

MINUTES
BRUNSWICK COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
November 8, 2022

I. Call to Order

- Laura Botto called the Meeting to order. The Meeting was held in Building G, Parks and Recreation Conference Room.

II. Invocation

- Kris Crane gave the Invocation.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 13, 2022 Meeting

- **Mike Sullivan made a Motion to accept the Minutes as approved and Teagan Perry Hall seconded. The Minutes were approved 5 to 0.**

IV. Citizens Wishing to be Heard

John Williams, Jr. was present to discuss the ADA accessibility within the County Parks. Mr. Williams stated he has been paralyzed the last 17 years and is a resident of Brunswick County. Stated ADA accessibility has been available since the 70's and that individuals with disabilities have been overlooked for decades. He has lived here for 49 years. Mr. Williams asked how many County Parks have ADA playgrounds?

Aaron Perkins replied we have 12 County Parks, of which 10 have playgrounds. Smithville Park is the only all inclusive. Other Parks have ADA compliance, but not equipment that is ADA accessible.

Mr. Williams informed the Board that he has asked the County now for 4 years to assist with having more ADA accessible Parks. He said the County was more concerned with the beautification process and planting a palm tree. The mulch is a barrier at the playground areas and does not allow the playgrounds to be accessible.

Kris stated that she had been to the playground at Smithville Park that was ADA accessible. She asked why that playground was ADA accessible and not all the Parks. She grew up in a County with less than 40,000 people and they had lots of ADA accessible areas.

Mr. Williams stated it is the right thing to do. Wildlife has an accessible lift on the Fish Factory Road. Can't use the Brunswick Nature Park kayak launch due to the parking lot doesn't have parking near the launch.

Aaron stated that Clearwater Management and Coastal Land Trust donated the property at BNP and have the final approval to do parking at BNP.

Mr. Williams said he wants things improved. People say they understand, but they don't, they are not disabled.

Laura indicated she empathizes and feels all should be ADA accessible. Said there are so many to do and all we can do is bring to the powers to be to get money to do things.

Mr. Williams said there were grants provided and he heard there was 3 million dollars spent at the Supply Park and wanted to know how much money was spent at Town Creek Park when renovation was done.

Aaron replied 5.7 million. Playground was existing and TCP Project was done in 2010 prior to him becoming Director. Liberty Swing located at Smithville Park is provided by LSI, which has the rights for the swing. Swings come from Australia and are \$28,000, which require a deposit to be paid in advance of \$14,000.

Mr. Williams indicated there is other ADA accessible equipment besides liberty swings. Aaron replied that most of the Park's playgrounds are ADA accessible, but don't have equipment. Trillium Grant is who did the all-inclusive playground at Smithville Park. Mr. Williams stated he had been to the Commissioners Meeting to voice his concerns and received no response. Mr. Williams again expressed that he doesn't understand why no parking spots can be added near the loading dock at BNP. He said other people park in the no parking or the loading dock.

Aaron said he would do everything he could.

Mr. Williams asked how many times have the Parks and Recreation Department talked about ADA accessible?

Dale replied that the Department may have fallen short, but moving forward will do better.

Mr. Williams wanted to know why no one applied for the grant that was offered?

Aaron explained that during PreCovid and Covid that our Department had to return grant money for Brunswick Waterway Park that could not be used based on conditions of the pandemic.

Mr. Williams asked was anyone told about the Grant?

Aaron replied no.

Mr. Williams indicated he had written the Governor of NC and received the link for the grant.

Aaron said you have to get approval from the Board of Commissioners to explore and apply for grants. There are times when municipalities are applying for the same grants as well.

Teagan asked if the Special Populations Coordinator can look at grants.

Aaron stated he is over the grants and getting funding isn't easy.

Dale shared that our Advisory Board needs to make sure that we do not let this fall on deaf ears and to make it top priority for the Board of Commissioners to understand.

Aaron indicated that the amenities in the Parks are what the public has requested through Site Master Plan meetings.

