

Recreation Advisory Board  
April 18, 2019  
Meeting Minutes

**Attendance:** Mark Ferguson, Brandon Thompson, Travis Gatling, Alan Swank

**City Staff:** Andrew Chiki, Emily Beveridge

**Guests:** Rob Delach, Athens Bikeway Committee  
Carol Patterson, Athens Municipal Arts Commission (AMAC)

**Call to Order:** The March meeting of the Recreation Advisory Board was called to order at 5:30 pm.

**Approval of Minutes:** Alan made a motion to accept the March meeting minutes with Brandon seconding. The motion carried without dissent.

**Old Business:**

**Arts:** Arts, Parks & Recreation - "ARTS" –

- Brandon reported that he attended the last AMAC meeting.
- Carol Patterson shared that AMAC is officially inviting the entire Rec Advisory Board to the next AMAC meeting on May 8 at ARTS/West.
- Brandon would like the advisory board to be more intentional in collaborating with AMAC.
- Andrew reported from Terri that ARTS/West has traditionally been a silo within the department. There has been a conversation with Emily and ARTS/West to look at programming beyond just the facility and to look at other models from agencies that include an arts component. In addition, Terri would like the department to work with Travis to see if there are opportunities to collaborate with dance.
- Travis shared that his students are looking for opportunities to interact with the community and that faculty have an interest in contributing to the community.
- Carol added that she has been on AMAC for a long time and AMAC has always considered ARTS/West a part of them. Carol also explained what AMAC does as a city commission; public art installations, the new art park, city funded art, etc. There is disconnect between Arts, Parks & Recreation and collaboration with AMAC. The mayor had spoken at the last commission meeting that there is a possibility of creating a separate arts and culture department that exists under the umbrella of the APR department. ARTS/West has always lobbied to be their own department since their inception. Is there a way to determine which part of the levy is specific for arts? Can we incorporate our cultural heritage? There is an upcoming emphasis on Appalachian heritage and art. Can we relieve the advisory board of feeling responsible for everything parks and recreation and the arts? We feel we are ready to grow as the AMAC board and take this on.
- Emily: As someone who has managed the facility for 2 years and been part of ARTS/West for over 10 years and worked with each of the previous Program Specialists - All feel that the

arts would be better served if it took the lead in the arts by being a stand-alone department or subdivision of a department. The budget for the arts part of APR is 6% of the total even though it is a major component for the city as a whole.

- Carol: The fact that the Armory is in the mix is important to consider as well.
- Mark: I don't have a lot of history on the city and being in the community not long. As an advisory board, we have not been overly productive for the first 3-4 years. We are starting to engage in more meaningful conversations. Is there value in the connection between arts and parks & recreation? It is important for us to identify the areas of overlap. For this board, I would hate for past operations to dictate future structure.
- Carol: When ARTS/West was first created there was a person from AMAC who attended APR meetings and someone from APR who attended AMAC each month. AMAC is doing great work right now and is very active.
- Rob: As a liaison from the bikeway committee, it is important to have cross fertilization between the board meetings.
- Brandon: It would be good as part of the strategic vision to find out what our goals should be for the arts component. I came on as an athlete and because I like arts. We can't come up with solutions if we don't know what the problems are.
- Mark: Could we invite members of AMAC to attend some of the retreat time to discuss the arts in depth?
- Andrew: We can add this to the retreat agenda and agree that inviting members of AMAC for that portion would be good.
- Emily: Our parks system could be developed further to incorporate the arts.
- Carol: The mayor has a lot of specific vision ideas as far as what he would like to do with the arts.

### ***2019 Pool Season - Planning & Updates***

- Andrew shared that we are in the process of hiring, flooring in the locker rooms has been replaced to be non-slip, pool surface painting is scheduled for next week, an awning has been installed over the concession stand and also at ARTS/West, additional chairs were purchased, and an EV charging station is currently being installed.
- Andrew also brought up that the 11 month post build review is coming up soon. He would like advisory board members to attend a walk through prior to the review to help identify issues and items. Brandon and Alan both expressed interest in doing so and the other board members will make an attempt to attend if able. A date of April 29<sup>th</sup> at Noon was agreed on to do the walk through and take notes. Andrew will remind the group and let everyone know about when the post build review will be.

