

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Agenda

May 16, 2024

Board-(Present)-Amanda Burns, Mark Denison, Jeffrey Fracher, Jessica Jackson, Geoffrey McDonald, Kent Merritt, Ned Michie, Hosea Mitchell, Jeanette Abi-Nader, Jacqueline Webber

Board-(Absent)- Denny Berry, Jenny Taylor

CHS Student- Caja Edwards

City-Riaan Anthony, Celia Dew, Caitlin Marcotte, Avery Watkins

Community- Tameka Anderson

Public Comment- none

Administrative Items

Admin 1- April Board meeting minutes

- Minutes approved by Ned M.
- Minor correction to spelling of student board members name (Caja not Kajay)
- Ned confirms board members term limits.

Action Items

A-1- none currently

Information Items

1. Presentation- Adaptive Programs
 - a. Celia Dew and Caitlin Marcotte (not present) April Baber (Senior programs)
 - i. Topics reviewed- the Adaptive Program caters to individuals with disabilities aged 6-70, as well as seniors aged 60 and above.
 - ii. Funded by the City and Albemarle Co
 - iii. Programs provide specialized instruction, educational activities, recreation classes, community outings, overnight trips, camps, and special events.
 - iv. Adaptive program focuses on developing leisure skills, enhancing socialization, and promoting individual choices.
 - v. Senior program offers arts and crafts, bingo, trips, and dances.
 - vi. Statistics for Senior programs from June '23 till May '24 are 338 programs, 1,537 participants. 28% County residents, 71% City residents, 1% other.
 - vii. Statistics for Adaptive programs from June '23 till May '24 344 programs, 3,329 participants. 48% County residents, 39% City residents, 14% other.
 - viii. Staff acknowledged need for an Inclusion Coordinator
 - ix. The department is working on a cost recovery model and plans to bring funding proposals to the board for consideration.

- x. The department is working with Albemarle Co to determine a formula for the County's contribution based on usage and cost-sharing.
- xi. Staff talked about the virtual programs offered.
- xii. Staff discussed the summer camps it offers, Camp Crow for ages 6-13, Camp Henry for ages 14-22, and Nature Arts Camp for ages 16-26.
- xiii. Camp Crow and Henry run Mon-Fri, 9-4, for 6 weeks.
- xiv. Nature Arts Camp runs for a week.
- xv. Staff discussed its sibling support group that they partner with VIA (Virginia Institute of Autism)
- xvi. Staff discussed the virtual programs it offers for Seniors, 5 programs a week to include Tai Chi, easy exercise, Thera-bands, and brain games.
- xvii. Celia discussed the 6-week basketball class she runs and the requests she gets for more sports programs.

2.Master Plan Update- Riaan Anthony

- a. Next steps after Community outreach.
- b. Add-on 4 parks (Market, Court Square, Tonsler, Washington)
- c. Each park will have 5 stakeholders. Stakeholders defined as organizations or individuals in the surrounding area of park.
- d. There will be a focus group made up of individuals with an interest in the park.
- e. Focus group will meet with a consultant who will have propped questions to get the answers we need.
- f. There will be a Council meeting soon to get Community input.
- g. It was discussed whether Board members should come to Council meeting.

3.CIP Update- Riaan Anthony

- a. Riverview Park restroom renovation is approved. It has taken 2 years.
- b. The contract is being ratified now and once ratified groundbreaking will start.
- c. Ned- When do you anticipate groundbreaking?
- d. It will take another month for suppliers to get supplies and 3 months to build offsite.
- e. Jeff- Where's it going to be?
- f. More into the park closer to the playground
- g. Ned- How many stalls?
- h. 2, just male and female
- i. Kent- Is it prefab?
- j. Yes, the crane will set it down.
- k. Jeff- Are there any dependencies that are outside of the control of the dept in terms of timing? Weather or things like that?
- l. Once we get a ratified contract, the company will give us a GANTT chart and lay out his workplan. We will put in roughly 1-13% contingency.

Maplewood Cemetery will start construction next week. They will start the bricklaying.

We had a successful Community input session on Oakwood Cemetery.

- Communities focus was ill treatment of African Americans.
- Next phase is putting in a piezometer a piezometer is to measure the water table in that section to determine how much water is there.
- We will leave the piezometers there for 3 months to see what the water does when it rains, then we will drain and Utilities dept will fix.

Geoffrey- Do you know how many graves are there?

Section G we do not have a total number.

Jeff- Can you use ground sonar?

Yes, but it must be dry.

Washington Park is at a punch list right now. It will be ready to open to the Community.

Pen Park Trails, we replaced the bridge and removed hood and frames on each fitness station. What's left is to see if we can fix equipment or does it need to be replaced.

Jeff- I noticed equipment with no signs explaining what it is.

We need to figure out do we need new equipment, is the equipment good or bad, if the equipment is good, we can get signage back.

Filter pump project has been completed.

- Restrooms are always in progress.

