

Lake Lure Parks & Recreation Board Meeting

Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2014

Call to Order

Chairman Ed Dittmer called to order the regular meeting of the Parks & Recreation Board at 1:32pm

Roll Call

Board members present: Ed Dittmer, Larry Czajkoski, Jonathan Hinkle, Linda Turner, Martyn Watts, and Jim Walters.

Board members absent: Jessica Kendall. Also absent was Commissioner Diane Barrett, Town Council liaison.

Town officials present: Mayor Bob Keith, Town Manager Chris Braund, Parks & Recreation Supervisor Melodie Potter, Environmental Management Officer Clint Calhoun, and Amy Allamong, Americops Trails Coordinator.

Approval of Minutes and Agenda

The agenda for the March 6, 2014 Board meeting was reviewed and a motion to accept was made by Linda Turner and seconded by Martyn Watts and all were in favor.

The minutes for the February 6, 2014 Board meeting were reviewed and a motion to accept was made by Linda Turner and seconded by Jim Walters and all were in favor.

Budget Review

Ed Dittmer reviewed the current year P & R operational budget that provides discretionary funding for the Board's use (line item 215 for supplies and materials) for \$10,000. Thus far only \$481 has been spent; however there are some expenses coming, such as whatever is decided on the geese mitigation and some trees to be cut down at the picnic grounds.

There are also so other funds available that date back to 2002 from the 75th Anniversary Fund to landscape Morse Park totally \$1,781.00. There are some proposals that will be addressed later regarding Morse Park improvements. There is also \$579.00 leftover from last year's landscaping in Morse Park. Chris Braund stated that the Board use this money as long as it was spent for improvements in Morse Park.

Open Issues

Status of Buffalo Creek Park – Amy Allamong brought the Board up to date with some work that was continuing on the Trail and the parking areas being flagged off. Chris said that Rumbling Bald Resort's trail head parking lot was looking great, and that they've almost

completed the guard rail. He mentioned that the next step for the Board was continuing with the property slated for the trail head with Wyndham Resorts corporate management. Chris stated that he has talked with the State Park authorities and that they've committed to put this on their agenda in April. They have funds to acquire this acre lot on Buffalo Creek Road needed for a public trailhead to service not only Buffalo Creek Park but also provide access to CRSP's northern trail systems. The property would then be leased back to the Town for trailhead parking development. This requires continued communications between Chris and Larry with the RBR who has restricted covenants on this property. This is critical before the transaction is closed. There was discussion regarding this matter. Ed discussed the signs that RBR has put up at the West Lake Drive entrance to their trailhead. Chris mentioned that the Town is working on signage as well, using interim (temporary) signs for information and directions. There was further discussion regarding the placement of signs. Chris stated that at this point we also have several PR strategies lined up, but we will not release them until we get signage and maps in place. Already the trail is getting good usage.

There was discussion about the direction of travel for both bikers and hikers. Chris commented about a trail in DuPont State Forest where there are hikers, runners, dogs and horses as well as bikers and the trail system works wonderfully for them. Discussion continued about the trails being used by hikers and bikers and the great comments we're hearing. Signage will help with direction as well as right of way. There was discussion regarding in the future making Donald Ross trails, possibly an outer loop, biker friendly. Amy mentioned that she and Fire Chief Ron Morgan had gone out on the trail with LLFD's ATV and they were able to use the provisional access that Trail Dynamics used and clear a path by just cutting a few saplings and branches, that now allows them access all the way to the top for emergency rescue access without negotiating all of the turns on the trail system. Ron mentioned to Amy that he was concerned that Fairfield VFD would not be able to make it up with their ATV due to its size. There was discussion regarding rescue and that it was agreed that the trails would be easy to walk in and walk the injured out without having to use the ATV. The ATVs could carry equipment up to a point and then it would be foot traffic from there out. Chris mentioned that Chimney Rock VFD, as well as Lake LLFD were very versed with back country rescue, and that Ron mentioned that a large percentage of those were carry out rescues by walking the injured out or by carry techniques. The emergency path will assist in getting injured out quicker.

Chris mentioned that they have a quote from Trail Dynamics that will get the trail all the way out to Eagle Rock. There is some fine tuning that needs to be done, but Chris expects to sign a contract by next week. After this, it should be sometime in April that they can lay out the trail. This addition it will be 5-7 miles in length. There was discussion about the design phase and detailed price estimates. The grant for Phase II will take us to Eagle Rock and State Park property. Chris explained the other trail systems that get you all the way down to the Blue Heron Point development. These trails are already in place. The State Park would be in charge of maintaining and upgrading those trails.

