

City of Fairfax
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB)
Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2022
City of Fairfax Hybrid Meeting
10455 Armstrong Street and GoToMeeting

PRAB Members Present:

Sarah Ross, Chair
Brian Knapp, Vice Chair
Mike Anderson
Tatum Anderson
Jon Buttram
Brian Cipriano
Pat Gallagher
Diana Gibson
Frank Francis
Matt Rice

Absent:

Kim Luckabaugh
Chuck Paceley

Staff:

Cathy Salgado
Brienne Baglini

Guests:

Paul Gilbert, Executive Director, NOVA Parks
Mark Chandler, City Rep Member, NOVA Parks
Brian Nolan

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Chair Ross

Time: 7:01 p.m.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Agenda for March 10, 2022 meeting.

Vice Chair Knapp requested to add director search to agenda under New Business

Motion: Pat Gallagher

Second: Jon Buttram

Approved unanimously

3. Adoption of Minutes

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Minutes from February

Deferred

Motion:

Second:

Approved

4. Presentations

a) Briefing and Discussion with NOVA Parks on Gateway Regional Park

Paul Gilbert, Executive Director and Mark Chandler, Board Member from NOVA Parks were guests who presented preliminary plans for Gateway Regional Park. Also in attendance virtually was Brian Nolan, NOVA Parks Planning and Development Director. Vice Chair Knapp provided introductions. The presentation has been updated since the initial presentation last year. Mr. Gilbert provided background on the park. The intent was for the park to be at an intersection of many trails and to provide respite and information on the regional trail system. Today it does not serve that purpose. A berm was created to try and make the park more usable which has not worked. Instead of fighting nature the idea is to let the park be what it wants to be. The plan includes removing the berm, establishing wetland plants and adding elevated boardwalks. The park would provide an opportunity to learn about the habitat, wildlife and flow of water.

Mr. Gilbert asked for questions. Question on parking and the ability to create parking at the park. Chair Ross stated that it would be hard to make an assessment on where parking could be located without the topographic information. Ms. Gibson added that she would be happy to assist with interpretive signage. She also asked if NOVA Parks can work with the asphalt plant to reroute trucks parking adjacent to the park. Parking will be a challenge. Mr. Cipriano also commented on parking and possibility to add a curb cut on Old Pickett Road. He also proposed adding a bridge crossing across the Accotink to the Wilcoxon Trail. It would be crucial for the park drawing people to it and thru it. The pavilion also needs modernization. Mr. Buttram asked if the idea if for the park to be a mini Huntley Meadows. Mr. Gilbert responded yes. Mr. Buttram said that elevated parking will most likely be needed and should be in the vicinity of the current entrance. The bridge addition would be great. There is also an opportunity for our city middle school Katherine Johnson to participate as they have a very active environmental studies program. Ms. Gibson added that it would be nice to have telescopes, binoculars on platforms along with displaying photos that could be updated. Great opportunity to educate on climate change.

Mr. Rice asked if a letter from FEMA will be needed regarding a map adjustment especially because of removing the berm and the proximity of businesses. Planning has not progressed to this point yet. Ms. Gallagher added that it would be nice to have public art in the project. Mr. Francis said that bikers become dangerous for

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walkers and if there is any thought to restricting bike use. Planning has not progressed to this point.

NOVA Parks will continue working on the project. Ms. Salgado suggested a pre-development meeting with the City Community Development and Planning department. They can assist with determining what documents will be needed to complete the review and permitting process.

B) Reaccreditation Update

Ms. Baglini, Operations Manager, for the Parks and Recreation Department provided an update on the reaccreditation process. There are 154 standards that are reviewed. We provide proof that the city meets the standards. This proof is then reviewed by a visitation team. We will be submitting in late March. The visitation team will meet with us the week of June 6-10, virtually. When we first were accredited six years ago we missed 9 standards. This time we are aiming to pass all of them. We will not know until the national conference in the fall if we pass. Vice Chair Knapp asked that we explain why being accredited is important. Ms. Baglini responded that it makes us be a better department. It helps to put processes in place and to follow best practices. All of this helps our residents – as it helps us do a better job.

5. New Business

a) Summary of recent council meetings and actions pertaining to Parks and Recreation – February 22, March 1 and 8

Ms. Salgado reported that the City Manager presented the proposed FY23 budget and CIP to the Mayor and Council. In addition funding was approved for the purchase of the Mathy property.

b) Return to In-person Meeting Attendance

Ms. Salgado explained that with the lifting of the emergency declaration boards and commissions have to return to in-person meetings. There is a provision that members can attend virtually for health and work reasons up to 25% per calendar year. Ms. Gibson asked about children attending. Chair Ross responded that children can attend.

