



Parks, Arts, Recreation & Culture (PARC) Commission
Thursday, June 7, 2012
5:30pm – 7:00pm

Cornelius Town Hall
21445 Catawba Avenue
Cornelius, NC 28031
www.cornelius.org/parc

MINUTES

- 1) **Call to Order** – Meeting called to order at 5:34 PM
Commissioners present: Chairman Bruce Trimbur, Michael Culbreth, Tedd Duncan, Del Arrendale, Nicolle Lewis, Dan Kelly and Travis Dancy
Staff present: Director Troy Fitzsimmons, Recreation Superintendent Ryan Hager, Recreation Programs Coordinator Olivia Smallwood, Karen Ulmer
- 2) **Determination of Quorum** – Quorum was established with seven commissioners in attendance
- 3) **Approval of Minutes (attachment)** – Minutes from the April meeting were approved as written
- 4) **Public Appearances – Citizen Concerns/Comments - None**
- 5) **Presentations**
 - a) Introduction: Recreation Programs Coordinator - Olivia Smallwood
Ms. Smallwood was introduced to the board. She graduated from Lees-McRae College with a degree in sports management. She worked for the City of Asheboro for four years. Her husband took the Director's position in Harrisburg, which brought them to this area. She has been here three weeks and had a gallery opening earlier this week. Clean Sweep at the CAC will be held on Tuesday, June 12 when they will clean and organize the arts center in preparation for summer camps. They are discussing holding clean sweep events more frequently during the year. CAC will start summer camps on June 18. She is working on developing an environmental education program, starting with Woodland Discovery offering a weekday program geared towards preschoolers and homeschoolers. They are discussing nature walks and other events and programs, mostly at Robbins Park. Director Fitzsimmons added that PARC is very excited to have Olivia here working with us.
- 6) **Director's Report** – Troy Fitzsimmons
 - Summer Day Camp has been very popular, with six out of eight weeks already sold out. Part of what allowed PARC to offer this new full day camp program was the contracting out of the lacrosse program.
 - "Lake Norman Sunsets and Scenery" is now on exhibit at CAC.
 - PARC has hired a summer intern, Zack Roehrs from Barton College. He has been out with our operations crew this week and will be helping in the office and with events and programs.
 - The annual Summer Concerts Series started in May, the Charlotte Symphony is June 30, Beach Bash is July 28 and Country Night will be August 18.
 - The Special Needs program held a sailing event recently with 119 kids. The NC Community Sailing and Rowing Center hosts this event as part of their agreement with the Town.

- We were conditionally awarded a \$300K grant through PARTF that we will use at Robbins Park for various projects, including a tie-in with WAC and improving the two ponds at Robbins. If state tax revenues come in as projected we should be awarded the grant.
- The Town's new website is up and running.
- Boy Scout Travis O'Shell completed his Eagle project at Legion Park.
- At Bailey Road Park, with the exception of the concert series, soccer fields will be closed for business through July 31 for field rehabilitation. Commissioner Dancy added that a group had recently contacted Visit Lake Norman about using the fields at Bailey Road Park for a large lacrosse tournament but could not do so because of the field closures. If the park had synthetic turf the field closures would not be necessary. He will begin a "lost opportunities" file for situations such as these.
- The WAC turn lane construction is underway. WAC's grand opening is set for July 7 at 1:00PM and will coincide with a baseball tournament with Lake Norman Little League and seven out-of-town teams. Mindi Stoner is putting together the event, including a commemorative item to give away.
- The Town Board is discussing a general obligation bond for November 2013, which could include funding for several park projects. It will take time to put together the list of items we would want included and to gather support for voting in favor of the bond. We will have to formulate shortly. There have not been any bonds for many years. Some included projects could be artificial turf, a new arts center, etc. We need to get our CIP in order. Commissioner Arrendale said we have a good plan but just need to prioritize which items we would want to include on the referendum.
- The Town Board has not yet decided on the budget for FY13. Director Fitzsimmons does not believe the Park Master Plan will move forward with the FY13 budget. Having a master plan over 10 years old makes it more difficult to receive grants and ours will be 10 years old come 2014.
- The Maglock project involves installation of an automatic locking system for the doors so that they can be programmed. We have left park restrooms unlocked because we do not have the staff to lock them and have had problems with theft of paper products, etc. This project was also funded in part by the contracting out of the lacrosse program.

7) PARC Commissioner Recommendations & Reports

- a) Items to be placed on record - None
- b) Commissioner Reports
 - 1) Commissioner Michael Culbreth – Said he was at Robbins Park recently walking on the nature trail, and once down the trail, there was no easy way to see the way out. Director Fitzsimmons said a Scout Eagle project recently involved marking the trees along the trails. Also, PARC is working with UNCC to map the trails and is working with another Boy Scout to build some kiosks that can house the trail maps along the trails.
 - 2) Commissioner Karen Tovar - Absent
 - 3) Commissioner Chris Jones - Absent
 - 4) Commissioner Tedd Duncan – No report
 - 5) Board Chair Bruce Trimbur – Noted the outdoor concerts and movies coming this summer
 - 6) Commissioner Del Arrendale – No report
 - 7) Commissioner Nicolle Lewis – Shared some research regarding PARC Commission Goals, as noted in section 8 below.
 - 8) Commissioner Dan Kelly – Asked about putting suggestion boxes in the parks. Cornelius will be the host site for the North Meck Filly League softball championship tournament, to be held at Torrence Chapel Park on Friday and Saturday this weekend. He invited all the commissioners to come. He has worked with Ryan Hager to have a mobile food vendor for the tournament. He hopes to hold the same tournament at WAC in 2013.

