



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Hickory Grove Recreation Center., 6709 Pence Road, Charlotte, NC at 6 p.m.

**PRC MINUTES
November 14, 2012**

ATTENDANCE

PRC Present:

Rob Brisley, Chair
Kendel Bryant, Vice-Chair
Elaine Powell, Executive Secretary
Jim Garges, Park and Recreation Director
Ed Barnhart
Doug Burnett
Brenda McMoore
Charlie McRee
Joe Pata
Sheryl Smith

PRC Absent:

Norman Mitchell

Resigned seats:
Northern Towns
North Region – N2
Southern Towns

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Chair Rob Brisley, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance and introductions of each commissioner.

Welcome and Introductions:

Lola Massad, Community and Recreation Center Services Division Director introduced and welcomed **Hickory Grove Recreation Center Staff**. Hickory Grove Recreation Center opened its doors in 2006 to the Hickory Grove Community as one of five (5) joint use facilities. Introduced were Ali Gitt, Facility Manager; Ali welcomed Recreation Assistant Melanie Kirschner, Recreation Assistant Gerald “Nick” Nixon, and Recreation Employment Corp (REC) Mentee Kenyon Smutherman. Among center highlights mentioned were the upcoming **International Badminton Competition** and a welcomed look at the hardwood gym floor, a highly-desired floor type. Division Director Lola Massad recommends this gym flooring for future recreation center builds.

Catherine Luckenbaugh, Curator for the **James F. Matthews Center for Biodiversity Studies** at

Reedy Creek Park and Nature Preserve welcomed Phong Dinh, **Eagle Scout**, on behalf of the Nature Preserves and Natural Resources Division as well as the Stewardship Advisory Council . Catherine recognized Phong's skill, commitment and community service for his **Retention Wall Project at Reedy Creek Nature Center**.

*At **Reedy Creek Nature Center**, in the area where Phong built the retaining wall, the land slopes down towards the building. At this same location, the gutters from the building discharge onto the sidewalks at the base of the slope. The runoff from the eroding slope, combined with the water discharging from the gutters, would create a big slick muddy mess on the sidewalk after rain. Not only was the back sidewalk dangerous, but entering the building after rain would lead to tracking serious mud into the building. The retaining wall and plantings have stabilized the slope and prevented the eroding soil from accumulating onto the sidewalk. Phong also installed a drain at the base of the slope to direct water away from the sidewalk.*

Catherine helped afterward by selecting plants to go into the flower bed.

Commissioner Elaine Powell **commended** Phong Dinh, on behalf of Stewardship, and provided regards and sentiments on his endeavor to become an Eagle Scout as well as regards for his community service.

Phong Dinh was applauded by all Park and Recreation Commission members and extended thanks through handshakes with each Commissioner.

Director Jim Garges **commended** Phong Dinh's parents, who were also in attendance.

Lola Massad, Community and Recreation Center Services Division Director also introduced and welcomed the **2012 Recreation Employment Corp (REC) Mentees**. Introductions were provided for the members in attendance which included mentees Malik Diggs, Kenyon Smutherman, TiiMyr Roberts, Terea Chaplin, Darryl Connor, Richard Isom, Jr., Quadir Black, and Malik Black.

Director Jim Garges **commended** Lola Massad and her Community & Recreation Center Services team that has supported the mission and goals of the **REC program**. Director Garges emphasized that in recognizing the benefit, community involvement and citizen development the program offered, the County Manager supported and increased funding for the program.

Regards were heard from parents in attendance, among them one who provided high regards for the program having had two children who have successfully participated, as well as program supporters. All members of the REC program were congratulated and applauded by the Park and Recreation Commission members.

Proclamations and Awards:

Director Garges **commended** the entire Park and Recreation Department on their designation as the **2012 Gold Medal Grand Award** winners. The Gold Medal Grand Award was acknowledged and presented for display during the meeting.

Chair Rob Brisley **inquired** on the requirements for securing the designation and upon indication of accreditation as a factor, **requested the PRC be notified** when the Accreditation process begins again.

Public Appearance - None

Program/Staff Presentation -:

Enterprise Services Division

Chair Rob Brisley **recognized** MCPRD **Enterprise Services** Division Director James Alsop, who updated the Park and Recreation Commission on the American Legion Memorial Stadium and Grady Cole Center.

