

MINUTES
BRUNSWICK COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
March 22, 2016

I. Call to Order

- Howard Benton called the meeting to order. The meeting was held in Building M, 2nd Floor Conference Room.

II. Invocation

- Howard Benton gave the invocation.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 16, 2016 Meeting

- *The Minutes were approved 3-0. Laura Botto made a motion to accept the Minutes as approved and Leander Mosley seconded.*

IV. Citizens wishing to be heard

- **George Briggs**, an owner at Ocean Ridge Plantation, and on behalf of Carol Dunham, appreciated the efforts of Brunswick County Parks and Recreation for including them based on their concerns about the park expansion and for inviting them to be on the Steering Committee. However, he was disappointed to find out that once appointed on the Steering Committee that there was only going to be the two opportunities for them to address their concerns before this Project gets a recommendation to go before the Commissioners. They had limited time to review the over 250 pages of data that was sent from Parks and Recreation and it was in fact burdensome to review it all in the time given as it was lots of data. Please see attached documentation; Document 1; presented by Mr. Briggs.
- Howard addressed Mr. Briggs about the additional property that OIB owns in that it is their property and it is up to them as to what happens with that property. He cannot predict what the Town will likely do with the additional property and stated that it had been 8 years since the first Plan and needs change.
- **Bob Plebanek** is a resident of Ocean Ridge since 2010, in which time he rented until his house was built 4 years ago. His house is approximately 2000 ft from the Park. He has done some research on Brunswick County Parks in general and has compiled data. He is a retired air force colonel. His main concerns in the data he produced was proximity of large sports complexes in relation to neighborhoods and that no other Brunswick County Park would share a common border of more than 600ft of lights with a large neighborhood like Ocean Ridge. His main concern is lights and spillage of lights into their neighborhood. He is worried about perimeter lighting. Stated he can see the lights from the Park now and that there are over 100-200 lots that will have an unobstructed views of the light towers. He believes that OIB will look similar to Town Creek Park when completed and estimates that visibility of those lights can be seen as far as two miles out. The Park, if constructed, will impede his enjoyment of his home. He is concerned about the light towers and their proximity for current and future homeowners. He does not deny the need for more facilities in Brunswick County, but

wants an alternate location for the sports complex as proposed in the plan. He likes the Park the way it is. Please see attached documentation; Document 2; supplied by Mr. Plebanek.

- **Discussion (Bob, Laura, Aaron, Daisy, Howard, George)**

Laura: Was the Park boundary existing or was Ocean Ridge there first?

Aaron: Stated the Park was donated in 2004;

Daisy Ivey (Town of OIB): Land was donated in 2004. It has always been zoned commercial property.

Laura: Made a statement that the area could have built as anything.

Howard: Asks if he is proposing that there be no lights on the fields?

Bob: Wants to know why we are spending taxpayer dollars for lights on the fields? What is the return on investment?

Howard: Sometimes seniors use the Park after games.

Bob: He is concerned with the lights and noise from the loud speakers. He would prefer the audio level from the Park be zero.

Howard: Again, what are you asking, No lights?

Bob: YES-NO lights at Park. It seems as though lights are on now at parks and no one is there.

Howard: Told him the light issue is being addressed at all Brunswick County Parks.

George: Spoke again that the property owners at Ocean Ridge understood there would be 2 baseball fields. He does not want 4.

Bob: Agreed with the 2 baseball fields from the original plan.

Howard: Askes, So 2 ballfields with lights?

George: Ocean Ridge is a retirement community and is continuing to build.

Bob: Homes are currently under construction and being built.

Howard: Asked, Basically, are you suggesting we move the Park? The County has already invested monies into this location and the land was donated.

Many in the Room: All agreed that they would like to see the Park moved.

There is more discussion between Howard and Bob concerning lights and ball fields.

Bob: Believes his quality of life will be impacted by this Park.

Howard: Understands his concerns about the lights.

