

The City of Durham

Parks & Recreation Department
Recreation Advisory Commission
Wednesday, November 13, 2019
DPR Training Room (1st Floor)
7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Members Present:

David Green, David Fellerath, Marcella Scurlock-Jones, Lesley Strack-Mullem

Members Excused/Unexcused:

Frank White – excused
Rebecca Reyes – excused
Kokou Nayo – excused
Eric Tullis - unexcused

City Council Liaison:

Council Member Alston – not present

City Staff Present:

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

Introduction/Call to Order:

David G. called the meeting to order at 7:37 a.m. and welcomed those present.

Welcome new members:

Jessica Slice – appointed but not officially sworn in and was not present at this meeting. Her absence will not be recorded.

Approval of Minutes:

No quorum at this meeting and no official business was discussed.

Adjustments to the agenda:

- No adjustments to the agenda

Public Comment:

- No public comment.

Director's Report:

- BIG thank you and kudos to David Green for presenting our RAC Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report to City Council. It was well received and David did an outstanding job. Rhonda thanked Lynda for her work on the report. Job well done!
Take-a-ways from the report:
 - Most City Council Members showed an interest in attending a future park tour.
 - Council Member Alston mentioned a group of 8th graders who were providing her with feedback on the condition of our aquatic facilities. She was happy to share that DPR is working on an Aquatics Master Plan that will improve and enhance our aquatic facilities.

- Mayor Schewel proposed increasing the RAC membership due to an overwhelming interest in serving on the Recreation Advisory Commission.
- Council Member Alston reminded the safety subcommittee members to remain sensitive to the feelings that residents have about an increase in policing our parks and open spaces.
- DPR has received the Economic Impact Report from Discover Durham for the 2019 Bimbe' Festival. The total value added to Durham's economy from the festival was \$1,402,479. The economic impact was huge for this one day festival. There was discussion on the added benefits of moving the festival to Rock Quarry Park, not just for DPR, but other festivals as well.
- On Monday, October 28th Mesa Somer from the pickleball community called requesting a meeting with the Director. She wants to meet with staff about establishing designated pickleball courts in Durham. She is planning to bring 20 or 30 residents in support of pickleball. DPR staff have been working on a recommendation to the Park Planning team regarding pickleball court development. Decision makers need to know the opportunities as well as impacts with any proposed change of use. Tom is planning to meet with the group and report back his findings.
- The second of four native habitat maintenance trainings for DPR landscaping staff was held at the "Prairie Island" at the American Tobacco Trailhead. These trainings will help DPR staff understand the care and maintenance for our native habitat areas. The trainings are being conducted by Durham Parks Foundation and Extra Terrestrial Projects through funding from the Burt's Bees Foundation.
- Accessible playgrounds in Durham – there is good momentum building as we look at inclusive playgrounds in Durham. DPR recognizes the need for more inclusive play features, finding the funds is the difficult part. Several community generated Participatory Budgeting projects have focused on this (Lakeview Park, Hillside Park, Burton Park, Drew Granby Park).
- As we approach the winter months, we have started shutting down certain park amenities that are subject to freezing. DPR has started the winterization of irrigations systems, park restrooms and drinking fountains. This process should be complete with all freeze sensitive amenities winterized by November 15th.
 - Bethesda Park
 - Duke Park
 - East End Park
 - Garrett Road Park
 - Sherwood Park
 - Solite Park
 - Southern Boundaries Park
 - Twin Lakes Park
 - West Point on the Eno Park
 - Whippoorwill Park
- Reminder: DPR Employee Appreciation event today from 10:30 am – 2:00 pm
- DPR Park Tour – would you prefer a spring or fall park tour? Do you prefer a tour in place of a regular business meeting or in lieu of one? Added to December RAC agenda.
- January Meeting – this is our annual RAC breakfast meeting. The DPR Accomplishments Report will be presented at this meeting.
- One of the RAC goals talks about the need to be involved with our youth. One way the RAC can achieve this goal is to work more closely with the My Durham Program. Rhonda suggested each RAC member consider their own talents and skill set, and look for ways we can assist our youth. What particular skills do you have that could be shared? Or maybe a work talent or mentoring opportunity. Jason and his staff are always looking for new programming ideas. Email Jason if

you have any ideas to share. Their programming is unique because they get to select the type of programming they want to do every 30 days. Do you have a special career skill or mentoring opportunity?

RAC Reporting Items:

- DPR events:
 - RAC Report to City Council – attended by David Green, David Fellerath & Kokou Nayo
- PAC meetings:
- Community Engagement events:
 - David F. volunteered with the Bike-A-Bull City event hosted by Bike Durham. He inquired about the type of relationship DPR has with Bike Durham. Do we want to have a closer relationship and participate in their events? Rich – we need them to reach out to us; we will work with them, if we have staff available. We do share information with various groups. Bike Durham will need to contact DPR. Staff receives many requests from nonprofits and various agencies.
 - The DHA Crime Task Force held their annual meeting in October – Marcella attended and reported that both Danielle Haynes and Reimari Mateo-Perez gave an excellent presentation and passed out useful resources to share.
 - Marcella reported some issues relating to homeless encampments in Orchard Park. What can residents do instead of dialing 911 all the time? Tom reported that staff clean the park regularly but this is a vulnerable park, and staff do not handle enforcement. Staff are working closely with the CIT team and there was some discussion about the struggles of dealing with home encampment issues and working within the parameters of the encampment policy. Would additional park signage help, or do we have too much signage?

