

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

JANUARY 23, 2025

Present: Ned Michie, Kent Merritt, Hosea Mitchell, Jenny Taylor, Amanda Burns, Jessica Jackson, Mark Denison, Jacqueline Webber

Absent: Jeffrey Fracher

City: Riaan Anthony, Annie Sechrist, Rachel Smith, Katie Lockhart, Justin Mckenzie

Community: **Food Justice Network-** KJ Howard **Professors at U.VA School of Architecture-** Katie Stranix, Elgin Cleckley, Lauren Cantrell **2nd Year Students at U.VA School of Architecture-** Roshni Ahuja, Caroline Long, Noah Stengel-Eskin

Public Comments: None

Administrative Items:

ADMIN-1: Elections for Chair and Vice Chair Ned Michie

- Hosea M nominates Ned Michie for Chair
- Jackie W approves nomination
- Kent M seconds nomination
- Ned Michie is approved as Chair

- Hosea M nominates Kent Merritt for Vice Chair
- Mark D seconds nomination
- Kent Merritt is approved as new Vice Chair

ADMIN-2: November Minutes Ned Michie

- Ned M motions to approve minutes
- Jackie W seconds motion
- Minutes approved at 5:40pm

Action Items:

A-1 Special Meeting on February 6th at 5:30pm Ned Michie

- Amanda B motions to approve meeting on Feb 6th
- Jessica J seconds motion
- Motion is approved
- Meeting will be in Council Chambers

A-2 Future Regular Meeting Location Ned Michie

Riaan A- Everything is set to have meetings at Carver. I would like to get a clear directive from the Board and we can make the necessary announcements.

Ned M- I would like to try it out for a couple meetings and if the room feels too big we can come back.

Amanda B- As a matter of record I would like to say that School Board meetings and closed session budget meetings are always on Thursdays, so meeting on Thursdays are incredibly difficult as a School Board member.

- Jackie W motions to move meetings to Carver
- Hosea M seconds motion
- Motion is approved

Information Items:

I-1 Presentation Roshni Ahuja, Caroline Long, Noah Stengel-Eskin, Katie Stranix

Katie Stranix:

- Teaches Second Year Studio
- 80 students/6 sections
- Project asks students to reimagine Market St. Park
- Each project was asked to include a restroom, public space, and market space whether indoor or outdoor
- Each project shouldn't disturb more than 40% of the site

Roshni Ahuja:

- Began project by looking through a lens of history and care
- Did a site analysis of Market St. Park
- Traced 2017 riots and protests that happened in Market St Park and U.VA
- Structure includes amphitheater style seating with structures to provide information about the riots that occurred in 2017 and other history
- Restrooms included with 8 stalls for men, women, and handicapped
- Plaza with fountains
- Circular exhibition space for community to share ideas
- Kept entrance the same to keep the flow of what's there, but changing the lens to honor the history of the park and not the removed statue

Caroline Long:

- Began project by looking through the lens of faith
- Noticed very few spiritual institutions in area surrounding Market St Park
- Aim to create a peaceful enclave that's open to the diverse community members and visitors of Charlottesville
- Wanted to create a bigger and more comfortable entrance
- Two major areas, one for community gathering and the other to be used as a marketplace for local small businesses
- Small area that can be used as a meditation space

- Designed roof to allow light to enter spaces while creating interesting shadows on the ground
- Shadows of light represent different paths faith takes people in their lives

Noah Stengel-Eskin:

- Began project by acknowledging the difficult history of the park but looking towards the future
- Guiding principle was to not delete any existing pathways but use them to create bigger and smaller spaces in a unified structure
- Main pathways linear structure echoes the Downtown Mall which is an important symbolic connection
- Created a fully aerial green roof that visitors could ascend directly from park, suggests cutting into ground to create cooled subterranean spaces
- Main pathways through the building will include gallery exhibition space, market space, and small business incubation spaces
- Wanted overall experience to feel like a “river of light” as people move through the space

Ned M- Is there a PDF or any kind of digital format that this can be preserved and passed to the Parks Dept?

Katie S- Yes, we can compile the work and share it

Jessica J- Do your students ever give presentations at public schools?

Elgin C- We have two summer programs

- Pipeline program through Organization of Minority Architects
- Summer Experience program
- We try to have grants to supply transportation and food
- We also pay a wage, so students understand they are interns and take pride in their work
- Ran program with Anne Spencer Garden in Lynchburg where students built two benches which are still there today

I-2 New Board Member Application Process Discussion Ned Michie

- We have 11 new applicants
- Geoffrey MacDonald decided not to reapply
- 3 Board positions open
- Board will schedule 3 separate Zoom interview sessions over a 2-week period
- Board will review applications before interview sessions
- Board will aim to make a decision on new members at the next regular meeting in February
- Board decided new members can attend public meetings but won't officially join Board until after Master Plan discussion in February

- Board discussed need to have more streamlined and efficient process in place for future Board member vacancies

