



**Parks and Greenways Board
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 13, 2024 – 9:30 a.m.**

Chair Gary Anderson called to order the Regular Parks and Greenways Board Meeting at 9:30 a.m. on February 13, 2024.

The following attended in person at Town Hall, 441 White Pine Drive, Laurel Park NC 28739:

- Chair Gary Anderson
- Vice Chair Judy Lyons
- Secretary Terry Pierce
- Denise Layfield
- John McGregor
- Todd Plessel
- Joseph Robustelli
- Commissioner George Banta - Council Representative
- Town Manager Alex Carmichael
- Town Clerk Tamara Amin
- Parks Operation Coordinator Bryan Hensley
- Interim Planner Kaitland Finkle

Absent:

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Anderson asked if there were any public comments; there were none.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was unanimously approved on motion by Mr. Robustelli and seconded by Secretary Pierce. Chair Anderson asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The December 12, 2023 minutes were unanimously approved on motion by M.s Layfield and seconded by Secretary Pierce. Chair Anderson asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

BUDGET REPORT

Town Manager Carmichael said there is no physical report, but he did have the number for the invasive vine's donations. The Town has raised \$21,850, including the \$5k from the Town, \$5k from Friends of Laurel Park and \$10k from a private donor. Mr. Carmichael has talked to Mr. Coffee who will start April 1st and work until June 30th unless renewed by Council.

Chair Anderson asked Mr. McGregor to come up with a small road sign that says "Invasives clean up in process to raise awareness or "Do your part in Laurel Park."

Chair Anderson says the current budget is roughly around \$4k.

OLD BUSINESS

LITTLE LAUREL GREEN PLAYGROUND AND STREAM BED UPDATE

Chair Anderson said the stream renovation looks beautiful.

Ms. Layfield said the playhouse work is complete. The only remaining thing is the handrails in the interior of the castle. Ms. Layfield found a mural to replace the tiles and said this would be a gift from her to the Town, so it would not cost anything.

Todd Plessel joined at 9:36 a.m.

Ms. Layfield said Mr. Ken Gaylord thinks the Town needs to hire a professional paver drainer person to resolve the sand drainage problem. Ms. Layfield said she will get quotes and bring them back to the Board. Ms. Layfield believes it is a very good use of the money for safety and functionality reasons.

Chair Anderson would like to open the park by the Spring. Chair Anderson moved to allow Ms. Layfield to pursue bids and Town Manager Carmichael to decide to go ahead up to \$4k.

Vice Chair Lyons amended the motion to \$3k max as well as getting a quote to include a solution for the gutter problem not just the inside sand and seconded by Mr. Robustelli.

NEW BUSINESS

OATHS OF OFFICE

Town Clerk Amin presented the Oaths of Office to Ms. Lyons, Mr. McGregor, Mr. Plessel, Ms. Layfield, and Mr. Robustelli.

Chair Anderson thanked all the Board members for all their work and support.

FISHER SUBDIVISION ON WILLOW ROAD

Interim Planner, Kaitland Finkle, introduced herself to the Board.

Ms. Finkle said the proposal is to subdivide 4.51 acres off Parent PIN 9558828737 (approximately 40.87 acres), creating a new lot on Willow Road. Another part of the proposal is to add .9 acres from Parent PIN 9558828737 to PIN 9558910990 (currently 7 acres) resulting in a 7.9-acre tract. This is referred to as an administrative lot line adjustment and is not up for review.

Divisions of land that qualify as subdivisions in accordance with Section 160D-802 of the North Carolina General Statutes, but that do not qualify as an expedited subdivision, shall be reviewed, and decided as a preliminary plat in accordance with UDO 6.3.14. Step 5 of the Preliminary Plat Procedure requires the Parks and Greenways Board to Review and Comment specifically for impacts on tree protection, parks, and greenways.

The Official Zoning Map shows that this area is located in the ETJ (Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction) and is zoned R-20 (Moderate Density Residential).

The Parks and Greenways Map includes the ETJ as part of the study area, however no trails are proposed for this specific area.

The Land Use Cover Map includes the ETJ as part of the study area with this specific area being designated as Developed, Open Space.

Chair Anderson asked if any board members had any objections. There being no objections, Chair Anderson approved the proposal and continued by saying that there are tree protections already in the UDO.

Ms. Finkle departed the meeting at 10:09 a.m.

Finance Officer Medlin joined the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

PARKS CIP

Parks Operations Coordinator Hensley presented the Board with the CIP.

- a. Parks CIP - The aforesaid CIP is attached to, and made part of, these minutes as Appendix 1.

Mr. Hensley said the top priority is getting the bridge repaired in Rhododendron Lake Nature Park. Second priority is the backhoe attachment.

Vice Chair Lyons said the Board should definitely support Mr. Hensley at the Budget Retreat and ask that he gets more help.

FY 24-25 BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS

Chair Anderson presented the rough draft of the Parks and Greenways Budget.

- b. Parks and Greenways Budget - The aforesaid draft budget is attached to, and made part of, these minutes as Appendix 2.

Chair Anderson said the Board is not asking for any big-ticket expenditures, the Board is just maintaining what the Town has.

