

## **Recreation Advisory Board**

August 12, 2013

### **Members Present**

Wayne Wheeler, Chair

Hutch Kerns, Vice-Chair

Josh O'Conner

Jordan Veale

Todd Dunnuck

Ashley Arrington

### **Council Liaison**

Cecil Bothwell

### **Staff Present**

Roderick Simmons, Director

Debbie Ivester, Assistant Director

Christy Bass, Interim Business Services Superintendent

Sandra Travis, Program Supervisor

Amy Rickman, Recreation Superintendent

### **Guests**

Timothy Sadler

Wayne called the meeting to order at 12:34 p.m.

### **1. Approval of July Minutes**

Josh motioned to approve the July minutes. Todd 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion and all were in favor.

Wayne shared that John Parrish has resigned from the board, and expressed appreciation to John for his service. Since John is not able to attend today's meeting, a formal recognition letter and gift of appreciation will be mailed to John. His board vacancy will be posted from August 15 through September 4. Wayne asked Board members to help recruit applicants.

### **2. Partner Presentation: FIRST Community Resource Center**

Janet Price-Ferrell, Executive Director of FIRST, shared that the organization began in 2002 by providing services and resources for families and people with mental and physical disabilities and that all staff members have a child with disabilities. FIRST is very involved in the community and she highlighted

some of the current offerings which include: a community parent resource center funded under OSEP until 2016; The Sunshine Project, funded by Smart Start of Buncombe County; Incredible Years Parenting Class funded by Smart Start of Buncombe County; the P.L.A.Y. Project funded from private donations; summer programming in partnership with the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Therapeutic Recreation Program. New programs include a Summer Leadership Program and Circle of Parents which will be held at the Burton Street Recreation Center. Last year FIRST served 106 children in childcare programs, assessed 85 children for school readiness, informed 125 families about special education issues, and assisted 12 families in providing their own intensive interventions.

Wayne asked what the different types of disabilities are. Janet responded that the disabilities range from Cerebral Palsy, mental health disorders, Autism, intellectual/developmental disabilities, severe ADHD and bipolar disorders. Jordan asked if FIRST works with adaptive or assistive technology. Janet responded that occasionally they try, but they also will link families with other resources. Hutch asked if the role of PRCA is to provide access to facilities and staff. Janet said that their office is located in the Shiloh Recreation Center and they provide programs at the West Asheville Recreation Center with city staff member Randy Shaw and the Therapeutic Recreation program. Debbie added that Randy is a certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) and he creates and leads programs and that FIRST continues to be a strong partner. Janet recognized that this partnership is much appreciated by FIRST.

### **3. NCRPA Community Board Member (CBM) State Forum Report**

Josh shared some of the highlights from the CBM Forum and that the NCRPA now has a Visa check card that Board Members are eligible to sign up for with half of the normally charged fees now split up between NCRPA and the State Credit Union. Overall it was a great conference with one of the most important topics discussing how to expand the engagement of volunteers. Hutch shared that there were about 75-100 people from all different sizes of towns and cities, and it was nice to hear presentations from various staff and Mayors. He took away the message about partnerships, defining who the partners are (city schools, county), and about creating relationships first and then developing the partnerships to better advocate for Parks.

### **4. Director's Report**

#### Summer Programs

Summer camp is ending this week and that the kids put on a show for their parents last Friday. The pools are beginning to close for the season, with Walton and Malvern Hills closing first and Recreation Park pool will remain open on weekends through Labor Day. Both Walton and Malvern Hills pools were closed a lot this summer due to their old age and labor intensive maintenance.

#### Flood Events

The recent flood damage has taken a toll on the park maintenance staff and the grounds are very soft. Parks from the French Broad to Weaver Park are wet and flooded and Azalea Park will cost about

\$70,000 and staff is working to get the soccer fields cleaned up in time for the upcoming season. This work has delayed the Montford Recreation Center gymnasium floor project.

#### Bele Chere

The last Bele Chere went out with a bang and Todd thanked Sandra and her staff for putting together a great festival despite all of the uncertainties that staff faced.

#### Organizational Update

Roderick shared the current organizational changes occurring, which includes several management changes. The current Deputy Assistant City Manager, Jeff Richardson, will be leaving the City for an opportunity to head Cleveland County as the new County manager. The PRCA department is in the process of making organizational changes and board members will be informed over the next several months as changes occur.

#### Summer Program Fees

Roderick shared that the Finance Department has asked PRCA to review the summer camp and summer program fees and bring alternate proposals back to the Finance sub-committee. Staff will need to look at center operations and evaluate what opportunities already exist in the community that could help reduce city costs.

Wayne asked if we have any involvement with the museum at Pack Place. Roderick responded that the PRCA has no relationship, but that the City leases the land to the museum and through this lease is the relationship between the City and the museum.

### **5. Reports**

#### Bele Chere Board:

Todd stated that the Bele Chere Board members put in a lot of work to make Bele Chere happen. He thanked everyone for working so hard.

#### Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission:

Wayne recapped the recent meeting stating that the area down in the riverfront is really taking off. There have been interviews with people working and living in the River Arts District for their input as to what they would like to see. There is the ten acres that the City owns but that only one acre is not located in the flood plain and is buildable. There are currently three final options for the use of the public building located near 12 Bones. Wayne has been impressed with the recent meetings and the different task forces that are working hard to get information. Mildred recommended additional parking in the River Arts District because it is currently not well lit or safe with cars on both sides of the street. Wayne stated that others have expressed the same concern over limited parking.

### **6. Other Business**

Debbie provided an update on the canopy that will be installed over the stage in Pack Square Park. The Asheville Downtown Association's initial date to unveil the canopy was Labor Day but it will now be in the spring with an event around Memorial Day.

Timothy Sadler asked about the possibility of having a Business Improvement District (BID) applied to the River Arts District (RAD) as a way to raise funds for a parking deck. He asked if there is there a way to benchmark the volunteer involvement across the state and find out which area is leading in this effort and encouraged the PRCA department to be a leader in the volunteer effort. He asked about the increase in fees for the fall baseball league and how it went from \$125 to \$750 and exclude people from participating. Roderick said that this fee is for the entire season adding that this is in an effort to recoup some of the subsidies that the City contributes to, along with all of our youth groups and parking fees. Timothy said that it would be nice to have had a gradual increase. Roderick said that we don't charge individual fees, only leagues that use our facilities.

Ashley motioned to adjourn the meeting at 1:21 pm. Todd 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion and all approved.