- **Dave White** is an Ocean Ridge Resident. He stated that lights are not the only problem. Noise and the ballpark is a problem. The Master Plan does not address noise. He has searched the internet and found data from Seattle of studies on noise levels and feels that the County has not done enough in their efforts to provide data about the noise issue. He is concerned with noise because his house is within a ¼ mile of the Park. He believes that someone should have provided something addressing noise concerns and its full impact to Ocean Ridge should be part of this Plan. He is worried that the sports complex will decrease the value of property and wants the complex to be in a different area.
- **Michael Savoia** is an Ocean Ridge resident with an extensive background in planning and budgets. His concerns are why was the number of ballfields changed from 2 to 4? He has reviewed the survey data and believes that the data does not support the addition of the extra ballfields. It was listed 9th from the survey and the survey does not

suggest they are needed. Number 2 on the survey is basketball courts to be located at the back of the Park and that these may not be built because of funds that will be used to build the ballfields which were not high on the agenda. He wants us to further review the data and facts and not rush to build out the Park. He would like for us to please take a look at the 2 fields and the lighting and where they will be placed. In the original Plan had the two ball fields faced away from Ocean Ridge, now these 4 fields face all over. He believes the addition of these fields are so a few select business owners can profit off of the sports complex.

- **Discussion (D.B. Grantham (OIB), Michael, George, Howard)**

D.B.: Asks, Michael, why would you think the business owners from OIB would be benefiting from this Park?

Michael: Explains it's his understanding that we are looking at hosting tournaments and that this Park Plan was developed to bring in revenue to restaurants, motels, hotels. Why is OIB looking to donate this land if it does not benefit them?

D.B.: Explained that years ago the County came to them and told them they needed a Park in this part of the County and that is sole reason that OIB donated the land.

Michael: Doesn't object to the Park, but again states, that the data doesn't reflect what facilities we are putting in the Park.

George: Again states that between the survey and the workshop that the data and comments from both reflect low comments for baseball.

- **Tim Ivey**, not a resident of Ocean Ridge, but a lifetime resident of Brunswick County. He has seen a lot of change and has a different perspective when speaking about the Park. He has played sports his whole life transitioning into coaching and still coaches on some level today involving a variety of sports. He states that there are a lot of kids from OIB to the Stateline involved in sports and that many have a hard time getting to and from Parks. The Town donated the 58 acres and that no matter where the Park is built he believes someone would complain. Taxes would need to be used to buy additional land. This Park is needed. He is not an expert on lighting and ball fields, but 4 ballfields is not enough for all the kids, especially, with practice. From his perspective, this Park is needed for the children, seniors, soccer, flag football and more is needed on this end of the County and this land is land the County does not need to purchase. The Park needs to be used to the fullest and he wants more facilities.

- **Tom Seamon** has been an Ocean Ridge resident for 5 years. He is concerned that OIB wants to hold commercial tournaments. He has a police/security background and believes expansion of the Park will increase crime, disorderly behavior, and traffic. He uses the Oyster Festival traffic as an example for increased traffic due to commercial events. Please see documentation; Document 3; supplied by Mr. Seamon.

- **Discussion (Tom, Howard, Aaron, Dean (OIB), George, Bob)**

Tom: Wanted to know who patrols the Park?

Howard: Sherriff's Department is responsible and there has been no vandalism that he is aware of.

Aaron: Says that the only incident he can remember involved graffiti in the Park. He explained that the events we plan on holding at the Park will not be like the events at North Myrtle Beach. Our tournaments have 600-700 people in a format in which they will all not be at the Park at one time.

Tom: He is worried about large Community Events.

Aaron: Staff is the main reason for the additional fields to serve youth and adults because of flooding issues at Shallotte Park.

Tom: Wants to know how we are going to prevent events and what are the procedures and requirements?

Aaron: They would have to fill out a Special Use Agreement.

Dean: Wants to clear up the misconception that OIB want to use this Park for large community events. They had no motive when they donated the land and they were promised by the County that this Park would be built out in 3 to 4 years.

OIB would give more land if needed to expand and his primary interest is in the over 3300 youth which cannot use Shallotte Park on a regular basis because of use and need for practice space. He stated that the Park is owned by the County, run by the County, and there is no intent to make it a commercial complex.

