

PARKS AND REC ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

JUNE 26, 2025

Present: Ned Michie, Jeffrey Fracher, Kent Meritt, Jenny Taylor, Carla Manno, Tina La Roche, Adam Courville, Amanda Burns, Hosea Mitchell

Absent: Jessica Jackson and Mark Dennison

City: Riaan Anthony, Katie Lockhart, Nancy Burney, Annie Sechrist

Public Comments: None

Opportunity for Board Response to Public Comment: None

Administrative Items:

A-1- Adopted the Agenda Ned Michie

- Ned M. asks for motion to adopt agenda with a friendly amendment to include the date on all future agendas.
- Kent M. moves to adopt agenda
- Adam C. seconds motion
- Agenda is adopted

A-2- Approval of May Minutes Ned Michie

- Ned M. asks for motion to approve May minutes
- Jenny T. moves to approve May minutes
- Kent M. seconds motion
- May minutes are approved

Action Items: None

Information Items:

I-1- Master Plan/CIP Discussion Riaan Anthony

- Explains to Board that after every Master Plan adoption there are action items that lead to funding requests.
- Budget cycle starts in September.
- This meeting was intended to educate the Board about capitol projects and gather input.
- Presents documents showing funded projects, unfunded projects that had been requested but not funded, and projects starting July 1st.

Overview of Parks Dept CIP Management Riaan Anthony

- Parks has a large capitol portfolio but no designated project manager.
- Department relies on Katie Lockhart, Parks dept, and administration services to manage projects.
- Goal over last 2 years has been to clean up old CIP projects from 2017-2018.
- Pointed out “rollover” projects that receive continuous funding, such as playground maintenance for approx. 40 playgrounds.
- \$200,000 allocated to replace about one playground per year.

Discussion of Specific Rollover Projects

- Board discusses school playgrounds which used to be funded by schools but now receive \$100,000-\$112,000 annually from Parks and Rec.
- Riaan A. explains that a complete playground replacement costs about \$100,000.
- Urban tree planting was discussed with confirmation that \$125,000 in new funding will be coming July 1st.

Downtown Mall Tree Project

- Consultant has conducted a study.
- Dept has a plan to execute but need funding.
- Project is important because City has found they are leaving money unspent, Council questioning why allocated funds aren’t being used.
- Completing project efficiently would demonstrate Dept’s ability to manage budgets effectively, potentially leading to more funds in the future.

ADA Compliance and Infrastructure Projects

- Board inquires about outdoor restroom funding and ADA compliance.
- Riaan A. confirms \$500,000 has been allocated for ADA improvements, which would include restroom upgrades.
- Board inquires about downtown mall infrastructure.
- Riaan A. explains that \$653,000 was being used for replacement of two crossways and other maintenance costs.
- Dept typically receives \$70,000-\$80,000 annually for downtown mall maintenance.

Federal Funding and Grant Issues

- Board member asks about federal funding impacts.
- Riaan A. explains only 3 department programs are affected by federal dollars; new program for the mall, the farmer’s market, and a plan that lost federal funding but is still moving forward.
- Katie L. elaborates that they originally had \$150,000 for the project but \$75,000 was grant funded and this funding had been revoked due to shift in focus toward environmental justice.
- Dept was able to complete the plan but don’t have the funds to implement it.

Lump Sum Funding and Tree Maintenance

- Riaan A. notes department averages \$400,000 in funding.
- Downtown mall tree maintenance is discussed.
- Riaan A. explains \$100,000 is allocated annually for maintaining approx. 80 trees.

One-Time Projects Review

- Riaan A. asks Board to ask questions about specific initiatives.
- Board member inquires about Tonsler Parks basketball courts and whether it was included in tennis court resurfacing.
- Riaan A. explains tennis court project is funded at \$341,000.
- Tonsler Park has its own Master Plan which hasn't been fully implemented six years later, highlighting the need for a dedicated project manager.

Riverview Park Restroom Update

- Katie L. explains department had been working with a general contractor on a modular restroom building and were almost done with drawings, but contractor stopped responding.
- Dept issued a notice to cure but may need to revisit the project.
- Dept has an on-call process through the Apple Construction stage that could help move the project forward.

Project Management Challenges

- Board member expresses concern about the lack of dedicated project managers, asked what Board could do to help address this issue.
- Riaan A. explains department has made multiple requests for project managers and currently outsource some management functions.
- Dept is internally discussing options including potentially partnering with Public Works.
- Board member suggests that Board's advocacy should focus on not just funding projects but making sure projects are completed through proper management.

City Public Works Staffing and Unexpected Projects

- Riaan A. informs Board that department had added internal positions in a new "project development team" with specialists for different types of projects.
- Discussed the challenges of unexpected projects that arise, such as sinkholes and erosion issues.
- Emphasized the need for a management system to better organize maintenance efforts.

Cost-Benefit Analysis Suggestion

- Board member suggests conducting a cost-benefit analysis to demonstrate losses incurred due to inadequate project management.

- Analysis could provide evidence to support requests for additional project management resources.
- Riaan A. agrees this would be valuable.

Budget Process and Project Manager Position

- Board member asks where in the budget process the decision to not fund a project manager position was made.
- Riaan A. explains budget requests go to the budget office, which conducts monthly reviews, then to the City Manager who decides what to put forward to Council.
- Suggests advocacy for the importance of parks to the city should be directed to the City Manager.
- Mentions ongoing discussions with Public Works about which types of projects each department should manage.

County Funding for Darden Towe Park

- Board member asks about County funding, referencing past issues where 2 million sat unused for five years because County wasn't fulfilling its obligation.
- Riaan A. explains the department asked Council to use that money to support other projects, including ADA restrooms and playgrounds.
- Confirmed County is paying their share, with a request coming for \$27,000 for the next field.

Jenkins Park Shade Structure

- Riaan A. explains that utilities at the park make it difficult to determine where to place posts for shade structure.
- Notes that the department is using long-term funding to address this project in the coming months.

Staffing Changes and Priorities

- Katie L. mentions department has converted some contract dollars to positions in a mid-year change.
- Riaan A. explains that when the department loses a position, they evaluate how to best utilize remaining resources, focusing on priorities identified in the Master Plan.
- Mentions the recent loss of their analyst position for 3 months.
- Department is being deliberate about where to focus their efforts.

Project Completion Timelines

- Riaan A. confirms that the crossways on the Downtown mall would be completed by 50th anniversary in July.
- Could not give definitive timelines for other projects but assured Board the department is actively working on them.

- Notes that pricing often comes in above estimates which can delay projects.

Golf Course Projects and Funding

- Riaan A. mentions that the irrigation system for the golf course has just gone out to bid that week.
- Golf has its own funds and has to pay back bonds.
- Some golf projects remain unfunded because they were not part of the 2 million allocation, such as the pump house, that was cut due to cost constraints.

ADA Compliance Priorities

- Department is prioritizing projects based on the Master Plan and the other considerations like ADA compliance.
- Department receives \$200,000 annually for ADA improvements from the City's 2 million allocation.
- Emphasizes that ADA compliance is a significant concern particularly for restrooms and playgrounds.

Future Project Planning

- Riaan A. invites Board to think of projects they would like to see for the upcoming fiscal year.
- Department is trying to balance ongoing projects, studies, and master plan recommendations without becoming overwhelmed.
- Board member emphasized the importance of the Michie Drive segment of use path, noting it would connect a low-income community of about 500 residents who currently have limited access to amenities.

Suggestions for New Projects

- Board member suggests a new golf park somewhere inexpensive in the city to activate spaces like McIntire Park.
- Board member suggests creating additional garden plots, noting there might be demand if properly advertised.
- Suggests looking for space at Meadowcreek Park.

I-2- Presentation-History of Father Daughter Dance Nancy Burney/Annie Sechrist

- Father Daughter dance has been running for over 20 years.
- Program currently has around 526 participants
- Previously tried Mother/Son event for 2 years, but it only attracted 10 families before being discontinued in 2018.
- Discussion turns to making programs more inclusive and reflective of diverse family structures.
- Katie L. notes they want to acknowledge family diversity and design programs that are inclusive.

- Board member suggested rebranding events to be more inclusive would likely increase participation rather than decrease it.
- Board debated the balance between maintaining traditional events that serve a purpose and ensuring inclusivity.
- Riaan A. mentions the department is open to new ideas and is in the process of hiring a dedicated special events coordinator (20-30 hrs. per week) who could help develop and implement more inclusive programming.

Chairman Matters

C-1- New Board Member Candidate Ned Michie

- Ned M. notes that a potential Board member has been reached out to but hadn't yet responded.
- There is another candidate who has expressed interest.
- Board votes to extend an invitation to this new person, bringing membership to an even 12 in accordance with bylaws.

Board Matters

- Board discusses potential meeting locations for the future,
- Board considers the pros and cons of moving to a city space versus remaining in their current location.

Director's Matters Riaan Anthony

- Reminds Board that ordinance in bylaw says no meeting next month, so Board will meet in August.
- Board will be receiving Parks & Rec dept newsletter highlighting events and other things within the department.

Public Comments

- Member of the community from the organization Cultivate Charlottesville Food Justice Network.
- Expressed concern over UVA and other entities making changes to the Cherry Ave area without coordination.
- Urged Board to stay connected to these developments, noting potential impacts on traffic, neighborhoods, and schools in the area.

Adjournment Ned Michie

- Meeting adjourned at 7:15pm