

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

The Zebulon Parks and Recreation Advisory Board met Monday, June 17th 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, Dexter Privette, and Quinton Taylor.

Meeting Agenda

1. Call to Order

Brandon called to order at 6:21pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve agenda: Dexter

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. April 15th, 2024

B. May 18th, 2024

C. May 20th, 2024

Motion to approve Consent Agendas: Quinton

2nd: Wendi

All in favor

5. Presentations

A. Wake County Parks, Recreation and Open Space

The Director of Wake County Parks, Recreation and Open Space will present information to the Advisory Board regarding Wake County initiatives to enhance conservation and access to parks.

Sheila Long recognized Chris Snow of Wake County Parks, Recreation and Open Space. Chris provided a summary of County conservation and open space efforts over the years. Chris showed a map of open space in Wake County. 9,871 acres of open space have been preserved.

Chris spoke about how they pick the land for acquisition. They use a GIS Model and they don't wait for land to go up for sale or for a property owner to come to the County. The model can evaluate any parcel of land across the county for open space and park acquisition, and can score parcels through GIS. Chris reviewed criteria such as water quality, parcel size, species & habitat, and location. Showed a map of high scoring and low scoring parcels.

Chris shared the request for property process. They issue a letter to properties in the priority areas and will ask them if they would like to sell it or conserve it. They let people know that funding is limited and they are seeking competitive pricing. The last process resulted in 253 positive responses where they were either interested in selling their land or putting an easement on their property.

The county goal is 30% or 165,000 acres.

Brandon asked if farmers can negotiate easements. Chris shared if they would like to keep farming, they can, but it is county land. The county acquires farmland and allows the farmer to keep farming.

Brandon asked how many letters they send out when inquiring about land. Answered that they aim big and overestimate because most of them will not go through.

B. Triangle Trails

Triangle Trails is a collaborative organization bringing communities together to help plan, build, and promote greenways. Program Manager, Rashawn King, will share information about their efforts and how counties and towns are coming together to expand opportunities.

Sheila introduced Rashawn King; he has been a great partner of recreation for the state at large but has also been our consultant for recreation resources. Helped us with our master plan and made sure it was in line with PARTF. He is an Advisory Board member for the City of Raleigh and invited the Board to pick his brain with any questions.

Rashawn works with Triangle Trails (TTI) and is part of this initiative of East Coast Greenway. He presented included discussion on the following:

- Spoke about different funding partners.
- Stated the TTI mission statement and what it means, and the marketing tag line.
- Showed the regional footprint of the counties they serve.
- Showed another footprint of some of the trails they hope to see coming up. Ultimate goal is to connect all the counties with a greenway system.
 - Wendi asked how many counties are connected currently. Rashawn stated which ones are currently connected now and different ones they are currently working with to be connected to each other. Some are in feasibility and design studies right now.
- Another initiative of this is to transform downed rail lines into greenway trails. It can be a cumbersome process working with rail companies, but TTI has had success creating relationships with different companies.
- Quinton asked if there will be rest areas for people traveling from state to state. Rashawn answered that there will be rest destinations, including merchandise shops, and coffee shops. This is what the East Coast Greenway Alliance is designed to help support.
- Wendi asked where we rank. Rashawn stated that he was told near the end of February that Florida is number one in trails and connectivity, North Carolina is number two.
- A lot of energy is focused around Wake County. Having counties like Wake and Durham as a blueprint is great because you can take that to the other counties.
- Spoke about technical assistance TTI does such as grant administration.
- Went over the 2024-2025 Triangle Trails Initiative work plan: plan, build, and activate, as well as maintain, and what each phase of the work plan entails. They want to continue to work with public and private sectors to create greenway destinations. They will be continuing to improve their website and social media, and are currently creating the Wander App.

- Spoke about the Wander App and what it will be used for, and the process of putting this app together, such as the different companies they are working with to collaborate. The app will have GPS to get you to the closest trail and take you to others, as well as taking you to other local destinations in the area such as parks, events, coffee shops and restaurants.. The app is fully developed and is being utilized in other states. We will be the first destination using this program for greenways and trails. When Wake County starts using this app other counties will follow and start to use it as well.

6. Open Discussion

The Interim Town Manager introduced himself to the Board and thanked them for all they do. He has always believed that communities should focus on quality of life. If the pandemic has taught us anything it is the importance of being able to get out. Also spoke about his previous experience of being the Town Manager for Greensboro.

The Board spoke about the Juneteenth Celebration last weekend such as the band, staff assistance and their help in assistance with set up, and the shirts were nice. Opportunities to improve.

Brandon thanked the presenters for their presentations stating he had learned a lot and their passion was evident throughout their presentation.

7. Staff Updates

A. Department Update

1. Budget Update

Sheila stated the BOC has not approved the budget yet, but there will be a work session tomorrow night where they will talk about it. Shade structures, dug outs, splash pad at Whitley, and Youth Advisory Board are all projects that have been identified for continued consideration as Board of Commissioner initiatives.

2. Next Meeting: July 15th

Brought attention for things to think about such as policy, special interests, and public engagement opportunities to come back with in August for an action plan and discuss as the adopted budget moves forward. That way the Board will have an idea of what to move forward with.

8. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Wendi

2nd: Quinton

All in favor