- 9) Commissioner Travis Dancy – Also this weekend, Hough High School is hosting the North Carolina AAU Track & Field Championships, the first time the Lake Norman region has hosted this event. Last year there were over 700 athletes.
- c) Town Commissioner Report – Commissioner John Bradford - Absent

8) Old Business

- a) PARC Commission Goals
 - 1) Cornelius Arts Center and arts programming – Chair Trimbur noted that with Olivia Smallwood joining us there will be some new eyes on this programming. Director Fitzsimmons said the PARC Commission needs to be focusing on a new facility and new programming for it. Commissioner Culbreth asked which programs have been the most popular at CAC. Director Fitzsimmons said numbers have been up in general due to better marketing, more affordable fees, etc. PARC has already notified the Community Arts Project that we will be bringing in additional providers for programming.
 - 2) Community garden(s) – Commissioner Lewis shared some ideas from a community garden in Washington, including good ideas for how to raise funds, having a place to hold classes and programs and having someone dedicated to scheduling programs such as seed swaps and cooking demos. Commissioner Culbreth found that there is an American Community Garden Association with a website that has a lot of good information, including the idea of using donated private land for community gardens. There is a community garden in Mountain Island and they have a website. Commissioner Duncan noted there are also two in Davidson sponsored by churches. It usually takes a person or group to drive this project to make it happen and for it to be successful. There was discussion about trying to get this person first and see if they can drive the project forward, instead of setting up the garden and then finding someone to run it. It was suggested that PARC should put out an ad for land, a czar, etc. and see what happens. Put it out via social media and see if it catches on. Commissioner Arrendale suggested that a subcommittee iron out more details before we go public with the request for a czar, or community garden leader. Director Fitzsimmons will talk to the Town Attorney about legal and liability issues around leasing a plot or using donated plot.
 - 3) Comprehensive Parks Master Plan – Commissioner Lewis found NC State recommendations on how to engage citizens more effectively and Director Fitzsimmons agreed that we want it to be very community based. He added that we may have to hold off on this based on the Town's budget and instead form a subcommittee to revisit the CIP and prioritize items on it in light of a possible 2013 bond referendum. The justification for delaying a new CMP is sound and we are still good for another year but he has told the Town Manager and Town Board that the Park Comprehensive Master Plan absolutely has to be updated the following year. Discussion can be shelved until September 2012.
 - 4) Advocacy for synthetic turf installation at Bailey Road Park – Commissioner Dancy will create a file on missed opportunities as a result of not having turf fields. Director Fitzsimmons said that the PARC commission can help out by educating and advocating to the Town Board. The fields are getting worn out by constant use and right now our only option is to take them offline for months at a time for rehabilitation. Commissioner Culbreth asked about starting with just one field, perhaps Smithville Park. Director Fitzsimmons said that with just one turf field, we lose the tournament opportunity, and we would lose the contributions by NM Soccer and the Lake Norman Giants. A subcommittee was formed with Commissioners Dancy and Arrendale.
 - 5) Reinstating collaborative meetings with neighboring Parks & Recreation departments – Director Fitzsimmons has a scheduled lunch next week with directors from Davidson and Huntersville and he will discuss this topic with them at that time. He will also ask the Huntersville Director about how they got their town's bond passed.

- 6) Establishing a PARC tie-in event with the annual Big Day at the Lake – Director Fitzsimmons met with staff and Dave Yochum to discuss an event the night before or the night of but Mr. Yochum thought it was too much. The night before is too hectic and the night of everyone is tired. Instead, they talked about something another time of year, either as a thank you to volunteers or as a fundraiser for the event. A suggestion was made to have a “day at the lake” type event for Cornelius residents. Nothing will happen this year. Tabled until August 2012.

9) New Business

- a) CAC Site Comparison – Consultant Craig, Gaulden, Davis has submitted summary work regarding three proposed sites for a new facility. Site 1 is next to the Police Department. Site 2 is across the parking lot, in front of Food Lion. Site 3 would be in Antiquity, next to a proposed amphitheater. Antiquity owns the land for Site 3. Director Fitzsimmons summarized the CGD proposals for the three new sites, including pros and cons and estimates for development. The Town Board has been reviewing this report also but has not yet weighed in. They have a \$5 Million placeholder in their CIP. After discussion, there was general agreement that Site 3 seemed to be the most attractive option.

10) Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 7:59pm.

Next Meeting – July 12, 2012 5:30pm

Future Dates: Thursday, August 2, 2012; Thursday, September 6, 2012; Thursday, October 4, 2012