

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

**7:00 P.M., Tuesday, September 21, 2021  
Virtual Meeting  
Chapel Hill, NC**

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

- 7:00 p.m. 1. Welcome, Roll Call, and Introductions – Chair
- 7:10 p.m. 2. Approval of Minutes (June 15, 2021)
- 7:15 p.m. 3. Questions and Petitions from the Public in Attendance – Chair
- 7:20 p.m. 4. Remarks - Mayor Pam Hemminger
- 7:35 p.m. 5. Communications and Petitions from Commission, Council Liaisons, and Staff
- 7:50 p.m. 6. Community Splashpad Presentation and Information – Kevin Robinson, Park Maintenance Superintendent and Kate Sayre, Community Member
- 8:10 p.m. 7. Skate Park Discussion – Phil Fleischmann, Parks and Recreation Director; Rodney Merritt and Benjamin Trueblood, Community Members
- 8:30 p.m. 8. Appointment of Commission Officers – Chair
- 8:45 p.m. 9. Park / Facility Tours – Chair and Staff
- 8:50 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 Soll
  - Youth Council Richardson
- 9:00 p.m. 11. Adjourn

## AGENDA NOTES

1. Welcome, Roll Call, and Introductions – Welcome to the 2021-2022 Commission season. New Commission member Hallie Cherry was formally appointed by the Town Council at its June 23, 2021, meeting. Current members Renuka Soll and Lydia Kivihya-Ndugga were reappointed at this meeting. Alice Armstrong, Orange County Representative has also been reappointed. Commission members, Council liaisons/members, and staff present will offer brief introductions. Members are encouraged to share any specific interests in terms of desired future agenda items for planning purposes.

4. Remarks – Mayor Pam Hemminger – The Mayor will share updates and information with the Commission.

5. Communications and Petitions

Booker Creek Watershed - A community information meeting regarding Booker Creek Watershed Proposed Flood Storage projects was held on Sept. 13. The program and video of the meeting can be viewed at this link:

<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/19007/15>

North-South Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Input - The Town has been working on its North-South Bus Rapid Transit (N-S BRT) project and had requested input through September 16 on its impacts on local parks and trails. In particular, the construction and operations of the N-S BRT will necessitate some minor changes to the following locations.

- Southern Community Park
- Fan Branch Trail
- Bolin Creek Trail
- Carolina North Forest (PSNC Corridor),
- Homestead Park
- Upper Booker Trail

More information on the project can be found

<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/Home/Components/News/News/17293/4048>.

Friends of Chapel Hill Parks & Recreation – After a successful first year with a formal contractual arrangement, the Friends and the Town have entered into a new agreement through June 2024. During the first year period, the Friends provided \$15,300 directly to the Town to support Parks & Recreation programs and services. For more information about the Friends and how to contribute visit

<https://friendschparksrec.org/>.

Funding Update - Parks & Recreation largely retained the same level of operational funding in the current fiscal year as in the past year, with increases in some personnel line items due to salary and benefits adjustments. Revenue projections for the current fiscal year will continue to be refined as the impacts of COVID-19 continue.

The Town reinstated \$170,000 in small projects Pay-GO funding for Parks & Recreation this fiscal year, divided as follows: \$50,000 – playground repairs; \$50,000 – parks; \$50,000 trails; \$20,000 – cemeteries. This was responsive to the Commission’s request of the Town Council.

Greene Tract Update (provided by Planning Dept. liaison Judy Johnson) - The wisteria vine, an invasive species, had grown overgrown the car path on the Greene Tract, so the County has been on-site to remove that vegetation from that area of the property.

The partners (Towns of Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Orange County) are continue working with the elected boards to refine efforts completed 1 ½ year ago (before the pandemic). The partners had hopes of beginning a public outreach phase in late summer and early fall; however, due to the pandemic situation, those plans are paused until this phase of the project can be held safely in person.

The Partners plan to attend a Parks, Recreation and Greenways Commission meeting to discuss plans for this project. This link will bring you to the resolution the Town of Chapel Hill adopted in January 2020 (the same as adopted by Orange County and Carrboro).

<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/home/showpublisheddocument?id=48548>

Hope Gardens – The developer of Homestead Gardens, the new housing development to be constructed at 2200 Homestead Road which is the current location of Town open space housing Hope Gardens, has determined what site work it will be able to complete in order to help facilitate Hope Gardens’ anticipated move to the northern portion of the property on Weaver Dairy Road Extension. The Town has provided correspondence to Hope Gardens requesting development and operational proposals. This update relates to an earlier PGR Commission request regarding the Town supporting Hope Gardens’ move to a new location.

*Inspire-Create-Preserve* newsletter – Parks & Recreation’s second public newsletter, *Inspire-Create-Preserve*, was released on August 6, 2021. View the most recent edition.

[Inspire Create Preserve Newsletter |](#)

Sign up for Chapel Hill E-News / Parks & Recreation in order to receive future issues directly in your email box.

Operational Status – Due to current COVID-19 conditions, the Town has postponed further reopening of indoor facilities to the public. This includes Town Hall and Parks & Recreation’s indoor facilities, which

have not yet resumed open gym or allowing drop-in use. Parks & Recreation indoor facilities remain open for scheduled programs and uses. Additionally, as of September 10, all Town employees must now be vaccinated or report for weekly COVID testing.

Summer Programs Recap - Summer camps ended on August 13. This year, 567 youth registrants were served across 9 weeks of camp. A new Pop-Up Camp initiative was held at several park and public housing locations this year. The Library's Circulator saw 260 visitors and 164 Storytime attendees during visits to parks and public housing locations this summer. AD Clark Pool closed for the season on September 6.

Tennis Stakeholders – Community members interested in improving tennis court conditions and access in the parks have engaged and are holding monthly virtual meetings. In addition to Parks & Recreation staff, Commission Chair Soll and Vice Chair McMahon have been involved in the discussions. The group has formed a new website which is maintained privately, <http://chapelhilltennis.org/>.

Trails Column – Jane Brown wrote a piece about Chapel Hill's trails which can be found in *The Local Reporter* at [this link](#).

Greenways, Sidepaths, Cemeteries, and Parks Projects Progress: Following are brief updates.

Commission members should feel free to contact the staff if they have any questions or comments.

*\*Cedar Falls Park Tennis Court Renovation Project:* Parks and Recreation staff is working to provide a temporary fix to allow tennis to continue at this location. Also, the staff is working with the project engineer to update the tennis court renovation plans in preparation for a public engagement process this Fall where additional input will be sought from the public and stakeholders. All community engagement communications will be through signs with QR codes, the Town's website, [www.ChapelHillTennis.org](http://www.ChapelHillTennis.org), e-news, media release, and email list.

*Cemetery Pathways* – Repaving of the asphalt pathways at Old Chapel Hill Cemetery has been completed. The brick pathways and gathering area at Memorial Cemetery have been repaired.

*Ephesus Park Tennis and Pickleball Court Project* – The most significant cracks on the tennis courts have or will be repaired. It is a temporary fix. Geotechnical engineering work is underway; 8-10 soil boring tests were taken in August. The final engineering report, including recommendations on repairs and an opinion of probable construction costs, is anticipated in October.

Updates will be provided to tennis and pickleball stakeholders regarding repairs options and cost of repairs after the assessment/report is complete.

*\*Hargraves Park Tennis Court Project* – The planning and preliminary design phase will begin in October and continue into 2022. Final Design, Permitting, Construction Documents, and Construction phase will occur in 2022. The Construction Phase will be staggered to not coincide with Cedar Falls Tennis Courts construction anticipated to occur in 2022.

*Pollinator Area at Plant Road* – The East Chapel Hill High School Monarch Butterfly Club installed new milkweed plants at the department’s Administrative Offices on September 12. The project aligns with the Mayors Monarch Pledge, a national program in which Chapel Hill participates.

\* The Cedar Falls and Hargraves Parks Tennis Court construction projects are being bundled together using the same professional for design. The project construction documents will also be bid at the same time. Using a single contract for multiple projects streamlines design and construction, saves procurement time, reduces management workload with fewer contracts to manage, and helps shorten project delivery timelines. Bidding these projects together will also create a larger construction project that may help attract more contractors.

6. Community Splash Pad Interest – This presentation will provide an overview of splash pads in other nearby communities and share initial findings and work of an ad-hoc splash pad work group established by the Mayor which involves Council Member Anderson, PGR Commission members McMahon and Boucher, and Parks & Recreation staff. There is growing interest in having one within the park system in Chapel Hill; [a petition](#) has been initiated to highlight public interest in having one in the area. Following the presentation and public comments, Commission members will be asked to offer their ideas related to this concept and brainstorm possible strategies and collaborations to bring it to fruition.

7. Skate Park Discussion – The purpose of this agenda item is to highlight the history, importance, use, and current condition of the skate park at Homestead Park, with a focus on collaboration to ensure a solid and successful future for this unique amenity within the parks system.

For any members who wish to visit the skate park prior to the meeting, it can be accessed off of a paved path located to the left of Homestead Aquatic Center, 300 Aquatic Drive, Chapel Hill. A contractor is scheduled to complete work this month to address some immediate needs at the site.

8. 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 2021-2022 season.

9. Park / Facility Tours - Review options for dates for tours of certain parks/facilities of interest possibly just meeting at the site.

## **POSSIBLE FUTURE MEETING TOPICS**

Fall – Winter 2021 Working Draft Agenda for Planning Purposes:

- PaRC Donation Program Update - October
- Cemeteries Update – October
- Pickleball and Tennis Updates
- Greene Tract Property Information – Date TBD

### Greenways Updates:

Greenways Topics Covered in 2019-2021:

- Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board and PGR Commission Collaboration for Advocacy
- 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 Prior Interests / Topics:

How to move projects forward? - Discuss Town's borrowing status/capacity with Business Management Department team members

Town of Carrboro Capital Improvement Program Projects - Carrboro Recreation and Parks Department

Orange County Capital Improvement Program Projects - Orange County Parks and Recreation Division

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

Teen Center Tour with Commission

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

American Legion Open Space Update

Eastown Project

Rails to Trails

Sidewalk Maintenance

Bus Rapid Transit

Development Buffers

Affordable Housing

Sponsorships

Park Fees and Cost Recovery Overview