



**OAK RIDGE PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
AUGUST 15, 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
- Mike Kimel
- Kyle Anders
- Chelsea Young, Alternate (sitting)
- John Garrett, Alternate (sitting)

Staff Present

- Brock Dunigan, Parks Superintendent
- Ashley Royal, Deputy Town Clerk

Members Absent

- Caroline Ruch
- Randy Collins
- Phyllis Clodfelter, 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 6:30 p.m.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Kyle Anders made a motion to approve the agenda, and Phyllis Anders seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (7-0).

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Co-Chair John Browning made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 16, 2024, regular meeting, and Chelsea Young seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (7-0).

4. STAFF REPORT

- Parks Superintendent Brock Dunigan reported that the park was fully staffed and that two additional positions had been approved by Council to begin on July 1, 2024. He announced that Brent Carrickhoff would be upgraded to one of the added positions as a Full-time Groundskeeper I. He noted that this position would be responsible for expanded duties at Heritage Farm Park and provide coverage at night. He indicated that Brent would work from one in the afternoon until nine at night. Dunigan announced that Austin Abbot, who had been a seasonal employee, would assume the second added position as a full part-time employee.

- Dunigan reported that the final inspection from the fire marshal had been obtained opening the restrooms at Heritage Farm Park for full operation. He stated that the temporary portable toilets would be returned.
- Dunigan pointed out that the Bar Construction contract at Heritage Farm Park expired on August 15, 2024. He noted that some issues remained unfinished and that the contract stipulated a daily penalty of \$1000 beyond the expired date. He stated that charging the penalty fee would be subject to the Town Manager's decision. Dunigan explained that among the unfinished issues were hauling away the dirt pile instead of spreading it on the lower field, regrading and repouring sections of the asphalt walkway, sand leveling the multipurpose fields in lieu of re-sprigging the fields and installing selected thermoplastic games along the walkway behind the fields. He added that a construction punch list would be developed in a month to insure satisfactory completion of the project.
- Dunigan noted that the first round of engraved brick pavers for the Veterans Honor Green had been delivered and would be installed shortly. He added that the project remained on schedule for completion in mid-September.
- Dunigan announced the upcoming RidgeFest event at the park on September 5, 6 and 7, 2024.
- Dunigan stated that a set of bleachers had been purchased as a capital expense for Field 4 and that Oak Ridge Military Academy would acquire the old bleachers.
- Dunigan provided an update on the park security project stating that four poles for security cameras at the park entrances and the attending meter boxes, power panels and boxes for the cameras had been installed by Oak Ridge Electric. He explained that work to connect the electrical transformer to the meter panel by Duke Energy was pending. He added that CMIT would conduct WiFi connection services beginning August 19 and RJ Young would begin to install the cameras on August 27.
- Dunigan reported that ORYA fall sports would be in play by August 19.
- Dunigan stated that the MyRec facility reservation system was in operation and had received positive feedback from public users. He added that ORYA field reservations had been uploaded to the system, and the ORYA stipend credit had been expended. He pointed out that charges for lights would be billed to ORYA separate from the field reservation charges.
- Dunigan reported that fiscal year 2023/24 ended \$2000 under budget. He reported capital expenditures for the current fiscal year included fall seeding services, \$15,000 to purchase new bleachers for field four, the purchase of a new Kubota to replace the Kubota purchased in 2009, grounds care of the pine plot at Heritage Farm Park and Town Hall and refurbishing and supplying tools for the McKanliss garage. He added that he would request a budget amendment to move the \$8000 slated to purchase a new golf cart to expenses to supply the McKanliss garage instead. He explained that he did not need a new golf cart as the Kubota being replaced was in good stead and would continue to remain in his fleet of park vehicles for use.
- Dunigan noted \$300 to \$400 revenue was garnered from park concession sales during the August Music in the Park event.
- Dunigan reported that the Eagle Scout project involving installation of bee pollinator stations at the parks was complete and the project involving installation of a hammock garden in the back field of the park was mostly complete.

Eckenrod asked about field usage by ORYA. Dunigan stated that he had received more than usual requests for field reservations from the public which had to be declined in deference to ORYA field occupation. He noted concern for the resulting

loss in potential revenue. Deputy Town Clerk Ashley Royal added that fields were occasionally booked by ORYA and not used. Dunigan mentioned that the concern would be discussed during negotiations with ORYA regarding the 2025 user agreement. He asked Board members to inform him of any additional concerns they had which he could bring to the discussion with ORYA.