RAC Action Items – Fee Waiver Requests

Fee Waiver Request - Rich Hahn

No fee waivers were discussed at this meeting – no quorum present.

Old Business:

- Park/Project Updates (Tom)
 - East End Park Tennis Court Renovation - half-penny project, construction is ongoing, work includes long awaited repairs to tennis courts, removal of vegetation, and fencing was replaced.
 - ONDP – back area will be used for parking and adding in some “pop up” programming.
 - Athletics - expanding the natural and artificial turf fields, presentation to show you what you bought
 - CIP level project – C.M. Herndon parking lot/field upgrade – replacement of the artificial field at Herndon, carry forward funding– which includes adding lights, will be used to increase rentable/programmable field hours. Allows us more flexibility by having two groups playing on the field instead of one.
 - Trails – Kelly Bryant Bridge under design development Third Fork Creek design development, assessing
 - Trail implementation program predicts where our next trails will be, where do we go from here.
 - We have 68 parks, 30 existing trails, and 90 future trails

- RP – Long Meadow Park improvements include, paving, modular restrooms, and park cleanup.
- Hoover Road Park (front playground, practice field lighting, and paved parking) staff will need to review the construction documents. Obtaining feedback from the actual player groups will hopefully keep us from making mistakes. The end product is much better if we include them in planning process.

New Business:

- Board Membership Recommendation – David G. reported that during the RAC Report to City Council, Mayor Schewel suggested the RAC consider increasing their membership size from nine members to eleven members to give us more coverage in the community. The public interest in the RAC has increased. David feels it's a good idea.
 - Leslie suggested discussing individual members interest and see if we have any gaps.
 - There was a discussion on board membership numbers and looking at a proposal to increase our numbers. This discussion will be added to the December RAC agenda.
 - Will increasing the number of members affect the outcome of reaching a quorum?
 - We may need to come up with parameters, something we can use to measure the outcome.
 - With more members we could form more subcommittees, and provide feedback to staff.

Add this item to the December agenda.

Committee Reports:

- DOST Report (no report) Frank White
- Park Safety Committee (no report) Frank White
- BPAC David Fellerath
 - David did not attend the meeting but shared that the purpose of the meeting was to follow-up on items from the Untokening Durham event.
- Hillandale Advisory Committee Lesley Stracks-Mullem
 - Studies have indicated there's been a decline in the interest of golf. The goal is to increase the number of returning players who play golf. Green fees are about the same as last year. Club sales are way down, course repairs are up/seeding is up, theft is an issue. There was a pipe break inside a conservation area. Lesley wanted to know what the arrangement is for marketing with DPR. They're looking at a program for a discounted membership for all city employees. Lesley offered to help out with the marketing. Rhonda explained the dynamics of the golf course management. The golf course is city owned and the CMO oversees the management. Marketing would go through Public Affairs and finance would weigh in as well. Finance would probably need to make sure the golf passes would not be considered a fringe benefit.
 - Rhonda pointed out that Karl is responsible for the marketing and this type of request should go through the city manager's office.
 - Several schools including NCCU utilize the golf course.
 - Rhonda added that Karl is doing a great job!

Open Discussion:

- Park Tour – prepare to discuss this topic during the December RAC meeting. Things to consider: spring or fall tour? Dates and times? Also, bring some ideas of parks or facilities you'd like to visit.
- Lesley pointed out that the November 2020 RAC meeting is scheduled on Veteran's Day. Staff will need to change the date of this meeting.
- Jason provided some background information on the MyDurham program. This type of programming will make it easier to capture unique and trending programs. The MyDurham team will be happy to work with the RAC. What life experiences do you have that you could share? Send them to Jason and he will connect with the MyDurham staff. We are always looking for new programming ideas to share with the teens. Ask yourself, what you guys want from DPR. A civics lesson maybe? Either individually or collectively as a board. All recreation programming ideas are welcome such as: etiquette, mentoring, communication, enrichment cooking classes, culinary events, how to start a league, how to run a business. Share some information about life experiences or careers. Maybe a physical therapist to come out and talk to teens about the science of that field. We are very open and flexible to whatever you want to offer up. It can be interactive.
- David G. the astronomy sidewalk tours. Tie in for the pad out at the outdoor education pavilion. Tom provided an overview of how the pavilion was developed and designed. Staff are looking for ways to expand more programming in that area.
- Night programming seems to be very trendy these days.
- Discussion on the very cool programming we're doing at West Point on the Eno.
- David F. – news reports of HR issue with DPR on Oct. 22nd labor dispute. Do we have any role in this issue, is there any oversight the RAC should do? Rhonda reported that the allegations were thoroughly investigated by HR and the CMO and the claims were unsubstantiated.

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:59 a.m.; it was seconded.

Next RAC Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2019
7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
DPR Training Room – 1st Floor

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lynda Merritt: