

Meeting Summary - Parks and Recreation Council Meeting, May 5, 2021

Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Haywood Rhodes (Chair), John Greeson (Vice-Chair), Andrew Landstrom, Bob Smith, Mikki Fleming, Cecily Kritz, Gina Reyman, Chris Colvin, Xilong Zhao.

Chapel Hill/Carrboro Greenways Commission rep: Alice Armstrong

Members Absent: Tim Tippin

Staff: David Stancil, Beth Young

Guests: Kathleen Beech, Tim Spruill, Ed Cox and Bruce Betz

Chair Rhodes opened the meeting. The March 3 and April 7 meeting summaries were reviewed and accepted. New member Chris Colvin (Carrboro Town representative) was introduced and each board member introduced themselves. Rhodes discussed the remaining vacancy in the PRC and suggested tabling any suggestions for appointments to the BOCC until after their summer break. Stancil stated that the BOCC may not get to appointments until after their break. The council agreed to wait until BOCC reconvenes.

New Business: Pickleball Needs: Chair Rhodes turned the floor over to several guests on the meeting to discuss pickleball. Bruce Betz spoke first and expressed their concern about the lack of pickleball courts in Hillsborough and the county. Currently only one court that is temporarily taped for Pickleball on the tennis courts at Fairview Park. Indoor courts at the SportsPlex are limited hours due COVID and indoor courts. Best solution would be to have outdoor courts opened year round. Fastest growing sport in the US today. Ed Cox spoke next and noted he was the organizer of play at the Passmore Center and at the Fairview Park court – three days a week for two hours at a time. The priorities they see at the moment are permanently marked courts at Fairview – three of them. Kathleen Beech spoke of the group's dedication. Tim Spruill noted lots of Hillsborough people are forced to drive outside of Hillsborough to play. There is a great demand for outdoor pickleball courts in Hillsborough. John Greeson asked the group if they have approached the Town of Hillsborough Park and Recreation board with their concerns. Spruill stated that Cox had talked with the Town of Hillsborough but stressed that it is a minimal amount of space dedicated to pickleball. Greeson stated that he wanted to make sure their concerns had been presented to all of the Parks and Recreation boards in the county since we are in a somewhat unusual configuration with multiple jurisdictions. Stancil stated that the Fairview Park tennis courts are the only ones that Orange County has in its system. In the past the tennis courts at Orange High were administered by Orange County, but years ago Orange County Schools took over the management of those eight courts and reservations now go through the school system. Stancil explained in regards to the lack of courts in the County system that until about a year ago he had never been approached about pickleball. Because there was no funding to address the need that was raised, he had initiated a pilot project taping lines for pickleball on one of the tennis courts at Fairview Park. The County does have on going license agreement with Orange Tennis Club for the use of the tennis courts at Fairview. There are funds to resurface and reline the courts at Fairview and there may be an opportunity there to permanently line those courts for pickleball and tennis. Stancil stated that we do have funds in the Capital Investment Fund for future tennis courts at Cedar Grove Park and Soccer.com Center but those funds have been pushed out to 2026 at the earliest. Rhodes thanked the pickleball guests and Stancil

for the update. Rhodes asked what was needed from the PRC – Stancil suggested that one approach could be asking for authority to expend the existing funds already allocated for the resurfacing and relining of the courts at Fairview, and ask that include lines for tennis and pickleball. Rhodes suggested a PRC member write a letter asking for this to the manager and board for next month’s meeting. Greeson would like to know the cost of adding the pickleball lining to the project. Stancil will provide that. Reyman was interested in adding pickleball to their list of needs. Stancil will provide a letter to PRC at the June meeting seeking authorization to move forward with Fairview Park court resurfacing. Members from the pickleball community will reach out to Orange Tennis Club about sending a letter of support to the PRC. Rhodes thanked the guest for coming and sharing their thoughts and needs with the council.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2030 - Stancil sent a link prior to the meeting for the council. One idea was to review this, and at the June meeting discuss the 2014 Master Plan document and what needs have changed, where we are and how things are going. Rhodes requested a bullet point list of what has been done since the 2014 document. Reyman would like the racial equity portion be factored in. Greeson would like to solicit some input from citizens. Stancil proposed that the Council wait and take a more detailed look at the plan in August or September.

Old Business: BOCC April 22 Worksession Review – Rhodes noted that he spoke about the PRC workplan that was presented to the BOCC. Stancil stated that the important role parks and open spaces had played during the pandemic was noted by commissioners.

Director Report: Project updates - Pre-bid conference for Blackwood Farm Park – expecting the project to go to the BOCC for approval in June with construction to begin in July. The park will be closed for the duration of the construction estimated to be about a year. Summer camp will be held at reduced level of participation – seasonal staff are funded by programs. Parks seasonal staff will be reduced going into next fiscal year. Staff is looking at community center rentals coming back on line with the increased gathering limits this summer.

June meeting topics: Recreation quarterly report, pickleball follow up, racial equity plan, Friends of P&R group update.

Council & Committee Reports: Intergovernmental Parks Work Group – Kritz reported that the group met in April and each jurisdiction reported how they had pivoted in service delivery during COVID. All of the providers noted how well the Health Department had kept all parks and recreation departments informed of the ever changing regulations in regards to the Pandemic.

Friends of the Orange County Parks & Recreation – Reyman stated there has been a meeting, and she will be on the board as well as Greeson and Rhodes. Welcome other members to participate,

The next PRC meeting will be held virtually June 2, 2021.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.