



RECREATION COMMISSION WORK SESSION OFFICIAL MINUTES JANUARY 24, 2024

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 5:32 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

• Recreation Commissioners Present

- Dennis Mitchell (Chair)
- Jit Saha (Vice Chair)
- Derek Kaighin
- Paul Slavik
- John Norton
- Cheryl Rand
- Karla Piedrahita
- Shuntel Beach

• Recreation Commissioners Absent

- Brad Bowers

• Staff

- Morgan Rodgers, Director, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services
- Kurt Kirby, Senior Operations Manager, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services
- Christine Young, Recreation Services Manager, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services
- Amber O'Dwyer, Administrative Office Coordinator, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services

III. WORK SESSION ITEMS

a. 2024 Bond Projects Update

- Kurt Kirby, Senior Operations Manager for the Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Services Department introduced the item.

- Staff referenced the detailed report within the agenda packet provided to the Recreation Commission that was produced by City staff overseeing the Park Bond Projects.
- 2024 is an exciting year for the projects as staff is seeking procurement on multiple projects, seeing the completion of a few, (Waters Road Park and Mid-Broadwell Park), and the beginning of construction on others.
- The report also conveys that as construction costs increase, staff must revisit each project's scope and budget and determine the best options available to complete the bond projects as intended.

RECREATION COMMISSION Q&A:

RE: Farmhouse

Q How long does the City have to spend the funds that were encumbered in 2021/2022? (Rand)

A (5) years. (Kirby)

Q Do you see any progress happening at the Farmhouse in the next two years? With GDOT listed as a variable, the concern is if the project will be completed by the time the funding must be expended. (Rand)

A Yes. And there is flexibility in the bond agreement for the timeline related to the spending of the funds. (Kirby & Rodgers)

RE: Rucker Park Restrooms

Q What about the restroom design at Old Rucker? (Rand)

A They will be similar in design to those at Waters Road Park and Windward Park. (Kirby & Rodgers)

Q What about the renovation of the house at Old Rucker? (Rand)

A The house is not part of the bond project. (Kirby)

Q What about the park closure and limited accessibility due to GDOT and City construction? Will it be limited to staff only? How will programs continue? (Rand)

A Yes, it will impact operations, but staff has plans to mitigate the loss of Community Agriculture programming. (Kirby)

RE: Webb Bridge

Q What is the current status of Webb Bridge and the septic/sewer issue? What is the timeline? (Norton)

A The septic/sewer concern is being funded by a separate Public Works account and not as part of the bond funds. Staff anticipates the sewer work will be completed by mid-2024. As construction starts, design/build will begin for the field and construction will begin when AMBUSH's athletic season ends.

Q We are over budget for Webb Bridge as well? (Mitchell)

A Yes, but this will be addressed under the Council Retreat 2024 Updates item on tonight's agenda. (Rodgers)

Q When will wayfinding signage be updated for Webb Bridge Park? Signage is lacking in properly directing people to tennis courts, the playground, and other major park features. (Saha)

A Do you mean on trails or at the park? Signing was updated at the beginning of 2023. (Kirby)

Commissioners commented that there is only one way into the park that would naturally direct people to park amenities. Others reminded that a small loop exists to direct park patrons to parking only or towards other areas of the park.

Current wayfinding signage is easy to revise. Staff will visit the park to determine if additional signage is needed. (Rodgers)

RE: Waters Road Park

Q Only \$780 remains for Waters Road Park but it looks as if the work still needed would exceed that balance. Is that not so? (Rand)

A \$780 remains unencumbered, but more is encumbered for the retainer of the work for the company who is building the park. (Rodgers)

Q What is the story with the diesel tank? (Kaighin)

A Staff had to dig until all remaining diesel fuel was removed and remediated before construction could continue. (Rodgers)

Q Could the \$780 be reapplied to Mid-Broadwell Park? (Piedrahita)

RE: Equestrian Center

Q Is all going well with the equestrian center as funding appears in place between the City and Foundation? (Mitchell)

A The house at the equestrian center must be demolished to make room for Arena 2. Arena 4 will be placed between Arena 3 and the covered Arena. Staff hoped \$10M would be enough to get everything accomplished including the barns but this is not likely.

b. Council Retreat 2024 Updates

- Morgan Rodgers, Director for the Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Services Department introduced the item.
- At the 2024 Council Retreat, events at Brooke Street Park was a hot topic due to the increased request of events at the park.
 - Some council members felt too many took place, others felt there were not enough.
 - The topic was deferred from the Council Retreat to be discussed at an upcoming work session on February 5.