### ***Sandlot***

- Andrew reported from Terri that on Sandlot's opening day the Sandlot board announced that the City is considering a participation fee. The department and City will continue to consider terms that support the community and the league.

### ***Pool Survey***

- Andrew re-ran the data of the survey to show answers based on where people live and shared the spreadsheet with the group.
- Alan would like to discuss the pool fees at the retreat for the 2020 pool season.

### ***Community Center Usage***

- Alan had requested at the last meeting to see what the community center usage has looked like over the last 3 years.
- Andrew provided a document that included usage and package sales based on the data available. The group will look at the information.

### **New Business:**

#### ***Traffic Light:***

- Alan - The current traffic light at the intersection of the community center is difficult to see. In a month the pool is going to open and there is going to be a lot of foot traffic crossing the street. People can't see the light when walking or until right up on it driving. There was an email that his wife received from the city that the light is operating as designed.
- Brandon: You cannot see what color it is when in a different lane. I've never seen a light like this.
- Alan: The safety of kids needs to be considered, would like the board to draft a letter or request the department to share the board's concerns.
- Brandon: Could Alan share the email correspondence from the City that he received with the board? This light does not seem safe.
- Alan: I will share the emails with the group.
- Rob: This is related to the parks, and that includes crossing to get to Sells Park. It is not a safe light.
- Brandon: I don't want to send a letter before learning something about it.
- Mark: There is a level of urgency to address the light considering the upcoming summer season.
- Travis: If we address this collectively, the issue should be considered.
- Andrew: Can reach out to get details from EPW about how the lights are intended to operate and pass along to the group.

### ***National Girls & Women's Sports Day***

- Terri received feedback that the advisory board would like to have more involvement with this event. Alan has expressed interest in serving on this committee, as did Brandon. Nic has expressed interest previously as well.
- Mark requested that this be included on next month's agenda as well since Alan had to leave early and not all interested were present.

### ***Board Planning Retreat***

- This item was moved to next meeting to finalize a date.
- Mark would like to see an outline of the agenda next meeting and this be a core item of discussion.
- Rob suggested that the retreat should incorporate and include the City's new comprehensive plan and Paul Logue should be invited to the retreat to speak on this.
- Brandon would like to see a list of the projects the department has – It can be broken down by the department ahead of time.

### ***Friends of Arts, Parks & Recreation***

- Andrew shared from Terri that the department is looking to start a non-profit "Friends of Arts, Parks & Recreation." This can be an item of further discussion at the next meeting.

### ***City Employee/Board Member Appreciation Event – Pool***

- Andrew brought up an appreciation event at the pool for city staff and board members. This could possibly be done in August. The group seemed to be in agreement that this was a good idea.

### ***NW Bike Path Spur Bridge***

- There was a request from the bikeway committee to address the bridge on the connector to Armitage Road.
- Rob shared that on the side going toward Armitage Road there is a big lip at the concrete. It is a problem for road bikes and a risk for popping tires. The county had a similar issue on one of the bridges they maintain and used an epoxy to address the lip and it worked pretty well.
- Andrew will have the maintenance staff assess it and find out what the county used.
- Rob also brought up that the wooden slats are coming loose on the bridge and one of the slats was curled and had to be replaced last year.
- Brandon wanted to know if there is a way of reporting issues to the city.
- Rob responded that he uses the City's reporting app for concerns and those go directly to Andrew.

- Rob also wanted to know if the City has considered putting up signage about reporting concerns along the bike path the way that the county does on their sections.

***Staff Report***

- Andrew brought up general information related to hiring for part-time staff.
- Emily shared about the arts based afterschool program to begin this fall and that she is excited to get this started. There have been several previous programs that were housed at ARTS/West so it is good to bring this back.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm.