

**Iredell County Parks & Recreation Department
Recreation Advisory Board Meeting
January 6, 2022 - 7:00 PM
Iredell County Recreation Center, 122 Grannis Lane, Statesville**

Members Present: Barb Thorson, Ben Johnson, Jeff Cheek, Ronda Hoke,
Scott Bell, Wesley Davidson
Via WebEx: Melissa Simmons, Deb Tatu, Marvin Norman
Staff Present: Michelle Hepler, Brandon Free

MINUTES

Wesley Davidson everyone and called the meeting to order.

No requests to speak.

Ronda Hoke made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 2, 2021 meeting. Bobby Deal seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.



Iredell County Parks & Recreation
Staff and Park Reports for Recreation Advisory Board

January 6, 2022

STAFF

Sports, Events & Facilities	Programming	Recreation Center	Parks Grounds	Administration
Brandon Free Marty Haneline	Jen Winters Katie Barr Haley Joyner	James Huffman Ronda Benfield Nancy Grabow	Micah Deane Nelson Fox Scotty Harris Jordan Lail Ben Liles	Michelle Hepler Stacy McGlamery

HIGHLIGHTS

Administration:

- Attended Carolina Thread Trail Forum on 12/2
- Jennings Park Phase I; initial cost estimate review with Stewart, then Iredell County Project Manager and Budget Analyst
- Site visit with Stewart, LaBella, and Energy United; Phase I infrastructure preliminary planning
- Met with account executives from Energy United to discuss construction credit options for Jennings Park

- Three corners project – team meeting
- Received email and phone call regarding sale of potential park property in southeastern Iredell County
- Finalized reclassification request for Parks Grounds Specialist-LEAD (beautification) job description in preparation for FY23 budget request; submitted 12/15/21
- Coordinating FY23 building budget requests with Parks Grounds Manager
- Reviewed/determined to maintain Fairview Baptist Church – Facility Use Agreement through December 2022; document submitted for renewal
- Requested timely decision by public health and wellbeing task force, regarding NCYSA Charter direction
- Attended “how to keep your cool when things heat up” workshop
- Conducted kick off meeting for Feasibility Study with Atkins
- Received informal notification that the Fourth Creek Greenway Expansion (Carolina Thread Trail segment connecting Bigleaf to Greenbriar) grant application has been awarded.

Sports, Events, Facilities:

- Met with Rec Advisory Sub-Committee about possible field use fees/policies.
- Completed billing for fall athletic field reservations.
- Brandon Free will be Vice-Chairperson for the Safety Committee.
- Fielding requests for spring field usage.

Programming:

- Completion & distribution of December departmental newsletter (monthly)
- Katie attended an Environmental Education workshop on 12/3. Received new curriculum guide for future programs.
- Haley attended a virtual marketing workshop on 12/3
- “Postcards from Santa” program filled at 500 registrations. Postcards were mailed on December 10.
- Organization and inventory of Scotts Rosenwald storage area (Outdoor Programs supplies) was completed on 12/7
- Holiday Drive-In Movie on 12/10: “How the Grinch Stole Christmas” sold out with 54 tickets
- Monthly Programming Division meeting completed on 12/14
- “Milk & Cookies with Santa” program on 12/18 at Scotts Rosenwald Community Building had 29 (of 30) registrations.
- Recreation Program Specialist (Adult Programs) position was reopened on 12/15. Only 2 written assessments were submitted from previous round of candidates; neither was selected to continue to the next round of screening. Position is open for applications through January 9.
- Opened PT Seasonal Outdoor Program Instructor position on 12/2, posted until 1/10/22
- Katie Barr joined the departmental Safety Committee, will replace Jen Winters
- Winter Solstice Hike on 12/21 at Bigleaf Slopes had 5 attendees, ranging in ages from 4 to 77
- Biennial Report booklet (FY20 & FY21) was completed and printed. Ready for distribution in January.
- Scheduled an “Outdoor Living Skills” workshop for homeschool students on January 28

- Prepared registration and marketing materials for Teacher Workday camps and Spring Break Camp for 2022. Registration opens 1/7
- Completed initial FY23 budget meetings within division
- Marketing & preparing for January-spring programs

Recreation Center:

