



City of Greenville  
**Recreation and Parks Commission**  
 Meeting Minutes  
 Wednesday, September 23, 2020 @ 5:30 PM  
 ZOOM Meeting

This meeting was held electronically via ZOOM.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nikki Caswell, Chair       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jaimie Yahnker |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gordon Darragh, Vice-Chair | <input type="checkbox"/> Mike Saad                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hasan Hilliard                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Darin White    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Byron Aynes                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carrie Watson  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kristian Williams                     |  |

**STAFF:**

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gary Fenton                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laura J. Davenport | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dean Foy      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don Octigan                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mark Nottingham    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heather White |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Councilmember Monica Daniels |  |   |

**AUDIENCE PRESENT:**

None.

**MEETING AGENDA, DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS:**

The meeting opened at 5:39 PM via ZOOM and the following items were addressed:

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. INTRODUCTIONS**

None.

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made to approve the September 23, 2020 agenda as presented.

Motion: Gordon Darragh

Second: Darin White

- |                                  |   |                              |
|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Vote: Commissioner Nikki Caswell | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Gordon Darragh      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Byron Aynes         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Darin White         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Carrie Watson       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

Commissioner Jaimie Yahnker joined the meeting at 5:44 PM.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made to approve the March 11, 2020 minutes as presented.

Motion: Gordon Darragh

Second: Darin White

- |                                  |   |                              |
|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Vote: Commissioner Nikki Caswell | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Gordon Darragh      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Byron Aynes         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Jaimie Yahnker      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Darin White         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Carrie Watson       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

## V. DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT

- A. Thank you for adjusting your schedules to allow for tonight's meeting and the short follow-up meeting on Friday at noon, which means at the end of the meeting we will recess this meeting rather than adjourn.
- B. Email from Jim Decker stating:  
"Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion tonight. I am Jim Decker. I have a resident of Greenville for 30 years. I am going to limit myself to three minutes, but I've provided you a packet with my comments and additional materials via Email. Over the past years I have spoken to you repeatedly about Bradford Creek Public Golf Course. The expenditures for maintaining Bradford Creek Public Golf Course has been an area of debate since the course was acquired by the city. Focus groups, an ECU graduate class (MTKG 6822) and a consulting agency (Golf Convergence) have all offered opinions on its operation. Eventually, the City contracted with Billy Casper Golf to manage Bradford Creek. With Billy Casper's withdrawal we find ourselves back where we started. As such, some points should be considered moving forward. According to the Carolina Golf Association there are twenty-nine North Carolina municipal golf courses. Each of these courses receive a subsidy from the city/county or military branch of service in which they reside. These subsidies run from \$15,000 to \$300,000 annually. Under City operation Bradford Creek sponsored year-round programs such as: Drive, Chip & Putt for Juniors, Junior Golf Team, Practice with the Pros for Juniors, United States Golf Association (USGA) Rules Seminar, Starting New at Golf (SNAG) Clinics, (PGA) Play Golf America, and Special Olympics Pitt County Golf practice. Not to mention the yearly Coastal Plains Junior Amateur Tournament which the city's own estimate brought \$75,000 of economic impact. When considering only direct operating expenses, Bradford Creek Public Golf Course revenues exceeded direct expenses in seven of its pre-Billy Casper years. The mission of the Greenville Department of Recreation and Parks is to "advance parks, recreation, and environmental conservation efforts that promote mental and physical health, serve as a deterrent to illegal or inappropriate behaviors, and enhance Greenville's quality of life." In doing so, the Department recovers approximately 43% of costs for programs like youth soccer and youth softball. Bradford Creek has returned a much higher percentage than many of Recreation and Parks programs. Therefore, I join with the Daily Reflector (02/12/17) to call upon City leaders to fund Bradford Creek "not to generate a profit, but to profit the people with the services they provide." Thank you for the opportunity to "speak" tonight. Jim Decker
- C. Staff submitted a 2020 PARTF grant application for funds that would support acquisition of 185 acres of lake land on the north bank of the river and just west of the 264 bypass, to become the west side half of the Adventure Park being developed in that area. Unfortunately, staff found out Friday, as you may already know, the project was not selected for funding, even though the project scored quite well in the competition and we know that a park of this nature will be a dynamic and unique benefit to our community and its citizens for decades to come. There were \$20M in grant requests statewide and only \$5.2M in grants, so the odds against approval were pretty high. We'll try again for PARTF support next year.
- D. A PARTF application is a massive task that requires a tremendous amount of research and time that requires a tremendous amount of research and time to assemble. When you receive a grant – you consider the grant application process a good investment of time and effort, because it results in as much as \$500K in project support coming to your community. Later on the agenda, we'll follow the City's policy for park naming, which states that "A permanent name may be assigned, if deemed appropriate by Council – following receipt of recommendation from the Recreation and Parks Commission." The Commission may approve, deny, or modify the naming recommendation. In formulating the Commission's recommendation, the policy requires a public hearing, which is on the agenda tonight, and between now and Friday at 12 noon, any other citizens who'd like to comment, but yet done so, can email their comments regarding the naming to the Greenville Recreation and Parks Department at [grpd@greenvillenc.gov](mailto:grpd@greenvillenc.gov) and those comments will be shared with each Commissioner.
- E. For the first time in six years staff had a summer without a Sprayground and for the first time in 45 years we had a summer without a Sunday in the Park. The greenways remained open, however playgrounds had to be closed for the summer. On a more positive note, with modifications, staff were able to continue numerous services and events, including a dedication (Sycamore Hill Gateway Plaza at the Town Common). Mr. Fenton shared a Bless Your Article from *The Daily Reflector*.