Garden Plot well at Azalea Park

- We are waiting on dry weather so company can get big equipment in.

Carver Rec Center

- Converting a room at Carver for new gymnastics room
- New room needed due to high demand for gymnastics classes.
- Only been designed so far.

Pen Park Family Restroom

- New family restroom going in to meet the needs of the community.

Hosea- What about Meadowcreek Trail?

We have a roadblock at the moment with two properties we're battling with.

VIA (Virginia Institute of Autism) are okay, we just need to run it through our attorneys. The private owner has requested more money. We have discussed with attorneys and VDOT.

Ned- Are we going to lose VDOT money?

I have requested an extension and we were given to the end of the year to go to bid.

4.Dogs in Park- Riaan Anthony

City ordinance section 4-14 explains dogs need to be kept on leash and under control on school grounds, city-owned cemeteries, city parks, Meadowcreek Golf course, the mall, sidewalks, and side roads from Water St. to Market St. Violations are a class 4 misdemeanor.

- Dogs are allowed off leash in a fenced in area at Azalea Park. They can be unleashed at Riverview Park on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday only. Darden Towe Park also has this.
- Dogs are not allowed in Ivy Creek and Ragged Mountain

Jessica- Are those City parks?

Ned- They are controlled by Albemarle Co.

Hosea- Is there a maximum leash length?

Jeff- It's probably woefully inadequate.

Jessica- I know you said that dogs aren't allowed in those two parks but is there a way to expand that?

Riaan- Yep, and I'll get to how we get to that point. This is a quick map of the 2 parks that is not allowed. This is Parks and Rec recommendation, which you don't have to follow.

We have a marketing strategy to install extra trash cans, dog waste, and signs.

- We want to educate the Community on dog parks.
- If that doesn't work, we will go to the next stage.

The next stage is Community support.

- This means if the Board decides to choose a few parts that you don't want it has to be Community support.
- A vote must come from the Board.
- A memo will need to be sent to the City Manager for approval.
- If City Manager pushes it forward, we have an agenda and the Council.
- If City Manager says yes, then it will go forward as an order amendment.
- It must have 2 public hearings.

Hosea- What does a vote look like? A vote from my stance would recommend amending the ordinance. How do we amend the ordinance?

We write a memo to Sam, if Sam says yes, then I will work with the City attorney because it's an ordinance amendment. My recommendation is once we do that, we can change other things within the amendment.

Hosea- It would seem to me that before we vote to make a recommendation, we should deliberate on what we want.

Ned- It seems to me we want to be pretty comprehensive. I would rather extend the process to make sure we cover all our bases before we submit anything.

Jeff- Can you go back to slides, what is this about recommendations?

Riaan- I'm recommending we exhaust all efforts before we make changes. In 9 years, we haven't done any marketing with regards to dogs in the parks. I recommend we come up with new signage and educate the Community by taking out an ad. If these efforts don't work, I would move forward with changes.

Avery- We're able to work with other depts to pull dog licenses within the City, use the GIS map to determine households with dogs and send targeted marketing and flyers to those households, for example the flyer you saw with the cons of not picking up after your dog. We recommend putting flyers at the ends of trailheads, dropping extra trash cans and things of that nature that we can do internally before moving to the next step.

Jeff- The City has been woefully behind on licenses for dogs.

Avery- We can potentially push to make sure we get more accurate records of how many people truthfully have dogs.

Ned- So the question is do we want to change current policies. We need to explore more places for dog parks because what we have right now is insufficient. We want to have a public meeting where we ask the public to come and tell us their dog issues.

Geoffrey- I like this recommendation to build awareness of the issue with the Community so when we move to the next step the market is prepped.

Jessica- I'm not for increasing dog parks. I would rather make sure we have equipment for children and people before concentrating on dogs. I think it's a discussion for us to have and for us to take some time and be very thoughtful before we recognize anything.

Ned- Do we want to talk about new dog parks or changing off leash policies?

Hosea- I think if we drag our feet and let Riaan and those guys do what they do, we're not doing what we've been asked to do.

Ned- It's a very layered complicated issue. We could create a subcommittee to generate a list of ideas that we need to talk about, this could help decide if we're going to make a proposal or not.

Hosea- We have to take a look at good and best practices around this and see what other communities like ours are doing.

Geoffrey- I think it would be helpful if we as a board take some time and learn more about the dept, so we can form a consensus based on what we see from the subcommittee's work and best practices, so we're aligned as a body.

Ned- Do we want to set this as an agenda item for next time?

Amanda- Do we want to pull a couple different localities and say hey this is what other groups are doing.

Ned- Do we want to just do a Google search and come up with best practices there.

Jeff- What are the best practices we're wondering about?

Amanda- We have to be careful about saying things like on Mon, Tues, Wed etc. because there is no way to enforce that. It must be simple and clear.

