



# RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

## OFFICIAL MINUTES

### JANUARY 9, 2024

ALPHARETTA CITY HALL  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS | 2 PARK PLAZA | 5:30 PM

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#### I. CALL TO ORDER

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

#### II. ROLL CALL

- Recreation Commissioners Present

- Chairman Dennis Mitchell
- Vice Chairman Jit Saha
- Brad Bowers
- Derek Kaighin
- Paul Slavik
- John Norton
- Cheryl Rand
- Karla Piedrahita
- Shuntel Beach

- Recreation Commissioners Absent

- None

- Staff

- James Drinkard, Assistant City Administrator
- Kurt Kirby, Senior Operations Manager, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services
- Amanda Musilli, Community Services Manager, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services
- Eric Milley, Park Services Manager (Northern, Southern, Eastern, Downtown Districts), Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services
- Matt Casey, Park Services Manager (Western District & Equestrian), Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services
- Amber O'Dwyer, Administrative Office Coordinator, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services

- Chairman Mitchell introduced new commissioner, Paul Slavik.
- Paul Slavik explained how he grew up in Alpharetta playing in the well-known parks and at Wacky World Playground. He left for college and has since moved back, started a family, and looks forward to serving on the Recreation Commission.

### III. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

### IV. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

#### a. Recreation Commission Minutes from July 11, 2023

- ❖ Commissioner Bowers offered a motion to approve the minutes, as presented, from the July 11, 2023, Recreation Commission meeting.
  - Commissioner Saha seconded the motion.
- ❖ The motion was approved (4-0-5 with Commissioners Norton, Beach, Rand, Slavik, and Piedrahita abstaining).

#### b. Recreation Commission Minutes from September 27, 2023

- ❖ Commissioner Norton offered a motion to approve the minutes, as presented, from the September 27, 2023, Recreation Commission work session.
  - Commissioner Rand seconded the motion.
- ❖ The motion was approved (5-0-4 with Chairman Mitchell and Commissioners Kaighin, Slavik, and Beach abstaining).

#### c. Recreation Commission Minutes from November 14, 2023

- ❖ Commissioner Piedrahita offered a motion to approve the minutes, as presented, from the November 14, 2023, Recreation Commission meeting.
  - Commissioner Beach seconded the motion.
- ❖ The motion was approved (7-0-2 with Commissioner Saha, Slavik abstaining).

### V. OLD BUSINESS

- There was no old business to discuss.

### VI. NEW BUSINESS

#### a. Election of 2024 Chair and Vice Chair

- Chairman Mitchell opened the floor for nominations for chairman of the Recreation Commission.
- Commissioner Rand nominated Commissioner Mitchell for the role of chairman of the Recreation Commission.
- Commissioner Beach seconded.
  - ❖ Chairman Mitchell called for a vote that all those in favor of Commissioner Mitchell for chairman, vote in approval.
  - ❖ The vote was approved unanimously (9-0).
- Chairman Mitchell announced that the Recreation Commission has voted in favor of Commissioner Dennis Mitchell as the chairman for calendar year 2024.

- Chairman Mitchell opened the floor for nominations for vice chairman of the Recreation Commission.
- Commissioner Norton nominated Commissioner Saha for the role of vice chairman of the Recreation Commission.
- Commissioner Rand seconded.
  - ❖ Chairman Mitchell called for a vote that all those in favor of Commissioner Jit Saha for vice chairman, vote in approval.
  - ❖ The vote was approved unanimously (9-0).
- Chairman Mitchell announced that the Recreation Commission has voted in favor of Commissioner Jit Saha as the vice chairman for calendar year 2024.

## VII. STAFF PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOP DISCUSSION

### a. DIVISIONS

#### i. Community Services Division Monthly Report – January 2024

- Amanda Musilli, Community Services Manager for the Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Services Department came forward to present the item.

#### MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS:

- CHS AG-Business students finished their first semester at Old Rucker Farm. They not only developed dried sweet potato powder but also holiday gift baskets and learned to make new added value items for their customers. This year they made candles with dehydrated flowers, recipe meal-kits (including ingredients for the whole meal), table centerpieces (including pumpkins, gourds donated by the Atlanta Botanical Gardens), and recipes for roasted pumpkin seeds with the donated gourds.
- The Community Agriculture Program began discussions with the North Fulton Master Gardeners and the Georgia Native Plants Society (GNPS) regarding the 2024 Garden Faire Plant Sale. The City's Community Agriculture Program will be joining these two organizations for an annual event at a new, singular, location (Wills Park). Staff believes this will help grow revenue and build awareness for the program. Hoping to hit a goal of \$10k in sales.
- The basement grow room in the house at Old Rucker Farm was prepped and renovated in December 2023, with (12) additional grow racks, providing (60) additional shelves for seedlings to sprout. This will enable the program to grow more products in 2024, including growing more seedlings for the Garden Faire Plant Sale, the Growers Membership Program, and North Fulton Community Charities donation garden. First of the seeds went into the trays today (and included stevia and lettuce).
- Crop planning was completed in December for the year, and staff will be transitioning half of the grow-a-row fields to a "cover crop" in the spring to help build the soil. Unfortunately, the grow-a-row fields are not as resilient and healthy as the education fields and require additional nutrients and care to be able to produce

better harvests. Chickens will also help fertilize the soil. The remaining upper half of the grow-a-row fields will undergo the same process in late summer.

- Winter classes were well attended, and hosting the evening classes at the Log Cabin was a great success in helping to provide an indoor space for programs when the weather is too cold for outdoor classes.
- In addition, more schools will be joining the Community Agriculture Program within the next year.

#### MONTHLY INITIATIVES:

- The first seeds for the year will go into the soil trays on January 11, thus beginning growth for 2024 right away.
- March 5<sup>th</sup> marks the beginning of the spring plant and seed pick-up (combining the plant pick-up and February seed pick-up into one event).
- All the cool-weather plants need to be ready by then (collards, kale, cabbage, etc.).
- April 9<sup>th</sup> will be the warm season plant and seed pick-up.
- Staff plans to launch the seed library program in the spring (March) for the Milton and Alpharetta branches.
- Alpharetta's community compost program is slated to launch this year. Currently, the bid has not yet been awarded to the selected vendor for the in-house food-waste dehydrator and composting services.

#### MONTHLY HAPPENINGS:

##### January Classes:

- Establishing a Vegetable Garden on 1/11
- Beekeeping Series on 1/14, 1/21, and 1/28
- Bug Hotel on 1/15 and 1/16 (self-serve)
- Birdhouse Gourds Craft on 1/17
- Seed Starting for Success: Part I on 1/24
- Book Club on 1/29

##### February Classes:

- Container Gardening on 2/7
- Seed Starting for Success: Class II on 2/21
- Garden Journaling on 2/22
- How to Grow: Leafy Greens on 2/24
- Growing an Herb and Spice Garden on 2/26

## RECREATION COMMISSION Q&A:

### RE: Garden Faire

Q What is the date for the 2024 Garden Faire Plant Sale at Wills Park? (Norton)

A April 20<sup>th</sup>. (Musilli)

### RE: Community Services Division Classes

Q Are all classes also available at the Log Cabin? (Beach)

A No. Most happen outside at Old Rucker Farm. Division will be offering one class virtually each month. Classes at night will take place at the Log Cabin. (Musilli)

Q Has staff figured out how to record the virtual classes for those that cannot attend live? (Saha)

A Yes. (Musilli)

### RE: Community Services Division Title

Q Is the title of your division still "Community Services"? (Rand)

A For now, but there is discussion on changing the name. (Musilli)

## ii. Cultural Services Division Monthly Report – January 2024

- Kurt Kirby, Senior Operations Manager for the Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Services Department came forward to present the item on behalf of Kim Manning, Cultural Services Manager.

### MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS:

- The "Alpharetta Greenway Mural Trail" artists who completed the (9) murals on the raised sewers along the Greenway were recognized by the Cultural Arts Commission in December and will be recognized by City Council on February 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Staff strongly recommends touring the art in person as the pictures do not do justice.

### MONTHLY INITIATIVES:

- The Cultural Arts Division is also working on the crosswalks in the parks.
  - The crosswalk at the Alpharetta Community Center is complete.
  - The crosswalk at Wills Park Pool now also has an art sculpture to further enhance the art.
- The newest Play Me Again Piano is being recommissioned for Cogburn Park. A January unveiling is in the works.
- The Community Stage "The Spotlight" is still in the process of having the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) finalized between North Point Mall and the City of Alpharetta. Staff hopes for approval of the MOU by City Council at the next meeting.

- *The Visitor* Sculpture is under restoration and the Alpharetta Convention & Visitors Bureau donated \$5k to help with the restoration.
- February is Black History Month and staff is working on a schedule of activities to be released soon highlighting the upcoming activities.

#### MONTHLY HAPPENINGS:

- *Arts & Culture Online Calendar*  
<https://www.alpharetta.ga.us/government/departments/recreation-parks/cultural-services>
- *Alpharetta Music City – Live Music Calendar*  
<https://www.awesomealpharetta.com/calendar/category/alpharetta-music-city-live-music/>
- *Heartwarming Sights & Scenes by Tony Thomas* / Community Gallery at City Hall / November 15, 2023 through January 12, 2024
- *Atlanta Portrait Society Annual Exhibit* / Alpharetta Arts Center Gallery / November 21, 2023 through January 20, 2024
- *Antique & Vintage Quilt Turning* presented by Chattahoochee Evening Stars Quilt Guild / Alpharetta Public Library / January 20, 2024 at 2pm
- *Black History Month* – Coming Soon for the month of February
- *Eurydice* presented by ACT 1 Theater / Alpharetta Arts Center Black Box / February 9-18, 2024
- *Girls on Fire* presented by Alpharetta Symphony Orchestra / Alpharetta First United Methodist Church / February 23, 2024 at 8pm / Tickets <https://www.alpharettasympphony.org/girls-on-fire>

#### RECREATION COMMISSION Q&A:

##### RE: Mural Project

- C The murals along the Greenway are impeccable and she and her family were exciting to see on New Years Eve when they rode the Greenway. (Piedrahita)

#### iii. Recreation Services Division Monthly Report – January 2024

- Kurt Kirby, Senior Operations Manager for the Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Services Department came forward to present the item on behalf of Christine Young, Recreation Services Manager.

#### MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS:

- The holiday season is wrapping up. The Season of Celebration was a huge success. There were 1500+ in attendance at the Tree Lighting which had (1) main stage, (7) performers, (16) snow machines, Santa, The Grinch, and Cindy-Lou Who.

- Breakfast with Santa at the Adult Activity Center saw approximately 90 attendees.
- At the December 18<sup>th</sup> City Council Meeting, two lifeguards were recognized for receiving lifesaving awards; Eli Haverdink & Adam Penn. The two were recognized for an incident that happened at the pool over the summer resulting in the saving of a life. The two were also recognized by the Red Cross.
- The Athletic Division hosted "Homers for the Holidays: Home Run Derby" at North Park on December 19<sup>th</sup> which was a great donation event for Toys for Tots.
- All lower tennis courts at North Park were successfully converted to pickleball courts. The ribbon cutting will be January 29<sup>th</sup>.

#### MONTHLY HAPPENINGS:

- Lyndsey Macon, is our new Special Events Coordinator and will begin within the next few weeks.
- Youth basketball is in full swing with 324 players coming out of the holiday break.
- The Recreation Summer Guide is in the works and should be available online February 9<sup>th</sup>. Registration begins February 28<sup>th</sup> for residents and will be open to all March 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Upcoming Events include the Polar Plunge on February 3<sup>rd</sup> and the Annual Family Dance, "Tropical Paradise" on February 10<sup>th</sup>.