- Registration started for “Health Fair in a Bag”
 - 99 reserved as of 12/28/21
- Finalized 2021’s pool expenses and revenues.
- Marketing for gift certificates.
- December blood drive (12/28) had 13 people registered.
- Gathered all SDS information from the Rec Center and Admin Offices for the new online SDS tracking.
- Started drafting FY23 budget for Rec Center.
 - Compiling quotes for the building budget.
 - Water feature pump motor and two awnings.
- 150 tote bags for the health fair were picked up.
- United Way pledge drive completed and proceeds turned in.
- Annual reviews performed.
 - One full-time staff
 - Three part-time staff
- 9 people attended Glowga
- Posted Programming Assistant position at 20 colleges in hopes to fill summer internship.
- James Huffman took over role of chair in the safety committee.
- Front Desk Attendant position is open for applications

	November 2021	Total to Date 2021
Membership Category:		
*Regular Membership		454
County Employees		16
Corporate		1
Insurance		172
Partnered Membership		31
Pool Passes		
Current Membership accounts:		674
Total Individuals in all membership categories <i>(including children under the age of 14)</i>		1,049
Pool Drop Ins (Including groups, lessons &		
\$5 Drop In Registrants	293	1,627
Group Exercise Attendance	725	6,819
Total Check Ins (including pool)	3,086	32,031

**Annual Family County & Corporate memberships are included with Regular memberships due to reports*

Park Properties:

- Overseed completed with Winter Rye at Stumpy Creek
- Leaf removal
- Clean up from Disc Golf tournament
- Disc golf hole #7, entry stairs repair
- Clean out and organize concession stands at Stumpy Creek
- Park Tour of various regional parks in Rock Hill, Charlotte, Cabarrus, and Huntersville (sports complexes, trails, kayak/canoe launch, disc golf courses)
- Ordered 7 replacement baskets for disc golf course
- Worked with Centralina Disc Golf Club to install 2 new wall structures along the disc golf course to better help with play/flow/traffic
- Beautification projects, including tree pruning and holiday decorations completed
- Identified graffiti at East Iredell Lions Club Community Park

Park Reservations for: NOVEMBER 1 – 30, 2021		
Park	Amount of Reservations	Total Participation
Bigleaf Slopes	0	58
East Iredell Lions Club Community Park	1	30
Jennings (Fields only, w/o Ropes Course)	7	68
Jennings (Other/Special Events/Shelter)	2	275
Outdoor Education Center at Jennings Park	3	59
Rec Center Field	15	743
Rec Center Gymnasium	108	757
Scotts Rosenwald Community Building	5	171
Scotts Rosenwald (fields only)	0	0
Stumpy Creek (fields and picnic shelters)	74	2,694
Stumpy Creek Boat Landing	0	3,471
Stumpy Creek Disc Golf Course	0	0
<i>Totals</i>	215	8,326

UPCOMING DELIVERABLES

Administration:

- Radio spot interview WAME – 1/3/22
- Developing CIP spreadsheet with Budget Analyst to for all parks and future projects, including revenue sources (grants, private funding, etc.)
- Researching additional funding sources including state budget and associated programs, for trails and park projects
- Master Plan Leadership team meeting 1/5/22
- Meeting coordination with City of Statesville and Atkins to launch stakeholder discussions regarding Fourth Creek Greenway expansion

- Developing four presentations for the ACCT conference in Ohio in February
- Director’s Roundtable meeting January 14th
- Formal approval of Jennings Park Phase I design
- ISS MOA for facility use; review and renewal
- Requesting permission to apply for LWCF and PARTF grants in 2022 cycles (February 1st deadline and May 2nd deadline)

Sports Events and Facilities:

- Meeting with non-profit organizations about spring scheduling
- Updating of storage and facility policies
- Identifying soccer goals that can be put on surplus

Programming:

- OEC course work on low elements, and clearing brush for a new element area
- Working with Boys & Girls Club to schedule a spring “Explore Archery” series, provided by CARES funding. Finance is coordinating the check cut, invoices will be sent at the conclusion of programming.
- MOA with Lake Norman TAASC group for partnered programs
- Networking with multiple homeschool groups about future programs
- Certifying 1 more facilitator to be USA Archery Level 1 Instructors
- Katie working with the ACCT Conference Service Crew to confirm plans for the Feb conference
- Setting up spring trainings for Ropes Course/Facilitation and Canoeing
- Prepping for upcoming spring programs (registrations, updating social media/website, etc.) such as teacher workdays, Spring Break camp, adult programs, & special events
- Preparing for FY23 budget

Recreation Center:

- Exploring the option to include introductory pickleball lessons.
- Radio interview to discuss upcoming Rec Center programs.
- Purchase of pool chemicals for 2022 season.
- Quarterly building inspection of the Rec Center.

