



RECREATION COMMISSION WORK SESSION SEPTEMBER 27, 2023 OFFICIAL MINUTES

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

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I. CALL TO ORDER

- ❖ Vice Chair Saha called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

- **Recreation Commission Members - Present**
 - Jit Saha (Vice Chair)
 - John Norton
 - Karla Piedrahita
 - Cheryl Rand
 - Brad Bowers
 - Jeremy Scott
- **Recreation Commission Members – Absent**
 - Dennis Mitchell (Chairman)
 - Derek Kaighin
 - Shuntel Beach
- **Staff**
 - Morgan Rodgers – Director, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services
 - Kurt Kirby – Project Manager, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services
 - Christine Young – Recreation Services Manager, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services
 - Claire Thurber – Special Events Coordinator, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services
 - Amber O'Dwyer – Administrative Office Coordinator, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services

III. WORK SESSION ITEMS

a. Park Bond Projects Update

- Kirk Kirby, Project Manager for the Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services presented the item.
- In November 2021, the Citizens of Alpharetta overwhelmingly passed a \$29,500,000.00 bond referendum for parks. There were a total of nine (9) projects outlined in the bond.
- Once a quarter, staff attempts to provide an update on the park bond projects. The report being presented tonight is the one presented to City Council at the September 18th, Council Work Session and will serve as an update for eight (8) of the nine (9) projects with information forthcoming on the Alpha Loop bond project.

Farmhouse Heritage Park

- This is the one project that perceptually does not appear to be moving forward (as there is no major construction associated with the initiative), but it is making progress.
- The intent is not great renovations for the park, but to preserve the site and its natural setting as much as possible.
- The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has recently informed the City of site impacts resulting from the Georgia 400 Managed Lanes project. Staff is working to schedule a meeting with GDOT.
- Owners of the developing parcel adjacent to the park (north of the gas station and east of the settlement site) have been in conversation with staff regarding parking and improved accessibility to the site.
 - This is a significant opportunity as currently, all the City's funding would be used to construct a lengthy boardwalk to permit access to the site., In working with the neighboring development, a new access point may be possible thus limiting the amount of boardwalk required and freeing funding for other enhancements to the historic site.
 - The developer has no reciprocal requests, believing the passive park will be an added amenity and feature that will enhance the resale value of the future development.

Mid-Broadwell Park

- Construction has resumed on the park with parking, restrooms, and infrastructure being installed.
- There is currently an RFP posted for the playground and staff has until September 28th to make a recommendation on a vendor. Once done, the next steps will be to seek approval of the selected vendor and contract by City Council come the end of October.
- If approved, the turnaround time for the playground, based on the "wood-like" design of the original concept, would be 15 weeks from contract signing to playability.
- The current rendering does not include the trail system as shown in the original design concept. This is due in part to the current illustration being focused solely on the first phase of the park's development whereas the trails are planned for installment later in the process. Currently, a natural trail does reside at the park as a rollover from the pop-up park that once occupied the site.
- There are plans to install a HAWK system along Mid-Broadwell near the fire station to assist in pedestrian safety for neighboring residents accessing the park.

Old Rucker Park

- Plans are currently at 90% completion with construction estimated to begin in mid-2024.
- The estimated cost for the current design is over \$3M. Staff is working to lower costs to a manageable budget without compromising the park's intent.
- If all goes well, staff is looking at 2025 for completion (18-24 months of construction).
- Much of the timeline is contingent upon the phasing schedule and balancing construction with the Community Agriculture programs hosted at the park.
 - During specific phases of construction, the park will be closed to the public while at other times closed to both the public and staff to ensure safety.
 - To minimize disruption to the Community Agriculture's programs, staff is working diligently to develop alternative arrangements for relocation of the program to other parks (such as Mayfield), etc.
 - Staff will only know exactly which plans to implement when various phases of construction begin.

Union Hill Park

- Renovations are complete on the covered venue site.
- The park's design concept was approved by City Council at the September 25, 2023, Council Meeting.
- Staff provided the opportunity for public comment as well as enlisted a company highly specialized in the development of skate parks to craft a promising design that meets the target demographic's interests.

Waters Road Park

- The design-build project began construction on August 28, 2023, with completion anticipated in Spring 2024.

Webb Bridge Park Upper Field Turf

- Design for the sewer connection is nearing completion. Staff is currently preparing to seek bids for the sewer and turf replacement simultaneously.
- Funding for the sewer connection will be identified from alternative sources so as to not affect the overall bond funding for the turf replacement approved by the public.
- Staff hopes to break ground on the turf replacement in Fall 2024 with the turf ready for play in Spring 2025.
- The remaining fields at Webb Bridge Park will remain accessible and playable for users.

Wills Park Proper Improvements

- Improvements will be accomplished with a phased approach and construction is scheduled for 2024. The current timeline is predicted to be approximately 12 months for construction.
- Plans for Phase 1 (renovation and construction of Wacky World playground and park restrooms) are 90% complete. The playground will retain the same footprint and parking will be expanded to encompass the space where vehicles currently jump the curb to park.
- Phase 2 (renovations to the gateway entrances and the connecting spine from Wills Road to Roswell Street) and Phase 3 (renovations to Waggy World dog park) are scheduled for completion in April 2024.

