

GREENSBORO PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, March 11, 2009 – 6:00pm
Trotter Recreation Center – 3906 Betula Street

PRESENT MEMBERS: Rose Marie Ponton, Chair, Carl Brower, Jr, Vice-Chair, Paul Brown, Marc Bush, Ken Free, Lori Galbreath, David Hoggard, Bill Knight

ABSENT MEMBERS: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Steve Branson, Candice Bruton, Kathy Cates, Jenny Caviness, Ben Free, John Hughes, Darryl Kosciak, Dan Maxson, Bob Morgan, Acting City Manager and Acting Parks & Recreation Director, Brooks Mullane, Marcie Richardson, Laurie Thore, Bernadette White, James White, Chris Wilson,

The regular meeting of the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Commission was held at Trotter Recreation Center. Rose Marie Ponton, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the February 11, 2009 Commission Meeting were approved as submitted.

Recognition

John Hughes, Youth and Community Services Manager, recognized the Parks and Recreation March Employee of the Month, James White.

Trotter Recreation Center Presentation

Ben Free, Trotter Recreation Center Director, presented the Commission with history of the center and events and programs currently held at the center.

OLD BUSINESS

Interim Director Update

This item was addressed later during the meeting under Acting Director Comments.

Tanger Family Bicentennial Garden Proposal: Sub Committee Report

Chris Wilson, Parks, Gardens, and Program Support Manager, stated that the Commission sub-committee met on this item March 9, 2009. One donation of one million dollars has been received by the Tanger family. There is an additional one million dollar donation being proposed to continue the name of Tanger Family Bicentennial Garden in perpetuity. The sub-committee discussed the designation and the parameters around the designation to insure that monies can be used at all gardens. The donations would possibly be used at any garden for current and future projects. By-laws would need to reflect that these funds would be housed in another organization and continue to be designated for the gardens as originally intended in the event of dissolution of Greensboro Beautiful, Inc. The sub-committee reviewed the naming policy in terms of what can be agreed upon with naming the facility. The policy states 99 years are given for perpetuity. The subcommittee favored the recommendation with a motion by Marc Bush and a second by Carl Brower, Jr. to present this recommendation to the Commission for possible approval.

Action Taken

A motion was made by Marc Bush and seconded to approve the subcommittee recommendations. A vote in favor was unanimous.

75th Anniversary Update

Jenny Caviness, GYC Coordinator, invited the Commission to attend the 75th Anniversary Festival at Country Park on June 27, 2009. The event will kick off with a bike ride at 8:00am. The festival will be held from 10:00am-4:00pm. Activities include hayrides, moon walks, games, arts, crafts, face painting, soccer kick outs, pedal boats,

food, etc. The entire department has assisted in planning this event. City Officials along with city staff will conduct a welcome. There will be MUSEP concert beginning at 7:00pm. The rain date is scheduled for June 28, 2009.

Hope Project Update

Darryl Kosciak, Youth First Coordinator, stated that the Hope Project is a community wide collaboration to steer youth away from gangs and gang related activity. Planning for this project began in 2005 which is currently working with over 30 children. There are currently 2 Community Outreach workers and one Administrative Assistant. The vision of this project is to build capacity and increase partnerships. This project is a relationship trust building effort with youth lasting 6 months to 2 years. Goals of the Hope Project include future preparation, distancing youth from gangs and gang activity, and sustain positive direction. The max capacity of participants is 45-60.

Kosciak reported that Goldie Wells' Life Group met with Hope Project staff, volunteers, mentor program representatives, the Gang Unit, and others. These collaborations have been broken down into a mental health team and faith action team in order to work with youth across the community more effectively.

Hope Project staff showed a documentary video at Claremont Courts regarding the history of gangs in this country, why and where it started, and how did it to progress to where it is today. This was a great opportunity to partner with the community and pass along information as well as promote the Hope Project.

Staff has developed a prevention presentation which was not included in the initial goals of the Hope Project. This has been conducted at all 10 recreation centers.

Kosciak continued stating that a Hope Project Hangout was held in February with 22 youth in attendance where they went to Celebration Station, then to Folk Center where people from the Upward Bound Program at A&T conducted an hour presentation informing them of their program. After the program they went and ate at the UNCG cafeteria then attended the UNCG basketball game. This was the first time a good portion of them had been on a college campus.

Eight children have been targeted to participate in the Upward Bound Program, whose goal is to breakdown any obstacles that exist in order for them to receive a college education.

The Weaver Foundation has donated tickets for Youth First participants to attend the NC Asheboro Zoo.

Discussions have been held with JobLink regarding their summer youth employment program.

There will be a first Hope Project Retreat held next week.

Kosciak stated that in 2008 the Hope Project received funding in the amount of \$200,000 each year for 3 years from the Weaver and Bryan Foundations in which funds are to be used for staffing until 2011. Kosciak stated that a grant from the Governor's Crime Commission was received in order to open 5 recreation centers for after school programs, basketball, and football at no charge.

Budget Update

Dan Maxson, Administrative Services Manager, stated that it was reported during the previous Commission meeting that the City was looking at a possible 8-11 million dollar deficit for the upcoming year based on projected revenues from sales and property tax revenue from the state. This number has been defined at slightly fewer than 8 million dollars. Discussions are being held regarding how the City will make up the shortfall. Maxson encouraged the Commission to attend one of the community budget meetings being held throughout the city regarding the budget and citizen priorities. The information gathered from these public sessions will be included into the process in which the Interim City Manager, Bob Morgan, will be presenting to City Council which will take place in April. Maxson stated that the next community budget meeting is scheduled for tomorrow evening at Bessemer Elementary School at 6:00pm which is located in Councilperson Goldie Wells' district.

Ponton reported that she attended one of the community budget meetings and there were not any negative comments regarding Parks and Recreation. Ponton also encouraged Members to attend one of the meetings.

NEW BUSINESS

Planning and Project Update

Candice Bruton, Planning and Project Specialist, stated that the capital projects are achieved primarily through bond dollars. Another way to achieve smaller projects funding is through the Neighborhood Small Projects Fund, which is a fund that is administered out of Housing and Community Development where \$100,000 is set aside each year by City Council for neighborhoods. There is an application process for communities to apply for improvements on city owned property that would benefit the neighborhood. Applications are submitted in September each year and a group of staff and citizens reviews the applications and makes a recommendation for funding. The recommendation is then given to the Parks and Recreation Commission for consideration then to the Planning Board then to City Council. Russ Clegg with Community and Housing Development will present this item at the next Commission meeting. Grants and Partnerships is an additional way of achieving capital projects.

Bruton stated that the next bond sale is anticipated for fall 2010. Bruton updated the Commission on the following projects:

Barber Park

This project is funded from the 2000 bond referendum. Phase I construction has resumed including a sprayground, concession stand, changing rooms, restrooms, pedestrian ways, infrastructure, parking, and picnic shelters. Completion expected fall 2009 weather permitting. Additional amenities included in Phase II are contingent on the bond sales from the 2008 bond referendum.

Keeley Park

This park is approximately 140 acres in northeast Greensboro formally known as Keeley Nursery. When the nursery was privatized it was recognized during the comprehensive planning that eastern Greensboro needed a park. Phase I will include a sprayground, parking, restroom, concessions, pond improvements to 5-7 ponds, and a community garden. The community garden would include a green house. This project is on hold, with the exception of the community garden, contingent on the bond sales from the 2000 bond referendum of approximately 2 million dollars. A Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grant was awarded for this project in the amount of \$500,000.

Southwest Recreation Center

Southwest Recreation Center is a 2000 bond project. This is a 15,000 square foot recreation center anticipated to serve the Adams Farm area. The property for this facility was acquired in 2006. The design is complete. This project is pending future bond sale.

Gateway Gardens

This project is a partnership with Greensboro Beautiful, Inc. Phase I will include infrastructure, pedestrian walkways, parking lots, heritage garden, children's garden, and rain garden. Design is currently being finalized. Construction anticipated beginning late spring 2009 and complete within one year. This is a 2000 bond project costing approximately 2.4 million dollars. A PARTF grant in the amount of \$500,000 was awarded for the Gateway Gardens.