Morse Park Pedestrian Bridge – Ed mentioned that there have been a couple of meetings by the focus group to review designs by Vic Knight Strategies and make a recommended design to present for public review and input before presenting to Town Council for funding. Ed mentioned that Vic Knight came up with six different designs and the focus group settled on one which coincides with our architectural Mediterranean designs and is compatible with other bridges in the Town Center area. Ed presented the rendering of the initial draft design and discussed this with the Board. Since the west end of the bridge will have to be about 9 ft high and will require a ramp/steps, it has been recommended that the design provide bathrooms on the

west end and a viewing/small event space on top which could be a venue for weddings and other small events. Once they get approval it will go forward to a public comment session sometime in April. The final draft design proposal will then go out to bridge contractors/manufacturers for an RP bid and for more detailed design and cost estimates. Ed stated that this will not be a bridge to nowhere, but it will lead to a long planned trail system on Town owned parkland off Jack London Road and also perhaps connect with other trails on adjacent private property on Haynes Hill whose owner has stated that he welcomes trails on this area of his property. There was further discussion regarding the many venues that this bridge could be used for. Ed stated he was very pleased with the focus group and their findings. There were discussions of the bridge being iconic. The Board was excited to be continuing on with this plan.

Canada Geese Mitigation – Larry Czajkoski discussed in length his findings using the UAV drone device for site aversion. The UAV is effective at scaring geese into the water, however, once in the water there was not much concern from the geese that the UAV continued to fly over-head. It agitated them, but not enough to move once they were in the water. Larry explained the successes of the mitigation efforts, including the success of the egg oiling between 65 and 80 eggs a year. This has been able to somewhat limit the population. Larry pointed out that resident geese that were born here will stay here and nest every year when mature. Larry discussed his findings and plans that he felt would be most effective on our large lake. Those geese that have goslings won't be averted because the goslings won't be able to fly and the geese won't leave them. Immature juveniles and those mature geese whose eggs were oiled would be targets for our aversion. From early May to mid June, they will be able to migrate elsewhere if they don't have goslings, but if not driven away before mid June, they will molt and be unable to fly for several months and thus will remain here. There was continued discussion regarding the types of aversion that had been used and that there had just not been enough volunteers to keep it going. There were comments from Clint Calhoun regarding how geese will not necessarily fly to their nest that they will want to come from the water to get to it. Additionally, they will not go into and out of water where there is high plant growth. There was discussion regarding perhaps putting up a fishing line fence in the public areas that we're trying to avert them from. Larry further discussed migration habits of these Canada geese and the challenges a large lake has with site aversion. Larry suggested that we focus our aversion effort in the Town Center area such as the beach, Morse Park, the Marina, and possibly Firefly Cove. Then see what success we have getting the geese from our public areas. Tackling the entire lake without a large volunteer effort would not be effective and would be frustrating. If successful on a limited scale, then we could share with private land owners our aversion techniques. Larry discussed findings from Geese Peace. He discussed the cost that would be associated with it. There was continued discussion regarding the different strategies at getting the geese out of the water, possibly daily effort during the two month prime aversion period. This cost could be as much as \$10,000 to \$20,000 this would be an annual cost as well. Martyn discussed concentrating on the beach and other strategies. Chris Braund stated that something needed to be done, because the geese have become a health problem with their droppings on the beach and elsewhere in town. All discussions and strategies would need people by either volunteering or paid help to make the program a success. Jonathan Hinkle recommended that we advertise for volunteers for two months. There was further conversation regarding that this needed to be done quickly due to the nesting of the geese.

Jonathan made a motion that the Town put out for a bid/contract using the outline that Larry had outlined. Jim Walters seconded that motion. There was further discussion using Tyrone Phillips for culling of the geese and getting him to bid. All agreed this was a sensitive topic that

needed visiting if the recommended aversion techniques were not successful. There was further discussion regarding oiling and the need for volunteers that are diligent. It was proposed that a call also go out for volunteers who are opposed to the culling of the Canada geese to come forward to perform the required time consuming site aversion to limit the damage being done by the geese and to make culling of the geese avoidable

Jonathan revised his original motion to additionally get a bid from a contractor that would include some culling. Jim seconded and all were in favor.

Status of planning for aeration/fountains for beach/marina/Morse Park Gardens pond:

MartynWatts reviewed the two proposals/bids before the Board regarding aeration of the Lake by the beach, the marina, and in the Morse Park Gardens pond. Martyn reviewed the process of aeration and the benefits in controlling harmful bacteria in the water. The bids differed due to the amount of aeration diffuser devices needed. The Board discussed making sure that each bid was in line with each other as far as what they were bidding on. There was further discussion regarding the number of diffusers needed as well as the location that would be best for them. Martyn and Clint discussed the difference between the two bids. Clint explained what he felt was needed as far as the oxygen needed in the water. It was agreed to revisit each bidder to get a more comparative bid. There was discussion regarding the dissolved oxygen numbers in the lake. Clint explained where they actually gather the DO numbers from. The Board discussed location of diffusers to areas that they would have the most effect in oxygenating the water in the Town Center Bay.