- F. The Great American Outdoors Act will now automatically dedicate a \$900M allocation to the Land and Water Conservation Fund program that provides support for national parks, state, and local governments to develop high quality, public outdoor recreation and conservation areas.
- G. Public Works is now working on the extension of the South Tar Greenway westward from the Town Common to Nash Street, which will make it easy to walk or bike from the Thomas Foreman Park, where Eppes Recreation Center is location, to the Town Common. This extension is almost a mile long. Any additional greenway extensions are soon going to be underway thanks to a US DOT grant Greenville's received to enhance the City's vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure.
- H. In conclusion, Mr. Fenton thanked staff for their efforts to continue making a difference for the people and families of Greenville. Capital projects are continuing, programs and events are being modified and tweaked to take make them safe and acceptable in the time of COVID, and employees are doing whatever they can to keep services operational. Staff are working to persevere and maintain some level of optimism and cordial demeanor through this difficult time of budget reductions, staff vacancies, remote teleworking, remote meetings, tension, and for some, quarantining.

## **VI. ASSISTANT DIRECTORS REPORT**

### **A. Operations Update**

- 1. March 16<sup>th</sup>
  - a. All Recreation and parks Facilities closed to the public.
  - b. All programming and events suspended.
  - c. Facility and Building rentals suspended.
- 2. April/May
  - a. Various programs cancelled (over 3,000 refunds processed)
  - b. Rentals cancelled (over 100 refunds processed)
  - c. All facilities remain closed.
  - d. Reduction in employee hours.
- 3. June
  - a. Summer programming planned based on state guidelines.
  - b. GAFC Indoor Pool opened by appointment only.
  - c. Community Pool opened.
  - d. All Recreation and Parks Facilities remain closed.
- 4. July
  - a. Summer camps continued.
  - b. Small events planned within guidelines.
  - c. Fall/Winter programs researched.
- 5. Provided current operations update, recreation center overview, and safety measures implemented.
- 6. Departmental brochure available online by season. Winter departmental brochure expected early November, for programs beginning in January.

### **B. Outreach and Event Update, Heather White**

- 1. Social Media- Increase Community Awareness - With some facilities still being closed, limited numbers allowed in buildings, not to mention a lapse in time where we were unable to offer programs, GRPD staff continue to work diligently with a sharing information to the public through social media forums.
- 2. Engaging Posts
  - a. When the pandemic affected the department in March, GRPD shifted our program plans to a virtual component when able.
  - b. Our staff created engaging posts some of which include craft ideas, scavenger hunts, outside wellness routines, athletic drills and even cooking recipes.
- 3. Program, Projects, and Events
  - a. In the last few months, we have been ecstatic that we are back to doing more of what we enjoy - and that is seeing our participants in person and being able to provide quality programs and services for our community, while focusing on the safety and wellness of our participants and staff. Our Facebook engagements have continually increased since COVID averaging 60,000 plus impressions per month. While the pandemic still lingers, through program and event

modifications, our department has much to share. We have boosted our FB efforts to average 4-6 posts daily to help get the word out.

