



Recreation and Parks Commission

Meeting Minutes

September 19, 2023 at 12:30pm

Eli Whitney Community Center • 4110 E. Greensboro-Chapel Hill Rd, Graham

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair Lisa Wolf, Vice-Chair Peter Dahl, Commissioner Bill T. Lashley, Mr. David Woody, Ms. Kelly Ronnow, Mr. Mike Dunning, Dr. Harold Kernodle, Mr. Thomas Purcell, Ms. Elizabeth Read

ALAMANCE PARKS STAFF PRESENT:

Jamie Merchel, Director; Nolan Carter, Trails & Open Space Coordinator; Anna Bowland, Grants & Communications Coordinator

PUBLIC PRESENT:

Andrew Sam, Alamance County Task Force Leader – Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail

1) COMMUNICATIONS

- a) The meeting was called to order and a quorum established at 12:30pm
- b) The August 15, 2023 meeting minutes were approved unanimously upon the motion of Peter Dahl and second of David Woody.

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

- a) Andrew Sam, Alamance County Task Force Leader for the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail gave an update about the group's trail work. In July and August the group has worked on new trail off Leath Road connecting to Shallow Ford Natural Area. The crew has also worked in Saxapahaw to build steps beside the campground, a fence, and a 96ft boardwalk. They have also recently installed bluebird boxes in Great Bend Park, donated by the Burlington Women's Club.

3) REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

- a) Chair Lisa Wolff informed the board that she and Director Jamie Merchel will have recurring monthly meetings in preparation for the Recreation and Parks Commission meetings. Lisa noted that she had visited Cedarock Park in advance of the US Women's Disc Golf Championship and was complementary of the preparations. Lisa asked Commissioner Bill Lashley if he had any insight as to whether the Recreation and Parks Department capital improvement budget would be affected by recent demands on the Alamance County Board of Commissions for school funding. Bill confirmed that the current B. Everett Jordan ball park project would not be affected. The Department is allotted \$753,000 by the county for the B.E. Jordan ball park renovation to be completed during the 2023-24 fiscal year.

4) REPORT OF STAFF

- a) Monthly Department Report: Director Jamie Merchel gave Department updates:



Recreation and Parks Commission

Meeting Minutes

September 19, 2023 at 12:30pm

Eli Whitney Community Center • 4110 E. Greensboro-Chapel Hill Rd, Graham

- Cedarrock Park hosted the ALCOVETS Balloon Festival on September 8-10 and the event was a success in spite of inclement weather.
- Cedarrock Park is hosting the USWDGC on September 21-24. Over 340 players are registered and the event will utilize all three of the park's disc golf courses.
- Other Fall programs include: Youth Football, Archery, and Alamance Adventure Race (September 30). Registration has begun for Youth Basketball which will include two options this year: a traditional league and a "Center Court" pod-based program held out of the two community centers. On October 3, The Mountains to Coast Ride, sponsored by Cycle NC, will ride through the Glencoe Mill Village between 11am-3pm. Alamance Parks staff will be onsite to volunteer to greet the travelers and provide information about the county. Farm to Table, a program for Alamance County 4th grade students to learn about agriculture, will be held at Cedarrock Park October 3-4.

5) OLD BUSINESS

a) Haw River Trail Updates:

- Nolan Carter, Trails and Open Space Coordinator, reported that Alamance County has been named as the lead partner with NC State Trails for the Haw River State Trail. In this capacity, the Department will continue to oversee the development and promotion of the trail in Alamance County in addition to working with partner counties and municipalities.
- Nolan reported that the new trail at Shallow Ford Natural Area has been flagged and signage is in queue to be developed and installed after the completion of signage at Cane Creek Mountains Natural Area, Oak Hill Trailhead.

b) Cane Creek Mountains Natural Area:

- Phase 2: The Lookout Trail and 4 campsites are on schedule to open on October 2. The Department received a permit for construction of the tower but new requirements of this permit include additional steel material and thicker treads which increase the construction cost by \$180,000. Nolan is working with the engineer and Barr construction to explore cost-saving options.

c) Cedarrock Park Playground:

- Jamie updated the board that the Department has a preliminary sketch of the updated playground space at Cedarrock Park. The draft was developed based on feedback from a public survey as well as from the project scope as written in the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grant. The playground will be designed to the "Universal Design" standard – meaning that it will be designed to have components that are usable by the greatest extent possible by people of all abilities. The playground will be designed with a natural look to fit with the theme of the park. The space will also be surfaced and fenced.

d) Property Updates:



Recreation and Parks Commission

Meeting Minutes

September 19, 2023 at 12:30pm

Eli Whitney Community Center • 4110 E. Greensboro-Chapel Hill Rd, Graham

- Troxler Property – Jamie reported that based on positive staff and board feedback, the Department is moving forward with exploring acquisition and development of this property. The Department is still in the preliminary phase of these discussions and hope to have updates by the end of the year.
- Mebane Oaks Property – Nolan reported that the Department is not pursuing the property at this time. The land that is available is of small acreage, and the owner of the adjoining, larger parcel is not interested in selling. The project does not fit with the current goals of the Department. Lisa suggested reaching out to the City of Mebane Recreation and Parks Department as this may fit with their goals.

6) NEW BUSINESS

a) Parks Board Paddle:

- All members of the Parks Board are invited to a Haw River Paddle on September 29 from 12-4pm. The location will be determined closer to time based on water levels. It was suggested to paddle the section from Swepsonville to Saxapahaw.

b) Great Bend Park:

- Peter Dahl noted a concern that an area of the park appeared that it was not being mowed. After discussion it was determined this section was intentionally left un-cut due to a trail re-route.

c) Volunteer Appreciation Event:

- Jamie announced that the Department is planning a volunteer appreciation event later in the Fall. More information is to come and all board members are invited to submit suggestions and participate in the event.

d) Weed Control at Cedarock Park:

- Kelly Ronnow raised the concern about the spraying of chemicals at Cedarock Park near the creek. Jamie will research the cause of this and potential alternatives.

e) Eli Whitney Community Center:

- David Woody made note of the great work of Alamance Parks staff in upkeeping the community center. In particular, recognition was given to Dan Moravec, Steve Holt, and Joe Teague.
- Kelly Ronnow inquired about the new fencing at the dog park and if the fence height it high enough (it should be at least 6 feet). Staff will check on this.

7) ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:43pm by acclamation.