Park Properties:

- Winterize irrigation system
- Continued disc golf maintenance, erosion control and basket replacement (7)
- Quarterly inspections at all 6 properties

PAST DELIVERABLES

Administration:

- Adoption of Cost recovery model
- Rocket, Drone, Concession stand, and Vendor Policies

Sports, Events and Facilities:

- NCYSA Charter direction

Programming:

- Inventory system tracking
- Updated Departmental Policies and Procedures

Recreation Center:

- Ordering uniforms for the Day Porter position

Park Properties:

- Disc golf bridge
- Picnic table repair

CALENDAR: EVENTS & PROGRAMS

DATE	Event	Division
Dec 4-Jan 29	Soccer Shots Winter Session	Rec Center
January	Health Fair in a Bag	Rec Center
January	Membership Drive	Rec Center
Jan 6	Thursday Night Yoga Starts	Rec Center
Jan 6	Day Trip: NC Chinese Lantern Festival	Programming
Jan 7	Rec Center Anniversary	Rec Center
Jan 7	Registration opens for Spring Break & Workdays	Programming
Jan 11	Homeschool PE starts	Rec Center
Jan 28	Outdoor Living Skills (Homeschool groups)	Programming

STAFF AND PARK REPORTS

Staff and Park reports were distributed via email prior today’s meeting. Michelle asked if there were any questions or comments regarding anything with the staff reports that are not currently listed as old business or new business.

Jeff asked how the movie night went. Michelle said that movie night was a little bit rainy. The event was sold out at 50 cars. The cars could contain as many people as would fit in the car. Thirty eight cars showed up.

We picked up seven new disc golf baskets for Stumpy Creek Park. We are replacing some of the older, worn baskets.

Tomorrow is the third anniversary of the Recreation Center. James and Michelle spoke on WAME radio Monday morning. He provided the fun fact: Since we opened, including all of the closures due to COVID, the Rec Center has had over 81,000 check-ins. The Rec Center was closed from March 17 to September 8, 2020. Jeff said that was one of his first questions to Michelle at the meeting at East Iredell Lions Club – how will the recovery be at the Rec Center. Michelle said we are at just over 1,000 members. We were at 1,500 pre-COVID.

Barb asked if, as a Silver Sneaker, if she needed to re-register. Michelle said she did not. Barb can swipe her card when she comes in.

OLD BUSINESS

JENNINGS PARK PHASE 1 UPDATE

Team meeting for Jennings Park was today. Regular meetings are scheduled every other week with the construction / design team, representatives from Wetlands and Water and occasionally the people working on water and sewer.

Settled on Site Plan B. It has a premier diamond. Parking is above the premier diamond and closest to Dietz Road. Based on the amount of grading and earthwork, this is the better option. A very rough cost estimate was provided in that meeting. That cost estimate was been reviewed line by line by the county project manager and project analyst. Follow up questions were sent to the team. The cost estimate spreadsheet will not be available until mid-February or March.

An example of the preliminary numbers that needs to be revisited has to do with concession stand and restroom building for the soccer field area. The cost estimator made an assumption at 5,000 square feet finished building and did not take into account part of the building being picnic space. Therefore the calculation was way off.

The Bluefield Road property has been in an upset bid process since summer. The bidding process is now closed. On Tuesday night, the Board of Commissioners voted to accept the upset bid offer of \$2.15 million. There is a 30 day due diligence phase then 45 days for process payment. After the acceptance vote, the Board voted to an ordinance to allocate those funds to the Jennings Park fund. There is currently around \$800,000 in the Jennings Park fund. Adding the \$2.15 million will put the fund balance at around \$3 million. We are on target to complete the construction design phase by late summer and go out to bid in September.

Michelle asked if anyone had any questions.

Barb asked what the estimated cost to completely finish Jennings Park would be.

The amount has changed since the original estimate. Per Michelle, the amount in 2017 when we first developed the cost estimates based on a concept plan, was around \$8.6 million to \$9 million. We anticipate the cost being higher than that but we are committed to fund raising, sponsorships and grant applications.

Marvin mentioned Lake Norman and Davis Hospitals.

Michelle has reached out to representatives from Energy United to discuss potential partnerships. Energy United is excited to work with us with construction credits based on the size and amount of electricity we would be using. We do not know exactly what that will look like until we get closer to specifics.

Commissioner Norman reminded Michelle to share the approved sponsorship package with potential sponsors such as Lake Norman Regional Hospital, Davis Regional Hospital, Truist Bank and GL Wilson. Commissioner Norman has connections at those three locations. Michelle is updating the cover letter to accompany the sponsorship package.

Scott asked about the plans for Jennings Park. Michelle has color coded grading plans. She will send a copy of those plans to Scott.

Commissioner Norman mentioned that all of these entities have helped on park projects. They are familiar with it.

Michelle asked for an update from the sub-committee looking at the fee structure.

Brandon met with Deb, Jeff, Ben and Bobby twice. Brandon submitted two options (Option A and Option B) for the group to consider for field reservation fees. During the meeting, Option C was formulated. Deb is going to share some additional information. Brandon is going to compile some additional information. Both sets of information will be shared with the sub-committee. After having a change to review the information, they plan to have a vote by the end of next week. Sub-committee is looking at a certain percentage for non-profits to be able to use the fields at a discounted rate. Still working to finalize a suggested amount.

Michelle thanked the group for their time and energy on this project. She hopes to present this information with our budget request in February. That would mean presenting the sub-committee findings to the full Recreation Advisory Board at our February 3 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

OFFICER ELECTIONS:

Every year, officers are re-elected or re-appointed a Chair and a Vice-Chair position. The positions are responsible for, according to the bylaws, leading meetings, helping keep order, making sure we follow Roberts Rules of Order. These positions would also make any specially designated appointments such as when we voted to have representation on the Master Plan Leadership Team. We voted that the Chair or his designee would serve in that role. Vice-Chair runs the meetings in the absence of the chair. Wesley has lead this group for at least five years as the Chair but he can no longer continue in this role. Michelle extends her gratitude and appreciation to him. Wesley was not at the meeting then night Michelle shared the news that Wesley will not be able to continue as chair.

Michelle Hepler: "I did not get to say what an awesome job he has done. I did not get to talk about how much I appreciate his support not just in the meetings but throughout the months during and in between and all the things. Thank you Wes."

Wesley Davidson: "Thank you. It has been a pleasure."

Michelle turned the meeting over to the Nominations Sub-Committee to share the slate of officers to vote on.

Jeff Cheek spoke on behalf of the Nominations Committee. Deb Tatu graciously accepted the nomination for Vice-Chair. The Committee was turned down by one member who was asked. They reached out to Seth Hathcock but has not heard back. The committee recommends Deb Tatu as Vice-Chair and Seth Hathcock as Chair. Seth was not at the meeting. No one has spoken to Seth to know if he is willing or capable of filling the role as chair. The committee does not have a Plan B.

Michelle asked the group if they would like to talk about a Plan B.

Jeff asked if anyone would like to volunteer. (No response)

Michelle asked if Deb Tatu would be willing to serve as Chair.

Deb Tatu said she did not know.

Michelle asked if anyone else would to serve as Chair or Vice-Chair.

Wesley told the group that there is not a lot to it. Wesley said he would continue but there are too many things on him at work right now.

Jeff said he heard that today too from someone else.

Wesley said he would love to but cannot commit to being present for every meeting.

Barb Thorson said she has already served two terms. She said that even if someone is new to the groups, they could be a fast learner and volunteer.

Michelle said we could go around the room. She started with Melissa and asked if she had any interest in serving as Chair. Melissa said, "I don't think so right now. I think I need to learn more."

Michelle asked Debra Tatu because Deb has already agreed to serve somewhere.

Michelle asked Ronda Hoke. Ronda said, "Not at this time."

Deb said she would be Vice-Chair. Deb asked, "You are saying we do not have a Chair?"

Michelle confirmed that the Board does not have a Chair. Michelle is going around the room to get a gauge of who else is willing to serve. Michelle gave Deb a pass for right now because Deb is willing to be Vice-Chair.

Michelle asked Ronda, "So Ronda you are saying not at this time?"

Ronda said, "Nope. Not at this time."

Michelle asked Wesley. Wesley said, "No. If I need to be, I will continue."

Michelle continued going around the room

Ben Johnson said he is not a hard no but he will pass.

Bobby Deal said, "Pass."

Jeff said he thought Bobby and Deb would be a good pair with the knowledge they have the associations and the school system. Ben agreed. Ben said their years of experience also.

Bobby said the time and travel for his other job has increased. He is scared he will be missing meetings for those during the spring and the fall. He would need to wait at least a year to see how that pans out.

Jeff said, "I am in the same boat as Ben. I just got here. And I don't mind serving. It's just . . . I'm the new guy. I don't really want to be the new guy just came in and now in a position."

Wesley said, "I did that and look where it got me."

Scott said, "No."

Barb said, "I have already served. I was the first female to ever be Chairman.... I want to pass it to someone else."

Michelle said, "If Deb said she was willing to serve as Chair, would anyone in this room consider Vice-Chair?"

Jeff Cheek said, "I will do Vice-Chair. I will save Wes right now."

Michelle said, "Deb if you are willing to serve as Chair . . . and that is if . . . you can still say no."

Deb said she was still thinking and asked what the responsibilities are exactly.

Michelle said she would run the meetings, check in with staff to see if there are any additions to the agenda, if there are any requests to speak, sometimes there are people who want to speak or present an idea or program. There is a Master Plan Leadership Team that is a sub-committee of this group. Either the Chair or the Chair's designee serve on that group. Meetings are scheduled once a quarter.

Jeff said, "I'll do it. She's got a full time job. I don't. I will do it."

Michelle shared that Jeff said he would be Chair.

Deb said. "OK. As Vice, I basically cover the meetings?"

Michelle said Deb would cover the meetings in his absence.

Deb said, "Ok."

Michelle said, "You good?"

Deb said, "Yep."

Michelle said they can read about the specific roles, they are outlined in the bylaws on our website.

Deb said, "Ok. I will do that in consideration of being Chair next go round."

Michelle said, "Ok. You guys heard that for the record. She said she would do Vice-Chair in consideration of serving as Chair next go round."

Deb asked, "And when does this year start? When do these take affect?"

Michelle said, "It would be in effect at our next meeting. Effective immediately basically."

Deb said, "Ok."

Ben Johnson had a question about the unanswered phone call to Seth asking him to serve. If a motion is made during the meeting and then Seth calls back to serve. Barb said the motion would carry.

Barb Thorson makes a motion to elect Jeff Cheek as Chair and Debra Tatu as Vice-Chair for the calendar year 2022. Wesley Davidson seconds the motion.

Discussion entailed with Wesley explaining that since Seth has not returned the call, at this point, the Board needs to move forward and have a Chair and Vice-Chair appointed.

Ben said we could come to the next meeting and be in this same spot. The group expressed agreement with that statement.

Michelle said, "Due to Seth not returning the phone call, we are moving forward . . . Wes makes a suggestion that we move forward with this vote as Barb started the motion."

Ben and Wesley agreed.

Wesley asked if there was any further discussion. There was none.
44:37

Motion passes unanimously. No opposition votes.

Wesley thanked Jeff and Debra.

Effective the next meeting, February, Jeff and Debra will be Chair and Vice-Chair. Michelle offered her congratulations and thanked them for their willingness to serve.

Wesley moved on to February meeting location. The meeting date is February 3. A yoga class is starting on Thursdays in the gym. We need to find a new location. Wesley noted that there is internet in the community building so we could still offer a WebEx option. The group decided on East Iredell Lions Club Community Building along with a virtual option. Michelle asked everyone to RSVP to Stacy in a timely manner in order to get a head count.

