

PARKS, GREENWAYS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
AGENDA

7:00 P.M., Tuesday, March 19, 2019
Chapel Hill Library, Room C
Chapel Hill, NC

Roll Call: Wesley McMahon (Chair), Jeanette Bench (Vice Chair), Linda Alexander, Alice Armstrong, Joseph Battle, Lydia Kivihya-Ndugga, Jochen Schwarz, Renuka Soll, and Evan Phillips (Youth Council Representative)

- 7:00 p.m. 1. Welcome – Chair
- 7:05 p.m. 2. Approval of Minutes (February 19, 2019)
- 7:10 p.m. 3. Communications and Petitions from Commission and Staff – Chair
- 7:15 p.m. 4. Questions and Petitions from the Public in Attendance – Chair
- 7:20 p.m. 5. Potential Commission Liaisons
- 7:35 p.m. 6. Special Countywide Advisory Board Meeting
- 7:40 p.m. 7. National Trails Day Program Ideas (June 1)
- 8:10 p.m. 8. Management of Merritt’s Pasture
- 8:20 p.m. 9. New Member Orientation
- 8:30 p.m. 10. CIP Updates
- 8:55 p.m. 11. Other Liaisons Reports
- 9:00 p.m. 12. Adjourn

AGENDA NOTES

3. Communications and Petitions from Commission and Staff

A. **PROCESS TO FILL VACANT SEATS AND SECOND TERM APPLICATIONS FOR SITTING COMMISSION MEMBERS:**

Three current members have terms that expire in June, but are eligible for consideration for second three-year terms. As a reminder sitting members must reapply through the Clerk's office. Those eligible are Wesley McMahon, Jeannette Bench, and Joseph Battle. Joseph Battle has indicated that he will not reapply because he has already served almost 6 years.

In addition, the seat that is currently vacant is reserved for a Cemetery "champion". The Cemetery Advisory Board will sunset on June 30. The Council is expected to appoint all four seats on June 12. We will invite all applicants to attend the May 21 meeting

B. **FORDHAM SIDEPATH PROEJCT UPDATE:** We are currently amending the design contract to study issues raised by neighbors living adjacent to the project. Current materials can be found on the project webpage: <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/town-hall/departments-services/parks-and-recreation/planning-and-development/fordham-boulevard-sidepath-project>

C. **CLELAND ROAD OPEN SPACE UPDATE:** We continue to work toward a revised plan for maintenance of the grass open space areas around Cleland Drive.

5. Commission Liaisons

The Commission agreed to consider appointing members to be liaisons with other advisory boards. In this role individual commission members would review board agendas and minutes to determine if issues of interest are being discussed. Members would not be expected to attend these meetings, but could if they desire. Please review these board and be prepared to discuss possible appointments to liaison positions. Board under consideration are:

- Community Design Commission
- Cultural Arts Commission
- Environmental Stewardship Advisory Board
- Planning Commission
- Stormwater Management Utility Board
- Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board

6. Special Countywide Advisory Board Meeting

A special joint meeting of all Orange County parks and recreation advisory boards will be held at 7:00 pm, April 23, 2019. The meeting will held in the Town of Hillsborough Board Meeting Room, 105 East Corbin Street, Hillsborough. Please mark your calendars. Please allow enough

time to secure parking and travel to the meeting site. See the [draft Special Countywide Advisory Board Meeting Agenda](#)

7. National Trails Day Program Ideas

National Trails Day will be celebrated on June 1. The Commission had expressed an interest in participating in some event. The staff suggests holding a hike to look at the proposed next phase of the Morgan Creek Trail. We could consider other ideas as well.

8. Management of Merritt's Pasture

Merritt's Pasture is the one of the few Town open space properties that is actively managed to address exotic plants and enhance visitor experiences. Recent and planned activities include:

- Recently sprayed an herbicide on a one-acre plot in Merritt's Pasture. Park maintenance has been working with Johnny Randall, Director of Conservation Programs at the North Carolina Botanical Garden, in an effort to eliminate some non-native fescue grass from the pasture and promote the native grasses and wildflowers that are already growing in that location.
- If weather conditions in the spring are suitable we will likely follow up with a controlled burn that the Botanical Garden trained prescribed fire crew would perform. This practice has been used in other similar areas in Town by the NC Botanical Garden staff and they have seen great results. We will evaluate the results during the summer and determine if we would like to continue this practice next year.
- This spring we will remove several exotic invasive trees from the pasture including Mimosas and Bradford Pears. At the same time we will cut a 20-30 viewing area into the pond. Currently the edge of the pond is so densely vegetated that visitors have a hard time visiting this waterbody.
- Two art benches will be installed in May. A larger one will be located at the top of the hill. A smaller one will be located near the planned opening at the pond.

9. New Member Orientation

In years past the Department provided a new member orientation for new advisory board members. We propose to restart that program. As currently envisioned we would offer new advisory board members the following orientation experience:

- Face to face meeting with the Director and key staff. This would be an opportunity for the new member to meet staff members most likely to routinely work directly with the Commission.
- Present each member with a document that presents high level information about the department including staffing, facilities, programs, marketing, and budget. This document would also address Commission issues such as terms, appointment process, election of officers, absences, roles and appropriate communications, and other issues. An incomplete start to that document can be seen below. We continue to work on it and hope to finish it by the April meeting.
- Tour the department's parks, trails, and open space.

As active advisory board members we value your input. Please review the draft document below and provide any insight you may have concerning content. Also provide any other ideas you may have to help bring new advisory board members up to speed faster.

10. CIP Updates

Please see the February 2019 [Parks and Recreation Planning and Development newsletter](#).

POSSIBLE FUTURE MEETING TOPICS

Interview candidates for four vacant seats (three regular and one cemetery champion) – May 21, 2019

Future Land Use Map (FLUM) Update

Sponsorships

Departmental Business Plan

Parks Master Plan Overview

Greenways Master Plan Overview

Election of Officers (September)

- According to the [board membership policy](#), advisory board officer elections will take place in September of every year.
- Each board shall elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair to serve a one year term.
- No one shall serve as an officer on an advisory board or commission for more than two consecutive full terms. Following a one-year absence, an individual is eligible to serve again as an officer on the same board or commission.