Eckenrod asked about the operating condition of the older Kabuto remaining in the fleet of park vehicles. Dunigan noted that the vehicle remained in good operating condition and that all four Kabutos were on a regular maintenance schedule for upkeep.

A brief discussion about the use of fields by the football programs and their playoffs took place.

5. ORYA REPORT

No report available. Royal noted that dates to schedule meetings to negotiate the ORYA User Agreement were pending.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration & Approval of Butterfly Garden at Oak Ridge Parks

Sarah Hoffman presented a proposal for a memorial butterfly garden to honor a deceased friend. She described the location, landscape design, and special additions to the project such as a library, plant labels and a station for painting rocks. She expressed concern with the slope of the site selected for the garden, noting potential issues with accessibility. She mentioned starting the project in the fall with completion anticipated in six to twelve months. Hoffman stated that she would assume all costs for the project and offered to either personally maintain the site or provide a yearly stipend to support ongoing maintenance of the site. Dunigan added that park staff would perform regular pruning of the area as part of its scheduled grounds care, and he recommended approval of the project. Board members briefly discussed the concept and Royal suggested following the project with a special interest story.

Mike Kimel made a motion to approve the project as described and Kyle Anders seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (7-0).

B. Consideration & Approval of Farmhouse Community Center Policies & Procedures

Royal presented the Farmhouse Community Center policy drafted by committee during the early start of the Farmhouse project. She stated that she had researched several similar local event centers for policy standards and rates to gain an understanding of standard practices for managing an event center. She pointed out that she had made several additions to the original draft which included parking amenities, WiFi coverage, an ice maker appliance and online reservation capabilities through the MyRec reservation system. Discussion of the policy included fee structures for resident and non-resident patrons, security/damage deposits, managing the serving of alcohol, logistics of cleaning and inspection of the facility in

between reservations, smart features for the Farmhouse for remote management, allowances for service animals, permissible and impermissible décor, fire hazards and limitations for making advance bookings. Royal suggested that Board members review the draft policy and continue its discussion to the next meeting in September. She stated that the policy would not require Council input, however the fee structure and alcohol service statements would require Council approval.

C. Park Security Camera Policy Update

Royal introduced the updated park security policy vetted by the Town Attorney and pointed out that the policy was not subject to change and was being presented for the Board's information. She explained that the policy restricted security camera footage for use in criminal investigation only and would thereby not be subject to public record request. She added that access to footage was assigned to the Town Clerk and designees, who were Dunigan and Royal, and that the footage would be limited to thirty-day cloud storage. She pointed out that the sheriff's office had been assigned full access to camera footage for purposes of criminal investigation. Dunigan stated that limiting camera security data for criminal investigation would escalate all perceived violations directly to criminal activity and prevent him from being able to resolve minor violations personally. Eckenrod explained that posting camera security signs publicly could encourage counter surveillance tactics by potential perpetrators and he discouraged signage. Discussion ensued and Royal suggested seeking greater clarity on the policy from the Town Attorney.

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. Update on Farmhouse Community Center

Phyllis Anders reported that concrete had been poured and was in the process of drying in the addition to the Farmhouse. She stated that once the concrete dried and was tested for suitability, framing of the addition would proceed. She added that all siding had been removed from the Farmhouse and salvageable siding had been kept. She expressed concern for the slow pace of construction and Dunigan noted that Bar Construction company had overcommitted their services resulting in delays.

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

Royal reported that due to wet ground conditions, food vendor trucks had been relocated to the parking lot at the previous Music in the Park event. She commented that the relocation was successful and that she would consider placing food trucks in the parking lot for future events when needed. Royal stated that two bands had been committed to the 2025 season, Gypsy Danger and the Special Occasion Band. Dunigan asked if 80z Nation was being considered and Royal mentioned that 80z Nation now required their events to be ticketed making their band no longer suitable to book for this event. She added that she would engage the same security company for the 2025 season.

8. OTHER DISCUSSIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMINDERS

Next regular meeting:

September 19, 2024

RidgeFest	September 5, 6 and 7, 2024
Heritage Day A request was made for three parking attendants for this event.	September 28, 2024
Music in the Park Featuring the Alek Ottaway Band.	October 12, 2024

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Kyle Anders made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m., and Mike Kimel seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (7-0).

Respectfully submitted:

Ashley Royal, CMC
Deputy Town Clerk

Adrian Eckenrod
Co-Chair