



Parks, Arts, Recreation & Culture (PARC) Commission
Thursday, May 5, 2011
5:30pm

Cornelius Town Hall Meeting
21445 Catawba Ave
Cornelius, NC 28031
www.corneliuspr.org

Minutes

I. Parks, Arts, Recreation & Culture Meeting

a. Call to order: Chair Trimbur called the meeting to order.

1) Present: PARC Commissioners, Chris Jones, Tedd Duncan, Gary Knight, Bruce Trimbur, Del Arrendale, Town Commissioner Chuck Travis, and PARC Director Troy Fitzsimmons.

b. Introductions: Chair Trimbur congratulated Troy Fitzsimmons on being named the new Director of PARC and mentioned he has a solid background; serving in parks and recreation for twenty years. Director Fitzsimmons was a member of the US Army Corps of Engineers, worked for Mecklenburg County Parks & Recreation as acting Assistant Director, held positions such as Park Planner, Planning Team Project Manager and later consulted in the private sector. He holds a Masters Degree from the University of Hartford in Public Administration. In 2004 Director Fitzsimmons moved to Washington State as Park Development Manager and later Programming Coordinator. In 2008 he came back east as the Town of Cornelius PARC Superintendent. Chair Trimbur stated he was glad to have Troy take the position of Director. Director Fitzsimmons responded that he has a great team to work with and have the upmost confidence they will help him through this transition. He stated he looks forward to serving the PARC Commission, Town Board, and the citizens of Cornelius.

c. Public Appearances: none

II. Approval of minutes (attachment)

a. The minutes from the April 7th meeting were approved.

III. PARC Commission Issues/Presentations set for a specific time - none

IV. PARC Commission Subcommittee Recommendations & Reports

a. Items to be placed on record – none

b. Commissioner Reports

1) Commissioner Gary Knight – Commissioner Knight mentioned he attended the Smithville PARC Day and that it was well attended. He commented that the truck with Wii games on the side was interesting and enjoyed watching the kids play. Commissioner Tovar also attended.

2) Commissioner Chris Jones – Commissioner Jones had nothing to report other than reminding everyone of the Veteran's Monument Poker Run taking place Saturday. He stated he will be participating on his motorcycle and hopes many others will be able to as well. Town Commissioner Travis mentioned the monument groundbreaking will be Memorial Day with hopes to have it completed by Veteran's Day. He thanked Commissioner Jones for promoting the poker run event.

4) Commissioner Tedd Duncan – Commissioner Duncan had nothing to report, but did ask for clarification on the final FY12 budget package and if it was back from the Town Board. Director Fitzsimmons responded, no, but that a piece of it, the Westmoreland Athletic Complex Operational Budget, would be discussed tonight. The Board is assessing it right now. Commissioner Duncan asked if any feedback had been received on items that Director Fitzsimmons would need the PARC Commission's help with supporting. Director Fitzsimmons responded that he did have some numbers to share and hoped for the PARC Commission's support, but outside of that the operational budget for this year is ok.

5) Board Chair Bruce Trimbur – Chair Trimbur wanted to remind everyone of the Clean Sweep event at the Cornelius Arts Center on Tuesday, May 31st and asked for Commissioner participation. He attended last year. Chair Trimbur also mentioned that there were a lot of activities in May but specifically May 28th was a Memorial Day event that the PARC Commissioners should mark their calendars for and try to attend. Director Fitzsimmons responded that would be great. He also wanted to point out some new initiatives: Ryan Hager is working with a new tennis provider who will provide a free day of tennis instruction to anyone who wants to participate. Another brand new program is Senior Strollers Walking Club kicking off on May 18th at Bailey Road Park which is a free program for seniors to get together, stroll around and chat.

6) Commissioner Del Arrendale – Commissioner Arrendale stated he had nothing new to report but did want to mention that we got a good deal with Troy. When he did his survey and review he was very impressed with Troy at that time and it hasn't changed. Director Fitzsimmons thanked Commissioner Arrendale.

c. Town Commissioner Report - Commissioner Chuck Travis – Town Commissioner Travis wanted to report the good news that the Town Board agreed to the financial commitments on WAC Phase II and they are close to being in place. It is a substantial amount we agreed to finance. Director Fitzsimmons mentioned it was a little bit over \$1.6 million. Commissioner Arrendale asked if that was on schedule. Director Fitzsimmons responded, yes, they have already started working. Chair Trimbur mentioned he was glad for the legacy that would provide the Town. Town Commissioner Travis thanked Troy Fitzsimmons for taking the position of Director; he does a fabulous job, and agreed that he does have a great staff to be stepping up with.

