



Lake Lure Parks & Recreation Board Meeting

December 6, 2018 Minutes

Call to Order

Chairman Jim Walters called to order the December 6, 2018 meeting of the Parks & Recreation Board at 1:32 p.m. at the Lake Lure Town Hall.

Roll Call

Board Members present:

Jim Walters, Chairman

Larry Czajkoski

Bill Massey

Dale Minick

Maureen Bay

Ed Dittmer

Martyn Watts

Town Officials present:

Town Council Liaison Stephen Webber

Others present:

Absent:

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Walters proposed approval of the agenda and previous minutes. The Agenda for the December 6, 2018 meeting was reviewed

The current agenda was amended to include the review of the minutes from the November 15, 2018 Special Meeting and the November 1, 2018 minutes. **Mr. Dittmer made a motion to approve the Agenda as amended and Mr. Czajkoski seconded the motion.**

Minutes for November 1, were reviewed. Mr. Massey requested an amendment for the section reading "thousands of volunteers" to be replaced with "thousands of visitors" under section (e) **Lake Lure Flowing Bridge.**

Minutes for the November 15, 2018 Special Meeting were reviewed. Mr. Czajkoski asked that in section **(a) Draft Master Concept Plan for the Boys Camp Road Property & for Morse Park**, paragraph four the sentence be edited to read “The rest will be wiped flat.” Next in section **(b) Lake Lure Tours Dock Request**, in the third paragraph that it be added to reflect “Per Mr. Wittmer.”

The November 15, 2018 Special Meeting minutes were approved with the amended sections to be included. **Mr. Massey made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Dittmer seconded and the motion.**

Park Presentation and Discussion

a) Recognition of Guests and their Discussion of Recommendations Submitted by Concerned Lake Lure Citizens, Residents, and Voters

Chairman Walters opened the floor for Mr. Dan Breneman to make his presentation to the board. All voted in favor to allow.

Mr. Breneman greeted everyone and let everyone know that today he makes this stance known as that of a private citizen of Lake Lure. His comments were directed towards the newly created Parks and Rec Director Position which has been approved by City Council. The reason for Mr. Breneman stating his position is two-fold. The first in being that he has a personal interest in the matter and the second, because he received an email from the Town Manager to the Lake Advisory Board about the Parks and Rec Director position and what that position’s duties will consist of. Mr. Breneman proceeded to give the board a recap of his work history and level of experience to establish his credibility towards being able to speak knowledgeably about this subject as an expert in his field. Mr. Breneman has concerns that we are not trying to maximize the opportunities that an area like this could present which is disappointing. He feels as if the Parks and Rec department in this community needs a full time director that is passionate, capable and can bring local, regional and national efforts to this area. This has been communicated to the Town Manager who suggested visiting the recreational efforts taking place in Fletcher with their Parks and Rec Department. Mr. Breneman went to meet with the director in Fletcher and learned how their program is booming and what challenges they are facing in trying to develop their program. One advantage that we have here is our lake which is one of our biggest assets, we have one of the largest state parks in North Carolina, and we also have a number of local businesses that are drastically hurting and the residents have no clue about it. We have been asking our businesses to operate within a six month window each and they cannot sustain this way. The businesses are essentially starving because they depend on the local tourism and there are not many efforts from the town of Lake Lure to find out how to produce a major revenue source to help businesses by extending tourism and operating within a nine-ten month time frame.

A follow up email was sent to the Town Manager but no reply has been received as on yet. The email presented 3 ideas for generating revenue streams for the town through activities. 1- We could rent or put in place a skating rink for ice skating to bring people into the town beyond the seasonal aspect. 2- We would attract more clubs to host events such as the Antique Boat Club Show being put together by Lake Lure Tours. These type of shows could be presented as a showcase to reasons people should want to come visit our town to generate future revenue as opposed to idea that will charge people for the

right to come into the town and hold events and still expecting them to spend additional monies towards food and lodging too. When the idea was pitched to the Lake Advisory Board over a year and a half ago Mr. Breneman thought it was ludicrous to charge people to come into the town and pay to hold events and expressed those sentiments. If we let them come and enjoy the experience of the town they will be more likely to spend money when they're here. By using this as an opportunity to promote the town it might even lead to visitors purchasing property here down the road.