- All 2022 Bond Series Park Projects approved in November 2021 are 25% over budget. This is mainly due to 2019 pricing applied to 2024 projects.
- City Council has stated that bond projects need to stand on their own without supplemental funding unless previously agreed upon.
 - No additional funding will be applied so staff must decide where cutbacks will take place.
 - Thankfully, bond interest has accrued totaling between \$3-\$3.5M that will be applied to the projects.
- Council is hoping for a proposed plan from staff at the February 19 Council Meeting.
- Caveats include the equestrian center as the agreement with the Equestrian Foundation is a 50/50 match. Therefore, any additional funding the City applies obligates the foundation to an increase commitment. The Foundation has been notified of this requirement and is content with maintaining the current budget to achieve what is possible.

RECREATION COMMISSION Q&A:

RE: Bond Project Funding (General)

Q Is there another bond issuance occurring in the next few years? (Kaighin)

A The City has a AAA rating so it is always open to bond issuances, but the City Council has made it clear that future bonds would need to be applied to other high level City priorities including fire station repairs, etc. (Rodgers)

Q Could parks be prioritized within the current funding and then future bonds be acquired for lower priority bond projects? (Kaighin)

A City Council has informed staff that the City needs to deliver on what was promised to the public when the 2021 Bond Referendum was voted for approval and not to seek future bond funding for the time being.

Some projects that are currently at a standstill may be funding sources for other projects. For example, the Farmhouse / Heritage Park is completely reliant on parking accessibility only made possible through the private development neighboring Quick Trip. Should parking not be possible, the park project can no longer be explored, and the funds can be reallocated for other projects under the scope of the bond series. (Rodgers)

Q Is the work session that Council has similar to ours? (Piedrahita)

A Yes but they have theirs in the Council Chambers at the dais. (Rodgers)

Q What are the top priority bond projects according to staff? (Slavik)

A Webb Bridge, Wills Park, Mid-Broadwell, and Old Rucker. (Rodgers)

RE: Wacky World, Wills Park & Equestrian Center

Q Are we still getting funding from impact fees and hotel/motel for Wills Park? (Mitchell)

A We do still get funding, but impact fee funding is very specific as to the types of projects for which the funding can be applied. Wills Park is one of them. (Rodgers)

Q What are impact fees? (Kaighin)

A Fees paid by a developer for each projected resident “impacting” the community based on the size of the residential development being constructed. (Rodgers)

Q Do we not have enough funding for Wills Park Proper if the project is \$5.1M and we have \$5.2M committed? (Mitchell)

A The \$5.1M is the cost of the Wills Park Proper project when trimmed back to meet the \$5.2M allotment. (Rand)

Q The Wacky World playground is a two-week build? (Mitchell)

A Yes and is scheduled to be built in October with demolition in March. (Kirby)

Q Having Wacky World demolished in March seems like a high-time for playground patrons, no? (Saha)

A Staff understands, but the entire area must be resurfaced, rebuilt, trees removed, restroom built, etc. (Rodgers)

Q Looking at the cost of the equestrian center barns, the cost has quite a discrepancy. Why? (Norton)

A That’s the difference in cost paid due to location. Staff is considering renovations versus complete rebuilds. This also allows staff to complete items under grandfathered parameters versus new development codes. (Rodgers)

Q Does having people pay for benches, etc. for placement at Wacky World help aide the bond projects? (Kaighin)

A No, it goes to a non-profit organization supporting the project. (Rodgers)

RE: Webb Bridge Park

Q Is Webb Bridge deemed high priority? (Norton)

A Yes, and this project will be completed. (Rodgers)

Q What vendor did the City select for the turf? (Beach)

A SprintTurf. (Rodgers)

c. Archery Program at Innovation Academy

- Christine Young, Recreation Services Manager for the Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Services Department introduced the item.
- The Atlanta Archery Club approached the city about moving its existing program to a new location that would enhance programming and serve the club.