d. Standing Committee Reports

1) 1) Director's Report – Director Fitzsimmons reported on a couple of highlights. We have some sponsorship renewals for 2011 special events, one from MI Connection for \$6,000 and another from Electricities for \$500. Recently on April 2nd there was a Summer Camp Crawl at Cornelius Arts Center. They started registration for camps and numbers were very much above where they were previous years. We really hit a mark in terms of getting people signed up. Mindy Stoner really helped out with that. We also started all of our summer camp registrations and we are up by about 8% compared to this time last year. We have WAC Phase II underway. The goal is to get it done early Fall and have a kickoff in October or November, and maybe have a small local tournament. We are going to be sodding the fields versus seeding them, allowing opening this Fall so we will be able to play. Chair Trimbur asked how we were able to get sod versus seed. Director Fitzsimmons responded that if we had went with seeding we wouldn't be able to open until Fall of next year due to allowing for one good growing season. Town Commissioner Travis asked if we were doing grass infields. Director Fitzsimmons responded no they are skinned infields which is an all dirt, clay/sand mix. He continued to mention that the county has officially dedicated the property to the town so we are officially owners, however we still have to comply with original agreements from here on out. If there is anything significant we want to do down the road we still have to consult with the county about it. Chair Trimbur asked if that was as a result from our contributions to the library. Commissioner Travis responded, yes, if we contributed to the library fund we wanted something in return, so that was the county's deal with us. It was nice to start with this and set a precedent. Director Fitzsimmons mentioned the other capital project, Robbins Park, is about 60% complete. The tennis courts are shaping up, asphalt and fencing is complete, restroom building is taking shape, and the field is irrigated. We will be holding off on putting the playground in until closer to opening because once it's in there is no way to keep people out of it. We are also giving the grass time to grow before we open in mid-September. Town Commissioner Travis stated it really does look nice in there. Commissioner Duncan agreed that this was executed very well and it was really looking sharp. Director Fitzsimmons continued to report that we have completed installing steps at the Bailey Road football field leading from the football field up to the school. Every time it rained we were getting silt, sand and mud on the track. We partnered with CMS and are already hearing great remarks from the school.

We have finalized the lease for the Cornelius Arts Center and subsequent sublease and professional services contract with Community Arts Project. Commissioner Jones asked how long the agreement is. Director Fitzsimmons responded the agreement is in effect for up to 2 years but if the Town found an interim facility the agreements dissolve. CAP is not going to be paying any rent but will be providing 15%

of program revenue, and all non-residents will pay a 15% surcharge of which PARC keeps 100%. Our projections of the non-resident fee is that it will be able to cover, at a minimum, the night and weekend part time staffing out there. Chair Trimbur stated that we will get a full presentation in June on that. Director Fitzsimmons continued to mention we have a request for qualifications and quotes out. The Town Hall, park facilities, along Catawba, police department and fire department all have their own contracts. We decided to pull them all together to get more bang for our buck and a lower our overall unit cost. Chair Trimbur asked if presently it was being done by the town. Director Fitzsimmons responded that no, we have separate contracts, and with some expiring June 30th, the timing was right to pull them all together. Bids are due back June 2nd. Commissioner Duncan stated that companies do that a lot. Often they can find some savings in monetary fees, but they always find the management process gets so much better. At the very least you will see a big improvement in that.

Director Fitzsimmons ended with stating he looks forward to serving the PARC Commission as well as the Town Board and the citizens of Cornelius.

Commissioner Knight wanted to note that he received a phone call from someone involved with a turf company and did refer them to Director Fitzsimmons. He stated he didn't believe the PARC Commission has any role in selecting turf companies. Director Fitzsimmons responded that yes, they need to contact us, and if you know anyone interested the information is posted on our website.

Chair Trimbur stated that during the next meeting we will hear the proposal on synthetic turf at Bailey Road Park. Director Fitzsimmons responded, yes, Ryan Hager and I received a proposal from North Meck Soccer to significantly increase their contribution in order to run their leagues at Bailey Road Park. Davidson Day may also want to play a role. We are trying to get partners together to get a significant contribution in order to get funding for synthetic turf fields. We will put a cost analysis together in June to show what the partners will be contributing, what the Town will fund and what savings are involved. We also want to show the economic impact. Commissioner Duncan stated typically if you have a natural turf field, there is a low threshold of use and it starts turning into mud or dust. This is a big investment but the return can be huge. Commissioner Knight suggested that if that becomes a possibility you may want to include that in your landscape maintenance, as a possible reduction, so we don't have to pay a set amount and there are no surprises. Chair Trimbur asked depending on this contract, what is the time frame for getting this synthetic turf? Commissioner Knight suggested if a cost analysis is done, consider the lifespan of the synthetic turf, and what the cost would be 12 years down the road. Commissioner Duncan agreed that you do have to think about replacements in the future but no one is sure what that number is. Commissioner Knight asked is their maintenance involved? Director Fitzsimmons responded not really, we will have to get a brush roller for the tractor. I will bring in samples in order for the Commission get a good feel for the product. Ryan Hager suggested the Commissioners take a peek at Hough High during non school hours to see an example. Director Fitzsimmons stated there are some maintenance costs but far less than irrigating a natural turf.

