

**Recreation Advisory Commission**  
**August 9, 2023**

**Call To Order:**

A meeting of the Durham Recreation Advisory Commission was held on this day in person, August 9, 2023. Vice Chair Cedric Burke called the meeting to order at 7:35 am. Attendance was confirmed by roll call. Councilmember Holsey-Hyman was present via zoom. Commissioner's Thomas and Stracks-Mullem were an excused absence. Commissioner Barnes was absent.

**I. Adjustments to the Agenda/Special Announcements**

None

**II. Public Comment**

- James Chavis shared his feelings about the lack of support in the PAC 1 community.
- The RAC received trail repair updates on the Third Fork Creek Trail from Robert Jennings, Park Superintendent.
- Aasim Inshirah expressed his desire to add additional billiard tables in Durham recreation centers.
- Dale McKeel addressed the commission with his Third Fork Creek Trail concerns.

**III. RAC Community Engagement Events & Committee Reports**

Hillandale Advisory Commission (Lesley Stracks-Mullem)

- No report at this meeting.

DOST Report (Jill Thomas)

- No report at this meeting.

Durham Parks Foundation (Emilie McIntosh)

- Emilie provided updates on upcoming events, future fund raising projects, and the annual retreat on August 19.

**IV. Approval of Minutes**

- Commissioner Mahajan made a motion to approve the June 14, 2023 meeting minutes; seconded by Commissioner Johnston; no further changes, whereupon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously adopted, the minutes were approved as presented.

**V. Fee Waivers (August)**

- Commissioner Mahajan made a motion to accept all fee waivers as recommended by staff; seconded by Commissioner Johnston. All in favor, motion passes unanimously.

**1. EDFC Recreational Soccer**

Event: Youth Soccer Program

Facility Request: Snow Hill Rd.- Soccer Field 1

Dates: Sept. 6, 2023 – Oct. 30, 2023

Fees approved by consent at 50% after payment of non-waivable fees

## VI. Old Business/New Business

- Soil & Property Assessment (Wade Walcutt)

Wade provided the latest updates on soil testing and analysis for Walltown, East End, East Durham, Lyon Park and Northgate parks. On August 3, we received preliminary information from Mid-Atlantic Associations. Based on the preliminary findings the City has decided to prohibit access to any sampled area within a park measuring above 400 ppm. Fencing and detailed signs will be installed to mark the area and provide educational and health resources. No preliminary soil samples taken from playgrounds identified any potential contaminant concerns. Findings showed there were no samples for action or remediation at Lyon Park and Northgate Park. There are concerns about East Durham Park and Walltown Park. A separate fenced off portion of property at East End Park, not accessible to the public, commonly known as the Sign & Signal shop identified six areas of concern. The final report will include short and long term solutions in accordance with the EPA and NCDEQ for each area above 400 ppm. The final report is expected to be completed by August 15. These results were shared widely within 24 hours of receiving them. Plans are underway to schedule another community input meeting shortly with stakeholders and residents to discuss next steps on keeping residents safe.

### Q&A

Sundaramoorthy: Is anyone from the dept. of public health coming out with a message?

A. They have not commented at this time.

Mahajan: Is DPR responsible for remediation or would that be another department?

A. Wade reported that plans for remediation would be handled by the subject matter experts. Plans may include an outside agency, the city and managed by the NC Dept. Of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Mahajan: Do you anticipate that DEQ would manage the community relations?

A. Communication would be a partnership and whoever is identified will lead the way. We will have a communication plan in place whatever path we take. We will determine the best methods for sharing information while keeping the community safe.

- Comprehensive Plan Status Update (Mary)

Mary provided highlights on our progress and a review of the timeline was made. She reviewed opportunities for engagement and pointed out the many ways residents could participate in the process. We should be wrapping up the engagement phase soon. The goal is to collect feedback from all areas of Durham. So far, we have received over 500 responses.

### Q&A

Mr. Chavis asked how the \$35,000 will be spent and will DCP has a say on how the funding is used?

A. Rich provided details on how the money will be used to assist with the Comprehensive Master Plan at no additional costs to the City.

Dale McKeel asked if trails will be included in the plan. (A) No.

- October RAC Tour / Joint Meeting Date (Mary)

Feedback was received by commissioners for the proposed tour plans and joint meeting of the RAC and Durham Parks Foundation. We are considering a two-hour tour on October 16, 17, or 19 beginning at 4:00 p.m. and concluding with a meeting and dinner. A list of proposed tour sites includes Equitable & Green Infrastructure projects.

- Meet at DPR Administration Building
  - Sherwood Park
  - C.R. Wood Park
  - Merrick-Moore Park
  - Walltown Park
  - W.D. Hill and Hillside Parks
  - East Durham Park
  - East End Park
  - Long Meadow Park
- Dinner Meeting Site Ideas at Conclusion of Tour:
  - DPR Administration Building
  - Forest Hills Neighborhood Center
  - Spruce Pine Lodge
  - Durham Armory
- Open Comments
  - Mahajan recommended a focus on regional parks.
  - Mahajan: Is there a trail that connects any of these park?
  - Lynda reported that Thursday, October 19 was the preferred date.
  - Mary will put together a proposed itinerary for commissioners for review and approval at the September meeting.

## **VII. Director's Report**

- A copy of the August director's report was included in each RAC packet that members received. Upon your review, send Wade any questions you may have regarding its content.
- Wade provided updates on where we are with Equitable Green Infrastructure projects. He talked about identifying areas of focus that the City is looking to reinvest in. He highlighted potential needs such as playground improvements and repairs that will have a huge impact on the community.

### Open Discussion:

- Sundaramoorthy shared his thoughts on accessible playgrounds and how important the need is for our community moving forward. Mary requested that commissioners connect her with residents who are interested in accessible playgrounds. Karthik stressed the need for recruitment efforts to fill our open seat for a person with a disability.
- Wade pointed out that we do incorporate inclusion and inclusivity during the design phase to incorporate inclusive elements. He identified Merrick Moore as a model and Emilie's work with fund raising goals. Duke park will be the city's first universally accessible playground.
- Wade provided updates on how things are going with Wheels.
- Sundaramoorthy wanted to know if we have a contractor to run the roller rink?
- Mahajan asked how things are going for fall and winter programming? Jason will follow-up and provide numbers. We have some new and exciting programs that will be offered soon.
- Sundaramoorthy asked about the operations of our pools.
- Mr. Chavis shared his feelings on the lack of communication with the closing of Long Meadow Pool.
- Aasim Inshirah a Hillside Park resident, asked what can be done when pop-up concerts

take place in the park and the police don't help. Lynda announced her retirement effective August 31, and thanked commissioners for their support. Commissioners gave Lynda a bag of surprises.

***Cedric adjourned the meeting at 9:10AM.***

Next RAC Meeting – Wednesday, September 13, 2023 (7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.)

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Lynda Merritt*