



**OAK RIDGE PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
MARCH 21, 2024 – 6:30 P.M.
(Held in person & electronically via the Zoom platform)**

MINUTES

Members Present

John Browning, Co-Chair
Adrian Eckenrod, Co-Chair
Phyllis Anders
Kyle Anders
Mike Kimel
Randy Collins
John Garrett, Alternate (sitting)

Staff Present

Brock Dunigan, Parks Superintendent
Ashley Royal, Deputy Town Clerk

Members Absent

Caroline Ruch
Phyllis Clodfelter, Alternate
Chelsea Young, Alternate

Reese Bell, Teen Advisor

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 Adrian Eckenrod called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

John Browning made a motion to approve the amended agenda, adding a presentation of a 5K run proposed by a student from the Early College at Guilford. Kyle Anders seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously (6-0).

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Mike Kimel made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 15, 2024, regular meeting, and Phyllis Anders seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (6-0).

4. STAFF REPORT

- Dunigan reported that the installation of the inclusive playground at Heritage Farm Park had been completed. He added that asphalt repair on the pathways were awaiting the reopening of asphalt production in April. Dunigan pointed out that the athletic fields would require re-sprigging in May which would involve some regrading in areas, and that landscaping at the park was complete including the spreading of mulch.
- Concerns were raised regarding the continued unauthorized use of closed areas in Heritage Farm Park and the potential for damage, theft, and injury that the

unauthorized usage could experience. Dunigan confirmed that closed areas were roped off against entry and sufficient signage was visible to ward off entry. He proposed the installation of a gate at the park's entrance. Discussion continued focusing on permanent and temporary solutions to preventing unauthorized entry into closed areas of the park. The decision was made to present the issue to council members during weekly council briefings for feedback, and to address the issue at the following month's Board meeting.

- Dunigan raised issues encountered with drainage along the pine plots facing NC Hwy 150 toward the Oak Ridge Swim Club. He discussed repair options that would require a change order to construct a culvert underneath the pathway by the swim club. He explained that asphalt would be reapplied, and rip rap added to alleviate the drainage issues in that area. Deputy Clerk Ashley Royal added that the change order would require Council's consideration and approval before repair work could take place.
- Dunigan asked ORYA liaison Randy Collins if ORYA would be providing field marshals for their ball sports in accordance with the Usage Agreement. He pointed out that the field marshals' tasks were currently being performed by the Park's evening groundskeeper. Collins admitted that ORYA had been lax in allowing these tasks to be absorbed by Town Park staff and noted that ORYA sports directors scheduled for field usage were responsible for these tasks.
- Dunigan followed up by asking Collins to clarify the relationship between ORYA soccer and Fusion Soccer, noting that Fusion Soccer had been scheduling and using fields in ORYA's name and not cleaning the fields after its use. Collins responded that he would bring the issue to ORYA's attention. Dunigan pointed out that pieces were missing to the soccer goals which could cause injury and asked Collins to follow up with the ORYA soccer directors to locate these parts.

5. ORYA REPORT

- Randy Collins reported that ORYA baseball, soccer, and spring softball practices had begun.
- Collins noted that the Casino Night fundraiser was not meeting its ticket sales goals and encouraged continued promotion of the event.
- Collins mentioned that the ORYA newsletter was in need of a volunteer editor.
- Collins introduced a discussion on installing two batting cages between fields three and four. He indicated that questions remained regarding the cages' structure, foundation, size, location, and cost. Dunigan pointed out that the FY2024-25 budget had already been submitted for consideration to the Finance Committee, but that discussion could continue on the request.

6. NEW BUSINESS

Deputy Town Clerk established that Caroline Ruch would not be attending the meeting, and that Alternate John Garrett would be a sitting member of the Board.

The agenda was revisited to add a presentation of a Golf Practice Net as agenda item 6B.

Randy Collins made a motion to approve the amended agenda and John Browning seconded. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

A. Consideration / Approval of 5K Fun Run for IAT at Oak Ridge Town Park

A freshman student at the Early College at Guilford, Ishaan Luthra, representing the Indian Association of the Triad (IAT) presented a fundraiser program to benefit the Children's Heart Foundation (CHF). Luthra explained that the IAT was a non-profit organization for youth dedicated to developing and supporting leadership and volunteerism. He stated that all proceeds derived from registration fees, a raffle planned for the event, sales of goods and donations would be donated to the CHF and that the event would be operated by a team of youth volunteers. Luthra requested approval to hold the event at Town Park, a waiver of fees for facility usage and the establishment of a liability agreement to cover the event.

