

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

The Zebulon Parks and Recreation Advisory Board met Monday, August 19th, 2024 at 6 PM.

This meeting will be held at Zebulon Town Hall, 1003 N. Arendell Avenue.

The following Advisory Board members were present: Wendi Watson, Brandon Wiggins, Garrett Underhill, Quinton Taylor, Marcus Bennett (arrived at 6:05PM), David Field (arrived at 6:08 PM)

Meeting Agenda

1. Call to Order

Brandon called to order at 6:02 pm

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve agenda: Garrett

2nd: Wendi

All in favor.

3. Public Comment

Public comments are limited to 3 minutes. Anyone wishing to speak must sign up by 5:50 PM. Public comment may be limited to 15 minutes.

None.

4. Consent Agenda

A. July 15th, 2024 (pg 2)

Motion to approve consent agenda: Quinton

2nd: Wendi

All in favor.

5. Old Business

A. FY 2025 Action Plan (pg 7)

The Advisory Board discussed their FY 2025 action plan and consider topics at the July meeting. Staff is seeking for the Advisory Board to engage in discussion and approve the FY 2025 Action Plan. The draft action plan is attached for review.

Sheila referred to the action plan presented and discussed at the July meeting and highlighted the changed date for the January meeting in the motion to adopt the action plan. Brandon stated he was on board with what was discussed initially and asked how everyone else was feeling. Stated they were fine.

Motion to amend moving the meeting to January 27: Quinton

2nd: Garrett

All in favor.

6. New Business

A. Maintenance Management Plan (pg 8)

Staff is in the process of updating the Maintenance Management Plan for the Parks Division. Staff would like to get feedback with the Advisory Board about the goals of maintenance and to provide some context for future budget discussions. The draft plan is attached for review.

Sheila introduced Nick to walk through the key points. Until recently, the department did not have a properly structured park division. We have been working to get that structure in place such as standardized maintenance, amenities and park branding. This plan will continue to grow as we work through those things. This will help us show what we're trying to accomplish, and the resources needed.

Nick stated if you think of the Master Plan as a guide of what we need, then our Maintenance Standard Plan tells us how to maintain this. The plan starts with the park user in mind and considers: the Master Plan, industry standards, program needs, experience with our park system and available resources.

Staff asked the Board what we want our parks to be known:

Wendi: place where family can go and enjoy the outdoors. Safe, healthy place, mentally, physically, emotionally.

Marcus: Agreed as well as not seeing trash, vandalism, and unmaintained areas especially ones that are utilized more.

Brandon: inclusive of everyone's interest and mentioned pickleball courts. Reflecting on what the town needs as a whole.

Quinton: The park being an oasis and a release.

David: Quality for children, safety, and activities. Open access to woods would be areas of concern. Little River as it is right now having one of these areas, but the other parks are awesome for this.

Brandon: Good viewpoints for parents who bring young children. Giving them the comfort to allow their kids to go play.

Garrett: Safety and friendliness of parks. Gone to other parks where it's been kind of dangerous.

Nick went over the goals we have set to maintain such as safety, quality, develop regular maintenance programs, react to emergency needs and renovations, identify hazardous conditions. Nick asked if this lines up with their vision, and they agreed.

Wendi asked how we've gotten public feedback.

Sheila shared that the Master Plan process relied on engagement from the public. That process identified concerns and priorities for the public. The How We Play check in process this past fall include very similar public engagement. We also respond to park user shared concerns both

when on site or reported to staff. We also receive feedback from participants for programs. Wendi stated it sounds consistent and frequent.

Nick reviewed and discussed elements of the Maintenance Management Plan including:

- Inventory of parks
- Inventory of equipment
- Inventory of staff and contracted services
- Preferred site amenities (standardize)
- Maintenance Standards

Went over maintenance standards which included staff, contracts, and overall funding. How much can we pay to maintain certain facilities. Created a tier system for how facilities should be maintained. Proceeded to explain Tier I facilities such as the community center. These should be getting daily services. Tier II is not as highly trafficked such as neighborhood parks, every other day. Tier III are facilities that are underdeveloped, weekly janitorial services, and routine maintenance whether it's weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Just because a facility is in a lower tier doesn't mean it won't be maintained more frequently if needed.