As a citizen Mr. Breneman encouraged the board to challenge the Council based on the facts of what is needed for this position. The plan as presented is very weak and doesn't help our tax base which hurts the residents by having their taxes raised. This is not an expense position but rather it is an investment position that will give our town results because they should be charged with bringing in funds for this town. The person in this position needs to be held accountable for securing activities that will bring in future revenues. Another example of the types of activities that could be produced here locally to generate income would be high school beach wrestling or beach volleyball tournaments, and basketball events. We could have small fund raisers that would start off small and develop into something more lucrative for the town. These are only a few samples of things that could be done and we need to find the best candidate to fill the position who is suited to take the town into a stronger financial future through revenue generating activities with by utilizing our parks and lake.

Mr. Czajkoski agreed with Mr. Breneman's presentation in the need to hold staff accountable for what they do here. Mr. Czajkoski asked for more clarity as to whether Mr. Breneman is asking the board to challenge the new Parks and Rec Director position's job description or what will be the new Parks and Rec Coordinator position's job description? To which Mr. Breneman stated that to his understanding when Council first approved this position within the budget it was as a Director position which has since been changed and that change itself is what he is asking the board to challenge because it should not have never been changed from Director to Coordinator. Just look at the statistics word of mouth is still the best advertising. You tell 29 people when you have a bad experience when you have a good experience you only tell 10 people. People love this community and are dying to come here so let's give them a reason to come. Mr. Breneman stated that we was told by one Council Member that this new position is going to be merely a goffer position which Mr. Breneman found upsetting. This is a revenue position not an expense position and if they are not producing revenue find someone who can. If expenses are being increased then it should be a means to increase revenue as well to balance it out. This is a tough decision and should not be taken lightly. Mr. Czajkoski let it be known that he shares Mr. Breneman's concerns.

Mr. Breneman stated that he had also communicated this to two Council members

Mr. Dittmer stated that we have been working hard to try to develop activities that will bring people into the community. A lot of which has been centered around outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, and boating which will bring people in through the year and not just during the summer. We work with the Olympiad to bring people in from all over the county and world. They are developing a long distance swim program for over the summer to bring more people into town. In the past we just haven't seen the demographics to support bringing in the programs to develop for children. Now that we've gotten the school that may change that. Now that we have a means of communications in place to encourage younger couples to move here and maybe work from home it may open up more of an opportunity.

We got very discourage when we tried to have a YMCA type organization to come here but they declined due to a lack of demographics here to support it. Up until now we haven't had any say with what takes place with the lake so this position will give us a little bit more say so with the lake which we look forward too. This position will focus 25% on the lake and 75% on Parks and Rec.

This position will work under the current Lake Operations Director thusly becoming his right hand man to take over once he retires. Lake operations currently has no dealings with Parks and Rec and this new position will focus on changing that. Currently we've had no staff to develop programs but we do see the need to create recreational programs.

Mrs. Bay pointed out that the board was previously told in the special meeting that it would be difficult to find one person who would have the expertise to handle all the things that this position should require. Mr. Breneman again reiterated that this does not need to simply be a goffer position. The person in this position needs to be held accountable to bring in events in to produce revenue. Mr. Breneman declared that he would take passion over knowledge any day. So if the candidate is passionate about the job and performing it to the best of his or her abilities the knowledge will follow and can be attained along the way. Mr. Dittmer agreed that the hire has to be a doer, not just sit back at a desk. The person does need to have the passion to develop programs and facilities.