Commissioner Jones asked for clarification on the metrics shown on the Director's Report. He asked the difference between service hours and contact hours and what those really mean. Ryan Hager responded that service hours are the actual number of hours the program is offered and contact hours are the actual numbers of hours we have made contact with citizens in the community. Commissioner Jones said it was interesting that we are down in participants but increased contact and service hours. Does this mean increased costs? Ryan Hager responded no, not necessarily, could've had more practice hours in a certain month, an extra game or two, etc that drives contact hours up. There is not a direct cost associated with having more practices or games. Commissioner Jones asked if there was not staff involved in supporting that. Ryan Hager responded no, we have volunteer coaches. On an administrative level there is, but our coaches are volunteers. Director Fitzsimmons reminded the Commissioners that this report is just a roll up of everyone's individual reports which show more detail in the numbers.

V. Old Business - none

VI. New Business – Westmoreland Athletic Complex Operational Budget

Director Fitzsimmons and Ryan Hager presented expense and revenue numbers for the Westmoreland Athletic Complex Operational Budget. Chair Trimbur asked if this will be presented to the Town Board. Director Fitzsimmons responded, yes, it will be presented to them on May 16th.

Commissioner Jones asked about concessions and if they would be contracted out to professional concessionaires. Ryan Hager responded, yes, we have already touched base with a few folks and showed them the site. Commissioner Jones suggested reaching out to local service clubs such as the Lions Club because they love to do this type of activity, and make it a fundraiser. This would kill two birds with one stone. Commissioner Duncan asked if it could possibly be run both ways. Ryan Hager responded they would like to use the same person throughout. There is a lot of overhead involved, and setting up and tearing down every weekend would be tough. With that said we could put it out there and see. Director Fitzsimmons added that with contracting it out, there is no kitchen in there, so all food would have to be prepped offsite and brought in on warming trays to serve. Commissioner Knight asked what the health department does on site and if the Town would be liable in any way. Director Fitzsimmons responded that they will periodically inspect, and it will be the responsibility of the concessionaire to get their permit and maintain requirements.

Commissioner Arrendale asked what the Town gets in tax revenue and hotel revenue. Director Fitzsimmons responded we do not know at this time. There was no clear cut way to calculate it because everything is different. I will be happy to ask our Finance Director. Commissioner Arrendale responded, yes, that would be impressive to show. If you can get 2% you are breaking even already. Town Commissioner Travis added that it is important that the Town gets its share. We can't afford to have some deficits. Commissioner Arrendale stated if you can give us some good numbers we can really get behind it.

Commissioner Duncan asked about adding an additional two fields. Ryan Hager responded that could bump up the economic impact to \$7.5 million. Commissioner Duncan asked does that make us significantly more marketable than just four fields. Ryan Hager responded we needed four fields to truly be in a tournament business. Obviously the more fields you have the larger tournaments you can host, but working with Huntersville and Mooresville will offset some of that.

Chair Trimbur asked if any of the numbers were a shock to the Town Board because they knew there would be additional costs associated with these fields. Town Commissioner Travis answered no, that tourism dollars are very important to us. It would be nice to see more of an idea of what that economic impact means to our bottom line. Commissioner Knight made a motion stating that there was unanimous consent of the PARC Commission in support of the operational costs for this effort. Commissioner Arrendale seconded the motion and with no further discussion, the motion passes.

Commissioner Duncan requested Director Fitzsimmons to think of ways to proactively use this group, think long term, and if there issues we could start getting interest in. Think about ways to use us with as much forward planning as possible. Director Fitzsimmons responded that is a great point and in addition to this today, the turf project is one thing. Hopefully we will have some good solid numbers in June you can get behind.

VII. Adjournment

Chair Trimbur adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting – June 2, 2011, 5:30pm

Upcoming Meeting Dates
Thursday, July 07, 2011
Thursday, August 04, 2011
Thursday, September 01, 2011
Thursday, October 06, 2011
Thursday, November 03, 2011
Thursday, December 01, 2011