Brandon asked about ranking tier system and if it's just based on traffic.

Sheila proceeded to explain how we identified tiers. The tiers prioritized community parks and facilities first, not just on traffic. Although community assets by nature will have higher traffic. At some point you have to decide the schedule. Just because it's placed in a tier doesn't mean we won't be responsive or stuck in that tier. We are going to have situations that put us behind, we only have three guys. We have been able to contract maintenance help. Rain can really impact a grass cutting schedule and the ability to respond to other work orders. We've had to reach out to vendors to help us get through those times. The number of positions are not consistent with the needs of the park system. We don't have to personally be the ones to perform the work, but we do have to find a solution and advocate for the resources.

Nick mentioned turf is briefly mentioned in this plan, but it has its very own specific plan.

Sheila spoke about occasional reliance on Public Works for facility maintenance. If they are unable to respond to a facility maintenance issue in a time frame, we feel acceptable to our park users, then we have to pull one of our guys to address it.

Quinton spoke about how the bathrooms are clean and well maintained. Sheila thanked Ms. Hazel for her part in this. She's been with us for a year now. Tried to get the position full time but was not funded. This is a position that needs to be full time. Needs to assist at the community center as well. Currently only being cleaned four times a week but needs it way more. Amy stated the current cleaning is only what's around the gym, but not the gym itself.

Marcus thanked Amy for taking care of the gym. Asked about contracts and park responsibilities. Sheila stated page 15 lists current parks and general idea of what we currently have under landscape contract. We will be going out for bid in the coming weeks and intend to change the

scope of work. For example it would be benefit to staff resources to switch responsibilities of greenway and Community Park.

Marcus brought up some areas of concern and there was discussion regarding:

- pine straw on basketball courts at Community Park.
 - Sheila stated she made a note and will look into the issue.
- balls get stuck in some of the basketball nets at Community Park
 - Sheila stated maintenance will take a look at these.
- lack of grass on one side of the Gill St basketball courts
 - Sheila stated we working through the soil issues at Gill St with DEQ. Sheila stated we have tried for years to grow grass, but grass has a hard time growing in that location.
- likes the dispersed seating at Gill St and would like to see more of that at other parks especially near the Community Park Basketball Courts.
 - Sheila suggested that we keep this thought as we plan for the budget and when we do a site plan for community park.
- latches for entrance to basketball court and dog owners who allow their dogs to freely enter into the basketball court.
 - Sheila stated if this a thing with a particular dog owner, then we can speak with them about it if you want to reach out to us when it is happening.

Wendi asked how the preferred amenities were identified. Sheila stated the things on this plan are things that we are currently purchasing. All of these items will be consistent for park branding such as every park having the same trash can. It helps with maintenance. If something breaks, you can easily change it out. We will continue to build on this list as we grow.

Quinton asked about alley activation and what qualifies that. Sheila stated this started before there was a downtown Mainstreet group. We helped activate those alleys to support development of downtown businesses. We are happy to still support these efforts, but the planning for that type of improvement should primarily stay with the Downtown staff and board for planning.

Quinton spoke about an alley on Horton St. that does not have stop signs. Sheila is getting Quinton in touch with Teresa and Public Works to address this.

David asked if there are future plans for another farmers market. Sheila stated it was paused a couple years ago. The market for farmer's markets was saturated and we were one of the smaller ones, struggled to get farmers, took a lot of work, investment to operate 26 days out of the year was more than we spent on other significant areas such as the Community Center or athletics. When looking at growth, the department didn't have the resources and needed to focus elsewhere for now, had to transition our efforts equitably. Transitioned vendors to events and made more event opportunities. Allowed staff to do more general events and programs. Stated there is a place for potentially getting back into a market in the future, but not right now.

