

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

**7:00 P.M., Tuesday, April 20, 2021**

**Virtual Meeting  
Chapel Hill, NC**

Roll Call: Renuka Soll (Chair), Wesley McMahon (Vice Chair), Alice Armstrong (Orange County Representative), Jeanette Bench, Leah Boucher, William Kaiser, Lydia Kivihya-Ndugga, Guthrie Richardson (Youth Council Representative), Jochen Schwarz, and Tyler Steelman

- 7:00 p.m. 1. Welcome and Roll Call – Chair
- 7:05 p.m. 2. Approval of Minutes (March 16, 2021)
- 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
- 7:20 p.m. 5. Morgan Creek Greenway Bartram Bridge Section – Johnny Randall, Director of Conservation Programs, North Carolina Botanical Garden; and Marcia Purvis, Senior Planner
- 7:30 p.m. 6. Stillhouse Bottom Nature Preserve Land Acquisition Pledge Request - Johnny Randall, Director of Conservation Programs, North Carolina Botanical Garden; and Phil Fleischmann, Director
- 7:40 p.m. 7. Presentations by Commission Applicants
- 8:40 p.m. 8. Five Year Commission Priorities – Chair
- 9:00 p.m. 9. Recommendations to Fill Commission Vacancies - Chair
- 9:15 p.m. 10. Liaison reports  
Commission liaisons may make a report on topics of interest to the entire Commission:
- Community Design Commission Steelman
  - Community Tree Committee Kaiser
  - Cultural Arts Commission Kivihya-Ndugga
  - Environmental Stewardship Advisory Board Boucher
  - Friends of Chapel Hill Parks & Recreation McMahon
  - Orange County Parks/Recreation Council Armstrong
  - Planning Commission Bench

- Transportation & Connectivity Advisory Board
- Youth Council

Soll  
Richardson

9:30 p.m. 11. Adjourn

## AGENDA NOTES

### 3. Communications and Petitions

*Booker Creek Adopt a Trail Volunteers:* Spring workdays were held in February, March, and April. Within the past three years, the volunteer group has planted 450 native plants and created a natural surface trail. This project is featured in the Spring/Summer issue of the Conservation Gardener, a publication of the North Carolina Botanical Garden. See photos of some of the progress of the group below.



*Town Council Meeting:* On March 24, the Town Council held a public hearing authorizing the filing of a sworn statement of debt made to issue two-thirds bonds in an amount up to \$3,205,000. Subsequently, at its April 7 meeting, the Council voted to adopt the bond orders for the following purposes:

- \$1,155,000 - for parks and recreation purposes
- \$550,000 - for public safety purposes
- \$1,500,000 - for streets and sidewalks

*Inspire-Create-Preserve Newsletter:* Parks and Recreation has established a quarterly newsletter, which is designed to provide updates regarding projects, programs, and services and also features information about staff and partners. The name of the newsletter mirrors the department's vision. Members of the public and the Commission are encouraged to [subscribe](#) to receive it by email. A copy of the first edition is attached to the email providing the agenda packet. Please share any feedback with department staff.

*Park Donations Program Update:* Parks and Recreation staff has been working to develop a new Park Donations Program that would allow individuals and organizations to contribute funds to purchase needed park amenities such as benches and litter receptacles. Staff distributed examples of some options for typical park amenities to Commission members who had offered to help determine what would become a standard within Chapel Hill parks and greenways. Feedback from Commission members has been received and is being incorporated into the program information. The Park Donations Program will be shared with the Commission in the near future.

*Funding Requests:* Recently, Town staff applied for two different possible external funding opportunities for the Morgan Creek Trail – East and West sections.

- Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Funding Program - Applied with Transportation Planning to receive \$1.8 million in funding for the West section of the Morgan Creek Greenway.
- Federal Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Community Project for FY2022 – Submitted funding request through Congressman David Price, Fourth District to receive money for the Morgan Creek Greenway Project West section for \$2.4 million and the East section for \$3.3 million. The department has approximately—\$ 1.2 million in funds available for the \$5.7 million projects.

*Chapel Hill's Mobility and Connectivity Plan: Overview and 2021 Project Priorities.* The information in these notes has been prepared in response to requests made during the Parks, Greenway, and Recreation Commission and Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board joint meeting on March 16, 2021. This report includes the number of miles included in the Mobility Plan and the number of miles in the six priority connectivity projects recommended by staff.

*Greene Tract Update:* The three owners Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Orange County, have completed the approval of their partnership agreement on the 164-acre Greene Tract in southeastern Orange County which adjoins the Historic Rogers Road Neighborhood. An update was presented to the three local governments for adoption consideration.

- Town of Carrboro – April 6, 2021
- Orange County – April 6, 2021
- Town of Chapel Hill – April 7, 2021

Planning Department staff is proceeding with drafting a virtual webinar to present the Greene Tract Environmental Assessment findings to the public and advisory boards which will be available on all three local governments' webpages. Listening sessions and other options to make the webinars accessible to the community are also being explored.

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

*Fordham Sidepath Project:* A virtual public information meeting was held on Monday, April 12, from 7–8:30 pm to review the current plans and next steps to develop the Fordham Boulevard Sidepath. Team members shared the construction plans, including the Sidepath alignment, landscaping, traffic calming mechanisms selected for Hickory Drive, and two intersections with Fordham Blvd. Team members from the Town and Kimley-Horn, engineering firm also held on-site meetings with the public to review the Sidepath's alignment on Wednesday, April 14 from 2:00 – 4:00 pm and Thursday, April 15, 4:00 – 6:00 pm.

Upon completion of the plan review, permitting phase, and after receiving construction authorization from the North Carolina Department of Transportation, the project will be bid

for construction. Bidding is estimated to take approximately three months, with construction occurring over a 9–12-month period.

*Playground Equipment Project:* The contractor will be upgrading and installing playground equipment at Burlington and North Forest Hills Parks later this Spring and early Summer. More information will be distributed before the contractor starts work.

5. Morgan Creek Greenway Bartram Bridge Trail Section - Johnny Randall, Director Conservation Programs, North Carolina Botanical Garden, will provide information on the Bartram Bridge section of the Morgan Creek Greenway Project. This portion would span Morgan Creek and connect neighborhoods north and south of the creek and allow areas south of the stream to have safe bicycle and pedestrian access into Chapel Hill and Carrboro.
6. Stillhouse Bottom Nature Preserve: - Johnny Randall, Director Conservation Programs, North Carolina Botanical Garden, will discuss the need for the Commission's support of North Carolina Botanical Garden Foundation's request Town pledge a \$100,000 match towards a North Carolina Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund grant application. If received, the funding would allow the Foundation to acquire 7-acres of undeveloped property, which would add to its Stillhouse Bottom Nature preserve area and effectively grow the Morgan Creek Bluffs National Heritage Area.
7. Presentations by Commission Applicants– The Parks, Greenways, and Recreation Commission has three Town Resident positions with terms set to expire, Jochen Schwarz, Renuka Soll and Lydia Kivihya-Ndugga. Commissioner Schwarz is not eligible to reapply. Chair Soll and Commissioner Kivihya-Ndugga have reapplied. New applicants will attend the meeting and make brief statements about their interest in serving and qualifications.
8. Modify Petition Request - The Commission received an extension from Mayor Hemminger to modify five-year priorities that it had outlined in previous correspondence. Priorities which were previously requested include a larger budget for park maintenance, resources for a comprehensive parks and recreation plan, and funding for noted capital projects (see accompanying attachment for details). The Commission's priorities were submitted before the Town's announcement regarding the issuance of two-thirds bonds which includes \$1,155,000 for some of the Parks and Recreation projects, which had previously been highlighted as priorities by the Commission. Additionally, together with the Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board the Commission agreed to include greenway projects as noted priorities submitted as a part of this request.

## **POSSIBLE FUTURE MEETING TOPICS**

### May/June 2021 Working Draft Agenda for Planning Purposes:

- Park Donations Program Review
- Pickleball at Southern Community Park Update
- Summer Programs Update
- Gene Strowd Community Rose Garden Update

Greenways Updates:

Greenways Topics Covered So Far:

- Blue Hill District Sidepaths and Trails
- Bolin Creek and Horace Williams Trails
- Booker Creek
- Fordham Sidepath Project
- Morgan Creek and Fan Branch Trails
- North and Dry Creek Trails

Other Interests / Topics:

Carrboro Recreation and Parks Department and Orange County Parks and Recreation Division

- Greene Tract Project Presentation

Payment-in-lieu Program Update and Modifications of Town's Ordinance

Teen Center Tour with Commission

Parks Master Plan Overview - How to update master plan

Open Space Data – How much do we have in comparison to other communities? Where are there gaps?

American Legion Update

Greene Tract Presentation – Summer 2021

Easttown Project

Rails to Trails

Sidewalk Maintenance

Bus Rapid Transit

Development Buffers

Affordable Housing

Sponsorships

Park Fees and Cost Recovery Overview