



RECREATION COMMISSION WORKSHOP

OFFICIAL MINUTES

FEBRUARY 22, 2023

ALPHARETTA CITY HALL
COMMUNITY ROOM | 2 PARK PLAZA | 5:30 PM

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I. CALL TO ORDER

- ❖ Chairman Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

II. ROLL CALL

- Recreation Commission Members - Present
 - Dennis Mitchell (Chairman)
 - Jit Saha (Vice Chair)
 - Cheryl Rand
 - Jeremy Scott
 - John Norton
 - Derek Kaighin
 - Brad Bowers
- Recreation Commission Members – Absent
 - Shuntel Beach
 - Karla Peidrahita

III. WORKSHOP ITEMS

- a. Rucker Road Park Design Concept
 - Morgan Rodgers, Director of the Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services presented the item.
 - The latest rendering of Rucker Road Park's design was presented, and modifications stated included:
 - Parking was altered from the initial design.
 - The rendering shows trails but currently these are not included in the first phase of design.

RECREATION COMMISSION DISCUSSION

RE: Old Rucker Park Design

Q. Vice Chair Saha asked about the on-street/curb parking and whether it would still be available.

A. Director Rodgers stated Rucker Road is expanding so on-street/curb parking will be eliminated. To address the loss, both parking lots will be open to all (not just staff and ADA).

Q. Commissioners Rand and Vice Chair Saha inquired about the paving of the parking lots.

A. Director Rodgers stated parking lots would be paved one of which will have pavers intertwined with the asphalt. This is on account of the cost of asphalt and the inclusion of pavers as a less expensive option is made possible by the water retention areas that already exist at the park.

Q. Commissioner Rand asked if the concept for Old Rucker Park's parking intentionally pervious or being approached in a similar fashion as Mid-Broadwell Park's parking in that it would be pervious until funding could be identified.

A. Director Rodgers stated because water retention areas exist at the park, the mix of asphalt and pavers was a viable option. Currently, water retention is not pre-existing at Mid-Broadwell Park so the ground is not conducive to asphalt.

Q. Vice Chair Saha inquired as to the number of steps remaining in the approval process.

A. Director Rodgers responded that this would be the final rendering with no additional public input. The intent now is to get feedback from the Recreation Commission and City Council during workshops. If neither had issues, staff would seek approval would seek approval by City Council. Once approved, an RFP process would begin to identify a construction vendor.

Q. Chairman Mitchell asked if lighting was dawn to dusk with no electrical lighting.

A. Director Rodgers stated this was correct.

Q. Commissioner Rand asked why some trails were concrete and others not.

A. Staff stated one provides access to the maintenance shop and is considered a service road that must be a hard service to handle heavy loads properly and safely.

Q. Chairman Mitchell asked for the width of the road/trail to maintenance shed.

A. Staff responded 10 feet wide; other trails being 8 feet wide.

Q. Commissioner Rand – Not needing to connect to City sewer available on opposite side of Rucker Road? Why not connect if we are on septic here?

A. Staff responded unlike Webb Bridge; it will not have the same foot traffic, so staff feels confident keeping septic.

Q. Vice Chair Saha what happened to the chicken coop?

A. Staff replied it is still there. Anything inside the fenced area noted on the rendering remains untouched.

Q. Vice Chair Saha asked about a playground design being incorporated.

A. It was noted that Wills Park is less than a mile from Old Rucker Park. That the design will have places for kids to play but no traditional playground slides, etc. Rather, natural play items such as climbing boulders would be the design elements included. The design does not preclude a future playground installment if need be; however, it is not part of the initial concept.

Commissioner Norton stated how this park was designated for community agriculture and not ever intended for recreational play.

Q. Vice Chair Saha asked if a more descriptive list of items for the “natural play area” could be provided.

A. Staff took note and stated yes.

Q. Commissioner Bowers inquired as to the future of the old home on the site.

A. Staff stated it is currently used as a grow room, for pickling, and the occasional class of eight or less but is to eventually be renovated and used as an educational center.

Q. Vice Chair Saha asked what the driving factor was behind the maple trees.

A. Staff responded it was because they are already there. The maple grove trees would be thinned out to support solid, strong, healthy trees to make it a neat feature of the park. As for fruit orchard, it will be new and a place where residents could come and pick fruit directly from.

Q. Chairman Mitchell asked if the well would remain.

A. Staff replied that it would.

b. Webb Bridge Dog Park

- Kurt Kirby, Project Manager for the Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services introduced Nate Hand and Claire Thurber.
- Nate Hand, Parks Supervisor and Claire Thurber, Special Events Coordinator of the Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services presented the item.
- A gentleman wanted to donate memorial benches which spun off into a conversation about establishing a dog park funded by his private donation.
- In response, Nate Hand looked for an area that could meet the gentlemen's request.
- The ideal spot seemed to be adjacent to the parking lot and baseball fields at Webb Bridge Park. The location would have a small impact on tree removal and be large enough for dogs to play and while also being accessible to the parking and trails.
- The dog park would include two entry points:
 - The first entry point would be ADA compliant, given the grading is flat, and would connect to the trail near the baseball fields.
 - A secondary entry point would be located on the opposite end of the dog park and connecting to a different location on the trail.
- The dog park itself would need to be curved on all sides (containing no angles) to avoid dogs the potential cornering of dogs from other dominant dogs.

RECREATION COMMISSION DISCUSSION

RE: Webb Bridge Dog Park

Q. Commissioner Rand asked as to why this location seemed ideal versus closer to the neighborhood in which dogs would likely originate.

A. Nate Hand replied that the alternate area proposed was intended to be passive and could upset neighbors who would not want to hear dogs barking, etc.

Q. Commissioner Rand asked why chain link would be used as it is not favorable.

A. Nate Hand agreed that traditional chain link fencing is not aesthetically pleasing or a marking of Alpharetta's design. In this case, black, vinyl coated, thick gauge chain link would look much nicer, meet the Alpharetta standard, and could disappear into the landscape.

Q. Chairman Mitchell asked whether wood or chain link fencing would be less expensive.

A. Nate Hand responded wood would be less expensive but is not easily maintained, overtime degrading faster than chain link. Additionally, it would be less conducive for the curvature design needed to avoid the angles leading to the issue stated above.

Q. Commissioner Norton asked if the gravel entry path would be considered ADA accessible?

A. Nate Hand stated that because there is no grading, it should be easy to traverse and ADA compliant.

Q. Chairman Mitchell asked what the next steps would be to make the concept realized.

A. Director Rodgers stated Nate Hand would first confirm with the donor if the project cost could be completely covered. If so, the concept would come back before the Recreation Commission and City Council for approval to proceed.

Q. Commissioner Norton asked if permitting was required.

A. Director Rodgers stated he did not believe so, but it all depends on private donor being able to cover the entire cost of the project.

Q. Commissioner Bowers asked about the maintenance requirements and staff's level of involvement.

A. Nate Hand stated there would be some maintenance work required by staff but felt the benefit offset the cost.

Q. Commissioner Kaighin inquired as to whether the City was prepared for the nuances that could come from a dog park complaint, concerns of dog parks from residents?

A. Director Rodgers stated the City already have a dog park (Waggy World) and is prepared for the responsibilities associated with a dog park. To add, the one at Webb Bridge would not be as extensive.

Q. Commissioner Norton asked if the dog park would be turfed.

A. Nate Hand stated no as grass would not grow under the tree coverage. Mulch would be used instead.

Q. Vice Chair Saha asked for the approximate size.

A. Nate Hand replied that it would be a little smaller than the one at Wills Park; about 100 feet by 200 feet.

Q. Vice Chair Saha inquired as to the number of trees to be cut to accommodate the project.

A. Nate Hand said 1/3 of the trees, several of which are unhealthy or small in diameter, would be cut.

Q. Commissioner Rand asked if the donor requested recognition signage.

A. Nate Hand stated the donor would like to have a plaque displaying the family name that donated the dog park.

RE: Park Memorial Program

Q. Commissioner Rand returned to the topic of the memorial benches and rocks and asked if staff had considered the idea that the program could morph Alpharetta into a "walking cemetery".

