



**OAK RIDGE PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 17, 2024 - 6:30 P.M.
(Held in person & electronically via the Zoom platform)**

MINUTES

Members Present

John Browning, Co-Chair
Kyle Anders
Phyllis Anders
Mike Kimel
Caroline Ruch
Randy Collins
Chelsea Young, Alternate (sitting via zoom)
John Garrett, Alternate (not sitting via zoom)

Reese Bell, Teen Advisor

Staff Present

Brock Dunigan, Parks Superintendent
Ashley Royal, Deputy Town Clerk

Members Absent

Adrian Eckenrod, Co-Chair
Ty Lindsay, Alternate

Note: This meeting was conducted remotely under N. C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.24 by use of simultaneous communication using the Zoom online platform and in which Parks & Recreation Advisory Board members participated by simultaneous communication. Board members joined and participated in the entire meeting, unless otherwise noted.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair John Browning called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Co-Chair John Browning made a motion to strike agenda item Six A off the agenda and to approve the amended agenda. Kyle Anders seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously (7-0).

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Caroline Ruch made a motion to approve the minutes from September 19, 2024, regular meeting, and Mike Kimel seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (7-0).

4. STAFF REPORT

- Parks Superintendent Brock Dunigan presented the financial report and noted that 38 percent of the fiscal year had occurred with 16 percent of operating expenses spent.
- Dunigan noted that a memorial bench had been dedicated and installed near the pond and a memorial tree had also been dedicated in the park.

- Dunigan reported the replacement of a few shrubs and trees and stated that preparations for overseeding the grounds for fall were underway.
- Dunigan verified that the fields at Heritage Farm Park had successfully rebounded from the infestation of army worms after being treated by Bar Construction.
- Dunigan shared that the installation of all eight thermoplastic games was complete.
- Dunigan revealed that a construction punch list had been created for Heritage Farm Park which was awaiting engagement from Bar Construction.
- Dunigan acknowledged success of the 2024 Music in the Park season.

5. ORYA REPORT

- Randy Collins reported that both the ORYA football and cheer seasons were going well.
- Collins noted that negotiations between ORYA and the Town of the 2025 ORYA Usage Agreement would continue on Monday, October 21. He did not foresee any major obstacles in the process. Browning remarked that the usage agreement could be reviewed by the Board in November and by Council in December.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration & Approval of Coffee Cart Proposal at Oak Ridge Parks (Sydney Williams)

Removed from agenda.

B. Consideration & Approval of Piedmont Shakespeare Company's Proposal for Performances at Oak Ridge Town Park amphitheater (David McGraw)

Executive Director of the Piedmont Shakespeare Company David McGraw introduced the company as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based out of Greensboro which provides free outdoor theater. He requested the use of the park's amphitheater and a waiver of its fee for one performance to be held Saturday, June 21, 2025, 8:00pm until 10:00pm, with a rain date to be ascertained later if necessary. He clarified that the event would not require any additional park staff support other than possibly for security. He noted that the company would provide its own technical and sound crew and requested permission to allow drone photography. McGraw added that light drink refreshments would be sold at the event and that online reservations would be encouraged to help control attendance at the event. Discussion continued on the operational details of the event.

Caroline Ruch made a motion to waive the rental fees for the amphitheater and to approve the use of the amphitheater by the Piedmont Shakespeare Company on June 21, 2025, with follow up with staff on signage details for the event. Phyllis Anders seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (7-0).

C. Consideration & Approval of Eagle Scout Project

BSA Troop 139 member Grayson Piazza introduced his plan to renovate the MST campground at the Town Park for an Eagle Scout project. He explained that he would build and install two wooden boxes at the campground to house a journal and a map of the park with its connections to the MST and a picnic table for pass-

through hikers. He added that he would also build and install two gravel pads for camping in the dry and for the picnic table to the campground. He specified that the project would take two weekend days to complete with some materials that would be donated by a local woodworker and other materials purchased with donations already collected for the project. He estimated total expenses to be around \$800, \$400 of which would be personally subsidized by him and \$500 in donations from friends and family. Grayson added that any unspent funds would be donated to the MST committee or Parks & Recreation Advisory Board to establish a fund for future eagle scout projects. Dunigan recommended approval of the project with additional supervision of the final details.