Howard: Addresses the crime rate and states that North Myrtle Beach does not use police for their events.

George: Questions the demand/need for regional tournaments and says it was clearly stated somewhere in some of the data he received.

Dean: Again reiterated that was not the intent and to stay off of this subject.

Howard: Went into details about the number of girl's teams and their regional tournaments and how we need 4 fields to accommodate this kind of tournament.

Bob: Says there are no children in Ocean Ridge Community. Move the Park next to high school or hold games at their facilities.

Howard: Discussed that there was land close to Jesse Mae that was looked at for a potential Park in the past, but then OIB donated land, and he proposes to everyone, "what would you do if you were in this situation?"

Bob: Says we are resolving the deficiency in the wrong area of the County.

Aaron: States that there was a Comprehensive Master Plan and a Strategic Plan put in place and that is how this Park was chosen years ago. Brunswick County approached OIB to donate and to eventually build the Park to serve the surrounding neighborhoods.

George: The demand is not there for the Park to have 4 ballfields. He says Master Plan says most people would like to walk or cycle to their local Park and this Park will not accommodate that.

- **Joe Arancio**, an Ocean Ridge resident who was a project manager in his profession has questions about the lighting and spillage from the light data. He is worried about how the lights will be downcast. He questions the Park parking lots and turn radiuses and whether school buses will even be able to turn around in the Park. He wants to know what DOT data we have on traffic issues. Wants to know why we are not using the schools as viable practice and play fields.

- **Discussion (Joe, Howard, Aaron)**

Howard: Explains that there is a rental fee to use the schools, \$50/hr.

Aaron: States that the schools operate totally separate from us.

Howard: There is a turn lane in the Plan.

Joe: Wants to know how many cars can fit in the turn lane?

Howard: States that the engineers have addressed this.

Joe: Wants to know what the operating hours are at the Park? What is the last time for an inning?

Aaron: Our policy states no games can start after 9pm. There are no 9 inning games with 1 hour time limit.

Joe: Has questions about the wetlands.

Aaron: States these have been addressed.

Joe: What triggered this expansion?

Aaron: The existing 58 acres along with the needs of the Parks and Recreation Staff. Based on data about youth/adult participation in the last 5-6 years our numbers are growing and demand is there.

Joe: He understands we need fields for kids, but he is concerned about the traffic, the lighting. Traffic is his biggest concern.

Aaron: Says they have met with DOT and he knows that the Park needs road improvements and these are in the Project and are included in the cost of the Project.

Joe: Questions if there will be a signal?

Aaron: Just a turn lane per DOT.

Joe: Charges the Board Members to ask for more data about this Project.

- **Karen Williams**, a spokesperson for Duke Energy, came to speak about Smithville Park. There is a group of employees from the power plant that frequent the Park and use it often for softball and are happy to hear of the expansion. She would like to see volleyball added to the Park and would like to offer assistance if the County can find a spot for it.

- **Cheri Lavorgna**, stated that the average age for OIB, Sunset, and Calabash is 61. Of these 3300 children, are they all in District 1? And are they all interested in baseball?? Where is the demand? OIB donated the land, but they have more land closer to the traffic circle and that's where she wants the fields moved then they would not impact their community.

- **Discussion (Aaron, George, Tim, Joe, D.B, Howard)**

Aaron: Says County owns the 58 acres now. The Plan was revised to stay in the 58 acres so we did not have to ask for additional land. Title was transferred to the County from OIB.

George: Med. Age, again, children seem to be located in Shallotte according to data. Baseball is not high in the data, walking trails are. Believes that data supports that high schoolers filled out the survey.

Tim: Says he's never heard of a child that would choose walking trails and picnic areas as their primary needs.

Aaron: The biggest needs of the Parks and Recreation Department is to find fields to accommodate usage. Everything is growing and if we keep growing we are going to have to cut off the youth and adults we can serve because of space issues. Mentions briefly the expansion at Smithville Park will include ball fields, pickle ball, tennis courts, etc.

Joe: Says he believes lighting at the tennis courts should be cut off at a certain time.

Aaron: Reiterated the park hours again.

D.B: wishes that everyone could have seen the lighting presentation from the Steering Committee Meeting and says he was amazed at the innovations and control and the advanced technology.

Aaron: Says that we will put the light presentation on our website so everyone can view it. He states that lighting is advanced and addresses spillage and that the higher the pole the better to control spillage and scatter, and glare.

Joe: Are these Musco lights?

Aaron: States that the lights at Town Creek are Musco lights.

George: Expresses concerns about lights again at the ground level as well as looking at the light towers will be obnoxious. Wants to know if the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board has seen the lights at Town Creek at night?

Aaron: Passes out sheets of examples from ground level.

Unidentified person: Asks if alcohol is allowed in the Parks?

Aaron: States no alcohol is allowed and if anyone sees any activity that is not appropriate at the Park to call 911. We have Staff on site during the hours of 7-3:30 and if they see anything at the Park they are told to also call 911 and to not try to address any problems, but to let law enforcement deal with it. They are in charge of maintenance of the Park, not security.

Howard: Comments that all Parks are fenced or gated at the front of the Park.

Aaron: Again reiterates that a Park Superintendent is present at the Park from 7-3:30pm only. The other times at the Park it would be up to citizens to make 911 calls if something was to occur, but that also the Sheriff's Department does patrol our Parks on a limited basis.

Tim: Says that in all his years playing sports and coaching that he has never seen any incidents in our Parks that would require a 911 call.

Daisy: States that the Deputy County Manager spoke about and addressed the crime issue at the Steering Committee Meeting.

Howard: Can only remember of 2 incidents at our Parks involving 2 teenagers at Northwest Park breaking into the concession stand stealing snacks.

There are questions from several at the meeting about the Oyster Festival and will it be held at the Park. Aaron let everyone know that the Oyster Festival has no plans to be moved to this location which was reiterated by Daisy, Dean, and D.B who are all representatives of Ocean Isle Beach. There were some questions about the land that the Oyster Festival is held on now is for sale or has been sold and the Festival will need to be moved. Daisy assured everyone by letting them know that the Town of OIB owned the property and again there are no plans for this Festival to be moved.

At this point, Aaron thanked everyone for their comments, but there was more business that needed to be discussed by the Advisory Board. He let everyone know that the public comment section of the meeting was closed and there would be no more public comments allowed.

V. Commission Business Session

- **Presentation of Ocean Isle Beach Master Plan (Board Recommendation Needed)**

Aaron informed the Advisory Board of the process in regards to the OIB Park Project. He let everyone know that the Project was returned to the stakeholders and Steering Committee and a revised Plan was presented on March 18, 2016. In this he explained that the new Plan will not include the need to ask for additional property from the Town of OIB. The facilities chosen to be part of the Plan were chosen by survey results, the Steering Committee feedback and the needs of Staff. Derek Williams was asked to revise the Plan to address rising concerns from Ocean Ridge residents and to try to accommodate all the parties' interest from the Steering Committee. There were additional representatives invited to attend the meeting from Calabash, Sunset Beach, Carolina Shores and 2 representatives from the Ocean Ridge Community. The purpose of revisiting with the Steering Committee and adding the representatives was in an attempt to address concerns over the buffer, noise, lighting, vandalism and crime at the Park. He let everyone know that we are on a short time frame because of our application process with the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Grant. He would like the Advisory Board to look over the revised Plan for OIB Park and pointed out the features of the Park. The 4 ballfields have been moved to the front, mentioned the walking trails, dog park, fitness stations and the addition of 2 pickle ball courts for a total count of 6. He mentioned that if funding is allowed they would also add the basketball courts. He informed the Advisory Board that he needed a recommendation from them in order for this Plan to move forward for Commissioners approval.

Howard: Wanted everyone to look at the new Plan, but choose to pass over making a motion on it so that the other Advisory Board Members had more time to look at the Plan while they discussed other business and he would readdress this later in the meeting. He now wanted to discuss the smoking policy for the parks.