BIENNIAL REPORT PRESENTATION

The department prepares this report every two years based on fiscal year. Current report is for FY20 and FY21. Staff, Board of Commissioners, Recreation Advisory Board and County Administration, at the time of the fiscal years, are listed. Included are a highlight of our parks and facilities with breakdowns for each facility. This report notes when (if applicable) each of these facilities became a PARTF grant recipient; Scotts Rosenwald (2011), Jennings Park (2016) and the Recreation center (2020). We missed putting the PARTF grant awarded to Stumpy Creek around 1998. The report list special events and programs hosted, types of partnerships and numbers. The last page is a map of our park locations within county and their addresses. Michelle will email copies of this report to Deb and Melissa. Michelle plans to present this information to the Board of Commissioners on January 18.

Per our Master Plan Leadership Team meeting, we discussed this report. However, they recommended doing a “report to the people” event to share this information with elected officials, stakeholder, etc. annually similarly to how the Cooperative Extension does currently. Each division would give a short update as the audience moves around the room. January could be a good time to do this because it is prior to budget time. We will move to this format in 2023.

Jeff asked about the budget overview on the biennial report. Jeff asked how to explain the budget overview to people. FY20 and FY21 were impacted by COVID. The numbers in the report include capital outlay not just operating expenses. From a percentage base, the national average of cost recovery for parks and recreation departments is about 23%.

Barb said this is a service to Iredell citizens. Michelle agreed. Barb said we try to recoup expenditures but our goal is not to our out charge people to the point they cannot participate.

Michelle said it is a community service like the library. It adds to the quality of life within the county. During the pandemic, we did not lay off any of our full time employees. The Rec Center was closed for over six months. We completely cut all of athletics. Michelle said the challenge is, as a Recreation Advisory Board and staff, need to do a better job of educating the community that we are a public service and we contribute to quality of life.

Barb said looking at parks and recreation is similar to the library. This is a service.

Jeff does not say that anyone would question the numbers expect the expenses are at one place and revenues are at another place. Jeff said he understands that it is not a money maker. Jeff used the library as an example of the disparities of budgets within the county. To Michelle’s point, Jeff said it is a quality of life issue and people want more ball fields. Jeff said there is a lot of potential for recreation but it cannot be done with these numbers.

Michelle said parks and recreation faces the challenge of keeping costs low. Other municipalities in our area do not have to recover 50% of their costs. The cost recover model that was proposed to the Board of Commissioners in August 2021 was tabled. This model will help us set parameters and benchmarks for how we charge for programs and services.

A huge piece of our income was adult programming. That went away for 18 months. That will impact revenue figures.

Jeff said we do a good job with the money we have.

Michelle said the per capita spending for parks and rec agencies, as reported to the Board of Commissioners in February 2021, is \$88 per person. Iredell County spends around \$11 per person. Michelle understand that the budget is limited because budget sources are limited. Our revenues for the last two years were drastically affected by COVID. During that time, we still had salaries to pay, grass to mow and park upkeep, to name a few.

Jeff said that Mooresville spends more per capita than the City of Raleigh.

Jeff said it is a nice document.

Michelle said Jen Winters does a great job putting this together.

CONCESSION STAND POLICY

Brandon has been revising this policy. We have not been operating our concession stands in any facilities in the last three years. In the past, they were operated by youth athletic associations. They would sell concessions and give a contribution back to a parks and rec fund. We may look to rent out the concession stands or building it into our budgets to run the concession stands – both options to generate revenue. Once this is completed by Brandon and reviewed by the county attorney, it will come before this Board.

NEW MOA REQUIREMENTS FOR FACILITY USE

Brandon provided an update. Last night was a meeting with non-profit youth organizations that use our fields. ICPRD now requires 501c3 and copy of the current year 990 for verification of the 501c3 status, including tax identification number. Those documents will be added to the current MOA on file. This will go into effect in spring 2022.

Scott Bell made a motion to dismiss, seconded by Bobby Deal Meeting adjourned at 8:20.

The next Recreation Advisory meeting will be on Thursday, February 3, 2022 at 7:00 PM at East Iredell Lions Club Community Building.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stacy McGlamery

Recreation Advisory Board Secretary