



Clayton County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

Minutes

July 19, 2021



Board Member Attendance:

Vacant, Chairman	Parks and Recreation / At Large	Vacant
Ianta Burks, Vice-Chair	BOC Chairman Appointee	Present
Jarvis Jackson	District 1 Appointee	Present
Rickey Lovelace	District 2 Appointee	Present
Carlos Benifield	District 3 Appointee	Present
Charlton Bivins	District 4 Appointee	Present
Carlos Frazier	Parks and Recreation / At Large	Present

Guest Attendance:

Troy Hodges	Director/Parks and Recreation	Present
Marsha White	Executive Assistant	Present
Koboi Simpson	Recreation Administrator	Present

I. CALL TO ORDER

Director Hodges called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m. and thanked advisory members for attending. The meeting was held via Zoom conference call. Notice to the public was posted on the Clayton County Parks and Recreation website.

II. RECOGNIZE CITIZENS/PUBLIC COMMENT

Three citizens were present for today's meeting.

- A. Mr. Drew Andrews mentioned issues at Independence Park including no restrooms, vegetation overtaking lighting, bleachers in disrepair, and the electrical box having exposed wiring. He inquired whether facilities are inspected prior to opening and whether there were staffing shortages from Covid. He also asked how the community can volunteer to assist with parks.

Director Hodges inquired as to what field was being referenced so he can send staff out the next day to address the wiring and lighting issues. He explained that the bleacher project usually occurs during the winter months when all bleachers are inspected for repair and are repainted. As for the restrooms, a tree fell in the middle of the building causing severe damage and the result was the building had to be demolished. Several port-a-pottys have been rented but were damaged and burned. The county is working on installation of a vandal proof restrooms; funding has been secured and the work is in procurement with Central Services.

- B. Dee Haney inquired about the water park and when it will be completed and open to the public.

Director Hodges stated that the water park will not be open to the public this year, and opening will be Memorial Day weekend 2022. The opening was delayed due to several issues with number of restrooms/showers and the Board of Health will not permit opening until all conditions are satisfied. During construction, foundation issues were found at the Nassau building which resulted in demolition instead of renovation. Construction was further delayed by supply chain issues and Covid.

- C. Attania Funny said that board member Carlos Benifield forwarded her the meeting information. She was not able to locate it on the website and asked if it was posted. She also noticed several ant beds at the tennis courts at the South Clayton Recreation Center and asked about the frequency of spraying. Finally, she mentioned that the Flint Community Center is gorgeous with a great playground.

Director Hodges stated that the Flint River Intergenerational Center is under Senior Services and not Parks and Recreation. In response to the ant beds, he stated that grassy areas receive granular insecticide twice a year. Ms. Marsha White responded to the inquiry about posting the meeting information on claytonparks.com. She shared her screen to show Ms. Funny where the meeting information is located. She said she will contact the Clerk of Commission to have meetings posted on the BOC website as well as have them posted on social media.

III. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

The May 17, 2021 Minutes were presented to the Board for review, discussion, and approval. No revisions noted. Charlton Bivins made a Motion to approve the Minutes. Jarvis Jackson seconded the Motion. All were in favor; no objections. The Motion was approved.

IV. BUSINESS

A. Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Chairman

Vice Chair Burks reported that Dr. McGlory is no longer with the board leaving the Chairman position available. She opened the floor for nominations. Mr. Carlos Benifield nominated Charlton Bivins; Mr. Rickey Lovelace nominated Jarvis Jackson who declined, and Vice Chair Ianta Burks nominated Rickey Lovelace who declined. Mr. Rickey Lovelace seconded the nomination for Charlton Bivins. All were in favor; no objections. Nomination for Charlton Bivins to fill the vacant Chairperson position was approved.

B. Advisory Board Visibility

Vice Chair Burks reminded everyone about the pre-Covid discussion of touring Parks and Recreation facilities. She expressed that board members should attempt to visit all facilities and meet staff while visiting so that staff know the board members. She added that there are many events planned in the parks and the board should have members present for visibility and recognition, so the public knows the board.

C. Concessions at Each Park

Mr. Carlos Benifield asked who runs the concession stands at each park. Director Hodges responded that each park has a contracted vendor and whether Mr. Benifield was asking about a specific park. Mr. Benifield said Panhandle Park. He also asked if it was a put up for bid.

Mr. Kobo Simpson stated that anyone interested can inquire with Parks and Recreation staff and Heather Easterling runs concessions at Panhandle Park. The vendor spots have not been put up for bid and have been the same vendors for quite some time. When a vacancy occurs, there is solicitation for vendors. There are no coordinators operating the concession stands; they are all ran by contracted vendors. Mr. Simpson added that the vendors pay rent for the spot and any profits belong to the vendors. Mr. Simpson said that he would email the vendor list to Mr. Benifield.

D. Lights in the Parks

Mr. Carlos Benifield noted that this item was previously discussed in public comment.

