

PARKS AND REC ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

MARCH 20, 2025

Present: Jackie Webber, Mark Denison, Kent Merritt, Tina LaRoche, Ned Michie, Jeffrey Fracher, Hosea Mitchell, Jessica Jackson, Amanda Burns, Adam Courville, Carla Manno, Ginger Craghead-Way (Student member)

Absent: Jenny Taylor

City: Riaan Anthony, Katie Lockhart

Community: Alexandra de Guzman-**Second Serve Tennis LLC/USTA**, Mariana Bell-**USTA/GRTC**, Jackie Temkin-**GRTC/Business Owner**, Katie Stranix-**UVA School of Architecture Professor**, Mac Doucette-**UVA Student of Architecture**, Noah Depeyrot-**UVA Student of Architecture**, Sadie Hathaway-**UVA Student of Architecture**, Cecilia Lapp Stoltzfur-**IRC New Roots**, Aleen Carey-**Cultivate Charlottesville/City resident**, Michelle Gibson-**10th & Page neighbor**, Alison Wilson, Tom Daly, Charlie Katzen, Carolyn Law, Jason Becton, Elgin Cleckley

Public Comments:

Jackie Temkin-GRTC/Business Owner

- Would like to know where the Master Plan is for Tonsler Park
- Was told construction would be happening in Tonsler Park in April
- Would like to ask about the efforts to coordinate with Albemarle County about pickleball vs tennis courts, with regards to adding a pickleball court in Tonsler Park
- Does not feel it does justice to either sport to have to fight for space in a multipurpose use court
- Would like the bathrooms opened up in Pen Park

Michelle Gibson- 10th and Page neighbor

- Concerned with outcome of Master Plan with regards to Washington Park, dog parks, and garden plots
- Thought there was a lot of information put out with surveys, but would like an update on those issues

Ned M- Generally for public matters like this, it's not a dialogue that we do. As a statement I will say that the Master Plan is now going to go before City Council and the Planning Commission for final approval.

- We are an advisory board, we don't make any decisions
- We give our input to staff, and they decide the best course of action
- The sub plans for Tonsler and Washington Park are not part of the Master Plan

Jackie Temkin- How do we access the plan?

Ned M- Email the director. Riaan, can you tell us what's currently going on with construction plans in Tonsler?

Riaan A- The construction that is going to happen in Tonsler Park has nothing to do with the Master Plan. The tennis courts were on our books to be resurfaced. Every 5 or 10 years we do maintenance as needed. We are not jumping ahead of the proposed framework plans of Tonsler Park.

Jackie Temkin- Is there going to be public input for the new cycling plans for Tonsler?

Riaan A- Once the plan gets adopted and we get funding from Council, we get Council's directive on what to prioritize first. Then the plan becomes more intense, and we invite the community to discuss more in detail the framework plans for Tonsler Park, Washington Park etc.

Alexandra de Guzman- Second Serve Tennis LLC/USTA

- Would like to let the Board know that she partners with USTA and to help ease funding, they have agreed to help fund Parks and Rec tennis courts

Mariana Bell- GRTC/USTA

- I am a volunteer with Girls Rule The Court, which is a part of USTA's nonprofit wing
- We help to serve the girls in our community that are underserved
- Want to make sure we can keep access to courts that are supposed to be public
- Would like to know why a certain private school is granted more access to courts even though it appears to be against Parks and Rec policy

Ned M- I know we have had these same issues with the pools so there is discussion going on about these issues

Cecilia Lapp Stoltzfur- IRC New Roots

- Would like to make a few notes and share some success stories
- Would like to thank Parks and Rec for investing in Michie Drive garden plots
- IRC has leased a site from the City next to Azalea Park and offers City residents a 3 ½ acre fruit and vegetable garden
- Had 35 families on site last season
- Would like to encourage the Board to think of creative solutions with partnerships that can equip more people to get involved in new and innovative ways

***Board introduces self and 3 new Board members and new Student member**

- Tina LaRoche- Executive Director of Camp Holiday Trails for 21 years
- Adam Courville- Charlottesville resident since 2019
- Carla Manno- Charlottesville resident
- Ginger Craghead-Way – Junior at CHS

***Riaan Anthony introduces self as Director of Parks and Recreation**

***Katie Lockhart introduces self as Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation**

Administrative Items:

ADMIN 1- January Minutes Ned Michie

- Ned M asks for motion to approve minutes

- Jeffrey F motions to approve minutes
- Mark D seconds motion
- Board approves minutes

Action Items:

A-1 Support Letter

Ned Michie

- Letter of support is about operational requests with ongoing staffing position for another year
- CIP request for funding towards the project
- Main purpose is to formally approve that we're going to send a letter close to these words to City Council

Jeffrey F- I would like to ask Riaan if Parks asked other depts to take a cut to ensure there would be no tax increase?

Riaan A- Yes, we cut close to \$240,000

Hosea M- What did you cut?

Riaan A- Temporary staff and parks with some contractors

Ned M- This has gone through all the budget committees and what not up to this point?