Bob Morgan added that this project will return to City Council Tuesday, March 17 2009. A community meeting will be held at Windsor Recreation Center on Saturday, March 14, 2009 at 10:00am to explain 3 possible proposals associated with traffic on Lee Street. Proposals include a traffic signal at Florida and Lee Streets and would be city funded with a cost of \$30-40,000, a left turn only crossover for traffic heading west to eliminate the need of doing a u-turn at a cost of \$180,000, or a blinking light. City Council will give direction on how to proceed.

Brightwood Neighborhood Park

This will be development of a new passive neighborhood park off of Summit Ave near Brightwood Elementary School. The cost is \$100,000. This project is part of the 2000 bond. Implementation is scheduled for summer 2009.

Ole Asheboro Park

Parks and Recreation was the recipient of a 1.3 parcel of land at the corner of Lee and Arlington Streets to be used as a passive park. This project will go through a public input design process. The Piedmont Land Conservancy was the receiver of the land donation. There are restrictions as to what type of amenities this park can include. Public design process is scheduled for this spring 2009. This is a 2000 bond project at \$125,000 with an additional funding of \$24,000 from the Neighborhood Small Project Program.

Westerwood Restroom Project

This project should be complete spring 2009. This is a partnership with the Westerwood Neighborhood Association who was awarded a Neighborhood Small Project Program grant. Funding was provided by the 2000 bond and the small project grant with a combined total of \$227,000.

War Memorial Stadium

There was a stakeholders group years ago that identified options for the disrepair of the stadium with the assistance of an architectural firm. This facility has not been successful with bond referendums; however there is a lot of community interest to restore and improve the stadium. A special project application has been submitted to Senator Brad Miller for possible funding. Discussions have taken place with perhaps the Farmers' Market evolving into more of a City Market and utilizing the stadium.

Bob Morgan, Interim City Manager, added that the grant submitted, if awarded, would primarily be used for the work that was done by the stakeholders. The application requests sufficient funding (7 million dollars) for the stadium and the entire park. The idea to expand the Farmer's Market into a City Market was included in the application. The application was written to where perhaps a stakeholder group could reconvene. This project was included in the stimulus list. Morgan continued stating that the Parks and Recreation Commission was asked by City Council to make a decision regarding the use of the facility and it was determined that the stadium would be used as an amateur baseball facility. Approximately 250 games are currently being held there per year.

Land Acquisition

This item was included in the 2006 bond. This is pending a future bond sale of 2.4 million dollars.

Trail Expansion

This item is pending a future 2006 bond sale of 1.178 million dollars. This project will implement recommendations made by the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Master Plan.

Skate Park

This project is pending a future 2006 bond sale of \$575,000. There is strong community enthusiasm and support for this project. This will be Greensboro's first skate park. Currently site locations are being assessed. Potential sites include Carolyn Allen Park and the downtown area. Staff is exploring sites requested by the community. Staff is currently maintaining a distribution list of those contacting Parks and Recreation so that they can be contacted when the public design process begins. Ryan Routh, citizen and skate park advocate, has raised funds to be used towards the skate park. Councilman, Mike Barber, strongly supports the skate park.

Southwest Park Improvements

There is \$375,000 included in the 2006 bond for park improvements which is pending a future bond sale. The recreation center will be nestled in a 30 acre site. The bond funds will be used to upgrade the site with park amenities, multi-purpose fields, trails, and picnic shelters as identified by the public planning process in the Master Plan.

Heath Park

This project is funded by the Neighborhood Small Project Program at a cost of \$20,000. This park is located in eastern Greensboro off of Franklin Boulevard. This Phase I Heath Park Master Plan project includes improved landscaping at park entrance, a new park sign, and improved parking. These improvements will begin spring 2009.

Ardmore Park Bridge

This park off of Florida Street used to consist of a pedestrian bridge over a deep stream that connected two parts of the neighborhood. This bridge will be replaced at an estimated cost of \$60-70,000. There are storm water regulations that become stricter in terms of buffers and how close the footings can be to the top of the bank. Parks and Recreation is working with Storm Water to project how large the bridge needs to be, how deep the footings need to be, etc. These needs may change the cost of this project. This project will be funded by the Neighborhood Small Project Program and is scheduled to be complete fall 2009.