Mr. Massey added that the town's position is that of a doer and not a creator and we would like to have the ability to work with someone to plan and direct activities. We are passive when it comes to recreational programing. It is a hope that the position will be more of a creative position to create activities, but this is not the concept of the town Council. We know where we are with this but the question is where are we going with the position that will matter the most.

Mr. Breneman pointed out that the number one sport among seniors right now is Pickleball so why aren't we taking measure to start a league? Mr. Dittmer replied that the problem has been a lack of staff and facilities to create leagues and that it also takes funding to create activities and a period of time but it is in our future plans. Town Council Liaison Webber chimed in that we got approval to conduct the study on the golf course area and the layout. All planning is money driven and it takes time. Mr. Webber also pointed out that while the director position was watered down to coordinator it is still a step in the right direction to get us where we need to be eventually.

Mr. Czajkoski concluded that the Parks and Rec Board as individuals and as a group needs to hold this position accountable to development and growth of Parks and Recreation and make them responsible for executing our P&R vision. Chairman Walters expressed that the board will communicate with the town manager and the new Parks and Rec Coordinator often and that the Board expects to get regular feedback and reports back to the progress being made on a routine basis.

Mr. Webber indicated that the Coordinator will attend the board meetings and suggested that in the event of the Coordinator's absence that the Director attend as his supervisor.

Mr. Breneman let it be known that he did not agree with this position as being a temporary fix. That if the town is going to hire someone that it needs to be someone who can take care of the task at hand right out of the gate as opposed to being a coordinator who can grow into producing viable solutions in time.

He stated firmly that by hiring a coordinator instead of a director is a weak approach and an excuse by the town to not address the issues.

Mr. Czajkoski asked Commissioner Webber whether this is a done deal as far as Council is concerned or is there room for further discussion to take place on the title and job description of this position. Mr. Webber replied that it is not a done deal we are going to approve the changes to the job description in the upcoming Council meeting but that he thinks it would however pass as is with the majority.

Mr. Watts expressed that at the moment we have two directors in a sense and it all seems messy. That for now the person will come in and solidify the lake then down the road he or she will have someone under him so that he can move forward and create more events

Mrs. Potter inquired as the director who is over the coordinator who is going to teach Dean about parks and rec? Mrs. Bay asked do we have a choice in this outcome and again Mr. Webber states that this direction towards the coordinator position is better than having no position at all.

Mr. Minick asked why is there even a true need to merge Parks and Rec into Lake Operations questioning what exactly does Dean do in his current role. Mr. Webber provides an answer to such. Chairman Walters points out that Dean has been focused on lake operations versus lake and parks activities. There is a big distinction between these. Mr. Watts makes mention that ten years ago Dean was just a lake cop and through the years his job has morphed into what it is today. Mr. Webber makes it known that Dean is a certified lake manager. The discussion ensued.

Mr. Webber asked so is it still the board's recommendation to proceed with taking this to the council? Chairman Walters replied that the board already voted last month to proceed and will continue to move forward.

Mr. Czajkoski stated that the entire proposal came up as a surprise and short notice. It has not been properly discussed. With all due respect there has not been enough discussion about this position and Shannon is acting in haste to hire for this position by January 1. This rush doesn't need to be. If I hadn't asked for it this board wouldn't be having a say with this position. There hasn't nearly been enough time spent on this. I personally question the experience level of the new director. Mr. Watts agreed with Mr. Czajkoski, the position was changed and the board was not even told why the position was changed.

Chairman Walter's asked do we as a board want to make a recommendation to delay hiring by this January 1 date. The discussion ensued with the board members over budgets, experience levels, time lines and expectations from the coordinator position with the Board feeling very strongly that they are against having this as only a goffer position. If we want a true director we should fight to have a true director

Webber stated that if the board would like to have a special workshop about the position before it is advertised as is to just let him know. That way the Board can air out all of their concerns directly to Council. Since it seems to be the consensus that it was rushed this will give the Board time to prepare.