E. Independence Park Restroom Facility

Mr. Carlos Benifield noted that this item was previously discussed in public comment. However, he wants to revisit this item at the next board meeting.

F. Team Numbers at Each Park

Mr. Carlos Benifield said that football season is approaching and wanted to know if registration was open. He inquired about the number of teams at each park. Mr. Kobo Simpson stated that registration opened in May and closes on July 31st. Currently, there are 701 youth registered for sports including football, baseball, soccer, cheerleading, and flag football. The number of teams is not known yet because teams are assigned after registration closes.

G. Clayton County League

Mr. Carlos Benifield inquired how a football organization can have their team join the Clayton County League. Mr. Kobo Simpson said that Parks and Recreation does not entertain solicitations from organizations. Teams play with municipalities only who follow the GRPA guidelines. Therefore, independent associations are not able to join the Clayton County League.

H. Police Presence

Mr. Carlos Benifield stated that he attended a baseball game at Rum Creek/Jonesboro and there was a big fight where a gun was drawn. He had to call Jonesboro Police Department because of the fight. He said that there needs to be more police at Parks and Recreation games as parents are getting out of control. Director Hodges replied that the department is looking into that and will implement it as needed. Currently, off duty officers are employed for security but having them at every game presents a financial challenge for the department.

I. Beach Opening

Mr. Carlos Benifield noted that this item was previously discussed in public comment.

J. Chairman Turner 5K Run/Walk Donation

Mr. Carlos Benifield referenced that Chairman Turner's 5K is next month and asked whether Parks and Recreation was partnered with Chairman Turner. He would like for Parks and Recreation and the Advisory Board to partner with the 5K and make a donation. He asked if Parks and Recreation employees can be a part of the 5K. Director Hodges advised that Parks and Recreation will not be a part of any donation. The county has approximately 2500 employees and many will be a part of the 5K including Parks and Recreation employees. Vice Chair Burks added that this is a good event to have visibility for Advisory Board members. Mr. Bivins added that board members could donate their stipend to the 5K to give back to the community.

V. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Parks and Recreation Director Troy Hodges thanked the Board for their dedication to Clayton County Parks and Recreation and provided an update on current projects and events related to Clayton County Parks and Recreation. Director Hodges informed the Board of the following:

- Construction at the Nassau building at the water park is going slowly but the water park is 98% complete. VIP complex renovations are 95% complete and they hope to open the building October 2021. The stadium at the VIP complex will get a total modification to the seating area.
- International Park Trails new program is "Walk and Read" which has QR codes positioned along the trail for kids to scan.
- Jesters Creek Trail, which goes from the Battle Creek Road area to the Southlake Mall area, is under renovations with new bridge trails coming.
- Rivers Edge Greenway, formerly Rivers Edge Golf Course, will get an extended walking trail similar to International Park. The trail will follow the old golf cart path.

- There will be an upcoming election in District 1 to fill the vacant seat of the late Sonna Singleton Gregory.
- The Café at the Lake Spivey Recreation Center is now open. Advisory Board members are welcome to eat lunch at the café.
- Events Updates: Wet and Wild event at Rum Creek was successful and well attended. It was followed by a Movie Under the Stars; the next Movie Under the Stars is 07/31/2021 at Morrow/Lake City; all ages Fishing Derby at International Park is 08/07/2021; New program for E-Sports NBA 2K Championship will occur at all five recreation centers on 08/14/2021; Movie Under the Stars on 08/14/2021 at Lee Street Park; and Final Movie Under the Stars will be 09/11/2021 with location TBD.
- Covid mandates remain unchanged. Mandates include limited numbers for sports and at recreation centers, masks for everyone, follow social distancing, and encouraging all employees to get vaccinated. Proposed resolution for Covid updates before the BOC tomorrow, 07/20/2021.
- Park Services: the number of daily attendees at parks has drastically increased. Staff perform daily checks and restroom cleaning. Football fields are being prepped for the upcoming season.
- CAPRA: Clayton County Parks and Recreation had met the standards for the third consecutive five-year mark. Continued accreditation shows the full commitment of all department employees to follow NPRA standards. Next reaccreditation will be 2026.
- Seasonal hiring is coming to a close. There was a low turnout for summer camp positions.
- There is a national lifeguard shortage, and the department needs lifeguards badly.
- Phase II of the county's compensation study is being implemented and employees are receiving salary increases.
- The department has some reorganization, and the organizational chart has been updated. Parks and Recreation received one new position and two positions were reassigned to another to the Communications department.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Mr. Carlos Frazier asked who he can contact regarding donations of boxes of giveaways. Items include Puma socks, bookbags, clothing, etc. and are new with tags. Mr. Kobo Simpson said he will reach out to coordinate.

- B. Mr. Jarvis Jackson asked if there is a way citizens can submit issues/concerns throughout the county. Director Hodges said that anyone can submit through See Click Fix on the Clayton County website or by downloading the app.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The Clayton County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.