

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

**Members Present:**

David Fellerath, Frank White, Kokou Nayo, Eric Tullis, 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 – excused absence

Leslie Strakes-Mullen – excused absence

Cedric Burke – excused absence

**City Council Liaison:**

No council representation at this meeting.

**City Staff Present:**

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

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

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

**Special Announcements:**

An official welcome and roundtable introductions were made to RAC member, Karthik Sundaramoorthy; our newly appointed RAC member.

A notice of welcome to Wade Walcutt, as DPR's newly hired director. He was not present at the meeting.

**Special Appreciation:**

David recognized Joy for an outstanding job as interim director! Her excellent leadership during the malware attack and pandemic crisis should be noteworthy and acknowledged. Thanks to Joy on behalf of the RAC!

**Approval of Minutes:**

Nayo made a motion to approve the August 12, 2020 meeting minutes; seconded by Frank; *no further changes, whereupon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously adopted*, the minutes were approved as presented.

**Adjustments to the agenda:**

Rich made a request to remove item **VI. RAC Action Items – Fee Waiver Requests** – no fee waivers at this meeting.

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

Joy Guy

- Sofia Hernandez, Assistant City Attorney is planning to attend our October RAC meeting. She is planning to give an update on a project to create some guidance for boards/commissions regarding public meeting laws and public records law and to answer any questions. As a reminder, she asked that we share this message: *It's important to remember that all email communications are public records. Members should NOT discuss any board business in those group emails, beyond general logistics.*
- On Friday, August 14 marked the one-year anniversary of the Algonquin Marker at W.D.Hill Recreation Center. Staff joined community leaders and 93 yr. Old Dr. Victor Maafo at the historic marker to hear his ideas and experiences that inspired the marker.
- We hosted our first Bull City Reels on Wheels event was held on August 29, from 8:30 pm – 11:00 pm at the Durham County Stadium. The event was free and advanced tickets were required. The movie event: Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle was sold out in two days!
- Back to School Bash on August 22 & August 26 at Campus Hills Park was a huge success, with over 270 backpacks and supplies distributed.
- Our softball leagues have started. We had 15 teams register with over 300 players.
- Tennis lessons are off and running.
- Virtual Canvas and Cupcakes: for ages 3-5 at Edison Johnson Recreation Center. Participants enjoyed painting a canvas and a cupcake treat!
- Virtual Sunrise Bootcamp – meets virtually every Wednesday morning
- Kahoot! Trivia – Marvel, DC and Pixar Characters - (ages 10 and up) a themed trivia event, play against up to 19 other players
- Stretch and Move video - positive comments from a participant were shared.
- Herndon Park restrooms are open for use.
- Staff are looking at ways DPR can support the virtual learning needs of Durham students. There are a few logistical issues with Wi-Fi and internet connections at our centers.
- Jason and his team are working on special teen programs for My Durham.
- We are now in Phase 2.5 – mass gathering limits have increased to 25 and the outdoor gathering size is 50. Managers and staff are looking at ways to provide some indoor programming. Our approach will be a slow start such as walking programs.
- Park Maintenance staff have been working with CIT to de-escalate an ongoing situation at Orchard Park. A resident had set up a tent under the shelter and was apparently living in the park. Staff coordinated with DPD and CIT to offer the individual additional resources. DPR staff have been monitoring the park daily.

### Vandalism/Mischief:

- The playground at Burton Park was vandalized, several pieces of equipment were burned and punctured.
- Maintenance staff found evidence of injury in the restrooms at Long Meadow Park. Police were notified and a report filed.

### Q&A:

- While opening up new programs, is DPR prepared to address the guidelines for social distancing? Joy: Staff will create a safety plan that is specific for each program, as well as general guidelines that apply across the board.

- What is the status of DPR parks and playgrounds, are they open? Joy provided updates.
- Furloughed staff, are they getting paid? Joy provided a response.
- Is there an opportunity or funding available to upgrade the Wi-Fi in our centers, so we can assist with the virtual learning needs of our community? Joy shared details on the status of the Duke Fiber Optic Network Project.
- Is there data available for enrollment in virtual learning centers – are they being utilized? Joy: provided some information which was shared by Community Education.
- What's the status of the park restrooms, are they open? Joy: Yes

**Public Comment:**

No public comment at this meeting.