Riaan A- Yes, if you recall in the Master Plan it calls for reinvestment in our facilities. In order to do that we need a Project Manager which is one of our requests.

Ned M- So we are now in the process of City Council discussing and approving the budget in April?

Riaan A- Yes, adoption possibly the second week in April.

Amanda B- I have a question regarding access to Riverview Park, is this just water access or is the parking lot included as well?

Riaan A- With CIP it is two projects, the first is to restore the bank and the second is to redesign the parking lot.

Amanda B- I think it's important that this group understands that there may need to be some advocacy for more parking as City Council seems to have some hesitancy with regards to parking.

Ned M- Can I get a motion to approve the letter?

Kent M- moves to approve the letter

Jessica J- seconds motion

Board approves letter

Information Items:

I-1 Presentation- Architecture

Ned Michie

Ned M- We have a fun presentation from a group of UVA Architecture students on some architectural concepts for Market St Park. This is the second half of a previous presentation

Katie Stranix- UVA School of Architecture Professor

- Final exercise of the semester for students
- Project lasted 6 weeks
- Students were asked to do site analysis on Market St Park

- Students were asked to include restrooms, gathering spaces, marketspace, and consider overall community engagement in their framework plans

Mac Doucette- UVA Student of Architecture

- Project's headline is Junction Edge
- Focus on history, specifically streetcars from Charlottesville in the early and mid 20th century
- Proposed urban pavilion is strategically placed between historical institutions to form a "knowledge corridor" integrating a library and gallery
- Design preserves green space while activating the park as a community hub
- Designed park with existing elevation so the park fits seamlessly with the urban scene of the Downtown Mall

Sadie Hathaway- UVA Student of Architecture

- Project is called Reviving Peace
- Focus on the negative past of the park and reviving it to become a tranquil space
- Design features a central worship space inspired by sacred architecture, with an oculus allowing natural light
- Surrounding elements include gathering spaces, a market, and wildflower gardens, fostering unity and reflection
- Petition boxes offer visitors a space for expression

Noah Depeyrot- UVA Student of Architecture

- Focus on history, specifically Vinegar Hill neighborhood
- Did research into oral history of Vinegar Hill neighborhood
- Through research was very interested in the duality of experience that was taking place in this one space
- Project introduces a linear pavilion that divides park into two experiences
 - an open lawn for casual use
 - A terraced landscape with gardens
- Design prioritizes accessibility by leveling the terrain
- New design will encourage foot traffic and make space more inviting

I-2 Garden Rules Ned Michie

Ned M- Justin McKenzie did a lot of research with other cities and parks and rec facilities about their rules and pricing and came up with a comparative chart

- These rules and regulations would potentially go into effect in 2026
- Important to note that there is a sliding scale based on income

Ned M- Any comments on proposed rates?

Jessica J- I think it would be better to list a minimum and maximum price so as not to scare away potential gardeners.

***Board agrees**

Ned M- Is everyone OK with the amount?

Amanda B- Is this applicable to non-residents?

Ned M- I would say no.

Ned M- They have 5 years as the proposed term limit, do we agree with that?

Jessica J- I don't think we should allow gardeners to monopolize our already limited plots for 5 years.

Carla M- Do we have data on how long our waiting lists typically are for these plots?

Riaan A- Yes, we don't typically have a long waiting list.

Kent M- I was under the impression that you need at least 2 years to get the soil remediated.

Jeff F- I agree with Ms. Jackson that 5 years is too long. I would be more comfortable with 3 years.

Ned M- We have a garden expert here who can weigh in.

Cecilia L.S.- The quality of the soil is determined by the stewardship of the individual than any certain amount of time.

Ned M- Ok so can we agree on 4 years for City residents and 2 years for non-city residents as our recommendation for term limits?

***Board agrees**

Ned M- The way I'm reading the rules, everyone will be considered in year two in 2026

Jessica J- I don't think we should wait. I think if you've been in for 4 years by 2026 you should go back into the lottery.

Riaan A- We are trying to be conscientious of gardeners by implementing new rules in phases and only raising prices at gardens that have been recently renovated like Michie Drive and Rives Park.

Jackie W- How have the gardens been renovated?

Riaan A- We demoed the existing garden, tilled the soil, added new fencing, new number system, and they now have water access.

Ned M- So is your thought, once the garden has been renovated, the gardener will then get 4 more years?

Riaan A- No, these rules will only apply to Michie Drive and Rives Park. Gardens like Meadowcreek require phased implementation due to its size. It also requires additional outreach and education sessions before implementing changes.

Ned M- So with regards to signing up for plots, it goes renewals then next City residents, then timed out residents who have entered the lottery and if there are any plots left it is opened up to non City residents.

Riaan A- Yes, that is correct

Ned M- We have coalesced around a number of things tonight, why don't we talk about it again at the next meeting.