A. Claire Thurber stated every application is evaluated and staff works hard to space out locations as a preventative measure.

Q. It was asked if any memorial swings had been purchased to date.

A. Claire Thurber replied that the first two were purchased from the donor interested in establishing the dog park at Webb Bridge.

RE: Webb Bridge Turf Replacement

- Director Rodgers stated that while on the topic of Webb Bridge, the sewer project has been delayed but still must happen before the turf can be installed.

Q. Commissioner Scott asked if the project would still be completed within 5 years?

A. Staff responded yes.

Q. Chairman Mitchell asked for a reminder on how the new sewer line would be run at Webb Bridge Park.

A. Director Rodgers stated it would follow the trail down pass the parking lot, pass the baseball field, turn to cross under the access road, and connect near the main road.

c. Restroom Inventory

- Kurt Kirby, Project Manager for the Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services came forward to present the item.
- ARPCS has 24 total restrooms.
- Staff is aware some restrooms are in desperate need of attention.
- UHP, North Park, Webb Bridge are top vandalism targets.
- In the last 4-5 years, maintenance teams designated to maintain specific park restrooms now oversee districts, maintaining a general area.

- Additionally, cleaning crew comes in seven days a week to keep them maintained but are so overused can be hard to keep pristine. RPCS has increased the level of maintenance and cleaning to try and keep them to a certain standard.
- Public Works calibrates with the Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services Department to help maintain the restrooms.
- North District
 - Consists of North Park and Cogburn Park.
 - There are 6 total restrooms in the district: 5 at North Park, 1 at Cogburn Park.
 - North Park in the north district is the oldest park in the system of Alpharetta.
 - Cogburn Park had a vandalism attack of sledgehammers on toilets/sinks.
 - Vandalism led to the initiation of auto-locks.
- East District
 - Consists of Webb Bridge Park, Windward Community Park, and Union Hill Park
 - There are 6 total restrooms in the district: 4 at Webb Bridge Park, 1 at Union Hill Park, 1 at Windward Community Park
 - Windward Community Park is a precast, prefabricated restroom on sewer.
 - Such prefabricated restrooms would be coming to Rucker Road Park and Waters Road Park.
- South District
 - Consists of North Point Park, Rock Mill Park, and Preston Ridge Park.
 - There are 3 total restrooms in the district: 1 at North Point Park, 1 at Rock Mill Park, and 1 at Preston Ridge Park.
 - North Point Park has had the biggest issue with homeless and automated locks as well as Public Safety have helped deter this and other unwelcome activity at that location.
- West District
 - Consists of Wills Park and the Equestrian Center.
 - There are 5 total restrooms in the district: 3 at Wills Park, 2 at the Equestrian Center.
- Auto Locks
 - Initiative is to get all restrooms on an auto lock system to deter shady or overnight activity.
 - Staff has been able to install auto locks on half the restrooms to date.
 - The cost per restroom is approximately \$5,000.

RECREATION COMMISSION DISCUSSION

RE: Restroom Inventory

Q. Commissioner Kaighin asked if the City preferred paper towels vs air blowers.

A. Staff prefers blowers because it cuts down on waste of paper towels.

Q. Commissioner Norton asked if the restroom capacity at Union Hill Park was capable of handling large crowds.

A. Staff responded that last year, it appeared to handle the load of people of the Concert Series (250). Anything large would require portable toilets.

Q. Commissioner Rand asked if upgrade options existed for the prefabricated restrooms.

A. Staff stated the idea could be explored.

RE: Restroom Auto-Locks

Q. Commissioner Rand stated couldn't someone just safely lock themselves in the restroom.

A. Staff replied yes, but auto lights trigger police that movement is occurring in a locked restroom and can arrest the individual for trespassing at that time.

IV. ITEMS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

- Commissioner Scott distributed information on the March 28th design day for Wacky World 2.0.

V. ADJOURNMENT

❖ Chairman Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Amber O'Dwyer
Administrative Office Coordinator
Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services