Springdale Park

This passive park is located in College Hill at the corner of Spring Garden and Spring Streets. This is a park redevelopment project scheduled for summer 2009; however trees have recently been planted as part of the redevelopment. This redevelopment will consist of a new playground, re-working of the pedestrian ways, entrance renovation, a new sign, new fencing, and landscaping. The Neighborhood Small Projects Program will fund \$19,000. This park is located in a historic district; therefore funds in the amount of \$60,000 will be utilized from the municipal service district. The cost of this project is 40% lower than anticipated.

Warnersville Parking Lot

This project will add an additional 27 parking places at the center. Once construction began it was recognized that the soil needs stability and is not suitable for a parking lot. Due to the area needing to be stabilized the estimated cost of the project came back significantly higher at \$70-80,000. The community was granted \$35,000. Contractors will be visiting the site and give another estimate for possible savings. If there is not a savings staff will look internally for possible funding. The community has submitted a second Neighborhood Small Project grant request.

Greenway Park Bridge

This park is located in Sunset Hills. This project consists of installation of a pedestrian footbridge over a small stream within the park. Construction documents are complete. Permitting is currently taking place. Construction anticipated for spring 2009 at a cost of \$18,600.

Pomona Accessible Ball Field

This is an Eagle Scout project almost complete by Brandt Taylor. Taylor rose close to \$100,000 for this project and participation from Weaver funds to build an all accessible ball field.

Aquatic Center

This 12 million dollar aquatic center was approved with the 2008 bond and has generated much community interest. Staff is currently working with the City Manager's Office to identify and refine the stakeholders group. The initial stakeholders group held a meeting in December 2008. The stakeholders are charged with finding a site for the aquatic center and making recommendations to the Commission and City Council. When placed on the bond this facility was envisioned to be a competitive venue and would host local and regional swim meets, consist of a warm-up pool and perhaps a diving well. Stakeholders will be responsible for refining these amenities.

Bruton distributed a list and descriptions of the remaining 2008 bond projects.

Commission Tour

Ponton requested possible dates to conduct a Commission tour to Parks and Recreation facilities.

Maxson gave possible dates and requested the Commission to submit their date recommendation to Richardson.

A recommendation was made to possibly conduct the tour in May 2009 in place of the Commission meeting.

Citizen Board Member Forum

Bernadette White, Special Projects Coordinator, informed the Commission that the 30th Annual Citizen Board Member Forum will be held August 13-15 at the Airport Marriott. This forum brings together members of Parks and Recreation Commissions and Boards throughout the state to discuss the issues and growth in the leisure field. As representatives of the communities working with the professional agencies citizen board members seek information

on ways to increase community focus on securing green space and providing positive programs and services for citizens. The theme this year is "Securing the Future of Parks and Recreation" to answer the question of where Parks and Recreation is headed in the next 30 years. Sessions will include team building through partnerships, gang awareness and security in parks, laws effecting parks and recreation, and the importance of citizen board member advocacy. The key note speaker at the banquet will be Dr. Phil Wray who will speak on the issues and trends of parks and recreation of today. Members will be receiving more information.

White stated that information regarding the 2nd Annual Recreation Resource Services (RRS) Teleconference information was included in Commission packets and will be held May 7, 2009 from 6:00pm-8:30pm. RRS is currently accepting questions that Members would like addressed at the teleconference. White requested that questions for the teleconference be submitted to Richardson.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

- NONE -

ACTING DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Morgan informed the Commission that an announcement should be made next week regarding the Interim Parks & Recreation Director.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Bush stated that it was a successful weekend with the Women's ACC Tournament held at the Coliseum. The economic impact of this tournament was 5-6 million dollars. Bush reported that Paul Brown volunteered during the tournament. The NCAA will be held at the Coliseum next week. The economic of this impact should be approximately 15-18 million dollars.

Hoggard stated a NY Yankees chair has been delivered to the Greensboro Historical Museum. Hoggard announced that his term has expired and this will be his final meeting and welcomed Bill Knight.

Brown stated that he will be volunteering once again at the Coliseum next week for the NCAA Tournament and welcomed Bill Knight.

Ponton announced that Brown will be the Commission representative for Playful City.

With no further business Ponton adjourned the meeting at 7:34 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcie Richardson, Executive Assistant
Greensboro Parks and Recreation