Ed stated that the cost numbers were needed in the upcoming budget preparations. There was a discussion of installing fountains in two separate locations in Morse Park Gardens pond. Warranty and guarantee of the diffuser system was discussed. There was continued discussion regarding why the diffusers were needed, especially on the hottest days of the year. Chris suggested that if there is still an interest on the fountain that Martyn get a picture of the same type of fountain spray, same make and model with the same horse powered motor. There was discussion of the fountain and the aeration of the water. Maintenance and power issues of having a fountain were discussed. Ed asked that further research be done and have the cost estimates ready with the information for the next meeting. Martyn suggested having Tony look at the electrical issues with the last fountain and make sure there is a GFI electrical connection for a fountain motor.

Recommendation on restroom solution for Morse Park Meadow and Flowering Bridge:

Jonathan Hinkle updated the Board with his findings on helping the Flowering Bridge with their request for a port-a-john at the Flowering Bridge location. Jonathan reviewed different cost and solutions. He looked into the port-a-johns that are transferred around on a trailer. This cost is \$28K and you still have to have someone come clean it, run water to it and it's not vandal proof. There are others that are more commercial that are \$40K Jonathan also reviewed a compost unit and how it would have to be maintained. This would cost \$23K. He reviewed also building one and the advantages and disadvantages. These do not require septic or water but would require cleanout every two months. There was discussion of the significant cost of renting the current port-a-johns and whether the four port-a-johns in the Morse Park Meadow area are actually needed at that location and keeping only the handicap unit there and moving one of the smaller units to the Flowering Bridge area and cancelling the need for the other two units. There was discussion about using the Visitor's Center restrooms after hours using the separate rear entrance to the building and have the police lock it up at night. There was discussion regarding the cleanup cost of the compost commode as well as the 6ft tank that would have to be placed below

it. Melodie Potter stated that she had spoken with the port-a-john contractor (Allbright) and asked that they bring us some new port-a-johns and to put one at the flowering bridge, but she would get back with them depending on what direction the Board takes. There would be no cost to move it. Ed mentioned building something around a port-a-john to make the appearance nicer. There was discussion back to the compost and the tank below ground in that it is in a flood area and it would have to be anchored into the ground. There was further discussion regarding what would be best and most cost efficient. Jonathan will forward the link of the compost company to everyone. There was discussion regarding using the septic tank and the possible permits needed. Ed asked to defer this one. In the meantime Melodie will have one put out at the bridge and to keep one handicap out at the marina.

Status of work on Maintenance List – Melodie updated the Board regarding the cutting of the black willow trees near the picnic area in Morse Park Meadow and getting replacement trees planted. There is money already allocated for this project. Melodie has begun spring maintenance in Morse Park Gardens and elsewhere in the public areas of the Town Center.

New Issues

Update to the Lake Lure Parks, Recreation, Trails and Opens Space Plan – Ed asked the Board to review his suggested changes to the Plan and that the Board go over them at the next meeting. The Plan has not been modified since 2011 and there have been much change in Town parks since then.

Parks and Recreation Budget Priorities for 2014/15 – Ed mentioned Tony and Melodie have already had their meeting with Sam and Thadd for their parks maintenance operational needs this next fiscal year. There was discussion regarding the need for another part-time employee for Melodie's maintenance of parks. Melodie suggested that she needed another temporary hire during the April thru October prime parks maintenance season and then in the winter have one part-time person. There was discussion regarding the task due in peak time and how some of it got contracted out last year. There was further discussion regarding this part-time position.

Ed discussed several line items in the parks and Recreation budget and what needs to be accomplished this next year. Picnic benches and signage is needed for Buffalo Creek Park. There was discussion about things that come up in the year for which additional monies are needed and Ed suggested asking to increase line item 215 an additional \$5,000. Chris Braund reminded the Board that they would need justification when coming to the Council. There was discussion to share the cost of the aeration system in the Town Center Bay with the Lake Operations Departments. Ed stated that the aeration for the Morse Park Gardens pond should be covered by the Parks & Recreation budget, and that the Lake Operations should be responsible for the bay.

There were some items that were put off addressing until reviewing modifications since it was so late in the day. Ed asked the Board members to review the handouts he had given regarding the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget. Chris discussed revising the suggested amount Ed had proposed for Buffalo Creek Park development from trail development to trailhead parking development. There was discussion on exactly what would be needed. There was discussion regarding the Community Recreation Center. This number would need to be decided when the public charter school begins its building program. There was discussion regarding the need for this center. This center would service the public and the school. Chris mentioned that he gets continued request to improve the area around the north end of the dam and to make it a tourist

attraction and to make it more attractive. There was discussion regarding the historical aspect of it. Chris discussed a design plan that he had Vic Knight to draw up the plan and layout that would have a viewer platform and a series of panels on the dam construction for education. Chris wasn't sure whether this should be a Parks and Recreation project or someone else's. Ed mentioned he would like to look at the plans for this.

Ed Dittmer adjourned the meeting at 4:03 p.m.

Minutes were taken and transcribed by Kat Canant, Town of Lake Lure Liaison

The next Parks & Recreation Board Meeting will be April 3, 2013 at 1:30pm