



**+OAK RIDGE PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
SEPTEMBER 19, 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
Caroline Ruch
Chelsea Young, Alternate (sitting)

Staff Present

Brock Dunigan, Parks Superintendent
Ashley Royal, Deputy Town Clerk

Members Absent

John Garrett, Alternate
Randy Collins

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 John Browning called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Co-Chair John Browning made a motion to strike agenda item six off the agenda and to approve the amended agenda. Co-Chair Adrian Eckenrod seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously (7-0).

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Kyle Anders made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 15, 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 22 percent of the fiscal year had occurred with 14 percent of operating expenses.
- Dunigan updated the park security project. He stated that meters and meter panels had been installed by Duke Energy and that RJ Young had begun camera installation at the Lisa Drive parking lot entrances. He expected camera installations to continue in the Linville Road and Scoggins Road entrances the following day. He pointed out

that a meter inspection was pending at the Heritage Farm Park entrance and that power had not been connected to the site.

- Dunigan noted that a memorial bench had been dedicated at the park and that a sign designating a memorial tree had been installed. He commented that another memorial tree was pending purchase.
- Dunigan reported that he, Town Manager Bill Bruce and representatives from McGill Associates and Bar Construction Company had inspected Heritage Farm Park to assemble a punch list of items requiring additional attention. He stated that approximately twelve items had been identified. Dunigan reported that installation of seven of the eight thermoplastic interactive games had been installed along the walkway and that the walkway had been reopened that day. He noted that the last game was awaiting shipment of parts.
- Dunigan proposed four revisions to the existing Facility Rental Fee Schedule to more suitably align the fees with current economic trends and practices. The first revision involved removing the \$100 refundable deposit required to rent an athletic field for two or more hours. He explained that the deposit fee was insufficient to cover real damage, and that the disclaimer language included in the reservation process for facilities provided sufficient protection from property damage by renters. The second revision proposed was to restrict the rental of the 225-foot temporary outfield fence for use in tournaments only. The third proposed revision was to increase the fee for optional infield prep from \$30 to \$45 for games, and from \$20 to \$30 for practices. Dunigan pointed out that the increase was necessary to address rising costs due to inflation and to align with fees being charged by neighboring facilities. He pointed out that the increases were still lower than most fees being charged elsewhere and that the charge would be unilateral to all renters including ORYA. For similar reasons, he proposed the fourth revision to increase staff cost per person from \$20 per hour to \$25 per hour. He added that if approved by both the Board and Town Council, the revisions would go into effect on January 1, 2025.

Browning inquired into the impact of the fee increases on ORYA and asked how much the fields were utilized by the organization. Dunigan replied that ORYA occupied the fields approximately 90 percent of the time during their athletic season. He explained that Town Council members had the final say in the revisions being proposed and could suggest additional revisions themselves.

Co-Chair John Browning made a motion to approve the proposed revisions to the Facility Fee Schedule to be effective January 1, 2025, and to present the revised Facility Fee Schedule to Town Council for consideration and approval. Co-Chair Adrian Eckenrod seconded the motion, and the motion was passed unanimously (7-0).

- Dunigan reported on the success of the recent RidgeFest event co-sponsored by the Merchants of Oak Ridge. He stated that attendance had increased by 60 percent from the previous year, with the lowest attendance having been experienced on Friday night. He acknowledged the contributions of his staff and Randy Floss to the success of the event.
- Dunigan listed the next events at the park as being Heritage Day on September 28 and the final Music in the Park on October 12, 2024.

5. **ORYA REPORT**

- Dunigan provided the ORYA report in Randy Collins' absence. He reported that all fall sports were fully engaged and that registrations had increased from the previous years, particularly for baseball and softball.
- Dunigan noted that the MyRec Facility Reservation System indicated that ORYA had overspent their stipend to date by approximately \$2,400 and expenses for field lights were outstanding.
- Dunigan announced the ORYA youth leadership Halloween Trail event scheduled for October 18, 19, 25 and 26. He commented that the event would collect canned food as admission.
- Deputy Town Clerk Ashley Royal added that she, Dunigan and Town Manager Bill Bruce had been working to put together a draft of the 2025 ORYA Usage Agreement and that the proposed draft would be presented to the Board for review after additional collaboration with ORYA. She anticipated having a completed draft proposal to review by the Board's next meeting in October.

Mike Kimel asked if remediation was planned to address drainage issues at a section of walkway in Heritage Farm Park. Dunigan responded that the issue was an item on the construction punch list and that he expected a drain box would be installed under the asphalt walkway to drain water into an area opposite the problem area.

Browning inquired if Bar Construction was cooperative in addressing issues and Dunigan replied that Bar Construction was compliant with performing repairs and has absorbed costs associated with reparation.

6. NEW BUSINESS

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

Removed from agenda.

7. OLD BUSINESS

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

Royal presented a draft version of the Farmhouse Community Center Policies & Fee guidelines along with research obtained from similar event centers in the area. She stated that the Board would determine the rental fee structure as well as the policies to manage the facility, and that Town Council would vote on the rental fee and the policy regulating the use of alcohol only. The Board's discussion included:

- Determining whether to allow alcohol to be served, which would include beer, wine, fortified wine and liquor.
- Determining the party responsible for controlling alcohol if alcohol is approved, and whether that party would be required to obtain an ABC special use permit, off-premises permit and/or a minimum \$1 million liability coverage policy.
- Determining whether to impose a refundable security deposit for renters who wish to serve alcohol, and how much to charge for the deposit.
- Consequences of violation of policies such as the discovery of uncontrolled alcohol on premises.
- Liability issues surrounding use of alcohol on Town property.

- Determining hours of operation and minimum hours required to rent the facility.
- Identifying appropriate fee structures for residents, non-residents, and non-profit organizations.
- Considering the cleaning and inspection of the facility after each reservation on weekdays and weekends.
- Deciding whether to charge a cleaning fee, and if so, how much to charge.

The Board opted to seek more insight from Town Attorney Michael Thomas regarding issues of liability and asked for additional research into issues surrounding serving alcohol in an event center. The Board arrived at the following decisions:

- Operating hours would be 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
- Refundable security deposit of \$25 for rentals not opting to serve alcohol.
- Refundable security deposit of \$100 for rentals serving alcohol.
- Alcohol must be controlled and served by a caterer or bartender with an off-premises ABC permit.
- Minimum legal drinking age of 21 must be observed.
- Resident and Non-Profit Organization rental fee: \$20/hour with 2-hour minimum rental, or \$300/day, plus refundable security deposit.
- Non-Resident rental fee: \$40/hour with 2-hour minimum rental, or \$400/day, plus refundable security deposit.

The Board decided to continue reviewing the Farmhouse policies and fees at their next meeting.

B. Update on Park Security Camera Policy

Royal reported that the Park Security Camera Policy had been approved by Town Council at the last meeting. She explained that access to camera footage would be restricted to law enforcement for purposes of criminal investigations.

C. Update on Farmhouse Community Center

Phyllis Anders reported that electrical inspections were underway at the Farmhouse and that insulation was being installed.

Royal added that Caroline Ruch had volunteered to work alongside Planning Director Sean Taylor to procure furnishings for the Farmhouse. Ruch explained that selections had already been made for paint colors and mission style cabinetry. She added that she was focused on preserving the historical character of the house, noting that the chimney area would remain as exposed brick, the fireplace mantel would be reused, and beams found in the house would be repurposed as coat hangers. She stated that she hoped to add more warmth to the entryway.

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

Royal reported that the last Music in the Park event would occur in October and that its hours had been adjusted to 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. due to daylight savings time. She stated that three bands had already committed to performing in the 2025 season

with one other offer still outstanding. She commented that the Board would need to begin discussing the Sunday music series for the Farmhouse Community Center.

8. OTHER DISCUSSIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMINDERS

- Next regular meeting: October 17, 2024
- Heritage Day September 28, 2024
(Parking will be managed by Mike Stone and Mike Kimel.)
- Music in the Park October 12, 2024
- Halloween Terror Trail October 18-19, 25-26, 2024

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chelsea Young spoke on behalf of Brian Dawson and expressed enthusiasm for construction of pickleball courts at Heritage Farm Park.

Deputy Town Clerk Ashley Royal announced that alternate Phyllis Clodfelter would no longer serve on the Board due to health conditions. She introduced Ty Lindsey who was present to observe the meeting and who would be considered for appointment to the alternate position being vacated by Clodfelter at the October 3 Town Council meeting.

Caroline Ruch mentioned the opening ceremony for the Veterans Honor Green which Ann Schneider stated would occur on November 11, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. She noted that the opening ceremony would be combined with an observance of Veteran’s Day at the Veteran’s Honor Green site.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Kyle Anders made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m., and Co-Chair Adrian Eckenrod seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (7-0).

Respectfully submitted:

Ashley Royal, CMC
Deputy Town Clerk

Adrian Eckenrod
Co-Chair