



**Parks and Greenways Board
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.**

Chair McGregor called to order the Regular Parks and Greenways Board Meeting at 9:31 a.m. on February 11, 2025.

The following attended in person at Town Hall, 441 White Pine Drive, Laurel Park NC 28739:

- Chair John McGregor
- Vice Chair Judy Lyons
- Secretary Pat LaSalle
- Denise Layfield
- Joseph Robustelli
- Todd Plessel
- Parks Operation Coordinator Bryan Hensley
- Council Representative George Banta
- Interim Town Clerk Bobbie Trotter

The following were absent:

- Town Manager Cara Reeves

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair McGregor asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair McGregor asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Mrs. Layfield wanted to add a discussion about the tree bear root sale. It was added to Old Business. The agenda was unanimously approved on motion by Mrs. Layfield and seconded by Vice Chair Lyons.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair McGregor asked for discussion on December 10, 2024, and January 14, 2025, regular meeting minutes. Mr. Robustelli made a motion to approve the minutes and seconded by Chair McGregor. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

BUDGET REPORT

Chair McGregor spoke briefly about the budget. He stated that he was able to go back in the minutes and locate four

OLD BUSINESS

Parks and Greenways Board Vacancies

Pat LaSalle was voted as a new member at last month's meeting. John McGregor will continue to serve on the board for another term. Chair Anderson asked board members to encourage interested parties to submit an application for consideration to fill one more potentially anticipated vacancy.

Volunteer Appreciation Gathering

Discussion ensued regarding the staging of an event to thank all this year's volunteers who helped Laurel Park sustain and maintain its public lands. The board agreed to host an event on Thursday, January 30, 2025, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Trailside Brewing company with a budget not to exceed \$450 after a motion from Mr. Robustelli and seconded by Vice Chair Lyons. Town Clerk Amin said she would publish the notice and encourage people to RSVP by January 20, 2025. Chair Anderson said he would interface with Trailside to solidify a date.

Staircase rebuilt at JOR

Mr. Plessel reported that he had cut and dried boards for the rebuilding of the staircase at Jump Off Rock park. He intended to varnish the boards next. He will select a date for the rebuilding in the next month or so when weather permits. Council representative Banta said he had all the tools required for the project.

NEW BUSINESS

Yearly Calendar Approval

The board voted unanimously to discontinue monthly site meetings in 2025 after a motion by Vice Chair Lyons and seconded by Mr. Robustelli. The board determined that it would call special site meetings for the Year 2025 as needed.

Parks and Greenways Comprehensive Plan Discussion

Copies of the Parks and Greenways Comprehensive Plan 2016-2026 were distributed among board members who needed a copy. Members were encouraged to read the document in the coming months to suggest relevant updates and changes to the overall plan, which will serve as a guiding document for the board going forward. Chair Anderson suggested that a small committee be appointed next year to lead this project for the entire board. The plan will need to be updated, at a minimum, with the following new projects and challenges – Ecusta Trail interface with Laurel Green Park, highway U.S. 64 round-about construction, Glen Rock Spring Park and Hurricane Helene aftermath. Chair Anderson asked Town Clerk Amin to arrange for the U.S. 64 corridor landscape architect Hunter Marks to address the parks board in January or February 2025.

Hardwood Seedling Sale

Chair Anderson suggested that the board consider a tree seedling give-away program next Spring and/or Fall 2025 to help replenish the devastation of Laurel Park's tree canopy from Hurricane Helene in September. He referenced the N.C. Forestry Service program and website for more information. The board emphasized the role of private landowners in Laurel Park playing a vital role in restoring trees on their individual properties. Council Representative Banta suggested that the board do an inventory of trees lost in public parks due to the hurricane to develop a list of where seedlings might be desired for restoration. Board members agreed that this was a worthwhile project to be considered for one of its goals for Year 2025.

PARK TECHNICIAN'S REPORT

Mr. Hensley is focusing on maintenance and cleanup of the parks system after Hurricane Helene as well as Christmas decorations for Laurel Green Park and the Fifth Avenue town entrance. At least one tree in the Fifth Avenue Laurel Green berm needs to be staked as it was pushed over by the hurricane. Vice Chair Lyons said she would get staking materials to Mr. Hensley for this use.

INVASIVES SPECIES COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. McGregor said the committee has the following goals:

1. Incentivize property owners to remove invasives species from their properties as well as to engage in restoration efforts. The board discussed the potential of having demonstration projects that would provide teaching opportunities for habitat restoration – from the first step of invasive species removal to the final stages of restoration of habitats with native plantings.
2. Identify and prioritize invasive vine hotspots for removal and to provide supervision to the two part-time town employees who are removing vines. Town Clerk Amin suggested the committee provide direct supervision to the employees addressing where vines should be removed on a priority basis as well as developing progress reports to be delivered to the town and private citizens who are funding this project. She clarified that the budget for vine removal is within the direct scope of the invasive vines committee.

BEE COMMITTEE REPORT

The committee intends to set a date to initiate discussions with the Asheville Bee Committee to determine whether the two groups can collaborate in the Year 2025.

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Progress is continuing on the celebration with the purchase and decoration of a Main Street bear that will live at an as yet undetermined location in Laurel Park.

BOARD AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Banta suggested that the board had a sizeable number of significant projects to address next year, including the Ecusta Trail, U.S. 64 road construction and continued cleanup of Hurricane Helene. The board also presented Chair Anderson with a plaque as a token of its appreciation for his service to the parks and greenways board and to the Town of Laurel Park.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Anderson adjourned the meeting at 11:01 a.m. on motion by Vice Chair Lyons and seconded by Mr. Robustelli.