

## **Recreation Advisory Board 2011 Annual Report**

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The Recreation Advisory Board meets the second Monday of each month at 12:30 pm in the first floor conference room of City Hall.

### **Mission**

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Advisory to City of Asheville in matters affecting recreation policies, programs, finances and land acquisition related to total community recreation programs.

### **Key Accomplishments**

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#### **Land Acquisition & Easement**

The Recreation Advisory Board approved the following land transactions.

- The acceptance of a 0.11 acre parcel from Buncombe County located on Jane Street and adjacent to Riverside Cemetery. Acquisition of the property allows the City to preserve additional wooded acreage on the eastern side of Riverside Cemetery and further buffer it from surrounding residential uses.
- The acceptance of a 0.03 acre parcel from Buncombe County located along Elizabeth Street. This parcel is needed to assemble the necessary right-of-way to construct Phase III of the Reed Creek Greenway.
- The conveyance of a sanitary sewer easement to the Metropolitan Sewage District (MSD) located at the Dr. Wesley Grant, Sr. Southside Center. MDS replaced and relocated its existing lines within the property, which will better accommodate future development of the center and the Town Branch Greenway.
- Sale of a sanitary sewer easement located along the boundary of Riverside Cemetery to an adjacent private property owner. The easement is located on a steep and unusable portion of the City's property, and presents no conflict with the current use.

#### **Capital Improvement**

- Sara Manuel, Geoff Ferland, Wayne Wheeler and Mildred Nance-Carson sat on the Board's FY11-12 Capital Improvement Sub-Committee to advise staff and the Board on priorities for the capital improvement budget which staff carried forward in the City's budget process.
- Mildred Nance-Carson, Lonnie Gilliam and Hutch Kerns sat in the FY12-13 Capital Improvement Sub-Committee to advise staff and the Board as it begins preparing for the next capital improvement budget. The Board hosted a public comment period at its September meeting regarding the FY12-13 budget. This process will continue into 2012.

#### **Asheville Municipal Golf Course**

- Board adopted a recommendation to the City Council Finance Sub-Committee for staff to explore options for golf course operations including by an outside vendor.
- Department Director Roderick Simmons presented an overview of the process and options available to the City when considering outsourcing the City's golf course to a private golf course management firm.
- Board heard a presentation from the Muni Alliance, a community golf course group to revise the golf course and transform it into a sustainable course. The Alliance will work with the City as it proceeds through the outsourcing process.
- Board received monthly progress reports on golf course outsourcing and request for proposal process.

#### **Name New Center**

The Board and the Reid Center Advisory Board hosted a public input process to recommend the name of the new recreation center located at the former Livingston Street Park. The Blue Ribbon Panel recommended two names for consideration by the Board: The Southside Community Center

and Livingston Street Community Center. The Board endorsed the name Southside Community Center dedicated to Reverend Dr. Wesley Grant Sr. to recommend to City Council. Council approved the name of the new center as the Dr. Wesley Grant Sr. Southside Center.

### **Partnerships**

The Board supported a partnership between the City and the Asheville Area Arts Council to strengthen and build capacity to achieve the mutual goal of enhancing the creative sector in Asheville and Buncombe County.

### **NCRPA Citizen Board Member Conference**

Board Chair Wanda Hawthorne and Vice Chair Wayne Wheeler attended the North Carolina Recreation and Parks Association Citizen Board Member conference hosted by the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department. Conference highlights included a tour of Greensboro's new children's garden, new aquatic center, and the nature center and museum.

### **Presentations**

The Board heard presentations on projects that affect City parks and recreation facilities.

- River Arts District Transportation Improvement Project: Dan Baechtold, Transportation Planner, Transportation Department, presented this project designed to improve the transportation infrastructure on a 2.2 mile stretch of roadway which includes alignment of the French Broad River Greenway along Lyman Street and a portion of Riverside Drive.
- Burton Street Technology Center Proposal: The Burton Street Community Association and the Asheville Design Center presented its proposal to renovate the lower level of the Burton Street Recreation Center into a technology center.
- Lake Craig Restoration Project: McCray Coats, Storm Water Services Manager, Public Works Department, overviewed this project that will eventually realign the Swannanoa River and Gashes Creek Road and impacting Azalea Park and Recreation Park.
- Nature Center Strategic Site Plan: Nature Center Director Chris Gentile presented a preview on the Nature Center's new strategic plan designed to lead the operations and capital improvement process at the Nature Center for the next ten plus years.

### **Fee Waiver Report**

The Recreation Advisory Board is authorized to waive fees for service of up to \$500 per occurrence, and not to exceed \$3,000 per fiscal year. In 2011 the Board approved the following fee waivers.

- Waived \$125 fee for the use of the Stephens-Lee Center by Big Brothers Big Sisters.
- Waived \$70 of the \$100 rental fee for the use of the shelter at Carrier Park by the West Asheville Business Association.

### **Board Profile and Operations**

- Staff completed on line board member training and posted it to City's website as part of a comprehensive orientation package designed for members of all boards supported by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department.
- The Board appointed a Marketing Sub-Committee to work with staff to identify gaps in the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department marketing and branding efforts. Wayne Wheeler, Wanda Hawthorne and Lonnie Gilliam sat in the committee.
- The Board approved staff's recommendation to appoint Aileen Sheehan-Wilson as the chair of Bele Chere Board for the 2012 Bele Chere festival.
- Board members participated in the grand opening event of the Dr. Wesley Grant, Sr. Southside Center, and the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new playground at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park.
- Will Callaway, Geoff Ferland and Sara Manuel board membership terms came to an end and were recognized by staff and the Board for their years of service to the citizens of Asheville. The Board

welcomed new members Todd Dunnuck, Josh O'Connor and John Parrish. With each vacancy, the Board reviewed the applicants and made its recommendation to City Council.

- Appointed board members served as liaisons to the Bele Chere Board and the Asheville Parks and Greenways Foundation.
- Board roster at the close of 2011:

Wanda Hawthorne, Chair	Mildred Nance-Carson
Wayne Wheeler, Vice Chair	Josh O'Connor
Todd Dunnuck	John Parrish
Lonnie Gilliam	Mary Ann West
Hutch Kerns	Cecil Bothwell, City Council Liaison