Mr. Plessel said the Bike Committee does not need any funds.

Secretary Pierce said no money is needed for Blue Bird Box Maintenance, but some funds could go to Educational Signage.

Town Clerk Amin said she heard back from the Bee City USA about the size of the signs and the responded with: "it's fine to print it smaller, as long as the proportions remain the same as our template signs."

The Board decided to make Educational Signage \$2k, Arbor Day \$600, Bee City \$2k and change the wording from Laurel Green Park Renovation to Park Improvements, bringing the total to \$19k.

Secretary Peirce asked that the first educational sign should go to Rhododendron Lake Nature Park.

Commissioner Banta said Glen Rock Springs needs some work and some locust steps. Chair Anderson said the next onsite visit should be to Glenn Rock Spring.

Chair Anderson said he will make all adjustments and present it to Council on the Budget Retreat on February 21.

The Board moved the discussion of the March Site meeting to the end.

PARK TECHNICIAN'S REPORT

Mr. Hensley said he worked on the playground and will see what else needs to be done.

Vice Chair Lyons thanked the Canal Park volunteers and Mr. Hensley for putting the Bee Hotel up.

BOARD AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Banta said there was a little community gathering on Saturday, February 10 with 15 Laurel Park residents. Commissioner Banta, Mayor O'Cain, and Town Manager Carmichael were also present. There were several points brought up by the residents but the ones that were specific to the Parks and greenways Board were:

- 1. Tourism** – It was felt that the town was promoting tourism with activities like music on the rock and listing the walking trails on "All Trails". Henderson County TDA is publicizing Jump-Off

Rock. Tourism has no benefit to the residence of Laurel Park, just increased costs for roads, police, and litter. “We don’t want to be Asheville.”

Ms. Layfield said they would need to look at the “All Trails” app to see if it is in fact on there and request them to make the change. Commissioner Banta said the Council is in full support of the Parks and Greenways Board.

2. Concerts at Jump-Off Rock - The activities at Jump-Off Rock Park, especially the music events sponsored by Friends of Laurel Park, promote tourism and have little or no benefit to the residence of Laurel Park (too many outsiders). Concerns include the need for extra police presence at additional costs to taxpayers, trash pickup, road litter and speeding vehicles. When residence attempted to attend FOLP meetings and voice their complaints, they were not well received. The residents suggested moving the venue to Little Laurel Green or Rhododendron Lake Park. After thinking about it, having music at Little Laurel Green Park might also promote too many outsiders to attend.

3. Parks and Greenways – Residents felt that parks and walking trails should not be expanded. Funding for P&G takes away from the funding of roads and ditch bank repairs. Parks and Greenways should concentrate on the current parks and trails with improved maintenance and safety of existing areas. The park at Glen Rock Springs is dangerous to walk in and hazardous to enter / exit at Hebron Road. No printed maps of the trails were available to residents, and they don’t want the trails publicized outside of Laurel Park.

BLUE BIRD UPDATE

Ms. Pierce reviewed the list of bluebird boxes.

- c. List of Volunteers and boxes - The aforesaid report is attached to, and made part of, these minutes as Appendix 3.

Ms. Pierce said they have moved three boxes to see if any activity happens and made a spreadsheet for all the volunteers to use that would make reporting in September easier.

BEE COMMITTEE

Ms. Layfield said the Board will get an update on Bee City signs from Council.

Ms. Layfield said she would like to enlarge the footprint for NO MOW MAY to include the terraces at the end of Rhododendron Lake Nature Park to see what they will provide.

Mr. Robustelli would like to start the NO MOW MAY in middle of April.

Ms. Layfield said the Bee City Committee will come up with a banner to enhance awareness.

Mr. Robustelli said the Bee City Committee will have a presentation on April 18 at Flat Rock Cinema to view the Queen of Sun movie and then a presentation from Brannen Basham at 6:30 pm.

Mr. Robustelli presented a volunteer handout that Town Clerk Amin enhanced to increase the volunteer base in Laurel Park.

Town Clerk Amin said she will include both handouts in the newsletter.

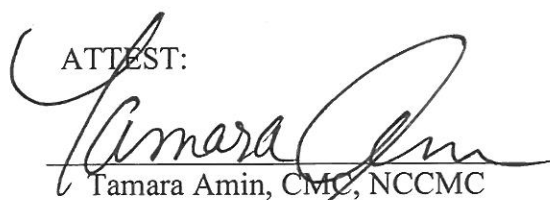
ADJOURNMENT

Chair Anderson said the February Site Meeting will be on February 22 at Canal Park and the March Site Meeting will be at Glenn Rock Spring.


Town Manager Carmichael said due to Spring Break and Staff taking vacations, no staff representation will be available for the March Site Meeting.

Chair Anderson said they will address the March site meeting further during their March Regular Meeting since no staff will be available.

There being no further business, Chair Anderson adjourned the meeting at 11:06 a.m. on motion by Mr. Robustelli and seconded by Secretary Pierce. Chair Anderson asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

ATTEST:


Tamara Amin, CMC, NCCMC
Town Clerk



Gary Anderson, Chair

3/12/24

Date