Wills Park Equestrian Center Improvements

- Arena #3 is complete.
- Plans for Phase 1 (renovation of arenas #2 and #4) are expected in October 2023 with construction planned for Spring 2024.
- Plans for Phase 2 (construction of entry drives, parking, and three new barns) and Phase 3 (construction of the promenade, five additional barns, and entry enhancements) are to be completed by July 2024.
- The Equestrian Foundation has agreed to help fund the sizable project. Currently, the total initiative has funding in place for the first two of the three phases with the aid of the foundation's stated financial contribution.
- One of disc golf course holes will be impacted given the new design for the Equestrian Center, but this warrants further conversation as many of the disc golf holes are very close to the stream and require relocation.

RECREATION COMMISSION DISCUSSION

RE: Wills Park Wacky World Playground

Q How is fundraising going for Wacky World? (Norton)

A Several corporate sponsors have been acquired as well as a few civic organizations, though the committee has yet to have a substantial sponsor commit. Fundraising efforts have taken place at many recent events including the Mayor's 5K Challenge, The Farmer's Market, and the Fall Brew Moon Fest. Additionally, a fundraising concert is planned to raise additional funds (which has already achieved close to \$10,000k pre-event). More events are also on the calendar for continued promotion. Between it all, the committee feels the momentum is building. (Scott)

b. ARPCS Scholarship Program

- Christine Young, Recreation Services Manager for the Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services presented the item.
- Alpharetta has a program in place, the ARPCS Scholarship Program, in which low-income families who meet certain qualifications may receive subsidized funding for children to participate in recreational programs.
- The current program was reviewed by staff, and it was determined that much of the documentation provided to the city was duplicious to that required by Fulton County Schools (FCS). Applicants are currently providing documentation once to the school system to meet free-lunch requirements and then again to Alpharetta for acceptance into the ARPCS Scholarship Program.
- From that realization, staff wished to streamline the current process.
 1. If the applicant qualified for the free-lunch program via FCS, then the applicant would only need to show the SNAP card, proof of Alpharetta residency, and a driver's license.
 2. This would not negate the current process, however, if the applicant is not participating in the free-lunch program. If not, all documentation currently required must be submitted.
- Additionally, staff will move away from the tiered program based on percentage to a flat fund of \$1,000 per child.
- The item was presented to the Recreation Commission for discussion during the August 2023 work session. Commissioners requested a secondary discussion on the topic to review data comparisons from neighboring cities with similar programs and request staff include the following parameters within the program:
 - A registration date for camps.
 - A participation cap between 20-25 applicants (avoiding a hard cut off given families with multiple children)
- Based on the feedback from The Commission, staff presented the following revisions to qualifications:
 - Applicant's documentation of approved participation in a school's free lunch program must be on official school or Fulton County Schools letterhead.
 - The address on the applicant's driver's license must match the local address presented on the application.
 - Applicant must present a utility bill or property tax bill as proof of Alpharetta residency.
 - Applicant must present dependency verification.
 - Notification of approval/denial was adjusted from five to ten business days.
 - The application now includes a check box for staff attesting dependency verification.
 - For homeschoolers/private school applicants, dependency verification was added as well.

- A participation cap between 20-25 applicants (avoiding a hard cut off given families with multiple children) was implemented.
- A funding cap was also implemented and will be issued on a first come first serve basis.

RECREATION COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

RE: ARPCS Scholarship Program

- Q Specifically, what type of documentation will be acceptable for dependency verification? (Scott)
- A Birth certificate, adoption papers, or legal guardianship.
- Q Were these the items required in the past but were eliminated with the new proposed plan? (Bowers)
- A Yes. They were required, then eliminated and ultimately reinstated.
- Q In the past, there were usually only 10-15 participants, but did any of them have present issues with the vetting process? (Bowers)
- A One of the three did. But, in response to the concern about a cap, staff stated 25 was the cap internally.
- Q Why was the cap only noted internally and not externally as well? (Saha)
- A Only a few residents apply each year and mainly the program spreads by word of mouth. The application also states it is on a first come first serve basis with limited funding.

IV. ITEMS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

RE: Mayfield Park

- Q Other than Grow-A-Row, what is the vision for Mayfield Park? (Saha)
- A Currently, staff is working to demolish any unsafe structures. As for the division of the park and programming would need to be discussed between the two cities of Milton and Alpharetta. No further conversation has currently been had beyond a grow-a-row program and community garden.
- Q What did the two cities agree to when the property was purchased? (Rand)
- A The two cities were concerned about the three neighboring plats becoming a private development so the two cities chose to invest in the property to preserve the space but nothing beyond in terms of prospective use for the property was ever discussed. The park cannot accommodate ball fields (due to size), nor active programs so the site would have to remain a passive park.

V. ADJOURNMENT

❖ *Chairman Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 6:23 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,



Amber O'Dwyer
Administrative Office Coordinator