James Alsop recognized Gary Runions, Project Manager with Clark Nexsen who provided an update on the **American Legion Memorial Stadium** via PowerPoint presentation that included repairs completed in Phase I and planned repairs in Phase II. Primary objectives were the life safety and functionality updates needed to provide the safest and most customer friendly site possible.

Commissioner Ed Barnhart, **inquired** whether the current selected (renovation/ upgrade) options dove-tail into current and future master plans for the site **or** into a specified dollar amount /budget aim. Gary Runions indicated both were currently equal considerations.

Commissioner Ed Barnhart, **inquired** whether there were plans to put a concession stand on the North site other than the tents that presently existed. Clark Nexsen advises that currently there is no plan to put a permanent concession stand at that site due to planning and cost considerations. All options now are presently temporary options, which is also due to building code.

Commissioner Ed Barnhart, **offered regards** and likes the vision of maintaining as much of the historical aspects of the site as possible.

Questions and answers followed from the Commissioners.

Director Garges, **emphasized** we are almost at a cross-roads, however in prioritizing the Department must take care of first life safety issues and other like requisite priorities first. The current plan (*presented during the meeting*) does not represent the “final” state. Discussion and master plan revisions must be made to determine what the final state will look like. There appear to be two camps; those who like the historic nature and only want to address functionality; and a second camp who want a larger stadium that accommodates more and are not so concerned about history. “Lots of public discussion” will occur before any changes are made. These improvements by Clark Nexsen are needed and improve the site by leaps and bounds. Next steps would be to finish the improvements, start the master planning process for the Greenway and Independence Park Connector (to include) Grady Cole, then finding the funding and capital to do the next phases.

Commissioner Bryant, **inquired** as to the cost of the recommendations; James Alsop indicated the current cost was the 3.8 million dollars allocated by the County

Commissioners. Likely an additional 3 to 5 million more may be needed to accomplish additional recommendations as they relate to this site.

Commissioner Powell, **emphasized** hopes that accessibility issues have been/were being addressed as they related to staff and vendors, and not only customers. Clark Nexsen indicates that code and ADA requirements have been met as it relates to accessibility. All entrances are 10 feet wide. Accessibility includes special needs and staff being able to circulate and get around the facility easily. Carts and equipments should also be accommodated in the improvements.

Commissioner Burnette, **inquired** regarding the lighting. Specifically, in what set of funds (the first group of second group of funds), would the lighting addressed. Director Garges provided background that a lot of the foundation area for the poles has started to deteriorate. Cost estimates have been provided to replace the lighting. Therefore, this has been prioritized. Per Clark Nexsen there will be no addition to lighting elevations, and a 25 year warranty would be included.

Chairman Rob Brisley, **inquired** regarding mentioned safety issues on South side. Specifically, what are the timeframes for getting them resolved. Per Michael Moraglia, Facility Manager II, this portion of the site is a retaining wall that is not presently being used or has very limited use. Michael noted the wall is near the storage shed and field house. Site staff is aware of this concern and have been provided with cautionary instructions for when the limited use of this area is required.

Chairman Rob Brisley, **inquired** regarding the concourse material. Per Clark Nexsen it will be concrete and should last a very long time.

Commissioner Joe Pata, **inquired** whether there is an estimated timeframe. Per Clark Nexsen, as it relates to construction the estimate is approximately 6 months which includes expediting the schedule for the press box and mentioned portions of the stadium in the presentation. As preliminary groundwork, seating arrangements have been made to accommodate construction (phases).

Commissioner Pata further inquired whether this is in line with asking for more funds. According to Director Garges, the Department is moving ahead and will make presentations to the County Manager at the appropriate juncture.

Chairman Rob Brisley, **inquired** regarding the anticipated seating capacity. Per James Alsop, it is right at 17,000.

Chairman Rob Brisley, **inquired** regarding the lighting foundation gap issues. Specifically, whether they are in the current or future repairs plan. Per Clark Nexsen, they are in the current plan.

Commissioner Joe Pata, **inquired** whether the proposal to be executed is delineated by Life Safety and then Functionality issues. Per Director Garges, it is. Director Garges offered that while some items addressed may not be life safety and may be over the 3.8M allocated, some of these things the Department really must get done for site effectiveness. No real work, as it relates to funding research, was done to get to the original number allocated, therefore it is somewhat low; there exists a lot of good justification for increasing it.

Questions which would need to be answered would include “Do we have the capacity” and/or “the capital budget to absorb a little more.”

Commissioner Joe Pata, **inquired** for future reference, is there an idea of how much rework would be needed in the master plan. Director Garges indicated that once we finish the full master plan, it will include what needs to be done and “what would you do to Grady Cole Center and the Independence Park Greenway Connector?” scenarios.

Reference Documents:

- 4a.1 Enterprise Services Division – Clark Nexsen Presentation (property of Clark Nexsen)

Capital Planning Division

Chair Rob Brisley **recognized** MCPRD **Capital Planning** Greenway Planner Gwen Cook, who updated the Park and Recreation Commission on the recent community concern regarding previously communicated changes to the access of McAlpine Creek Greenway.

Gwen Cook presented the PRC members with the handout, “Changes Coming to Upper McAlpine Creek.” Gwen clarified that “McAlpine Creek” references as they relate to the presentation are referencing both creeks on site when referring to the relief sewer project. Clarity on the extent and notification of the project were provided, a result of recent misinformation provided by local news publications. For public safety the greenway will be officially closed during construction periods, but will be available/will not impact agreed upon events with the running community. 5K runs will continue uninterrupted. There are not now and will not be competitive runs due to inconsistent surfaces. Additionally, it is very expensive to maintain this trail. At the conclusion of the project 4 weirs will become 4 bridges, and granular trails will become consistent surfaces for running.

The first community workshop went somewhat unrepresented by the press.

Questions and answers followed from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Barnhart, **noted** a couple of things: with few exceptions nothing has changed from what was put out to the community at public meetings. The greenway will be closed and the park will not. 5K trails will be operational during high season. A lot of misinformation exists. Staff have been very accommodating to the running community and looked at many options; homeowners in the area were resistant. Misinformation will hopefully get corrected through the sharing of accurate information. Commissioner Barnhart requests that all PRC and Advisory Council Liaisons please give all names and people who need correct information, to Gwen. Commissioner Barnhart encouraged concerned PRC members to attend the associated public meetings.

Commissioner Burnette, **noted** that the crown jewel in the park appears to be the trails. Anxiety seems to exist around use of these trails and the message is being convoluted and misrepresented. Runners need to come through the best portal (Athletic or Greenway) or the advisory council who can best inform them and hear their voice in matters.

Per Gwen Cook, Park and Recreation works diligently to accommodate citizen runners, how we do this should be suggested to Preston Buckman, if they raise any suggestions or concerns.

Director Garges, commented that as a runner, he can attest that we have done a lot for runners in the county. Anytime the Department makes a change to a popular thing, we provide diligence to get the information out; please provide suggestions when needed on how to best communicate changes in communities.

Commissioner Pata, **reported** there are a couple of main coaches, who have been working with Preston (Buckman) and appreciate the work that is being done. Additional planning for future projects such as Matthews Sportsplex, Shuffletown, and years forward he suggests should include more space and terrains for runners. On a day to day basis, the facility (McAlpine Creek) is crowded.

Gwen Cook requested Commissioner Pata send those needs to her. Participation levels are high and it is our job to advocate for more sites that are similar. People are excited about it (use) and therefore are upset about it (unavailability for use). Those mentioned by Commissioner Pata are key partners; they want to work with us and will benefit from positive collaborations with us.

Commissioner Burnette, **noted** the tremendous opportunity in this community discussion. Cross-Country courses are in the masterplan. Through dialog we can tap into the running community to be good advocates for greenways. Tax payers are great allies to tell their elected officials they are interested.

Chairman Rob Brisley, **requested** to know whether the focus group site meeting was offered to the home owners and people that live there (McAlpine/Sardis Communities).

Gwen Cook indicated what we (the Department) were specifically after were the other stakeholders. Homeowners were covered under the Community Workshops. Gwen further elaborated that, at this point there will be no additional out-reach to the community. Who the Department requests to hear from presently is the running community. Gwen closed by advocating for more signage relating to changes and workshops. Gwen also noted that in the future she and Jeff (Robinson) will strategize on how much time in advance is too much time in advance for workshop notices.

Reference Documents:

4b.1 Changes Coming to McAlpine Creek Handout/PowerPoint Presentation

Appointments –Advisory Councils – Applicants

Aquatic: ***Motion was made*** by Commissioner McCree to appoint **Emily Cowles** to a unexpired term on the Aquatics Advisory Council, expiring 6/2015, which was seconded (Pata) and approved unanimously.

Greenway: ***Motion was made*** by Commissioner Burnette to appoint **Gordon Clark** to a unexpired term on the Greenway Advisory Council, expiring 6/2015, which was seconded (Pata) and approved unanimously.

South: ***Motion was made*** by Commissioner Barnhart to appoint **Daniel Jason Cook** to a unexpired term on the South Advisory Council, expiring 6/2015, which was seconded (McMoore) and approved unanimously.

Public Hearings: None

Advisory Council – Committee Reports

North Park Advisory Council Members requested Commissioner Powell discuss with the PRC and Park SLT regarding Department efforts to do “a Gold Medal job” of marketing itself. Director Garges agrees and informed the PRC that presently the Department does not have an active marketing campaign budget. Information dissemination is good, but it is different than “marketing”. In the new masterplan, on the operational side there is a marketing aspect. The Department is working with PS&I to see who would be best to do it, their department or an outside team. Director Garges noted it must be a careful balance between taxpayer investment to return on investment. Must show that the expense resulted in an improvement.

Commissioner Pata inquired whether there was a press release for the Gold Medal award. Director Garges indicated yes – anticipated article release date is the 21st of December.

Director’s Report

- (a) Director Jim Garges requested Kesha Meads send the updated version of the Smoking Policy for ongoing review and discussion at the January PRC meeting.

- (b) Director Jim Garges shared the outcome of the FY2012 BEST Results via summary with the Park and Recreation Commission.

Reference Documents:

- 8.a Revised Smoking Policy
- 8.b FY2012 BEST Summary (available upon request)

PRC Chair Report

*Chairman Brisley acknowledged a request from Commissioner Powell and Commissioner McCree to amend the September 11, 2012 meeting minutes to include discussion content regarding Whittington Field. Said content will be sent to Kesha Meads for inclusion by Commissioners Powell and McCree.

Chairman Brisley requests Kesha Meads send him the most recent PRC Advisory Council assignment listing.

Consent Items:

(10) *Motion was made* by Commissioner Pata to approve the September 11, 2012* PRC Minutes as well as the October 9, 2012 PRC Minutes. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Bryant and approved unanimously.

Staff Reports and Requests

None

PRC Reports and Requests

Commissioner Pata **requested** additional information on Field Use Agreements.

James Alsop, Enterprise Services Division Director, presented via PowerPoint presentation useful facts and numbers relating to usage of Athletic Fields.

Chairman Rob Brisley, **inquired** of the annual reconciliation process and when that occurs.

Per James Alsop, this reconciliation occurs in December. The Department then alerts users with agreements during the December/January timeframe.

Commissioner Barnhart, **inquired** about the process of allocations/reconciling and how it is done.

Per Alsop, defined amounts are preset for capital improvements and maintenance requests.

Chairman Rob Brisely, **inquired** regarding organizations profiting from use of county fields, and encourages the Department to not lose an opportunity to gain a reinvestment commitment.

James Alsop will send a spreadsheet of investments.

Director Garges indicated, in response to questions surrounding Queens, there is an agreement for 50/50 use of Queens facility at reasonable times.

Commissioner Burnette, **inquired** whether agreements such as the Queens one are available in schedule form on line for the public. This would help when citizens complain that the field was not available when they where there and not in use.

Per the Department, there is nothing on-line.

Commissioner McMoore, **noted** that regardless of who contributes and the outlay of funds for capital improvements, Park and Recreation (Mecklenburg County) owns and books all county fields. She additional requested to know for organizations that make major profits on events, are we not allowed to get an additional revenue.

Per the Department, we only allowed to recoup fees and expenses outlined in the contracts.

Chairman Brisley, **requested** that at least one time a year the Department update the PRC on special events and athletic events.

Commissioner Powell, **inquired** regarding when a field is not available, do we steer them to less used parks.

Per Alsop – it depends. There are variables which include parking and lighting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.