- Recreation Services saw this as an opportunity to bring on a unique program that very few agencies in the state of Georgia offer and that will provide the community with a new and exciting sport.
- Staff recognizes that pricing may seem steep but there is a lot of training time offered within the pricing structure.
- After much discussion, staff offered Innovation Academy's old softball field as a location for the club to operate out of and to provide programming through classes and camps for the City. The club will also continue their clinics, events, and private instruction at this new location.
- Safety is being ensured through the installation of fencing, netting, a covered archery line (all to be procured and supplied by the club), and via the placement of the location at the back of the park. That said, staff believes that the club has exhibited a professional, safe set-up plan.
- The hope is to kick off the new programming in March.
- The principal at Innovation Academy is excited to partner with Atlanta Archery Club for intramural and after-school activities for their student body and has been very supportive throughout the process.

RECREATION COMMISSION Q&A:

RE: Archery Program at Innovation Academy

Q Is the vendor securing all costs? (Mitchell)

A Yes. (Young)

Q What is the cost? (Beach)

A Staff has not asked since there is no fiscal impact to the City. (Young)

Q Is the covered archery line a permanent structure? (Saha)

A While it may not be considered "permanent" is it immovable, and the structure seems aesthetic and safe. (Young)

Q How popular is the program? (Piedrahita)

A The club has a good following, and the owner/lead instructor is being offered the opportunity to provide private instruction as well as public instruction via the City as has been done with other recreational instructors (i.e. gymnastics). (Young)

Q Will the space be rentable for experienced archers? (Rand)

A Yes, the club has a membership program but that is facilitated directly through the club and not through the City. There were talks of making them a City partnered association, but staff would like to gauge the success of the program first. (Young)

Q What happened to the archery line at Sharp Shooters? (Kaighin)

A Sharp Shooters is closing. (Young)

Q Is there good parking to support the program? (Piedrahita)

- A Staff is working on available parking at Innovation as currently daylight parking is not permitted. (Young)
- Q Is Fulton County okay with this? (Mitchell)
- A The principal at Innovation is in support. (Young)
- Q How many instructors? (Saha)
- A There are at least (5) instructors.
- Q What about the certification process for those sub-instructors? (Saha)
- A Certification is required by all recreational instructors and sub-contracted instructors and will be required for the archery instructors as well. (Young)
- Q How does open shooting work for those who have taken only a few classes and wish to practice? (Mitchell)
- A This is something staff has to revisit. (Young)
- Q Will powerful crossbows be permitted? (Norton)
- A Rules and regulations would be put in place and the instructor would be present to prevent the use of unauthorized items such as powerful crossbows. (Young)
- Q What is the liability to the City should someone accidentally shoot another? (Saha)
- A Liability would be no different than a kid who hits a kid with a baseball. In addition, the program owner/instructor has to be insured. Liability is \$1M for the City. (Rodgers & Young)
- Q Does Council need to approve this? Do we? (Slavik)
- A No, this is more informative and to make the Rec Commission aware of a new program being onboarded. (Young)
- Q No bid is required? (Slavik)
- A No. (Rogers)
- Q What of the park rules recently approved that meant no projectiles? (Saha)
- A That rule applies in terms of an "open to the public" setting. This is an organized, contained setting. (Rogers)
- Q Are targets removed and locked away each night? (Norton)
- A Yes. (Rodgers)
- Q How many lanes will the archery line have? (Piedrahita)
- A 16. (Young)
- Q Does this open the door to axe throwing, flame throwing? (Kaighin)
- A Programs considered by the City would have to have enough of a following and interest to be truly considered. Axe throwing and flame throwing likely not have as much interest as archery which is recognized as an Olympic sport.

IV. ITEMS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

- Commissioner Rand wished to ensure that the request was heard to have various organizations, beyond the major athletic associations, deliver updates at Recreation Commission meetings.

V. ADJOURNMENT

- ❖ Chairman Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amber O'Dwyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Amber" written in a smaller, more compact script, and the last name "O'Dwyer" written in a larger, more expansive script.

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