4. PIO Involvement
    - a. Our City's PIO department has been instrumental in sharing our message through a variety of sources. They aid in sharing our FB page information on the City's page, assist with live photos and videos to showcase our happenings, and market our programs and events through a weekly e-blast.
  5. Press Releases
  6. Media Interviews
    - a. Many local sources have reached out to our department over the last several months for press releases and interviews. This information shared has been in magazines, newspapers, and aired live on TV and radio.
    - b. Through these challenging and wavering times, one thing has remained constant - Recreation and Parks play an essential role in maintaining the quality of life in a community through use of parks, trails, green spaces and delivery of services and programs.
  7. Recreation and Parks staff continue to find the opportunity in challenging times to provide quality experiences for our citizens. This evening I want to share with you a few pop up events our staff has been able to offer with specific safety measures in place.
    - a. Carpool Cinema, a free movie series offered during the summer months in lieu of our traditional Movies in the Park, has been well received and will continue into the fall. In addition to the family-friendly Friday night movies, a Thursday evening date night will be added to the series. On select Thursday evenings, GRPD will partner with a local food truck vendor so couples can enjoy dinner and a movie.
  8. The movie series will be held in rotation at Boyd Lee Park, Greenfield Terrace, and Jaycee Park. Parking spots are limited and pre-registration is available on-line at [Greenvillec.gov](http://Greenvillec.gov) or by calling the Recreation and Parks Department at 252.329.4567. Dates listed include family and date nights.
  9. Dashboard Bingo, a bi-weekly drive-in bingo opportunity, will be held in the parking lot at the Greenville Aquatics and Fitness Center on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of the month, September 2<sup>nd</sup> through October 21<sup>st</sup>, from 10:00am - 11:00am. Bingo cards and markers will be distributed to cars when players arrive and prizes, which are donated by local businesses, will be delivered to the winners' vehicles. The cost per player is \$2.00.
    - a. Staff has also offered Trivia Dash and are working currently on pop-up seasonal events for November and December.
    - b. Our staff will continue to monitor health conditions and guidance from local and state officials, and will make modifications to the events as needed.
- C. Parks Planner Update, Mark Nottingham
1. Sycamore Hill Gateway Plaza
  2. Eppes Recreation Center Renovations
    - a. Updates to the front entrance.
    - b. Development of a front desk and lobby area, including controlled entrance capabilities.
    - c. New teen lounge with amenities.
    - d. HVAC improvements.
    - e. Weight room improvements.
    - f. Eppes Alumni Room improvements.
    - g. Selected Designer to 10/08 City Council meeting and contract to 10/19 City Council meeting.
    - h. 4 month design timeframe.
    - i. Construction to begin in Spring/Summer 2021.
  3. Community Pool Replacement
    - a. 9/10 City Council selected preferred site at Eppes Recreation Center.
    - b. 10/8 City Council to approve designer and contract to 10/19 City Council meeting.
    - c. Construction complete by May 2022.
  4. Adventure Park Update
    - a. September/October solicit bids for Phase I construction.

- b. October/November City Council to approve construction contract.
- c. 4 month construction schedule.
- d. Phase I construction complete spring 2021.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Public Hearing – Recommendations for naming of new parkland located at 3050 Blue Heron Drive.
  - 1. Staff solicited community input on potential names to be considered for the new parkland.
  - 2. Over 30 responses were received and staff narrowed down the suggestions to include potential names based on feedback and the adopted park naming policy.
  - 3. Staff reached out to additional community partners to gather input and formulated a draft list of names that was published for further consideration.
  - 4. An online survey was created and circulated from 7/14 thru 8/5. Staff received 738 votes through this survey.
  - 5. The highest percentage of vote (34.28%) was for Emerald Riverfront Park. Other park names included Wildwood Park (23.17%), Blue Heron Park (18.97%), Unity Park (17.89%), and Wildside (5.69%).
- B. Public Comments
  - 1. There are no public speakers and the audience has 24 hours to submit comments.
- C. Discussion
  - 1. Commissioner Saad’s comments via email: I write to you regarding the name of our new and exciting adventure park. This will grow into an amazing property where people from our region will decide to come to do great outdoor activities like kayaking, canoeing, paddle boarding, hiking, riding bikes, skateboarding, ziplining, and so much more. The name of this property will say a lot to those who don't know it... A good list of names have been proposed and the public has given feedback on their thoughts via 696 votes. They are as follows: Emerald Riverfront Park - 34.77%, Wildwood Park - 23.28%, Blue Heron Park - 18.39%, Unity Park - 17.96%, and Wildside Park - 5.6%. I would like to focus on the top two contenders. Emerald Riverfront Park is an interesting name, but what is concerning is how well this would do for marketing purposes. First of all, it's long (23 characters total) which is hard to remember, hard to pronounce in conversation, complicated for signage, and difficult for cards/print advertising. But the number two contender is quite interesting. First of all, it's short (just 13 characters or just 8 if you use the first name alone.) Also it's easy to remember, catchy, easy to pronounce, and great for signage and digital/print advertising. Additionally it has 'legs' in that it could be extended in use for the many activities (Wildwood Kayaking, Wildwood Hiking Trail, Wildwood Ziplining Park, etc...) For marketing and promotional use, this name is quite wonderful and is representative of the area. I ask you to give the name 'Wildwood Park' serious consideration in your discussions tonight. This is a name the community could get behind, is an excellent fit for the property, and would assist staff with promoting this new and exciting park. Thank you in advance for your consideration.
  - 2. Commissioner Darin White – From a marketing standpoint, people from out of town might be more interested in something with “wild” in it. Agrees with Commissioner Mike Saad.
  - 3. Commissioner Gordon Darragh – Agrees with Mike and Darin on what they have to say regarding marketing and promoting. Likes the ways you can use “Wildwood.”
  - 4. Commissioner Nikki Caswell – Emerald is an insider/Greenville name.
  - 5. Commissioner Carrie Watson – Talked with others, “Wildwood” was crowd pleaser. Only concern was comparison to “Deadwood.” Friends did not like “Deadwood.” Like the idea of “Emerald Park.”
  - 6. Commissioner Byron Aynes – The name “Legacy Landing” had been tossed around. Director Gary Fenton stated some people felt the name Legacy sound morbid.
  - 7. Commissioner Jaimie Yahnker – Likes the idea of “Wildwood.” It’s different and it’s catchy, rustic of the original land. Has good thoughts on “Wildwood.”