I-3 CIP Update Ned Michie

- Moved to next meeting

I-4 Future Regular Meeting Location Ned Michie

- Space not ideal, but big enough for audience members
- Next time move tables closer and be more intentional about using microphone

***Board agrees to try Carver for another meeting**

Public Comments:

Alexandra de Guzman- Second Serve LLC/USTA

- Suggests talking to County about garden plots

Michelle Gibson- 10th and Page neighbor

- Noted sharp increase in garden plot pricing (eg., from \$50 to \$150)

Aleen Carey- Cultivate Charlottesville/City resident

- Has concerns regarding the lack of community outreach on new garden rules and pricing
- Has concerns over the lack of clear sliding scale information and scholarship criteria
- Asks for clearer documentation and public facing material
- Concerned that long time plot holders (some over 35 years) are unaware of changes
- Recommends Parks and Rec directly contact affected individuals (approx. 54 plot holders)
- Expressed frustration over perceived rudeness during her comment time, specifically expressed being waved off when asking Board member to speak up

Cecilia Lapp Stoltzfur- IRC New Roots

- Asks for an emphasis on including diverse voices, especially current gardeners and underrepresented community members
- Asks for Parks and Rec to ensure people affected by changes are part of planning process
- Suggests sending emails or letters to affected gardeners
- Would like to know if the Board has interpreters for non English speaking community members who may attend meetings
- Asks for more clarity on public comment time (eg., having a timer)

Riaan A- We can coordinate with the Marketing dept for more broader communication. We can post clear and updated documents online with detailed information.

Chairman Matters: **Ned Michie**

None

Board Matters: **Ned Michie**

- Wanted to ask about current plans for Crow Pool, heard there were plans for reconfiguration

Riaan A-

- Conceptual design exists, it is not final
- Public Works is continuing conversations about the space
- Crow Pool may not be part of the final plan

Jessica J- Would like better clarity on Public Comments. Would like it made clear if it will be Q&A style or just comments.

Director's Matters: **Riaan Anthony**

D-1 Budget Update

None

Adjournment: **Ned Michie**

Meeting adjourned at 7:44pm

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

SPECIAL MEETING

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

FEBRUARY 6, 2025

Present: Ned Michie, Jeffrey Fracher, Hosea Mitchell, Mark Denison, Kent Merritt, Jennie Taylor, Jessica Jackson (Virtual)

Absent: Amanda Burns, Jacqueline Webber

City: Riaan Anthony, Annie Sechrist, Will Bassett, Rachel Smith, Chris Gensic, Mike Svetz (**PROS Consulting**)

Public Comments: Peter Krause

- Representing 40 organizations under the Mobility Alliance
- Expressed appreciation for the thoroughness of the parks and recreation Master Plan, especially regarding the citizen needs assessment
- Highlighted the need for more development along the Rivanna River, mentioning missed opportunities in the Master Plan regarding greenways and natural areas
- Emphasized the importance of adding more urban bicycle infrastructure, such as flow tracks and traffic playgrounds for children
- Advocated for increased collaboration with schools for projects like urban biking programs and highlighted the significance of McIntire Park, which needs more focus in the plan

Administrative Items: None

Action Items:

A-1 Parks and Recreation Master Plan Mike Svetz

Master Plan Review

- **Key Clarifications:** The Master Plan is a guiding document reflecting community values over a 10-year horizon and is flexible to accommodate changes over time
- **Implementation:** Stressed the importance of understanding that not all projects or recommendations are expected to be implemented immediately
- **Partnerships:** Emphasized that community partnerships and collaboration with various entities, including schools and other city departments, are crucial for realizing the plan's goals
- **Feedback Integration:** Ongoing feedback from staff and the public has helped shape the Master Plan, which will continue to evolve with future iterations

Capital Improvement Prioritization:

- The plan includes reinvestment in existing park infrastructure, expanded services, and visionary projects such as shared-use path system and Rivanna River access
- Mention of ongoing efforts to ensure accessible public spaces and the inclusion of plans for adaptive recreation at Pen Park

Staffing and Budget Requirements:

- **Staffing Needs:** As the park system grows, more planning and construction management personnel will be required to handle the increase in projects
- **Operational Costs:** Detailed the cost of maintaining park amenities, including operational impacts like trash collection, maintenance of dog parks, and playground equipment replacement

Community Engagement & Feedback:

- **Survey Responses:** Public feedback, including responses to a statistically valid survey, indicates strong community support for certain initiatives such as greenways and playground expansions
- **Tax Considerations:** A large portion of the community indicated support for a tax increase to fund improvements to the parks and recreation system. However, concerns were raised about whether this response was representative of the entire population, particularly lower-income residents

Greenways Development:

- Explore further collaboration between Parks and Recreation and Transportation and Economic Development departments for greenway expansion and funding

McIntire Park Enhancements:

- Revisit and update plans to allocate more resources to McIntire Park, focusing on the trail system, connectivity, and urban biking infrastructure

Plan for Adaptive Recreation at Pen Park:

- Move forward with planning and budgeting for the adaptive recreation facility and all-inclusive playground at Pen Park

Comments: None

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned