

**PARKS, GREENWAYS, AND RECREATION COMMISSION
AGENDA**

**7:00 P.M., Tuesday, September 20, 2022
Virtual Meeting
Chapel Hill, NC**

Roll Call: Tyler Steelman (Chair), Leah Boucher (Vice Chair), Alice Armstrong (Orange County Representative), Shane Brogan, Hallie Cherry, Lydia Kivihya-Ndugga, Renuka Soll, Marcella Twamley and Christopher Worrell

- 7:00 p.m. 1. Welcome and Roll Call – Chair
- 7:05 p.m. 2. Approval of Minutes (June 21, 2022)
- 7:10 p.m. 3. Communications and Petitions from Commission, Council Liaisons, and Staff
- 7:15 p.m. 4. Questions and Petitions from the Public in Attendance – Chair
- 7:25 p.m. 5. Cedar Falls Park Tennis Court Renovation Project Accessibility For Parks Grant Application Overview and Support – Phil Fleischmann, Parks and Recreation Director, and Marcia Purvis, Principal Planner
- 8:00 p.m. 6. Pickleball and Tennis Courts Shared Use Discussion and Status - Phil Fleischmann, Parks and Recreation Director; Atuya Cornwell, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director, Nikiya Cherry, Recreation Manager; and Tyler Steelman, Chair
- 8:30 p.m. 7. Splash Pad and Inclusive Playground Feasibility Analysis and Report Update and Discussion – Marcia Purvis, Principal Planner and Wendi Ramsden, Landscape Architect, CJT, P.A.
- 8:45 p.m. 8. Downtown Pocket Parks Naming Process and West Rosemary Street Pocket Park Review – Phil Fleischmann, Parks and Recreation Director and Representative from the team working on the project.
- 9:00 p.m. 9. Appointment of Commission Officers - Chair
- 9:15 p.m. 10. Adjourn

AGENDA NOTES

3. Communications and Petitions:

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – At the October 3 work session, the Town Council will receive an update on ARPA and discuss possible additions to the current list of projects. The Parks and Recreation projects that the Council previously approved ARPA funding includes:

- Cedar Falls Park – athletic field artificial turf replacement project.
- The design for the Morgan Creek Trail – East section.
- Replacement of the HVAC system at Homestead Aquatic Center.

American Legion Property – Updated information regarding the history of the property and discussions can be found at this link. The Town Manager’s Office is leading a process to express how this property could host affordable housing, a Town park and commercial development consistent with the Council’s petition and guidance in June. A consultant is anticipated to present preliminary design concepts showing all three uses to the Town Council at the October 3 work session.

Naming of Hargraves Community Center Facilities – On September 14, the Town Council authorized naming Northside Gym after Nate Davis and the indoor basketball court at that facility to honor the late Fred Battle. Both individuals made significant contributions to the center, Northside community, and to Chapel Hill over many decades. Staff is working to plan a ceremony to honor both men and formally dedicate the facilities. More information will follow.

Land Use Management Ordinance Audit Update - On August 30, Town Planning Staff and Orion Planning & Design representatives held a roundtable to review the Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO) audit. They discussed possible revisions that could be proposed to the ordinance. Renuka Soll participated in this discussion on behalf of the Parks, Greenways, and Recreation Commissioners. The modifications could include the regulation that guides the development and allows us the Town to receive recreation area space in residential communities. For an update on this initiative, please [click here](#) to visit the project website.

NC Botanical Garden Foundation Property Acquisitions - The permanent pedestrian easement for the Cochrane property has been recorded. The Business Management Department (BMD) has identified the \$100,000 needed to fulfill the Council's resolution to support the Raney property acquisition. This funding is required not to delay the purchase of the property. This is responsive to the Commissions prior petition dated May 2017 and October 2021.

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Park and Facilities Tour –Parks and Recreation team members hosted a Parks facilities tour on Sunday, July 17, with the Parks, Greenways, Recreation Commission, and Chapel Hill community members.

Greenways, Sidepaths, and Parks Projects Progress: Following are brief updates. Commission members should be free to contact the staff if they have questions or comments.

Cedar Falls and Hargraves Parks Tennis Court Projects – The Parks and Recreation Department staff has received comments from the United States Tennis Association Technical Assistance team on the Cedar Falls Park Tennis Court Renovation Project design documents. Staff is working with WithersRavenel, the project engineering and landscape architecture firm, to make changes to the plans to incorporate their input. The technical assistance phase occurs as part of their Play it Forward grant program since staff submitted the project for a \$50,000 grant.

The \$679,800 Opinion of Probable Construction Cost (OPCC) for the Hargraves Park tennis court project indicates a need for an additional \$464,800 to supplement the \$215,000 in Two: Thirds bond funding received for this project. Parks and Recreation Department staff has submitted a budget amendment to BMD requesting the transfer of bond funds remaining in other project accounts and Recreation Area Payment-in-Lieu monies to make the difference. This item is expected to go to the Council later this month or in October.

*Due to industry conditions and inflation, many other construction projects are now experiencing similar funding challenges.

Ephesus Park Tennis and Pickleball Court Projects - Planned work to resurface the tennis courts and repair the Mondotex surface on the pickleball courts is still on schedule beginning in mid-October.

Morgan Creek Trail - Parks and Recreation Department Staff recently received Stewart's fee proposal for the West Section and an Opinion of Probable Construction Costs (OPCC) for the three greenway sections. The OPCC for the West Section is \$2,941,694. Our current budget is \$2,270,000. Staff will be meeting with Stewart to negotiate the proposed fee.

Since the Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) is starting on the design of a new wastewater line that will be installed near the Bartram Bridge section of the Morgan Creek Greenway Department, Staff is working with Stewart, Inc. to develop a scope of work for a contract amendment to assist the Town with modeling work for the creek crossing and installation of a prefabricated bridge by OWASA's contractor. These professional services may allow the Town to save money on completing this section of the Morgan Creek Greenway.

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Department Staff has also requested a fee proposal from Stewart, Inc. for a contract amendment to complete the East Section's planning, design, permitting, and construction documents. Stewart has indicated that they will submit their proposal in September.

Teen Center – Parks staff is working with Public Works, Fire, and Building and Development Services to determine what improvements are possible at the Teen Center and ideas related to the scope of work and estimated costs.

Public Art Enhancements - Two new memorial art benches will be installed in parks later this month: On September 15 a carved marble bench created by artist Paris Alexander will be installed in Pritchard Park, near the Library's rear patio, in honor of Caitlin Kennedy Kelly. On September 21 a bronze, concrete, and steel bench created by artists Michael Waller and Leah Foushee Waller will be installed on the Tanyard Brach Trail in Umstead Park in honor of Eva Metzger, a Chapel Hill trails advocate. Both projects were funded through donations from the respective families and coordinated with Community Arts & Culture and the Parks and Recreation Department.

4. Questions and Petitions from the Public in Attendance:

5. Cedar Falls Park Tennis Court Renovation Project Accessibility for Additional Funding and Parks Grant Application Overview and Support – Phil Fleischmann, Parks and Recreation Director, and Marcia Purvis, Principal Planner – Information about this project can be found on the project webpage (<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/government/departments-services/parks-and-recreation/planning-and-development/cedar-falls-park-tennis-courts-renovation-project>). The 90% design documents are complete and ready for bidding construction and based on the most recent Engineer's Opinion of Probable Construction Costs (OPCC), there is a funding gap of \$992,877.

Staff is actively pursuing external funding in an effort to fully fund and begin the project. In addition, to the United States Tennis Association (USTA) Grant for \$50,000, Department staff has submitted a draft application for a North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Accessibility for Parks (AFP) Grant for Technical Review. This matching grant of up to \$500,000 can be used to build new facilities or adapt existing facilities that meet the unique needs of children and/or veterans with physical and developmental disabilities. Staff believe that this grant presents a unique opportunity to support the department's inclusion efforts in that this project will make the Cedar Falls tennis facility fully accessible and enable it to host different tennis programs for individuals of all abilities including adapted tennis and Special Olympics.

The final application deadline is November 1, 2022. Before applying, the Staff requests the Commission's support and advocacy for the funding gap and for the final grant application and the forthcoming request to Town Council for their approval of the grant application at an October 2022 meeting.

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6. Pickleball and Tennis Courts Shared Use Discussion and Status - Phil Fleischmann, Parks and Recreation Director, Atuya Cornwell, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director, Nikiya Cherry, Recreation Manager; and Chair.

Commission members and interested parties are encouraged to view the recording of the June 2022 Parks, Greenways, and Recreation Commission meeting in which public input was received on this item. The recording can be accessed at this link:

https://chapelhill.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?clip_id=5821

Reference the portion of the meeting occurring between 0:16.00 and 2:09.00.

During this agenda item, the Chair will provide remarks / summary from the Commission's last discussion of this item in June. Staff will provide information and feedback received since the meeting – survey results, feedback from other jurisdictions who allow shared use, and consideration of other surfaces.

Leaders from each sport will then be invited to speak on this item for a total of up to five minutes per sport. Leaders are encouraged to email any presentation materials that they plan to use in advance to the Commission's staff liaison, Marcia Purvis (mpurvis@townofchapelhill.org) for distribution to the Commission. Leaders are then asked to remain available for any clarifying questions posed by Commission members or staff.

Public comment for an additional allotment of up to twelve minutes (2 minutes per speaker) may then be allowed at the Chair's discretion. The Commission and staff will then discuss the item with the intent for the Commission to provide a recommendation to staff.

Background

Ephesus Park currently features four tennis courts and six pickleball courts. There were originally six tennis courts at the park; a decision was made several years ago to convert two tennis courts at the complex to create the Town's first and only dedicated pickleball courts. Since that time, demand for pickleball has continued to grow and the department has taken various steps to try to serve those wanting to play the sport which has included incorporating time indoors and implementing shared use of the in-line hockey rink at Southern Community Park during scheduled times. At the same time, tennis has remained popular; the department has been unable to sufficiently maintain the Town's tennis court inventory due to a lack of maintenance funding.

In the spring, Chapel Hill Pickleball submitted a written proposal requesting shared use of 2 of the 4 remaining tennis courts at Ephesus Park. A tennis stakeholders' group, Friends of Chapel Hill Public Tennis Courts, submitted a written response. The proposal, response, and additional materials can be found at <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/government/departments->

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[services/parks-and-recreation/recreation-facilities-schedules/tennis-pickleball-courts](https://www.townofchapelhill.org/government/departments-services/parks-and-recreation/recreation-facilities-schedules/tennis-pickleball-courts).

Authorizing shared use would effectively allow pickleball to occur on tennis courts.

Shared Use Consideration

Shared use of facilities is an administrative scheduling decision routinely made by department staff. Current examples include our multi-purpose fields which are used by different sports at different times. Parks and Recreation has continued to listen to the various viewpoints around the shared use of tennis courts. Staff recognize there are concerns that insufficient access to suitable, well-maintained courts negatively affects those who want to play both sports. Staff understands that allowing pickleball to occur on tennis courts could provide a short-term strategy to addressing unprecedented pickleball growth. Staff also acknowledges that allowing pickleball on the tennis courts could potentially provide a less desirable playing experience due to added lines, noise, and increased use leading to potential site constraints.

At the Commission's June 21, 2022, meeting, the board and staff received public feedback on the shared use proposal. Because there was not a quorum at that meeting, the Commission deferred making a recommendation on the proposal. Deferral allowed time for several actions to occur: 1) initiating a survey to gain a broader perspective of use of Town court facilities and user experiences with shared use at other venues (*survey results can be viewed at the department's tennis/pickleball webpage*:

<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/government/departments-services/parks-and-recreation/recreation-facilities-schedules/tennis-pickleball-courts>); 2) talking with other jurisdictions that have implemented shared use to receive feedback; and 3) considering impacts and additional hard surfaces which could be used for pickleball.

Because this is a complex request and staff has not been able to find clear common ground among the user groups, the Commission is being asked to provide input on options and to make recommendation(s). Following recommendations on shared use, staff will consider all information and render a decision. This is consistent with how the department makes decisions that impact many users.

Options that the Commission may wish to consider include, but are not limited to:

1. How will the Commission support the short-and long-term needs of both tennis and pickleball in Chapel Hill? For example:

- a. Recommend the funding and development of a new, stand-alone pickleball complex (e.g., 16+ courts, size and location to be determined)
- b. Support funding the completion of needed tennis projects at Cedar Falls, Ephesus, Hargraves, and Oakwood and expediting the completion of these projects
- c. Agree to support and collaborate on advocating for the development of a stand-alone pickleball complex
- d. Advocate for the Town's funding of a routine resurfacing program for tennis and pickleball courts in accordance with generally accepted maintenance standards.

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- e. Support the development of additional pickleball and tennis courts at different locations, the specific number to be determined through a new or updated comprehensive systemwide plan.
- f. Note these needs within the Commission's annual priorities and recommendations.

2. Should shared use of the tennis courts at Ephesus Park be permitted? If so, under what parameters and guidelines? For example, Chapel Hill Pickleball's proposal could be accepted as is or with modifications determined by staff which could include:

- a. Requests for formal tennis programming (e.g., Schools, Empact Tennis, etc.) on the tennis courts could take priority over all other uses including times scheduled for pickleball.
- b. Ensure tennis remains the primary sport using the site. To do so, pickleball could be permitted only during scheduled times not to exceed set allocations (for example, a maximum of two weekday mornings and three weekday evenings per week; shared use on weekends may not be allowed except in cases of occasional tournament / program rentals).
- c. Initiate a court reservation system requiring reservations and the payment of established fees for court use.
- d. Schedules could be posted on-site and on-line. Shared use schedules could be evaluated on a predetermined basis, e.g., at least twice a year, and changes would be communicated to users.
- e. Temporary lines could initially be used as placement of permanent lines is considered further.

7. Community Splash Pad and Inclusive Playground Project Feasibility Analysis and Report Review and Discussion – Marcia Purvis, Principal Planner, and Wendi Ramsden, Landscape Architect, CJT PA, will provide an update on the site visits that have been conducted to evaluate the six parks (Cedar Falls, Hargraves, Southern Community, Umstead, Chapel Hill Community) and 2 Chapel Hill Housing neighborhoods (Eastwood and Oakwood) to determine suitability for locating a splash-pad and inclusive playground.

8. Downtown Pocket Parks – Naming Process – Phil Fleischmann, Parks and Recreation Director, and Review of Planned Pocket Park on West Rosemary Street – Representative from the team working on the project.

The Town anticipates acquiring at least two new pocket parks along Rosemary Street as part of developments occurring in downtown Chapel Hill. During this agenda item, staff will review a proposed process for naming the parks and seek the Commission's feedback. In addition, an overview of an approx. 6,000 sq. ft. pocket park to be located adjacent to a new hotel development and Old Town Hall will be provided by

West Rosemary Street Pocket Park



The forthcoming pocket park on West Rosemary Street is 60' by 105' and is partially within a Town-owned lot, which is 50' wide. The park will cover that width but feel wider as the hotel is set back about 10' from the property line giving the 60' width between buildings.

North of the park is a sidewalk and vehicular drive to provide service access to the Historic Town Hall building, hotel drop-off, and under-building hotel parking. The park will have walkways providing pedestrian connection at both north and south ends, simple plantings, benches and seating areas for small groups, lighting which conforms with the downtown fixture design guideline, and the future installation of an e-bike station if the Town or a subcontractor would like to take advantage of that.

9. Appointment of New Officers - According to the [board membership policy](#), advisory board Chair and Vice-Chair officer elections will occur in September of every year to serve a one-year term. The Commission will work to determine its Chair and Vice-Chair for the 2022-2023 season.