

TOWN OF GARNER
Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Date: September 16, 2024

Date and Time: Pursuant to the Bylaws governing the Garner Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Advisory Committee, a meeting of the Advisory Committee was held on September 16, 2024 at the Garner Recreation Center.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call: Vice Chair Matt Davis called the meeting to order at 6:03pm. The committee members present were Hope Webber, Tim Montgomery, Dr. LaPonda Edmondson, and Mon Peng Yueh. Town Council liaison Gra Singleton was also in attendance. Staff members present were Maria Muñoz-Blanco, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Director, Katie Lockhart, Parks and Recreation Superintendent (Parks & Nature), and Megan Young, Parks and Recreation Superintendent (Operations). Presenters from WithersRavenel in attendance were Jon Blasco and Kayleigh Gill. Members of the public in attendance were Bill Caudill and Amanda McCloskey.
2. Approval of the Agenda:
 - a. Mr. Davis asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Webber motioned to approve the agenda and Mr. Montgomery seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
3. Approval of the June Meeting Minutes:
 - a. Mr. Davis asked for any changes or a motion to approve the minutes from the June 17 meeting. No changes were noted. Motion to approve the June minutes made by Mr. Montgomery, seconded by Ms. Webber. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Petitions and Comments from the Public:
 - a. No petitions and comments.
5. Committee Members Concerns/Comments:
 - a. No concerns or comments.
6. Senior Advisory Committee:
 - a. Ms. Cicci, the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee liaison, was not in attendance. The next Senior Citizens Advisory Committee is on Friday, September 20, 2024.
7. Reports/Discussion Items
 - a. Director and Department Reports:
 - i. Ms. Muñoz-Blanco noted that while there is no funding currently allocated, the Lake Benson Park Master Plan will help guide future park plans, including addressing deferred maintenance and the relocation of the Lake Benson Boathouse, which will be necessary due to the South Garner Greenway Extension project. The project concepts are being presented to the committee for early feedback before moving forward with additional public input.
 1. Jon Blasco and Kayleigh Gill with WithersRavenel presented three Lake Benson Park Master Plan concepts.

- a. The committee inquired about shelters and there was discussion about quiet reflection space vs. rentable spaces. WithersRavenel noted any shelters near the Veterans Memorial would be small and therefore would not attract large parties for use, rather design to be a space to rest and reflect.
 - b. Mr. Singleton asked if there would be other possibilities for the location of the boathouse if property adjacent to park is acquired. WithersRavenel noted that would add options for consideration.
 - c. Mr. Montgomery asked about adding stormwater control. WithersRavenel provided an overview of the impervious surface restrictions of the UDO/Lake Benson Overlay.
 - d. Ms. Yueh suggested parking by the Veterans Memorial should be oriented east/west and parallel to the drive to maintain the open vista of the Veterans Memorial. WithersRavenel noted some of the concepts have the parking lot oriented that way.
 - e. Ms. Muñoz-Blanco noted she would share all concepts with the committee.
 - f. Mr. Singleton requested the meadow remain as is. Mr. Singleton also inquired about the size of the dog park and WithersRavenel noted the size of dog park is the same on all concepts.
 - g. Staff and committee members agreed on the importance of limiting what amenities are added to the park. Committee members suggested keeping the drive as is.
 - h. The committee was not supportive of removing the existing large shelter or building a bandshell. Ms. Yueh noted that while a bandshell and stage would be nice to have, it wouldn't be priority given funding limitations.
- ii. Ms. Muñoz-Blanco shared updates from the department report:
 1. The Town was awarded \$8.5 million in federal funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund's Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program. Other departmental updates are summarized in the written report provided to the committee.
 - iii. There were three fee-in-lieu items for committee discussion.
 1. Clifford Bethel Master Plan
 - a. Staff recommendation is fee-in-lieu. Mr. Davis asked for a motion to approve fee-in-lieu. Ms. Webber motioned to approve as fee-in-lieu and Mr. Montgomery seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Stancil Farms Master Plan
 - a. Staff recommendation is fee-in-lieu. Mr. Montgomery suggested approving with staff recommendation as fee-in-lieu but requested the plan be brought back to the committee for further review as the plans progress. Mr. Davis asked for a motion to approve based on Mr. Montgomery's suggestion. Dr. Edmondson motioned to approve, and Ms. Webber seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
 3. The committee was provided with an update on Homestead at Bryan Farm.
 - iv. Mr. Montgomery noted the department has accomplished a lot, highlighting the Penny for Parks projects.
- b. Council Updates:
 - i. Mr. Singleton reiterated the work that has been accomplished with Penny for Parks.
- c. Announcements:
 - i. Dr. Edmondson asked about potential funding opportunities to see through the Lake Benson Park plans. Ms. Muñoz-Blanco noted there may be an opportunity during the next bond program, in addition to potential grant opportunities that would allow for components of the plan to be realized.
 - ii. Dr. Edmondson also inquired about the parking situation on Main Street with so much activity and development happening. Mr. Singleton noted the Town is working with a developer on a parking deck.
 - iii. Mr. Mike Caudill, a member of the public in attendance and the VP of baseball for Garner Sports League (GSL) shared his desire for Garner to have a destination athletic park for baseball and softball citing Middle Creek and Rocky Mount baseball complexes, describing the number of fields and their position, as well as how they are used for travel baseball tournaments. He suggested prioritizing field lighting upgrades to change the existing lights with LED lights rather than replace scoreboards. He also noted GSL has pursued donations for amenities like batting cages and suggested upgrading existing parks.
 - iv. Ms. McCloskey, a member of the public in attendance, noted her interest in applying to be on the committee.
8. Other Business
 - a. Gifts and Donations Policy Update
 - i. Mr. Davis asked for a motioned to approve. Mr. Montgomery motioned to approve, and Ms. Webber seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
 - b. Sponsorship Policy Update

- i. Mr. Davis asked for a motion to approve motioned to approve. Dr. Edmondson motioned to approve, and Ms. Webber seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- c. Nominations
 - i. Mr. Montgomery nominated Mr. Davis for Chair and Dr. Edmondson for Vice Chair. Voting will occur at the next meeting.
- d. Adjournment
 - i. With no further business, Vice Chair Davis asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion by Mr. Montgomery, seconded by Ms. Webber. Motion carried unanimously.
 - ii. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.