Jessica- I'm just wondering if we could pick 2 things that we really want to focus on and come up with recommendations before we just talk about stuff and move on. I have a real concern about Garden plots, and I sent it in an email but it's not on this agenda. Maybe we can have a presentation only some months and have a time limit. We can go online and do research before the meeting. I would like us to consider at the next meeting what we want to accomplish for the next 6 months.

Ned- I'm totally with you. I want us to move into discussions about policy and have fewer presentations. I don't think the presentations are meaningless. I think we listen and give feedback and they take it back and think about it so it's useful. I think we have enough high-powered citizen brain power here that would be better spent on giving our input prior to decisions being made. It sounds like we want to have a subcommittee to talk about the issue, they will meet during the next month and come to the next meeting to discuss the issue.

Jessica- I don't see why we need a subcommittee if we take the time as a board to discuss the issues.

Jacqueline- Well the subcommittee can organize all the different points of view and the topics and the possible solutions and then come back to us.

Ned- I think that's the hope that the subcommittee can focus us a little more on what decisions the group can make.

Geoffrey- At this point we could pick 2 or 3 issues to target as our policy areas for the next 6 months. Each of us chooses a subcommittee on one of the issues to meet with and then we come back and have a meeting where the presentations are from the subcommittees on their work.

Ned- That would be a way to build, it will require multiple meetings from people.

Geoffrey- I would like to put in a kind word on presentations, they're very valuable and I appreciate the staff taking their time to put them together and be here with us in the evening. I would be open to pre-reading from the presenters, maybe it can come with the agenda that way we can condense the presentations to have more time for questions and answers, then we move on to policy.

Ned- I've talked to Riaan about getting that to a written state and he's working towards that.

Geoffrey- Is there anything preventing us from organizing and working on this between meetings?

Riaan- So you're allowed to do a Google doc.

Hosea- It looks like we are beginning to think about empowerment shifts. We are beginning to think about becoming a little more active and more engaged in the programming that's done. There may be value in having a separate retreat where we focus on who we want to be when we grow up. Maybe during the summer, we can do a 4-hour get together to focus on what our role ought to be.

Riaan- My recommendation would be to have a work session in between and I can do a presentation on that to have a bit of discussion, so we aren't talking over each other, and everyone knows the rules of engagement.

Amanda- I'm happy to start a Google doc if everyone agrees. We know we want to talk about dog parks and garden plots. I have found 7 different jurisdiction dog park rules that I can drop in the Google doc for everyone to look over.

Jeff- It's easy to type your thoughts in there and at least gives us a space everyone can see and add to as well. It could also be useful for a subcommittee to use that info to take into their next meeting.

Ned- If we're going to make a big recommendation about dogs or garden plot rules, we need to really open it up to the public. We can set up an email account to get public comments.

Amanda- We could do 2 things at once to keep things moving, we can have a public meeting on dog parks and garden plots.

4.Aquatic Update- Avery Watkins

I have a brief presentation on Aquatics.

- Spray grounds have opened.
- We have 4 locations going through September.
- Hours of operation are 10-8 everyday starting June 9th.
- No update on Ops Manager position, strong candidate for Ops Specialist.
- No movement in FT Lifeguard II position, potential Temp Lifeguard II
- 6 applicants have been reached out to for interviews, we have 4 this weekend and 2 next week.
- We have hired 16 lifeguards, 10 have turned in new hire paperwork, 6 are working on turning in paperwork.
- We have 26 potential lifeguards.
- With this 26 we have about 70 lifeguards.

Amanda- How did the marketing strategy go with regards to Seniors?

Avery- We have 1 active senior starting on May 20th and 2 stay-at home moms that will be joining us as well.

Avery- I have a quick update on camps as well.

- Majority of camps are over half full, with quite a few on waitlists.
- Camp starts June 17th and goes for 5 weeks.

Riaan- We have heard you on the issue of presentations.

Avery- We can work to a time limit on them.

5.Chairman Matters

None

6.Board Matters

Amanda- I would like Caja to speak about her activities since being on the board.

Caja- I had an opportunity to go to Venable Elementary with Amanda and meet with the kids there. It was nice meeting with all the kids. I saw a lot of kids that I knew, who knew me from dancing lead in a local dance group. It was nice to hear that that I was an inspiration to them. While there they told me that they would like to have a dance group. They live in Hardy Dr. so maybe we can start something for them over there. They also expressed that they want to learn self-care things, maintenance stuff, or girl things. It would be cool if we could get a group together for girls and eventually boys as well.

7.Director's Message- Riaan Anthony

I was in Richmond this week, I'm not sure if anyone is aware but there's a City ordinance about unionizing. The first 3 unions will start July 1st. First is Police Fire Conference, second is Parks Teamsters and third is Parks Public Works Utilities. One person in the Fire Dept will be unionizing. So, we went to train to learn about negotiations and how to negotiate with the union. We would love to be everything for the Board, but we have the Master Plan process and now we have negotiations. We have 12 FTE positions vacant so please give us time as we will get there slowly but surely.

Ned M.- adjourned meeting