John replied ADA compliant is minimal and does not mean accessibility. People with disabilities give up easy and are tired of not being able to use facilities. We have technology to make things better, but people are choosing not to do it. He hopes to finally see improvements.

Laura stated that the Advisory Board really appreciated Mr. Williams coming in and opening their eyes to commit to trying to get things done.

Kris stated she loved Mr. Williams passion.

Mr. Williams said he expects Parks to be ADA accessible and hopes to see improvements.

He has been approached by news stations regarding sharing his story. Mr. Williams stated the Board of Commissioners do not give a flip about you and that was evident when he attended a Board of Commissioners Meeting this past June.

Aaron stated that the Advisory Board Members are appointed by the Board of Commissioners. Can't change the past but can change the future. He will push as much as he can.

Mr. Williams asked for the contact information for Cleanwater Management.

Aaron said he will provide, as we have no say so in BNP. We only oversee the facility.

Mike responded that this was the first time he had heard anything on the ADA accessibility.

V. **Commission Business Session**

- **10 Year Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

Aaron stated the Plan was mailed out to all the members of the Advisory Board. Public Meeting was held on 10/25/22, where roughly 60 people attended. Top concerns from those who attended were to not raise taxes and to slow down the development. Existing Park facilities need love and care. New Plan proposes 4 new District Parks and 5 new Community Parks. Brunswick County has slated approval of 50-60,000 new developments. We have 19 municipalities and 15-20,000 new developers in Leland area. There are problems with developments clearing entire areas. Want something put in place that they can't cut everything down and to maintain the green and blue way areas. There are currently no dedicated bike paths.

Brunswick County is growing and more schools are needed. Indoor facility space is a problem and more indoor facility space is needed to accommodate the three areas of the County.

Kris stated it was a lot of reading for the Plan and that a lot of work went into it.

Motion was made by Dale Rabon to approve the 10 Year Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan and present to the Board of Commissioners and seconded by Teagan Perry Hall. Motion carried 5 to 0.

VI. **Director's Report**

- **Update on Smithville Park Project**

At this time still waiting on board to get in so that the grinder pump can be put in place.

- **Update Park Improvements**

Looking at doing the following Park improvements:

Ocean Isle Beach Park, new sign, motorized gate and perimeter fencing;
Dutchman Creek Park, new sign, perimeter fencing and playground;
Town Creek Park, new sign, motorized gate, perimeter fencing; and
Brunswick Nature Park, new sign, motorized gate, ABC stone and landscaping.

VII. **Comments from Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Members**

Aaron shared that he is having Wildlife check the size of the gator at Ocean Isle Beach Park. A gentleman has been feeding it and taking selfie pictures with the gator.

Brian Moore is working with Conex to put in a storage unit for Dixie Youth League at Ocean Isle Beach Park.

Youth Football was set for last game on 11/12/22. Had to move games to Tuesday and Thursday the following week based on weather.

Kris shared that the Fall Soccer Season was better with parents acting accordingly and good referees.

Teagan liked that the soccer games required either none or very little travel this season to other Parks.

Aaron thanked the Advisory Board for their service. Noted that it is not the easiest with the complaints but was appreciative of them serving on the Board.

Mike stated Crystal King was wanting an outdoor volleyball area at Dutchman Creek Park and Smithville Park. He was going to ask her to attend an Advisory Board Meeting.

Teagan stated children needed to learn how to play volleyball before middle and high school.

Aaron stated families wanted Lacrosse also.

VIII. Adjourn Meeting

Mike made a Motion to adjourn meeting and Dale seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

IX. Meeting Roll Call

Board Members Present: Laura Botto, Teagan Perry-Hall, Dale Rabon, Mike Sullivan and Kris Crane.

Board Members Absent: None

Staff Members Present: Aaron Perkins and Tanya Jackson

Citizens of Interest: John Williams, Jr.

Next Scheduled Meeting: Tuesday, December 13, 2022