Parks and Rec Advisory Board Meeting

October 16, 2025

Present: Mark Dennison, Tina LaRoche, Patrick Healy, Jenny Taylor, Betsy Roettger

Absent: Adam Courville, Amanda Burns, Harper Ullrich (Student Member)

City: Riaan Anthony, Annie Sechrist, Markisha Hughes, Courtney Ambrose

I. Call to Order/Roll Call Mark Dennison

- Mark D. noted two resignations since the last meeting: Carla Manno and Ned Michie.
- This brings the Board to seven members and one student representative, which places attendance just at quorum, depending on whether Harper U. is counted.
- ★ **Points of Order Mark Dennison**
- Mark D. referenced a letter from the City Manager dated October 6, regarding the Parks Foundation and the Advisory Board's mission.
- This letter established a clear prohibition on simultaneous service on both Boards.
- Tina LaRoche acknowledged receipt of the letter and stated that both she and Adam C. would need until the next meeting to decide whether to continue serving on the Foundation, the Advisory Board, or neither.
- Tina LaRoche agreed that she could serve as a non-voting member to honor the City Manager's directive.
- Riaan A. recommended proceeding with Tina in a non-voting capacity so that the Board could continue discussion.
- Mark D. agrees, noting that without Tina's participation the Board would lack quorum to conduct any official business.

II. Agenda Approval Mark Dennison

- Given the lack of quorum, Board agrees that Vice Chair election could not proceed and should be removed from the agenda.
- Mark D. moves to remove Vice Chair election from agenda and discuss during Board Matters.
- Patrick H. seconds motion
- 3 yays
- 0 nays
- Motion carries

III. Public Comment

- **Jackie Temkin**
- Praises the Board's video interview with Just Her Sports, noting the positive feedback it received and encouraging continued outreach and community engagement.
- Shared that Atlantic Foundation has reopened applications for volunteer and grant opportunities.
- Suggested Parks and Rec consider pursuing available funding, particularly for park maintenance and small-scale improvements like resurfacing courts and trail upkeep.
- Emphasized that while partnership with Parks Foundation may not be formally required, collaboration could provide access to resources that benefit park projects and youth programming.

IV. Board Response to Public Comment

- Board thanks Jackie T. for her comments.

V. Announcements Riaan Anthony

- Riaan A. announced the upcoming Downtown Safe Halloween event on October 25, 2025.
- Riaan A. invited Board members to volunteer, noting it is one of the Dept's largest events.
- Riaan A. announced there will also be a Masquerade Ball at Carver Rec Center also on October 25 from 6-8pm.
- Annie S. announced partnership with Jefferson Madison Regional Library to host a cooking demonstration on October 19, 2025 at 2pm. This event is to help promote the Charlottesville City Market cookbook.
- Mark D. thanked staff for the updates.

VI. Action Items Mark Dennison

A-1- Nominations & Election of Vice Chair

- Item removed from agenda

A-2- Approval of September Minutes

- Mark D. recuses from voting as he was not present at September meeting.
- Due to Board having a lack of quorum, September minutes could not be approved.
- Mark D. moves to defer approval of minutes to November meeting, at which time Sept and Oct minutes will be reviewed.
- Patrick H. seconds motion
- 3 yays

- 0 nays
- Motion carries

VII. Information Items **Mark Dennison**

I-1- Update and Discussion on Revised Board Mission

- Mark D. reviewed three draft versions of the Board's mission statement.
- Edits were made to align with the City Manager's Oct 6. letter and to clarify the Board's purpose relative to the Parks Foundation.
- Revised drafts will be recirculated by email for review.
- Mark D. notes importance of adopting a mission statement before new members are added, to ensure clarity on the Board's scope and intent.
- Jenny T. mentioned not receiving previous emails with attachments.
- Mark D. agrees to resend materials both via listserv and to individual addresses.

I-2- Updates on By-laws & Discussion

- Mark D. summarized progress on by-law revisions, noting prior discussion at the September meeting.
- Consolidated draft updates include membership composition, meeting frequency, quorum requirements, and agenda verification procedures.
- Given lack of quorum, Board deferred detailed review until November, with a goal to approve amendments by year-end for submission to the City Attorney's office.
- Riaan A. encouraged completion before the January leadership election cycle and suggested including a redline version for clarity.
- Discussion also included a new Electronic Meeting Participation Policy, allowing members to attend virtually in cases of travel or absence.

I-3- Connect Sites **Markisha Hughes/Courtney Ambrose**

- Markisha H. presented an overview of the Connect Program which provides safe, engaging after-school environment for Charlottesville youth.
- Markisha H. explained that Connect Program was renamed to reflect its community-building mission.
- Connect operates out of three locations: Key Rec Center, 10th St Warehouse, and Greenstone on 5th Community Center.
- Program serves over 2,000 children annually, offering meals, enrichment, and partnerships with organizations such as City of Promise, YMCA, C4K, NEBA, the City Market, and Charlottesville City schools.

- Partnerships provide tutoring, digital literacy training, music education, and nutrition education, helping youth develop academically, socially, and physically.
- Daily program hours are from 4-7pm Mon-Friday (closed on Thursdays). Meals are served between 4:30-6:30pm; and children participate in activities, games, and monthly field trips. Registration is not required; any Charlottesville City school student ages 5-18 may attend.
- Presentation concluded with Board questions about partner roles, staff involvement, and the new structure of site coordination.
- Courtney A. confirmed that all partners engage directly with youth and operate in collaboration with Parks and Rec staff.

VIII. Chairperson's Matters Mark Dennison

- Mark D. acknowledges the trust Board has placed in him and takes responsibility seriously, especially during this transitional period with more potential changes coming.
- Emphasizes his commitment is to provide transparent leadership, effective governance, and advance the Board's advisory role in implementing the Parks and Rec master plan and supporting great programs.

IX. Board Matters Mark Dennison

B-1- Board Member Application and Next Steps

- Board discussed the process for interviewing and selecting new Board members, with seven applications received.
- Board discusses having a subcommittee of 2 people to interview applicants, make recommendation to the full Board, and then have the full Board discuss and finalize the decision in a transparent process.
- Mark D. moves to have Patrick H. and Jenny T. create subcommittee to interview candidates.
- Betsy R. seconds motion
- 4 yays
- 0 nays
- Motion carries
- Patrick H. would like to see a presentation from the Trails division in January on the agenda.
- He would like a full overview so as to get a better understanding.

X. Director's Report Riaan Anthony

- Riaan A. mentioned that Parks and Rec dept is in budget season with departments submitting their final operation budgets.
- Budget defense is scheduled for October 30.
- Several property partnerships were mentioned, including a project for a small pocket park.

XI. Public Comment (2)

- **Jackie Temkin**
- Expressed interest in supporting girls' sports and suggested better promotion of volunteer opportunities.
- Tina LaRoche expressed appreciation for the staff at Smith Aquatic Fitness Center, particularly those managing the pool and front desk, acknowledging the challenges with lifeguard staffing nationwide.

XII. Board Response to Public Comment

- None

XIII. Adjournment **Mark Dennison**

- Meeting adjourned at 6:48pm