



**RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, JULY 11th, 2016**

Board Members in Attendance: Vice-Chair Todd Dunnuck, Pat Dennehy, Helen Hyatt, Barry Mundt, Kimberly Reed, Sheneika Smith, City Council Liaison Keith Young

Staff in Attendance: Christy Bass, Dee Black, Al Kopf, Debbie Ivester, Lauren Sexton, Justen Paden, Roderick Simmons, Sandra Travis, Pete Wall

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice-Chair Todd Dunnuck called the meeting to order at 12:34pm. Todd welcomed everyone to the Dr. Wesley Grant, Sr. Southside Center, and also thanked the Board members who attended the Fees and Charges Work Session. He pointed out Debbie Ivester sent out the minutes and related materials from the work session to the Board for their information. He then asked if there was a motion to pass the minutes from the May meeting as written. Barry Mundt made the motion to approve the minutes as written, Pat Dennehy seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Report: Haywood Street Community Visioning Advisory Team – Dean Pistor

Todd said due to Dean's absence the report will be available at the next RAB meeting.

b. Report: Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee – Helen Hyatt

Helen informed the Board the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee has not had its first meeting yet, but it is scheduled for August 11th at 8 a.m., in the 6th floor training room in City Hall. Helen told the Board she will send out information regarding the meetings to make sure everyone stays up to date. Todd explained the Board will want her to give a brief overview of the meetings at each RAB meeting moving forward. Debbie asked her to explain for the new members what the Committee is. Helen clarified this Committee is designated to review the City Council's visioning plan for the City, and it should take 17 months to do so. She is a little hesitant about the consultant company hired, as they have only worked with major cities and not any small ones like Asheville. She stated together the Committee will review and advise on the entire plan for Asheville. She stressed it will require a lot of outreach and community participation. At this point, she's just received the highlights from the department divisions. Debbie told the Board they can find the existing plan on the City's website. She will send the link to the Board.

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. RAB Bylaws Review- Todd Dunnuck, Vice Chair

Todd informed the Board that Bob, Debbie, and he had met to review the bylaws and there were just a few housekeeping updates to be made. The revisions were sent to the Board prior to the meeting. Todd asked if anyone had any questions about the changes. Helen asked if there were any updates possible for when new members come onto the Board, and if there is any way Board members can have a conversation with the applicants before moving forward with them. Todd

explained the Board tried to interview applicants in the past, but found in the end it is really up to Council. Todd said when there are a lot of applicants the Board can interview, but lately there have not had enough applicants to do so. Debbie said the Board can interview applicants if wishes to do so, but needs to be put into the timeline, and keep in mind the Board may not get the candidate it recommends. Debbie asked Keith Young's opinion as Council Liaison. He replied Council gets good recommendations from the Boards and Commissions Committee, but sometimes it makes the decision to appoint before even sending it to Council. Recommending a candidate doesn't guarantee an appointment but it does weigh in heavily. Debbie stressed the Board needs to help with recruiting applicants so it gets candidates that will help the Board accomplish its goals. Todd suggested in regards to acting on the bylaw changes the Board can act on it now or put it on the agenda for the next meeting. The Board agreed to have a vote. Pat Dennehy motioned to accept the bylaw changes as presented, Helen seconded the motion and the motioned passed unanimously.

b. Bond Referendum 2016 – Roderick Simmons, Director

Roderick Simmons presented the City Bond Program. He started by saying it's on a tight timeline, whereas most cities work on it more than two years but the City is doing it in eight weeks. Once Council approves it, it will then go to the Local Government Commission (LGC) for review to ensure the City will not bankrupt with the bond, and for oversight by the State. The three categories within the bond package are infrastructure, parks and recreation, and affordable housing. If Council approves it, the categories will appear on the ballot as three separate items in November. Infrastructure will include sidewalks, streets, transportation projects, bus stops, and a greenway in east Asheville. Parks and recreation will allow the City to update and enhance current facilities. He explained that between 2001 to 2004 Parks and Recreation had a big expansion, but now the 54 facilities are more 30 years old and are in need of update and to create a cycle to catch up on maintenance. In 2009 over 500 citizens were involved in creating a Master Plan. The Master Plan outlines facility improvement for the next 20 years. In 2009 the Master Plan recommended \$40 million in improvements within 10 years, but since then the City has spent only \$1.4 million. Todd asked why so little has been spent. Roderick responded that level of budget has not been appropriated for the improvements.

Parks and Recreation staff developed the bond category in three areas 1) Highest Use Parks, 2) Gap in Services, 3) Backlog Maintenance.

Highest Use Parks: Memorial Stadium and Richmond Hill Park are highest used parks experiencing almost 2,500 hours of use of which staff programs 500 of those hours. Richmond Hill has no restrooms, and no basic amenities to accommodate the high use at these two facilities.

Gap in Services: Parks and facilities in which the City cannot accommodate future use. Once one gets south of the Shiloh Center and Jake Rusher Park which is only a playground, there are no other park and recreation amenities in south Asheville. The Irby Benson Athletic sport fields are at Valley Springs School but is a Buncombe County Schools facility not owned by the City. The number one capital project in the Master Plan is the Grant Southside Center. By completing the final phase of the center with a gymnasium and programming space will be huge to help meet the needs of the citizens. This project has been on the books almost 10 years, so that makes this the highest priority. Montford Center and the surrounding complex is the only full functioning center in the system. It was built in 1974 to function specifically as a recreation center and want to make Grant Southside Center the second. Montford and the Grant Southside Center fill in the gaps. This summer 400 kids signed up for camp with a waitlist of almost 100 kids could not accommodate since there are is no

facility space. Todd asked if the money would finish everything planned for the Grant Southside Center. Roderick confirmed yes. Todd asked if it would include the splash pad. Roderick replied yes it would. Council is preparing for a community meeting regarding the center and the greenway that will go through Livingston Street as well. Roderick informed the board of the plan to have a splash pad at Jake Rusher Park as well so to offer a similar experience in south Asheville. Pat asked if we had looked at creating a pool instead of a splash pad. Roderick explained that is part of the conversation with the community to decide how it will move forward and in what form.

Backlog Maintenance: Improving concession stands, restrooms, lighting on ballfields, and ADA accessible issues.

Roderick stated the next step on the bond is the Boards' since staff have to be neutral and cannot advocate for the bond. Most cities utilize its Recreation Advisory Boards to do the advocating so citizens who serve on the Board are being champions for a bond. Some boards create a special committee but that is up to the Board. Councilman Keith Young explained City Council has created a list of community stakeholders with a group assigned to each Council member to explain to them how the bond will work and to invite each stakeholder to back the bond and help champion for it. Keith said the Board can shape and inform stakeholders about the bond however it wants, it's not required to follow Council's model. Council will take action on the bond at its next meeting on July 26. Helen asked what the main detractors are for the bond. Keith said most people will argue the increased property tax rate. Pat stated Asheville hasn't had a successful bond in years. Keith affirmed. Keith said Council is taking a poll about a potential bond and the results will provide a good road map to what those detractor questions and specific concerns might be. Helen asked if the outcome of the vote could be overridden. Keith explained it would have to be done by Council and approved by the LGC but it's unlikely they would overturn the vote. Todd asked how Roderick suggested bringing this to other community groups. Roderick said staff can present factual information however staff cannot advocate how to vote on the bond. The Board can meet with stakeholders and present the basic bond information. Todd was concerned with the scope of the task and said it was overwhelming. Roderick encouraged him stating he will provide presentation material Board members can use that is more focused on parks and recreation bond when meeting with stakeholders. Keith said Council feels the parks and recreation component of the bond will be easier to sell, but when speaking to stakeholders tailor it to what they care about that gives them the reason to vote yes.

