pickleball and tennis players are sharing use of the tennis courts at Bethesda Park.
- Berla: One concern is working with “antagonistic” DPR staff who make decisions on scheduling times and courts for designated play. Are Pickleball players being treated fairly?
- Berla: We want to make a committed effort to work on a resolution that is fair to everyone.
- Fellerath: Sounds like there a disagreement with the way DPR prioritizes use of the courts.
- Berla: Players were told by DPR staff, they could only play during their assigned designated times, even if the tennis courts were not being used. Does this same rule apply to tennis?
- Berla: We know we have to share, as there are no dedicated pickleball courts in Durham.
- Fellerath: This sounds like a conflict issue and David would like to see more documentation listing their concerns and possibly add this topic to a future meeting agenda.
- Nayo: What is your solution?
- Berla:
  - Ladder leagues which will bring in revenue

- Running a tournament
- Beginner lessons for free
- Do some community outreach
- In terms of play: guidelines that allow both uses instead of so many restrictions in place.
- Guy: DPR staff have worked together in a good faith to try and accommodate both user groups. If that process is not working, we certainly want to revisit our decisions and welcome your input and feedback on the process. We would like to schedule a meeting, to discuss an agreement that will work for everyone. Joy shared her contact information with Toby.
- Stracks-Mullem: We can do some research to see if there's an increase in usage on dedicated pickleball courts in areas like Morrisville and Chapel-Hill.
- White: Bethesda is your preference, is it possible to move from park to park? Toby described the process and the amount of work involved.
- Guy: Does your group utilize the courts at Garrett Rd? Pickleball lines were painted on those courts. Toby described the difficulties of playing on painted courts versus designated pickleball courts.

**Welcome:**

David provided a welcome to Karthik Sundaramoorthy our newly appointed RAC member. A formal welcome and introductions will be made at our next meeting.

**RAC Reporting Items:**

Attendance at community meetings, DPR events, resident concerns or feedback reported.

- No reported items at this meeting.

**RAC Action Items – Fee Waiver Request**

Rich Hahn provided fee waiver documents for review prior to this meeting.

Consent Agenda Items:

**1. Eno Community Tennis**

Event: Althea Gibson Tennis Tournament

Facility Request: Southern Boundaries Park (Courts 1-8)

Date(s) of Event: October 17, 2020

Staff Recommendation: 100%

**2. Long Ball RBI**

Event: Conditioning workouts for 10 players per session

Facility Request: Crest Street Park – Ball Field 1

Date(s) of Event: August 15 – October 31, 2020

Staff Recommendation: 100%

**Action Item:** Frank made a motion to accept staff recommendations at 100%; it was seconded by Eric. Motion passes, all in favor.

**Old Business:**

RAC Engagement in the Comprehensive Plan 2050

- David F. recommended removing this agenda item and providing updates as needed.

Updates/FY21 Half- Penny

- No report at this meeting.

**New Business:**

RAC Elections

- Members were in full agreement with deferring RAC elections until September.

- Members were encouraged to submit nominations for chairman and vice-chair to Lynda in advance of our September meeting.

**Committee Reports:**

DOST Report

- No report at this meeting.

Park Safety Committee – Frank White

- Committee has not met since March due to COVID.
- A meeting is scheduled directly after this meeting is over.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) – David Fellerath

- An update on Shared Streets in Durham was made.
- Let David know if you want more information on the plan

Hillandale Advisory Committee - Rebecca Reyes/ Leslie Mullem-Stracks (backup)

- Leslie attended the last meeting and provided a report.
- There is an increase in golf users due to COVID, which isn't reflected in the revenue due to single rider golf carts, equipment sales, etc.

**Open Discussion:**

- Frank is monitoring community chats from residents in support of a tennis center in Durham.
- Joy reported that DPR is always looking for ways to support and accommodate all our passionate tennis residents, including pickle ball players.
- Joy will follow-up with an update on the meeting with Tony Berla next month.
- David F: Should we add this topic to one of our meetings to take a look at DPR facilities versus community needs? Due the lack of time, David suggested members be prepared to talk about this topic next month and decide if a formal recommendation from the RAC is needed.
- Frank: requested an update on Snow Hill Rd. Park. Where are we at?
- Joy will have Tom provide an update on Snow Hill Rd. Park.
- **Action Item:** Frank made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 9:07 a.m.; it was seconded by Leslie.

**Next RAC Meeting:**

Wednesday, September 9, 2020

7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Virtual Meeting

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Lynda Merritt:*