**RAC Reporting Items:**

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

- No items at this meeting.

**Old Business:**

Updates & Highlights: Project/ FY21

Half- Penny: – Tom Dawson

- Drew Granby (playground) part of the participatory budgeting process, will be installed in the next few weeks
- Bay Hargrove (playground) community intensive driven project, completed.
- Bathroom projects at Crest Street Park, Red Maple Park, and Lyon Park
- New half- penny funding: Whippoorwill Tennis Courts (repairs), West Point on the Eno (northern parking lot), Wrightwood Park (playground replacement) Rock Quarry Park (bathrooms)

CIP Projects & highlights:

- Trails funding for resurfacing of trails: ATT, Third Fork Creek Trail, will be completing a Trail Implementation Study.
- Plans for our playgrounds located in our river system of parks (Old Farm Park, River Forest Park), looking at ways to relocate playgrounds to higher ground, since they are located in a flood plain.
- Pineywood Park– full renovation of tennis courts this year, we may add W.D. Hill.
- Northgate Park Tennis Courts (on hold) under consideration, a survey is out to collect feedback on plans for a dedicated pickle ball court. Go to our website and take the survey to provide your feedback.
- Hoover Rd has started construction!

**Q & A**

- Inquiry made about the ATT trail as it relates to ADA issues and slope issues. Tom provided a brief history on construction, funding and maintenance needs of the ATT.
- Frank reported that the trail through Ellerbee Creek, near the dog park at Northgate Park is constantly wet. Tom – this is a constant issue and difficult to manage; as this area exists in a flood plain.
- What's the status of the Snow Hill Rd. Study from 2017? Tom provided an update.
- What is the half-penny? Tom provided an overview of the various types of funding sources.
- Water fountains – why do we turn off the water in the winter? Tom – some of our water fountains are unprotected from the weather. Rich added: we're in the process of installing bottle filling stations, beginning with the higher use parks.

- What type of surfacing do we use on our tennis courts and why? Tom: we use a process called (full depth reclamation), we find this process results in a lot less cracking.
- What's the status of the Rock Quarry Park project? Some project delays. . Tom provided an overview of the various types of funding used on this project and updates on some of the planned amenities.

### **New Business:**

#### **RAC Elections (Chair/Vice Chair)**

- Two nominations were received: (1) David Fellerath for Chair and (2) Eric Tullis for Vice Chair.
- David opened the floor for additional nominations.
- Frank made a 1<sup>st</sup> motion to elect David Fellerath as Chair and Eric Tullis as Vice Chair. The motion did not carry as there was further discussion.
- There was discussion about the election process moving forward. Nayo suggested deferring the elections until our October meeting. Nayo: this will allow an opportunity to ask one of our female members, if they would like to serve as chair or vice chair.
- Lynda reminded everyone, that member approval or willingness to serve, must be made prior to submitting a nomination.
- A majority of the members present were in favor of moving forward with the elections.
- After further discussion, Nayo made a 2<sup>nd</sup> motion; and a role call was made. The motion carried; all in favor. David Fellerath was elected as chair and Eric Tullis was elected as vice chair.
- Nayo made a 1<sup>st</sup> motion, making it mandatory, that all nine members must be present for board elections in the future. The motion did not carry.
- Lynda recommended updating our RAC Bylaws to reflect any changes made.
- This topic would be a good question for Sophia, City Attorney's office.
- This topic (RAC Bylaws) was moved to the October meeting for further discussion.

### **Committee Reports: (9:07 am)**

#### **DOST Report**

- A liaison is needed for this commission. David asked members to consider serving on behalf of the RAC. Karthik requested more information, and what is required to serve on this commission.

#### **Park Safety Committee – Frank White**

- Defer to October meeting.

#### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) – David Fellerath**

- Defer to October meeting.

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

- No report at this meeting.

### **Open Discussion:**

- Question: Can we expect, that all our RAC meetings, will end past the 9:00 am hour? David: we are in the process of looking for ways to make our meetings more efficient and timely.

At 9:11 a.m. Frank made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Eric, motion passed all in favor.

#### **Next RAC Meeting:**

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Virtual Meeting

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Lynda Merritt:*