As a reminder pursuant to Senate Bill 704, the public has 24 hours after the conclusion of public hearing to submit written comments, and such comments shall be forwarded to the Commission. Please see the City of Greenville Recreation and Parks homepage on the City’s website for instructions on how to submit comments.

**IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

- A. Gordon Darragh – Everyone’s a treasure, you work hard, great front line workers, thanks for everything you do.
- B. Jaimie Yahnker – Grateful to be with the group tonight. Proud to be a part of this Commission.
- C. Byron Aynes – Thanks to staff for everything you are doing. Nothing like having your routine interrupted to make you appreciate what you do have. Appreciate everything you have been doing.
- D. Carrie Watson – Thank you to all staff. Evident by your presentation on how much you have to do based on all of the changes with Covid-19. Appreciate your dedication and service to the City. Look forward to new offerings this fall and winter. Glad the playgrounds are open!
- E. Darin White – Thanked Councilmember Daniels and Commissioners for taking this Commission seriously. Glad to see Greenville taking an aggressive approach to the park system.
- F. Councilmember Daniels - Department is the foundation of Greenville and you are always a part of it. Proud to serve as the liaison for this department. Have not skipped a beat in making sure that Greenville continues to prosper and grow. Will continue to advocate for your department because of the work you put behind it. Thank you!
- G. Nikki Caswell – Thank you for keeping things moving for us. Greenville is open and there are things to do. Enjoy the trails, greenways, parks and playgrounds. Still a lot to do.

**X. MOTION TO RECESS**

A motion was made to recess the meeting at 7:09pm and reconvene at 12pm on Friday, 9/25 via ZOOM.

Motion: Jaimie Yahnker  
Second: Gordon Darragh

- |                                  |   |                              |
|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Vote: Commissioner Nikki Caswell | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Gordon Darragh      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Byron Aynes         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Jaimie Yahnker      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Darin White         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |
| Commissioner Carrie Watson       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay | <input type="checkbox"/> Nay |

Motion carried unanimously among those present.



City of Greenville  
**Recreation and Parks Commission**  
 Meeting Minutes  
 Friday, September 25, 2020 @ 12:00 PM  
 ZOOM Meeting

This meeting was held electronically via ZOOM.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nikki Caswell, Chair       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jaimie Yahnker |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gordon Darragh, Vice-Chair | <input type="checkbox"/> Mike Saad                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hasan Hilliard                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Darin White    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Byron Aynes                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carrie Watson  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kristian Williams                     |  |

**STAFF:**

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gary Fenton       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laura J. Davenport | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dean Foy      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don Octigan       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mark Nottingham    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heather White |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Councilmember Monica Daniels |  |   |

**XI. RECONVENMENT**

Meeting was reconvened at 12:17PM on Friday, 9/25/2020 via ZOOM.

**XII. OLD BUSINESS**

A. Naming of new parkland located at 3050 Blue Heron Drive

1. Carrie Watson – Will the Commission entertain any comments from the shortened names? Liked the name Wildwood Park and the name Emerald Park.
2. Motion made to name the park Wildwood Park.

No discussion.

Motion: Gordon Darragh

Second: Darin White

Vote: Commissioner Nikki Caswell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Gordon Darragh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Jaimie Yahnker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Darin White	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Carrie Watson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

**XIII. MOTION TO ADJOURN**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:21PM.

Motion: Darin White

Second: Gordon Darragh

Vote: Commissioner Nikki Caswell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Gordon Darragh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Jaimie Yahnker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Darin White	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay
Commissioner Carrie Watson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yay	<input type="checkbox"/> Nay

Motion carried unanimously among those present.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura J. Davenport  
Administrative Assistant  
Recreation and Parks Department