

RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

NOVEMBER 10, 2014

Board Members Present: Josh O’Conner - Vice Chair, Forrest Merithew, Pat Dennehy, Kim Reed, Bob Pierce, Todd Dunnuck and Barry Mundt

Staff Present: Roderick Simmons – Director, Debbie Ivester – Assistant Director, Judith Scott – Administrative Assistant, Sandra Travis – Program Supervisor, Al Kopf – Superintendent of Planning & Development, Christy Bass – Business Services Supervisor, Amy Rickman - Recreation Superintendent, Mark Halstead – Program Supervisor

City Council Member: Chris Pelly

Josh called the meeting to order at 12:31pm.

1. Welcome New RAB Member

Josh introduced the new RAB member, Forrest Merithew.

2. Approval of September Minutes

Barry motioned to approve the September minutes. Bob seconded and the motion passed with all in favor.

3. RAB Meeting Schedule

Josh opened discussion regarding RAB’s monthly meeting schedule. RAB meets once a month. Over time the amount of agenda items have reduced and at times there are no agenda items for a monthly meeting. He asked RAB members to consider if the board needs to continue with a monthly meeting schedule to consider meeting less frequently.

Debbie explained operations have become more efficient, and to make best use of RAB members’ time, the board might consider meeting every other month. If issues come up and can’t wait two months, the chair can call for a meeting in the off month which will remain on the 2nd Monday at 12:30 pm. Chris doesn’t feel it will be a problem with the City Council.

Barry prefers meeting bimonthly. Todd suggested keeping it monthly but if there’s no agenda cancel the meeting. Kim agrees so that unscheduled meetings would not get replaced with a conflict if the meeting should be called.

Debbie reported it is not difficult to cancel a meeting. The only requirement is a public notice issues at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting date which is done via a press release and social media.

Roderick’s concern is if there is public comment on an agenda, it’s difficult to push them to the following month if the meeting is cancelled. Better to schedule presentations on the set meeting date.

Josh's concern is not having a set schedule if there are public comments.

Todd suggested updates for members on the off month via email.

Kim asked how soon it would be known if a meeting is scheduled on the off month. Debbie stated on the off month if a meeting is needed, notification would go out at least a week before. She meets with the chair and vice chair 10 days prior to each meeting and has to do the public notice of the upcoming meeting.

Pat asked if a meeting in December is needed regarding the budget, deferred maintenance report and the capital improvement budget. Roderick said the budget agenda can be transferred to the January meeting.

Debbie said RAB has timely business at the end of each calendar year. All boards and commissions written annual report is due to City Council by the end of January. RAB takes action on its report at its January meeting of each year.

We need to make sure the other board members are aware of the change in schedule. Debbie will get an email to all members about the change.

Periodic reports are still due monthly and will be shared via email. Send these reports to Debbie. Goal reports can be reported monthly or can be reported every other month at the meeting.

Bob motioned to move the meeting to every other month. Barry seconded and the motion passed with all in favor.

4. Update: Aston Park Tennis Center

Debbie reported on the recent public engagement process at the Aston Park Tennis Center in which a focus group of tennis center constituents process public comment and prepared a report to the City Council Finance Committee that occurred at the committee meeting on November 28, 2014. The overall tennis center revenue budget needs to be developed to include fees and charges, plus other revenue streams such as sponsorships. The City is conducting a fees and charges study during the next two to three months, and the Parks and Recreation Department is the first department in the study, and the tennis center will be its first priority. In the event there are tennis center fee adjustments, it is intended to be effective on April 1, 2015 when the tennis center opens for its 2015 season rather than the beginning of the next fiscal year on July 1, 2015.

5. Public Engagement Calendar

There are several projects requiring public engagement in 2015 including the Shiloh Center Complex. Debbie does not have all the information today but will work with staff to put the calendar together and share with RAB at a later date.

6. RAB 2014 Goals Report

Focus Area: Communications

Goal #1: Develop Relationship with City Council – Barry Mundt: No report. Roderick reported the City Council Governance Committee will schedule the Mayor to meet with the chair and vice chair of the various boards and commissions to talk about their expectations, and will begin in December or January.

Goal #2: Represent RAB with Stakeholders

1. RAB appoint exofficio to the Asheville Parks and Greenways foundation – Josh Conner: The relationship with the Asheville Parks and Greenway Foundation is going well. The Foundation hosted its fall Our Parks Day to spread mulch on the trail at Haw Creek Park. Councilman Pelly, Board Members Kim, Barry and Josh attended. The Foundation is kicking off a fundraising campaign that will hopefully help Parks and Recreation.

2. RAB engage with the Friends of the Nature Center – Bob Pierce: Attendance at the Nature Center is strong and should be a 100,000 plus year. The Friends have more work to do on its private partnership proposal to the City of Asheville.

Focus Area: Community Outreach and Public Engagement

Goal #1: Engage with public and community outreach – Kim Reed and Ashley Arrington: No report. Debbie stated the Tennis Center focus group update in the previous agenda items falls under this goal.

Focus Area: Partnerships

Goal #1: Enhance partnerships

1. Host volunteer community service work day in a park or facility in conjunction with a community partner – Ashley Arrington: Debbie reported RAB members worked alongside of the Asheville Parks and Greenways Foundation at its Our Parks Day on XXX at Haw Creek Park. Volunteers spread new mulch on the trail in the park. Josh reported this last Our Parks Day was better than previous year. Debbie stated if this is the only community service work day RAB does this year then the goal is accomplished.

2. Host a partnership expo to bring partners together in a central location to demonstrate their role with the City – Josh O’Conner and Todd Dunnuck: Consider hosting a partner expo sometime in January or February 2015.

Focus Area: Finance and Budget

Goal #1: Participate in the Parks and Recreation Department capital improvement budget process – Staff, Hutch Kerns and Josh O’Conner: Roderick reported the City is looking at priority based budgeting model. Staff will hold its budget workshop this month.

7. Director’s Report

Roderick reported on the following:

- Recognize Amy Rickman, Recreation Superintendent who will be retiring from the City the end of December after 35 years of service.
- Staff will present a report on capital and deferred maintenance projects at RAB’s meeting in January, including swimming pools that are underperforming.
- RAB members received the current Activity Guide which is published every quarter. Highlights include Movies in the Park, which were a huge hit, and Breakfast with Santa which is the next event at the Dr. Wesley Grant, Sr. Southside Center.
- Youth basketball produced by the Parks and Recreation Department is offered for the first time at recreation centers.
- The renovation on the gyms at Montford and Shiloh Centers is complete. Work on Stephens Lee Center gym starts in December. Staff is exploring community based programming and what services we need to provide at these locations.
- The Stephens Lee Center gym is closed due to recent evidence of bats. It is believed bats may be entering the building via openings on the building exterior in the area of the gutters. The gutter repair work is in process. Once the gym renovation commences, more work will be done to ensure all exterior openings are repaired, and to mitigate any bat activity already present in the ceiling of the gym where bats may be nesting.
- The City is conducting a study led by the Finance Department on all of its fees and charges. The Parks and Recreation Department is one of the first departments in the study. Bob asked which facilities charge fees. Roderick responded program fees are charged for all programs and there are shelter rentals.

8. Other Business

Josh asked for any suggestions for our next agenda.

Forrest offered to bring information to RAB about the Greenways Committee that reports to the Multimodal Transportation Commission in the Transportation Department.

Bob requested construction update for Azalea Road. Debbie reported that after consulting with the chair and vice chair, this report will come to RAB once the project is further along in its development.

9. Adjournment

Barry motioned to adjourn. Pat seconded and the motion passed with all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 1:08 PM.