The decision to pause on offering a market was discussed with and supported by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Quinton acknowledged the sprinklers he saw at Wakelon.

David stated he spoke to Richard and runs into him at parks.

7. Open Discussion

Marcus stated he will have a table at the Boys and Girls Club talking about his basketball coaching programs. Marcus shared concerns and there was discussion regarding more opportunities for girls' basketball year-round, kids quitting a team mid-season and filling the spot, league play with other communities. Sheila also reminded the board the budget process for next year is going to begin soon and keep these ideas in mind.

Wendi stated September is National Recovery Month. She is doing a fundraiser with the Mudcats to sell tickets so kids can attend a baseball game. Talking with Boys and Girls Club for youth recovery event with a DJ and food. Still in talks, hope to solidify. As of August 11 she met all requirements for finishing her doctoral program and is now Dr. Wendi Watson.

8. Staff Updates

1. Department Update

1) Upcoming Events

Amy spoke about our last Movie Night with a record of 700 people. Over 400 participants in summer camp. September events include Adult & Senior Bingo as the older adults sometimes just want to be with other adults, away from kids. Spoke about the second Rock the Block coming up on Friday, September 13. Coat drive at Gill St. Park on Thursday, Sept. 26 from 5pm-6:30pm, invited the Board to donate coats and volunteer, we accept scarves and hats, serving hotdogs, and music. The next Outdoor Movie Night is Little Mermaid on Friday, Sept. 27, doors open at 6pm. Invited Board to volunteer at Candy Cane Lane such as making reindeer food and ornaments. Quinton stated the Young Professionals group are interested in participating in Candy Cane Lane.

2) Shirt Sizes

Chloe received everyone's shirt sizes.

3) 3v3 Basketball

Nick stated we are in the beginning stages of planning this. Time and numbers will dictate if we can do it. 8 total teams, two different pods, then tournament. Justin has great ideas for it and is encouraged. No rules or anything set as of right now. Marcus mentioned the amount of people coming to basketball open gym, and there was a lot of interest in the 3v3. Asked about age groups and shared concern about ages at open gym. Nick stated it has not been decided yet as we are just getting started. Sheila stated now that summer camp is over, we can see if there's any holes that have opened up to have another open gym. Initial plan is a Christmas tournament in the evening. Wendi asked if this is something the public can attend. Sheila stated we are looking at what we could do since we are very limited with this facility. Adults can play intensely, and it may not be as safe for spectators in such a small space. We are considering a half court

3v3 plan which would be similiar to the Olympics. In process of developing rules, structure, Justin will be able to focus more after fall sports has started.

4) Next Advisory Board Meeting: September 16th

a. Play Zebulon Master Plan Check In

Sheila stated this will help with budget decisions.

b. Land Acquisition

Sheila stated we will review proposed zones for future parks and intended levels of service.

c. Youth Advisory Board Proposal

Sheila shared Paola is assisting with developing a plan for the Youth Advisory effort. Transitioning away from using “youth” wording and will be mindful of teens with intentional marketing, trying to be less formal. We will offer a series of engagements to peak interest first. Figure out a cute name to engage. Have a meet up at Creative Cup after hours, food, and maybe bring in music.

d. Park Rules Review & Update

Nick will be bringing this forward.

5) Sustainability Board Meeting: September 16th

a. Action Plan

BOC has officially appointed the Advisory Board as interim; Paola will be staff liaison and help develop a process for it to be in a good place once she exits. Already have a chair and vice chair from advisory board, if they want to follow that structure they can, or change it. Need to set schedule. Upcoming programs that are relevant to sustainability such as tree planting. Doesn't have to be mandatory, but volunteer opportunity. We will need to consider updates to the tree ordinance.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Marcus

2nd: Wendi

All in favor.