Caroline Ruch made a motion to approve the eagle scout project as presented with additional supervision given by Brock Dunigan to the project's final renovation details. Co-Chair John Browning seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (7-0).

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. Review and Approval of Farmhouse Community Center Policies & Fees

Deputy Town Clerk Ashley Royal presented the updated Farmhouse Community Center Policies which included revisions made by the Board at the previous month's review. She offered a summary of opinion regarding alcohol service at the Farmhouse obtained from the Town's Attorney Michael Thomas and from the Town's insurance provider through the North Carolina League of Municipalities. She stated that both sources recommended that a permit be required of the renter to obtain and serve alcohol at the Farmhouse in order to protect the Town from possible issues of liability. She explained that in order to serve alcohol at the Farmhouse, the renter could engage a caterer to provide the alcohol, an ABC off-premises alcohol license and a licensed bartender to serve the alcohol. Alternatively, the renter may provide his/her own alcohol but must also obtain a special use ABC permit and a licensed bartender to serve the alcohol. Board members proceeded to discuss the details of a refundable security deposit and concluded that a \$100 refundable security deposit would be required of all rentals at the Farmhouse along with a required agreement to a standard disclaimer providing coverage for loss of property due to damage or negligence.

Board members decided to set operating hours of the Farmhouse to 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. on Mondays through Fridays, and 10:00 a.m. – 10 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays to provide adequate coverage by staff for maintenance of the facility.

Ruch proposed providing a two-hour rental of the facility to Oak Ridge residents 65-years or older at no charge on Mondays through Thursdays from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. with an approved reservation request. She noted that the request could be a recurring event and that any rental beyond the 2-hour limit would be subject to charge at the prescribed rental rate. She further demonstrated that the non-paying requests would prevent any other paying requests for the same time if they were approved. Dunigan suggested that holidays be excluded from the proposed consideration.

Reese Bell asked for clarification on the age restriction to rent the facility. Royal noted that restricting the age to rent to 18 would be added to the Farmhouse Policies, noting the legal requirement to be 21 years or older to rent with alcohol service allowed.

B. Update on Park Security Camera Policy

Royal reported that all security cameras had been installed but were not yet live online. She noted that WiFi connectivity at Heritage Farm Park was awaiting service from Spectrum who had given an anticipated date of November 1 for full operation. Royal explained that an electrical issue with a camera at the north end of the park had been addressed and that training of the Guilford County Sheriffs office on the security camera system was pending.

C. Update on Farmhouse Community Center

Caroline Ruch reported that the original mantels over the fireplaces at the Farmhouse were being restored by Hedgecock Builders. She pointed out that the fireplaces would not be operable but would preserve the look of the original Farmhouse furnishing. She added that the brick over the fireplaces would be exposed to further underscore the original setting of the chimneys. Ruch pointed out that all hardware appointments were historically accurate in presentation and ADA compliant. She added that Hedgecock Builders would repurpose wood beams retrieved from the original building into wall mounted coat racks at the entryways.

D. Update on 2024 & 2025 Music in the Park Series

Royal reported much success in the 2024 Music in the Park Series owing largely to the efforts of park staff and volunteers. She noted that four of six bands had committed to the 2025 season.

8. OTHER DISCUSSIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMINDERS

Next regular meeting: November 21, 2024

Halloween Terror Trail October 18-19, 25-26, 2024

Dunigan noted that ORYA would be collecting used coats to donate to victims of Hurricane Helene in Western NC.

Veterans Day/VHG Grand Opening November 11 at 10 a.m.

Dunigan reported that construction was completed at the VHG site on October 11 and that ASJ Wilson was addressing the punch list items and completing landscape work.

Light Up the Night December 7, 2024

Ann Schneider confirmed that luminary installation was scheduled to occur on December 3.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Randy Collins commented that ORYA President Tom Collins would be stepping down from his position on December 31, 2024, and suggested that he be acknowledged with appreciation for his years of volunteer service to the organization at a Town Council meeting. Ann Schneider proposed scheduling the acknowledgement during the January 2025 Town Council meeting.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Co-Chair John Browning made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m., and Randy Collins seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (7-0).

Respectfully submitted:

Ashley Royal, CMC
Deputy Town Clerk

John Browning
Co-Chair