Discussion proceeded covering various details of the event. Board members agreed to hold a vote on the request with the understanding that Luthra would confirm an appropriate date to hold the event with Town staff.

Kyle Anders made a motion to approve the 5K Fun Run for IAT at Oak Ridge Town Park and Randy Collins seconded. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

B. Consideration / Approval of a Golf Practice Net at Heritage Farm Park

Patrick Hawks requested consideration of the installation of a golf practice net, or hitting net, with three to four position mats at Heritage Farm Park. He noted that the golf net would make Heritage Farm Park unique as no other town park in the area offered this amenity. Discussion took place covering aspects of cost, material, safety, functionality, portability, and maintenance. The Board agreed to consider adding the request to the 2025 Capital Improvement Plan.

C. Consideration/Approval of Park Security Proposal (Adrian Eckenrod)

Eckenrod presented a park security proposal prepared by RJ Young, a technology solutions firm. He explained that the proposal outlined a point-to-points delivery system which would utilize established WiFi and cellular infrastructure in the park. Eckenrod stated that the security system would be installed at each entrance to both the Town and Heritage Farm Parks, which would be a total of four entrances. He noted that the system would consist of a ten-foot pole on which would be mounted two bullet cameras to capture the backs of vehicles entering and exiting the parks, and one dome camera to capture an overview of movement. He pointed out that power points to deliver power to the system would need to be established from nearby or installed power sources and that the wireless network footprint would need to be expanded to extend coverage to Heritage Farm Park. He explained that the system would be cloud based which would require a subscription fee for storage of recordings. Discussion continued focusing on details of the system's requirements, operation, maintenance, reliability and cost. The Board requested additional information and product demonstration and opted to continue its consideration into the following month for further review.

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. Update on Grand Opening at Heritage Farm Park

Dunigan reported that Duke Energy would be completing trenching work to deliver power to the park in a week. He noted that fixtures were being installed in the restrooms, but that flooring was pending. Discussion proceeded regarding the planning of the Park's opening in terms of setting a date and determining the breadth or scope of the ceremony and a budget to cover its costs. The Board decided to plan a soft opening of the Park, while Royal and Dunigan consulted with the Town Manager for a budget. The Board decided to keep May 4 as a tentative date for the soft opening.

B. Update on the Farmhouse Community Center

Phylis Anders reported that the construction of the Farmhouse Community Center had slowed down due to discovery of soft soil conditions under the foundation. Council member Ann Schneider explained that the soil was being analyzed and an engineer was being sought to remediate the situation. She added that piers would be installed to shore up the foundation and that the cost to do so was expected not to exceed budget. Schneider added that the process of bidding out the parking lot, sidewalks and landscape around the Farmhouse would push the project out to July with an anticipated completion in the fall. She noted that the revised schedule would prohibit having a Back Porch event which had been anticipated to occur in July.

C. Update on 2024 Music in the Park Series

Deputy Town Clerk Royal reported that the schedule for the 2024 Music in the Park series was released to the public today. She stressed that the event had received positive media attention, noting that both Yes! Weekly and WGHP Fox News had reached out with interest to publicize the events. Royal stated that Oak Ridge Bagel and Deli, Sherwin-Williams, DeVaney Dentistry and Grass Masters had committed to sponsoring events during the season.

Students from the Early College at Guilford interrupted the discussion via zoom. The students introduced themselves as student advocates for UNICEF with a presentation to hold a scavenger hunt to benefit UNICEF. As the presentation was not on the agenda, these students were advised to call Royal the next morning to discuss their proposal for possible inclusion to the April meeting agenda.

Dunigan continued the discussion of Music in the Park with a concern about using his part-time park staff to operate sales and concessions at the events. He noted that some had discontinued their employment with the Town due to the task. Royal indicated that Town staff were called upon to assist with Music in the Park as a last resort due to shortage of volunteers. Discussion ensued regarding how to muster volunteers for future events.

8. OTHER DISCUSSIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMINDERS

Next regular meeting:	April 18, 2024
Spring Arts & Craft Show	April 6, 2024
Music in the Park	April 13, 2024
Canine Capers	April 27, 2024

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Kyle Anders made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m., and John Browning seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (7-0).

Respectfully submitted:

Ashley Royal, CMC
Deputy Town Clerk

Adrian Eckenrod
Co-Chair