Chairman Walters suggested a motion to request the workshop between this board and town council to further discuss this matter

Mr. Minik makes the motion to set up the workshop to discuss the new Parks and Rec Coordinator position and job description with Council and Mr. Watts gave the second. All approved in favor

b) Buffalo Creek Park, Weedpatch Mountain and the Trail to Eagle Rock – Larry Czajkoski

Mr. Czajkoski presented the following updates. Concerning Buffalo Creek Park, per our agreement concerning the management and maintenance of those 8 ½ miles up to Eagle Rock all of the down trees have been removed and the trails have been cleared.

Concerning the kiosk we now have two. Now that the Eagle Rock Parking area is open to the public for reserved parking, we need to do some edits on the content. The information needs to be updated.

Mr. Dittmer asked Since the Rangers will be patrolling that area how will they handle it if someone just parks there?

People will have to go online and reserve a spot the park will send you a confirmation and a combination to use on the lock at the gate to grant you access. They will enforce it how they see fit.

Mr. Czajkoski also shared the existing kiosk content, sight-seeing spots and the logos with James Ledgerwood so it can be used in their kiosk in Chimney Rock. Everything is located in a drop box

Buffalo Park entrance sign is done and completed. Mr. Czajkoski and Mrs. Potter went up there and scouted and flagged a location for the sign to be placed so that you can see it coming from both directions. Mrs. Potter brought the sign in to the meeting for the board to review it in person.

Walking bridge across Buffalo Creek, we decided to pressure clean it once a year or so depending on the need and keep it clear of leaves. Mrs. Potter has already put these measures in place.

Mr. Czajkoski presented a monthly pie chart. It featured the BCP Loop, BCP Loop Bike, Weed Patch Mountain Bike, and Weed Patch Mountain Hiker to address each area in terms of usage. We are currently having an issue with one of the two bike counters, The Weed Patch Mountain Trail Bike Counter. It seems to be getting some spikes once or twice a month. Larry, Dana, and Robin are working on this and looking to get help and trouble shoot this problem.

For Buffalo Creek Park closures we've made 14 signs to be used all around the town and at the various parks for when we need to temporarily close a park or a trail. This is very timely with the upcoming weather event forecasted for this coming weekend. Mr. Czajkoski has written a corresponding press release regarding closure of Buffalo Creek Park and Trails that he gave one copy to Mrs. Krejci and the other copy was passed around for the board to review as the document was read out loud. It was suggested to place this communication directive onto the website and social media sites immediately

Mrs. Bay exited the meeting at 3:00pm

Mr. Webber reminded the board that Shannon has to grant approval for the press release to be published and requested that a copy of the press release be attached to the minutes.

Mr. Czajkoski will share this information with James Ledgerwood as well.

Mrs. Bay exited the meeting at 3:00pm

Mr. Webber reminded the board that Shannon has to grant approval for the press release to be published and requested that a copy of the press release be attached to the minutes.

Mr. Czajkoski will share this information with James as well.

c) Dittmer-Watts Nature Trail Park – Ed Dittmer

Mr. Dittmer stated that he didn't anticipate the need to close the trail down this time of year because it typically has fewer visitors. Mr. Watts pointed out an issue with water draining down creating a drainage issue for the park.

Mr. Dittmer make motion that we coordinate with the state DOT to provide a solution to cover or correct the drainage problem. Mr. Watts seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Dittmer also pointed out that there was a tree down and wanted to make mention of such to Mrs. Potter so that she could check it out.

d) Lake Lure Flowering Bridge – Bill Massey

Mr. Massey updated the board on the Caroling on the Bridge event. Laura facilitated the event which turned out really well. Thanks to her efforts with coordinating with the Classical Academy the event became a success for the community.