- **Smoking Policy Option (Board Recommendation Needed)**

Aaron informed the Advisory Board that there has been some concerns about smoking near the ballfields and in general about smoking in the Park. He let the Board know that the County doesn't have a policy in place to address this in the Parks. The Brunswick County Government Policy states that no smoking can occur in the buildings, the vehicles and if there is a space, they can designate a space in front away from the buildings for smokers. He then presented several options to the Advisory Board. Please see documentation; Document 4; supplied by Mr. Perkins.

Discussion (Laura, Aaron, Howard, Leander)

Laura: Is surprised we don't have a policy and that all of her New Jersey Parks had a no smoking policy and she felt that whatever the committee decided it should be one or the other, either allow smoking or not allow smoking. She strongly believed there should be no smoking anywhere near where children would be.

Leander: Agreed with Laura that it needed to be one way or the other and that it would be difficult to enforce and that the public would not read signs about non tobacco use.

Howard: Would like to see designated smoking areas and believes that no smoking signs in the Park will not stop individuals from smoking.

Laura: Believes people will not go to the designated areas and it should be a no smoking policy, no if ands, or buts.

Leander: Wanted to know what the punishment would be if they did smoke and who's in charge of enforcing it?

Howard: Says it would have to be an umpire/citizen, or park attendant and they do not have time to do this.

Leander: Stated that most individuals really don't smoke right up at the fences and that most step away from the fields.

Howard: Agreed signs will not work, individuals will sneak to smoke.

Leander: Questions, where would the designated smoking areas be located?

Howard: Believes if we had designated smoking areas, we would need at least 2 or 3 areas.

Laura: Adamant that there should be no bad exposure to the children. If they go to a no smoking policy that there will be complaints, but they will be early on and will eventually die down like what happened when restaurants went no smoking. Policy needs to be in place.

Aaron: States that most public places have a no smoking policy due to environmental health.

Motion is made by Laura for a No Tobacco Policy to be put in place at all Brunswick County Parks. This does not include e-cigs. Leander seconded. Motion passed, 2-1 (Howard voted no).

VI. Directors Report

Aaron: Town Creek Park Project is going well. An RFP will be sent out again to find an electrician to wire the score boards, as no one bid the last time. Dixie Youth had their Opening Ceremonies at the Park. It was an all-day event and ran well. He informed the Advisory Board that the lights in the Community Building have been switched to address the dimmer/flickering issues.

Howard: Asked about the stress fracture to the Community Building and is it being addressed?

Aaron: Stated that the veneer does not affect the buildings structure. The building is made of metal and the stress fracture is cosmetic and has been fixed. The County has a 5 year warranty on all above ground structures at Town Creek.

Aaron: Informed everyone that the entrance to Waccamaw Park is being addressed and hopes to have it completed in the next couple of weeks. Horseshoe trail around ballfields is being put in for ADA and to fulfill our commitment with our PARTF grant which is close to being finished and complete. An RFP went out in regards to the maintenance building and has been awarded to Carolina Craftsman.

Smithville Park is now at 60% design plans. Staff is reviewing the Project and a review panel has been put in place to catch Project errors before they become problems. Bid will be sent out in July and he hopes to award the project in August.

Howard: Questions if the entrance will be first?

Aaron: States that he will recommend to the construction company to work from the back to the front when constructing the Park.

Howard: Asks the Advisory Board Members to now revisit the OIB revised Park Plan and asks them if they have any questions?

Aaron: States that the engineers have estimated this project to be around 4.9 million. If they cannot do the basketball courts, he will add this as a CIP Project for the following year if funds are available. He needs a recommendation from this Advisory Board.

Motion is made by Laura to recommend that the revised plan for the OIB Park go to the Commissioners for review. Leander seconded. Motion approved 3-0.

VII. Adjourn Meeting

Motion to Adjourn is made by Howard and seconded by Laura.

VIII. Meeting Roll Call

Board Members Present: Howard Benton, Leander Mosley and Laura Botto

Board Members Absent: Erik Bocook and Dale Rabon

Staff Members Present: Aaron Perkins and Melinda Johnson

Compass Pointe Engineering: Michael Norton

Citizens of Interest: Please see attached documentation; Document 5;

Next Scheduled Meeting: Tuesday, April 19, 2016