6. Old Business

a) FY23 CIP and Operating Budget Update

The budget and CIP were presented to the Mayor and Council. Included in the Parks and Recreation CIP is the inclusion of open space yearly funding and West Drive feasibility study. Vice Chair Knapp asked if the Strategic Master Plan was moved to FY24 instead of FY23. Ms. Salgado responded yes. Mr. Knapp explained that this was done because of the retirement of Ms. Salgado and the

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newness of the incoming director. He is also not sure if PRAB is ready for the commitment as there are lots of new members just getting their feet wet. It takes a lot of time and effort by not only staff but also PRAB.

b) Parks and Recreation Director Search

Chair Ross had nothing to report. Vice Chair Knapp wanted to affirm the importance for Chair Ross to reach out to the City Manager and for PRAB to have a seat at the table. Vice Chair Knapp asked that for the next meeting PRAB should:

- See the job description
- Discuss qualities in a director
- Discuss what contribution PRAB can make to the process

Mr. Cipriano stated that the city staff and Mayor and Council may have a different vision than PRAB. He stated that PRAB acts as an advisor but that PRAB should not comment on the job description and posting.

Chair Ross stated that she would reach out to the City Manager. Mr. Buttram explained the School Board's process of finding new principal's and the difference between that and finding a new superintendent.

Mr. Rice noted that Mr. Buttram is an elected official and his role is different than PRAB's role. PRAB is advisory. If the City Council or City Manager is uncomfortable with PRAB being involved then that is their call. Vice Chair Knapp noted that PRAB was invited to the table for Ms. Salgado's hiring.

Chair Ross will send an email to the City Manager.

7. Parks and Recreation Department Reports

a) Project Updates – Community Center

Ms. Salgado shared that the public outreach for Phase 1 was nearing completion and that the architects will be providing three options for city review. Vice Chair Knapp asked about the Senior Center outreach. Ms. Salgado reported that it was fantastic. They provided great input and were very engaged and excited about the project. Mr. Knapp reported that he was disappointed in the in-person outreach session at Sherwood. The attendance was poor. Ms. Salgado noted that over 140 people attended the virtual sessions and that they engagement was very good.

b) Upcoming Meetings, Events and Programs

Thaiss Park project starting soon with meeting kick-off. Will be coming back to PRAB for review. Events and programs are included in the PRAB report.

c) Trail Updates

Ms. Salgado provided an update via the excel spreadsheet.

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8. Stakeholder Updates

a) School Board - Jon Buttram

Mr. Buttram congratulated winter sports at the high school. The boys varsity basketball team made it to the state quarterfinals. They had the best record in 20 years. The new principal Georgina Aye will start this summer. The School Board presented the FY23 proposed budget to the City Council. Asked for \$63.7 million, an 1.8% increase. The presentation went well. Good questions. Mr. Buttram provided updated information on July 4th fireworks. The school can host in the upper parking lot. The stadium will be under renovation. Dr. Pajardo will be retiring on July 1, 2022. A search has started.

Mr. Buttram reported that he will not be running for reelection for the School Board. We all thanked him for his service.

b) Planning Commission –

Mr. Rice thanked Mr. Buttram for his service and commented that the July 4th fireworks show was his family's welcome to the city. The Planning Commission is thinking about housing and looking at the mix of housing in the city. Mr. Rice explained that a report was just submitted to the City Council. Demand outstrips supply for mid-tier housing. There is no clear answer to where the discussion will lead. The video of the discussion can be found on the city website – 2/28/2022.

c) Senior Center – Chuck Pacey

Absent

d) Student Representative – Tatum Anderson

Ms. Anderson reported that school has been busy. They have been using the trails in the city and that she sees why trails are so beneficial and important.

e) Commission on the Arts – Pat Gallagher

Ms. Gallagher reported that most of the Commission on the Arts program information is in the PRAB report. The Commission has had two work sessions with the Willard Sherwood Health and Community Center project team to discuss art space.

f) NOVA Parks - Brian Knapp

Vice Chair Knapp was re-appointed as treasurer for the NOVA board. Revenue for the light shows and golf has been way up. Hiring for part-time positions has been challenging especially for summer operations. They have been understaffed and facility hours have had to be shortened. They have increased the minimum wage. The board is working on the 5-year strategic plan. Some elements are owned by the board some by the staff. When complete he will present it to PRAB. Vice Chair Knapp thanked everyone for their input on Gateway.

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9. Matters of the Members

Mr. Anderson told Mr. Buttram he undersold how well the basketball team did. Mr. Anderson explained that he and Tatum will be virtual for awhile because of a health issue.

Mr. Francis asked if PRAB could discuss Providence Park at the next meeting. There are maintenance issues especially drainage that he would like to discuss. Ms. Salgado suggested Mr. Francis provide some background that could be shared with PRAB.

Mr. Cipriano stated that it is very important to have the bridge designed for Gateway even if it can not be built at this time.

Ms. Gibson reported that the New School has their annual Science Fair on March 29th and that they are looking for judges. April 22nd is Earth Day and is hoping to work with Christopher Fleming (our Parks Arborist) again. She is celebrating a milestone birthday at the end of the month.

Mr. Knapp reported that there is a lot of history at Chancery Square and Providence Park regarding drainage. He also agreed with Mr. Cipriano about having the bridge designed. He noted that there are a number of trees down in Daniel's Run Park and that he has had communication with Mac Ryan about the Wilcoxon Trail low spots.

10. Meeting Adjournment

Time: 9:25 p.m.

The next PRAB meeting will be held on Thursday, April 14, 2022 @ 7:00pm at City Hall.