

## **The City of Durham**

Parks & Recreation Department

### **Recreation Advisory Commission**

Wednesday, August 14, 2019

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

7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

#### **Members Present:**

Marge Clemons, David Green, David Fellerath, Lesley Stracks-Mullem, Frank White, Eric Tullis, Rebecca Reyes, Kokou Nayo

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

All present.

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

Council Member Alston - not present

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

Tom Dawson, Joy Guy Jason Jones, Rich Hahn, Rhonda Parker, Lynda Merritt

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

David G. called the meeting to order at 7:38 a.m. and welcomed those present.

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

Rebecca made a motion to approve the June 10, 2019 meeting minutes; seconded by Marge. *No further changes, whereupon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously adopted*, the minutes were approved as presented.

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

- Lynda added: RAC Attendance Report to City Council – a copy of the report was given to each RAC member.

#### **Director's Report:**

- The City of Durham received the North Carolina Great Places Award by the North Carolina American Planning Association for the Hillside Basketball Courts Renovation Project. Rich shared a video that was produced by FILA USA highlighting the project.
- A Ceremonial Item was presented during the August 5<sup>th</sup> City Council Meeting: presentation of the NC Great Places: Award for Public Art – Hillside Basketball Courts, by the NC Chapter of the American Planning Association. Big thank you to Marge, David Fellerath & Nayo for attending on behalf of the RAC.
- Staff have been addressing needle container concerns raised by residents of Hillside Park. Staff reached out to the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition (NCHRC) to discuss possible solutions to the needle program at Hillside and other parks. Park Maintenance has changed out the boxes at W.D. Hill and Hillside Park, and put them on a schedule to check weekly. Proper handling and disposal of needles is something NCHRC has expertise in, so DPR is going to discuss whether it's feasible to move forward with an agreement. Staff are on the lookout for needles and uses special precautions to dispose of them. Staff will schedule a meeting to

discuss this issue with the Health Department, DPD and NCHRC since this issue is beyond DPR's expertise. There was some discussion relating to this resident and his reasons for reaching out to the media. Frank made a recommendation that DPR staff direct him to attend the PAC meeting in the area where he lives.

At 7:49 a.m. Eric Tullis arrived at the meeting.

- PAC 1 residents have some questions about DPR projects. DPR staff is planning to attend the September or October PAC 1 meeting to provide them with some answers to questions they have and provide park updates.
- Durham had the honor of hosting the 2019 USTA NC 40 & Over State Championships and it was a huge win for DPR and the City of Durham. The 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 tournament was played at several venues across the city, including Elmira Avenue Park, Morreene Road Park, Rock Quarry Park, Southern Boundaries Park, and Whippoorwill Park. Economic impact: \$409,153
- The outdoor pools have been operating on reduced hours due to a chronic lifeguard shortage. There was discussion on why the shortage exists and Jason provided details. Staff are exploring ways to increase interest and find more full-time staff to fill the gaps. We've expanded our recruiting efforts by participating with all local schools and job fairs, nonprofits, etc. Locally we recruit a variety of ages, retirees, etc. younger people have very limited hours of availability. Commission members were genuinely concerned about this issue and were trying to understand the impact of the shortage. Jason and Joy are working on some strategies that will hopefully assist with next year's summer pool season hiring process.
- Northgate Park complaint – A resident was distraught about a summer camp jamboree event that took place at Northgate Park. He stated that this was the worst day of his life due to our event. He called the police several times; he was even more upset when he learned it was a DPR event. He wants to file a formal complaint but is planning to post a complaint to the listserve.
- Long Ball's Durham Senior All-Star Team won the Mid-Atlantic Regional tournament and was flying to Florida to participate in RBI (Reviving Baseball in inner cities) World Series from August 4-9, 2019. This is the first time in 30 years Major League Baseball has hosted a Regional tournament in NC. Rhonda was very unhappy with the lack of media coverage.
- A meeting was held with DPR and DPS staff to discuss Lucas Middle School and the Snow Hill Park Interlocal Agreement. It's been 7 years and a lot of staff changes. Rhonda is hopeful the agreement will move forward and be finalized.
- ADA – DPR staff attended a VIP group meeting to assist participants with onsite registration.
- Landis Dr. parking issues – a resident living on Landis Drive reported there's been an increase in the number of strangers parking in front of their homes on Landis Dr. It is getting so bad that there are concerns over emergency vehicles being able to gain entry should an emergency occur.
- Gender - The application for boards and commissions now has the following five options: Male – M; Female – F; Nonbinary or third gender – X; Prefer to self-describe – X; Prefer not to say-
- Unauthorized use of motor vehicles: recently, we've received several complaints from trail users about the unauthorized use of motor vehicles (golf carts, electronic unicycle, and motorized scooters) on our trails. DPR staff are in the process of inventorying existing signage so that additional signage needs can be determined.
- Thanks to the efforts of Rebecca & Rich - 26 spin bikes have been replaced. Rebecca takes classes at Walltown and Edison Johnson, attendance is up, and participants really like the new bikes.

- A member of the Red Maple Park Community invited DPR to attend a meeting to discuss their desire for the City to purchase vacant land in order to build a community center. Annette attended the meeting and gently tried to explain that it is unlikely that the City would be interested in purchasing additional land as the lots they're interested in do not serve any of our purposes currently identified in the Master Plan. Annette did educate them on the Durham Park Foundation as a potential partner for fundraising, given that the neighborhood was so inclined to raise funds, purchase the property and donate the land to the City. The message was not well received and Annette was thankful that Frank was in attendance and provided her with support.
- Indy article – A National Nonprofit Rated Durham's Parks Poorly. But Comparisons Don't Tell the Whole Story – the article led to more questions about the purpose of a fair comparison, especially one that's conducted yearly. Durham faces different funding constraints than Cincinnati, or New York and they don't have the same competing priorities that DPR does. Comparisons are nice, but they only tell the story when everyone operates on the same playing field. The survey was conducted by the Trust for Public Land. Tom talked about some of the benefits of the data and how useful the results are to DPR.
- Vandalism:
  - The accessible swing that was recently installed at Orchard Park was stolen.

**RAC Reporting Items:**

- Frank attended the Red Maple Park community meeting.

**RAC Action Items – Fee Waiver Requests**

Fee Waiver Request - Rich Hahn

The RAC Action Items/Fee Waivers were presented and accepted by staff recommendation.

- Marge made a motion to approve all four fee waivers by consent (staff recommendation); it was seconded by Rebecca and unanimously approved.

**1. Durham Cares**

Event: Breakfast Fundraiser

Facility Request: Durham Armory

Date(s) of Event: November 19, 2019

Staff recommendation at 0%

Approved on consent.

**2. Food for the Sole**

Event: Sneaker Expo/Sneaker Drive

Facility Request: Durham Armory

Date(s) of Event: November 17, 2019

Staff recommendation at 50%

Approved on consent.

**3. South Durham Little League**

Event: League practices and games equal to value of batting cage donation

Facility Request: Herndon Ball Fields, Southern Boundaries #2

Date(s) of Event: Sept. 1 – Oct. 31, 2019

Staff recommendation at 100%

Approved on consent.

#### 4. Schoolhouse of Wonder

Event: Story Time Workshop

Facility Request: Holton Career & Resource Center – The Learning Center

Date(s) of Event: September 14, 2019

Staff recommendation at 100%

Approved on consent.

**Public Comment:** No public comment.

#### **Old Business:**

##### Project Updates – Tom

Playground updates highlighted:

- Bay-Hargrove Park:
  - Older damaged playground equipment
  - Selected for ½ penny funding due to its age and level of damage, worst on the list
- Drew/Granby Park:
  - Will be a highly inclusive park, Participatory Budget selected
  - Special features, regardless of ability that everyone can use
- Belmont Park:
  - Community wanted a dirt bike track for 8 yr. olds
  - We're making a concentrated effort on inclusion features
- Walltown Park: received a small grant to add adult exercise features
- Lakeview Park:
  - Submitted as a PB project, didn't get the funding
  - We shifted grants and developed a plan
  - We received 145 surveys and a design was selected
  - There are funding limitations and layers of inclusion exists
- Orchard Park:
  - Staff are concentrating on CPTED efforts to improve visibility in the park.
  - The community is working with staff on this effort.

##### RAC By-Laws (draft for approval) – Lynda

- Lynda requested a final review and vote of approval.
- Rebecca made a motion to approve the Recreation Advisory Commission Bylaws; seconded by Marge. *No further changes, whereupon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously adopted*, the Bylaws were approved as presented.
- Lynda will send a final copy to the City Clerk's Office.

##### RAC Priorities for FY20 – Lynda

- Please send your feedback to Lynda, this is the RAC's document, and this information will need to be included in our report to city council. Leslie has some edits and will send them to Lynda.
- Rhonda reminded everyone that having too many priorities was one of the comments made during our RAC retreat. It's better to have fewer priorities so you can focus on them, than have too many to prioritize.

##### RAC Report to City Council – Lynda

- Lynda asked for feedback on the content of this report.
- We are still working on some information that needs to be finalized and included in this report.

**New Business:**

**COD Handbook for Advisory Boards, Committees & Commissions**

- Handout: Durham Counts On You: Handbook to the City of Durham's Advisory Boards, Committees & Commissions – please review at your leisure

Welcome to Eric Tullis, newly appointed RAC member. Formal introductions were made.

**Committee Reports:**

**DOST Report - Frank White**

- No report at this meeting.

**Park Safety Committee – Frank White**

- Frank is requesting the RAC formerly recognize the Park Safety Committee as a subcommittee of the RAC. David G. and Marge will be serving. A motion was made to approve; there was a second and it was unanimously approved.
- Frank recently reached out to Lee Tillery, the executive director of High Point Parks and Recreation as they maintain a ranger program. High Point is willing to host the RAC so we can learn more about their program. The invitation is open to all commission members. The Park Safety Committee will be looking at some dates to visit High Point in September.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC)**

- No report at this meeting.
- David Fellerath has agreed to serve as liaison on behalf of the RAC.

**Hillandale Advisory Committee – Rebecca Reyes**

- Rhonda will make sure Rebecca is added to the email list.
- Rhonda reported that operations are going well, and they're hoping this fall will be better
- The cart paths are being renovated and phase 1 is almost complete.
- Leslie has volunteered to serve as a backup if Rebecca is unable to attend,

**Open Discussion:**

- No open discussion

A motion was made by Marge to adjourn at 9:02 a.m.; it was seconded by David F.

**Next RAC Meeting**

Wednesday, September 11, 2019

7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

DPR Training Room – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Lynda Merritt:*