Mrs. Krejci commented that the event had a good turnout. She was informed that there was close to 100 people to attend. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

Mr. Massey also stated that the Stroll of Lights attendance was also increased this past month. The lights are up and the town should see a reduction of electricity being used because everything has been switched to LED now.

e) Lake Lure Public Golf Club – Dale Minick

Mr. Minick stated that November membership was a little behind. The greens and top dressing done. We are at 110 in our membership drive which is a significant number. We are still receiving calls from surrounding townships. The membership drive will expire December 31st.

f) Morse Park – Melodie Potter and Jim Walters

The pier at the end of the east peninsula. They put it out four days after our meeting and by now hopefully everyone has had a chance to see it. What would we like to do as far as proceeding and recommendations to take to the Council.

Mr. Czajkoski stated that keeping the dock there for the boat show once or twice a year is a good idea. But to keep it there for the rest of the year is not a good idea. Again great idea for the boat show but it would obscure the view that we love. Mr. Czajkoski went back over the initial proposal to the board to discuss each individual item that was listed as a benefit. Mr. Czajkoski stated, I would argue that they would not be able to generate additional revenue from concessions. We as the town should not be tasked to answer for security and safety by placing a dock out there full time, It is the concessionaire's responsibility to do that with lifeguard chairs if they so choose to do that. I would say no to this proposal to keep the dock there all year because it compromises the view and because it does not bring any additional benefit to the Town by keeping the floating dock there in place all year round.

Mr. Watts declared that he agreed with Mr. Czajkoski this is essentially creating another marina. This makes no sense to do it from this position as oppose to the other available docks. We have two finger docks that could be used as a base for the floating dock during the week of and only for the boat show.

Mr. Dittmer also stated that he didn't see any additional benefits from letting the dock stay year round.

Mr. Minick: Agrees but stated that he's glad the plans to have the boat show are finally coming together because it is an idea that was presented a year ago.

Mr. Czajkoski stated that with regards to the proposal from Lake Lure tours we agree to temporary mooring of the floating dock for the weekend of the Boat Show or shows only. We do not agree with the permanent mooring, placement and installation of the floating dock. And for storage it should or could be placed back where it was beforehand. **Mr. Czajkoski made the motion and Mr. Massey gave the second. All voted in favor.**

g) Town Parks and Recreation Supervisor – Melodie Potter

Mrs. Potter stated that her staffer Carl is working out really well. Also the Christmas decoration have been put up. We are now working in our winter mode.

Mr. Dittmer inquired as to whether Mrs. Potter could build a few benches. Mrs. Potter will check to see if Gunner and Chuck can build a park bench

h) Discussion regarding open board positions and Chair and Vice-Chair nominations

Chairman Walters stated that Valerie Hoffman has applied for the vacant seat alternative seat on the board and asked for a vote on this matter so that it can be presented to Council.

Mr. Mr. Czajkoski made the motion. Mr. Watts gave the second. All voted in favor to proceed with Mrs. Hoffman as an applicant to become an alternative board member.

i) Adoption of the 2019 Meeting Schedule

The board reviewed the schedule for the upcoming year. The July 4th Holiday does conflict with the normal first Thursday P&R Meeting in July, so the July 2019 P&R Meeting will be held on Thursday, July 11 2019.

All in favor to accept the 2019 meeting schedule

j) Town Council Liaison – Commissioner Stephen Webber

Mr. Webber stated that as far as the speed limit issue is concerned we didn't get what we wanted. As the ABC store and that area develops we will consider changing the speed limit again. It will be 25 mph out past the gas station for the time being. The sign will be relocated an ordinance is need to discontinue the current speed limit and adopt a new one.

Next year is Town Council's elections. Bob Cameron is finishing up his second term and has decided not to run again. If you know anyone who is interested in signing up to run for Town Council the information will be available so keep an eye out.

Adjournment

Mr. Czajkoski made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:41 pm. Mr. Massey seconded and the motion carried.

Minutes were transcribed by Administration Support Specialist Sha'Linda Pruitt.

The next regular meeting of the Parks & Recreation Board meeting will be January 3, 2019 at 1:30 pm.

ATTEST:


Jim Walters, Chairman