The detailed bond materials will include information about the City's Capital Improvement (CIP) budget. People need to know bond money is in addition to the CIP budget. Bond money will pay for the designated projects, and CIP money will be spent on other capital improvement projects. Todd said a cheat sheet would be really helpful. Pat asked if there is a formal campaign program the Board can immolate. Keith explained staff cannot provide that since it would be a conflict of interest. Roderick said usually a local Chamber of Commerce would provide this and explained staff cannot advocate for tax expenditures. Helen asked if staff had created a list of stakeholders and constituents yet. Debbie replied it is part of the next agenda item, Appreciation Meet and Greet, however it will be delayed to coincide with the bond process. Once Council takes action at its July 26th meeting we will have more defined talking points for the Board. Debbie emphasized this will move quickly and she will be happy to facilitate a Board organizational meeting to map out bond activities. She suggested a Board meeting in August. Helen also recommended an August meeting due to the tight deadline. Debbie stated the Board can hold an August meeting without a vote but since it is being discussed she recommended a vote. Todd inquired if the Board wants a meeting or

form a subcommittee? Helen replied she thinks the Board should meet on the August 8th and hold an informal meeting. Todd asked Councilman Young if the Board should meet prior to Council's vote. He advised the Board to meet after the City Council meeting on July 26 or after the August 8 public hearing. Debbie offered the dates of August 10, 11, or 12. Todd called for other opinions. Kimberly Reed agreed to have it later in the week of August 8th. The Board reached a consensus to meet on August 11th at 12:30 p.m. Debbie said she will organize the location. Pat motioned to hold a special Board meeting on held August 11th at 12:30 p.m. Helen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Appreciate Meet and Greet

Roderick described this to be a quality event to honor and engage with community partners to occur in July. It is now pushed out to a later date for this kind of engagement and to coincide with the bond referendum Todd asked if we could still do that and also present the Bond information. Roderick stated it can be adjusted to discuss the bond instead of going into partnership issues.

d. RAB Vacancy – Megan Archer

Todd informed the Board that Megan Archer has resigned. Debbie stated the vacancy will be posted July 15th and will close August 3rd. Debbie will send the online link to the Board to direct applicants to apply. She reiterated the Board's role to help recruit applicants. Debbie will do a press release, post to Facebook, and ask the City's neighborhood coordinator to push it out.

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

John B. Lewis Soccer Complex Turf Replacement: The Asheville Buncombe Youth Soccer Association (ABYSA) served as project lead on selecting the contractor to install the turf while following City purchasing policy. There was some belief the City procedures were not followed and City Council rejected the bids. City staff will take the project management lead and manage the bid process, and ABYSA will request an extension to its Tourism Product Development grant. Construction is expected to start in the spring 2017. Todd asked isn't that ABYSA's busiest season? Roderick stated the project timeline is according to the ABYSA schedule. Helen asked if all the fields will be done at once. Roderick said it will be done in stages. Helen asked if it would include a buffer to the river, Roderick said no. Pat asked about turf replacement at Memorial Stadium. Roderick responded it will depend on the Bond package to see where projects will fit into a timeline since don't want to start one project in the middle of another.

Nature Center: The construction of the front entrance of the Nature Center is posted for bid and moving forward.

Swimming Pools: Todd asked for an update on the swimming pools. Roderick stated the full report will be on the agenda for the Board's meeting in September. Staff is developing a schedule to release the reports. Staff will present to the Board first, followed by the general public. Helen asked how old Walton Street Pool is. Roderick said it's over 40 years old and that is part of the dialogue to determine if to replace it or update it. If decision is to replace what size should it be since the current size is too small.

Councilman Keith Young reminded the Board that at the beginning of the year Council made a promise to how it will budget Parks and Recreation Department. Now is the time to start thinking how you will remind them of their commitment to supplement the budget to help Parks and Recreation work to its fullest extent in the community. Once you get two meetings out from January that will really come up quickly.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Swimming Pool Assessment Report

7. NEXT MEETING: August 11th, 2016; 12:30 p.m.; location TBA

8. ADJOURN

Vice-Chair Todd Dunnuck adjourned the meeting at 1:33 p.m.