#### RECREATION COMMISSION Q&A:

##### **RE: North Park Pickleball Courts**

Q Why did the height of the fence get lowered? (Rand)

A Pickleballs do not travel as high as tennis balls and the lower height also aids in spectator viewing. (Kirby)

Q Do we know how many people play pickleball versus tennis? (Norton)

A Staff does not have a number, but it is definitely not a fad. It proves popular because the activity proves multi-generational and as much a social activity as a sport and that might add to the appeal and attraction. (Kirby)

C Welcome to come out tonight to see open-play and how popular the activity is. (Saha)

Q Do you have to have a reservation for open-play? (Bowers)

A There are only a few sessions a week scheduled for open-play. If you wish to confirm your court, it is best to reserve it for practices, etc. Courts are reserved through Kevin McDonald in Recreation Services. (Saha)

C Tuesday nights are open-play so you can just come on your own. (Rand)

Q How many pickleball courts are there in the city? (Mitchell)

A 16. (Kirby)

iv. **Park Services Division Monthly Report (Part I) – January 2024**

- Eric Milley, Park Services Manager for the Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Services Department came forward to present the item.

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Staff has (3) vacant park technicians due to retirements and promotions and staff has been interviewing to fill the vacancies and are in the process of background checks.
- Staff is currently in the process of scheduling the annual pine straw and mulch replacement at all parks, City Center, and Main Street and Haynes Bridge medians.
- Staff is also currently working on the replacement of the (6) missing Main Street trees. They were declining trees that have already been removed.
- Over at Innovation Academy, staff is selectively pruning and removing trees and branches that are encroaching on playing fields and are trying to promote growth of the more structured and healthier trees.
- Staff is currently in phase two of the actual building of the approved Webb Bridge Dog Park addition at Webb Bridge Park. The tree removal and pruning has been complete and now staff is working on the construction of the walking trail.
- At the ballfield complex at Webb Bridge Park, staff has removed (12) declining maples and replaced them with a different variety of maple that will be more narrow and not as wide which will be better suited for the area.

MONTHLY INITIATIVES:

- The next two months selective pruning, removal, and tree and shrub replacement will continue in all parks.

RECREATION COMMISSION Q&A:

**RE: North Park Light Poles**

Q Can you provide an update on the light poles being replaced at North Park?  
(Mitchell)

A I will provide an update during my staff presentation. (Kirby)

v. **Park Services Division Monthly Report (Part II) - January 2024**

- Matt Casey, Park Services Manager for the Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Services Department came forward to present the item.

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS:

- The Equestrian Center finished the year strong with (3) nationally rated horseshows in December. Horse show season started back last weekend.

- Staff has added infield mix to all ballfields in preparation for the upcoming baseball season and enhancing the common areas.
- Entrances to park facilities have been pressure washed. The Wills Park Recreation Center playground and the tennis court bridge have also been pressure washed and sealed. The covered arena was going to be pressure washed next week but will be laser graded tomorrow.
- At Mid Broadwell Park, a large section of underbrush has been cut and removed from the middle of the property. Staff will be looking into adding some natural passive trails in the near future.

#### MONTHLY INITIATIVES:

- The nets at the Wills Park batting cages are torn and ripped. Staff will be replacing the netting with the help of AYBA prior to the start of the spring season.

#### RECREATION COMMISSION Q&A:

##### **RE: Batting Cage Damage & Repair**

Q Is that due to vandalism? (Rand)

A Heavy wear. (Casey)

Q Could the batting cage netting be replaced with fencing? (Norton)

A The batting pavilion is broken into (8) lanes and fencing would not be a better option. To add, AYBA is leading the charge and reconfiguring the layout for player safety. February. (Casey)

##### **RE: Pressure Washing at Wills Park**

Q Will the pressure washer hit the Community Garden fence? (Rand)

A We can ensure that. (Casey)

##### **RE: Baseball Season**

Q When does the baseball season start? (Norton)

A February. (Casey)

##### **RE: Athletic Field Banners**

Q What is the status of the replacement/replenishment of the sponsored athletic banners? (Saha)

A AYBA is on a different rotation for replacement, but park wise, all backstops and sunshades with the City logo and AYBA are being replaced now. (Casey)

#### **vi. Senior Operations Manager Monthly Report – January 2024**

- Kurt Kirby, Senior Operations Manager for the Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Services Department came forward to present the item.

- Happy to report that fall capital initiatives were completed before the end of 2023.
  - Webb Bridge Park Dog Park: Work began in November and should be completed in the spring.
  - Sewer work along Greenway was completed December 15<sup>th</sup> with Fulton County. The county completed all restorations and repairs so hopefully there will be no more trail closures.
  - The Mansell Boardwalk is being replaced. It is being completely torn out and is scheduled for completion in 2nd quarter of 2024 (weather permitting).
  - North Park Turf 2 Pole Removal and Lighting Upgrades:
    - Wooden poles were taken down in December 2023 due to damage caused by woodpeckers.
    - What was one or two poles is now nearly every pole on the field.
    - The poles posed a safety issue and needed to come down, so fields were shut down for play while the poles were removed.
    - Fields are currently open but have no lighting. Staff is working with on-call vendor to have lights orders installed, and operational before March.
- Bond updates are scheduled for the January 24, 2024, Recreation Commission Work Session after the 2024 City Council Retreat. The work session report will be the exact same information presented during the retreat to ensure the same information is shared.

#### RECREATION COMMISSION Q&A:

##### **RE: Light Poles**

Q Ordering new wood poles? (Kaighin)

A Plan to install concrete poles and new LED lighting. (Kirby)

Q Is that the only park at risk of woodpeckers? (Kaighin)

A Yes. Other parks have poles that are aging and need replacing, but North Park seems to be the prominent area affected likely due to the way they were treated and therefore more appealing to woodpeckers. (Kirby)

##### **RE: Mansell Boardwalk**

Q Is the boardwalk being fixed part of the DOT project? Behind the Wild Wings? Is the City paying for the repair? (Rand)

A While not tied to the DOT project; it is the area. Yes, the City is paying for the repair of the boardwalk which will have the same footprint but different material. The current material does not have a long lifespan but continues to fall into disrepair and accrued over \$200,000 in boardwalk repairs in the last (5) years. Council has now decided to invest in a long-term, permanent solution to the boardwalk. (Kirby)

Q The new installation will be planks laying in a different orientation? (Rand)

A No. It will be helical piers with a metal structure and form concrete similar to that at Union Hill Park. (Kirby)

**RE: Partner Associations**

Q Could we hear from representatives from the partnered organizations for updates at our meetings? Morgan Rodgers mentioned an emphasis on having representatives come. (Rand)

A Agreements are in place for the (5) athletic associations which require they present an annual update. For those who do not have a formalized partnership, we can certainly reach out to any partnered organizations to have them present at The Commission's request. (O'Dwyer & Kirby)

Q Would love to review the list of well-known versus not so well-known partnerships to see who could come and deliver an update. Perhaps the list could be reviewed at the workshop. (Rand)

**RE: Usage of Mulch vs Pine Straw**

Q How does the City discern between the use of mulch versus pine straw? (Kaighin)

A If the beds have pine, staff uses pine straw. If the beds contain hardwoods, staff utilizes mulch. (Milley)

**VIII. RECREATION COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

- Vice Chair Saha, of all the minutes throughout the years, these have been his favorite.

**IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- There were no public comments.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

- ❖ Commissioner Rand made a motion to adjourn.
  - Commissioner Kaighin seconded the motion.
  - The motion was approved unanimously (9-0).
- ❖ Chairman Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 6:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Amber O'Dwyer

Administrative Office Coordinator