I-3 Garden Rules Justin Mckenzie

- Fees will remain the same this year at \$150 for residents and \$300 for non-residents
- Scholarships will be available
- Plots can be renewed year-to-year but Board is considering implementing term limits in the future
- New lottery system will be used to assign plots, rather than first come first served
- Renewals will get priority, then remaining plots will be assigned through lottery
- If no plots are available at gardeners preferred location, they will be placed on a waiting list. Waitlisted gardeners who are assigned mid-season will be prorated
- Only one plot will be issued per person for new applicants
- Plots that have not been worked by May 1st may be reassigned to a waitlisted gardener
- Gardeners will receive a warning if their plot is weedy or not properly maintained, plot may revert back to program if no corrective action is taken
- New rules prohibit the use of rain barrels and certain structures since parks will be undergoing renovations

I-4 Comments/Questions about Quarterly Reports Ned Michie

Amanda B- From a City school perspective we have asked for a sit down to clearly map out who is responsible for ground maintenance. We are getting complaints about tree trimming and sidewalks that are not cleared on safe walk routes

- School Board conducted their own safety audit and they found deficiencies
- Audit will speak to this Dept being understaffed as to why work couldn't be completed
- Advocacy at this level can help address that the line item budget for maintenance isn't getting done but we're still getting charged

Riaan A- We had a meeting with the schools on that and we are sending our report to Ms. Powell

- We are having discussions internally on how to address these issues
- Parks and Rec Dept gets no money from the schools for their maintenance
- We need the schools to inform us in a timely manner when there are issues
- My job is to get the Dept realigned to focus on core causes

Ned M- I was interested in the swimming report and the complaints that pools are being taken up by a lot of rentals

Riaan A- This year rentals did grow a lot. We had very little lanes for the public and pool times were uncertain. We're going back to the drawing board to address what our priorities are in terms of how many lanes should be open to the public at any given time. Also how do we prioritize private school versus public school usage.

Public Comments: None

Chairman's Matters:

None

Board Matters:

None

Director's Matters:

D-1 Integrated Pest Management Representative Riaan Anthony

- Need one member from the Board to be a representative
- Meet once on Zoom
- Reviews report before it is sent to City Council

Ned M- This report contains information about how much bug killer and things of that nature are used during the year and how we're doing on that front. Is anyone interested in the role?

Mark D- I would be willing to fill the position

Riaan A- Great!

Adjournment:

- Ned M asks for motion to adjourn
- Kent M motions to adjourn
- Jessica J seconds motion
- Meeting adjourned at 7:20pm

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

SPECIAL MEETING

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

FEBRUARY 6, 2025

Present: Ned Michie, Jeffrey Fracher, Hosea Mitchell, Mark Denison, Kent Merritt, Jennie Taylor, Jessica Jackson (Virtual)

Absent: Amanda Burns, Jacqueline Webber

City: Riaan Anthony, Annie Sechrist, Will Bassett, Rachel Smith, Chris Gensic, Mike Svetz (**PROS Consulting**)

Public Comments: Peter Krause

- Representing 40 organizations under the Mobility Alliance
- Expressed appreciation for the thoroughness of the parks and recreation Master Plan, especially regarding the citizen needs assessment
- Highlighted the need for more development along the Rivanna River, mentioning missed opportunities in the Master Plan regarding greenways and natural areas
- Emphasized the importance of adding more urban bicycle infrastructure, such as flow tracks and traffic playgrounds for children
- Advocated for increased collaboration with schools for projects like urban biking programs and highlighted the significance of McIntire Park, which needs more focus in the plan

Administrative Items: None

Action Items:

A-1 Parks and Recreation Master Plan Mike Svetz

Master Plan Review

- **Key Clarifications:** The Master Plan is a guiding document reflecting community values over a 10-year horizon and is flexible to accommodate changes over time
- **Implementation:** Stressed the importance of understanding that not all projects or recommendations are expected to be implemented immediately
- **Partnerships:** Emphasized that community partnerships and collaboration with various entities, including schools and other city departments, are crucial for realizing the plan's goals
- **Feedback Integration:** Ongoing feedback from staff and the public has helped shape the Master Plan, which will continue to evolve with future iterations

Capitol Improvement Prioritization:

- The plan includes reinvestment in existing park infrastructure, expanded services, and visionary projects such as shared-use path system and Rivanna River access
- Mention of ongoing efforts to ensure accessible public spaces and the inclusion of plans for adaptive recreation at Pen Park

Staffing and Budget Requirements:

- **Staffing Needs:** As the park system grows, more planning and construction management personnel will be required to handle the increase in projects
- **Operational Costs:** Detailed the cost of maintaining park amenities, including operational impacts like trash collection, maintenance of dog parks, and playground equipment replacement

Community Engagement & Feedback:

- **Survey Responses:** Public feedback, including responses to a statistically valid survey, indicates strong community support for certain initiatives such as greenways and playground expansions
- **Tax Considerations:** A large portion of the community indicated support for a tax increase to fund improvements to the parks and recreation system. However, concerns were raised about whether this response was representative of the entire population, particularly lower-income residents

Greenways Development:

- Explore further collaboration between Parks and Recreation and Transportation and Economic Development departments for greenway expansion and funding

McIntire Park Enhancements:

- Revisit and update plans to allocate more resources to McIntire Park, focusing on the trail system, connectivity, and urban biking infrastructure

Plan for Adaptive Recreation at Pen Park:

- Move forward with planning and budgeting for the adaptive recreation facility and all-inclusive playground at Pen Park

Comments: None

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned