



Recreation and Parks Commission

Meeting Minutes

October 17, 2023 at 6:00pm

Alamance Parks Administrative Office • 3916 R. Dean Coleman Rd, Burlington

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair Lisa Wolff, Vice-Chair Peter Dahl, Mr. Dan Ingle, Ms. Kelly Ronnow, Mr. Thomas Purcell, Mr. Craig Yokeley, Ms. Elizabeth Read.

ALAMANCE PARKS STAFF PRESENT:

Jamie Merchel, Director; Steve Shaw, Parks Superintendent; Anna Bowland, Grants & Communications Coordinator

PUBLIC PRESENT:

None

1) COMMUNICATIONS

- a) The meeting was called to order and a quorum established at 6:02 pm
- b) The September 19, 2023 meeting minutes were approved unanimously upon the motion of Tommy Purcell and second of Dan Ingle.

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3) REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

- a) Chair Lisa Wolff thanked the Commission for participating in the Haw River paddle outing last month.

4) REPORT OF STAFF

- a) Monthly Department Report: Park Superintendent Steve Shaw and Director Jamie Merchel gave Department updates:
 - Facility Updates (Steve Shaw)
 - Cedarrock Park Events: Cedarrock Park hosted two large events in September: the ALCOVETS Balloon Festival and the PDGA Women's National Disc Golf Tournament. Steve thanked Alamance Parks staff and the local clubs and volunteer trail builders for all of their help and months of hard work in preparing the park for these events.
 - Completed Facility Improvements: Recent facility improvements include: roof replacement on the storage barn and farm barn at Cedarrock Park, New fencing added at the Cedarrock Historic Farm and along the Regulator Disc Golf Course, fencing added/repaired and water spigot added at the Eli Whitney Community Center dog park.
 - Upcoming Improvement Projects:



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Upcoming facility improvement projects include: bridge construction on the Cedarock Equestrian trail; Cedarock Park playground upgrades; installing an additional well for the park bathrooms; concrete aprons at Pleasant Grove, Great Bend Park, and Great Alamance Creek Paddle Access; Village of Alamance paddle access development, installation of additional sound baffles in the Eli Whitney and Pleasant Grove gyms, Eli Whitney gym upgrades, and B.E. Jordan Ballfield renovations.

Haw River Trail and Cane Creek Mountains Natural Area progress is detailed in old business.

- Programming Updates (Jamie Merchel)
 - Recent Programs:
 - Alamance Adventure Race (9/30) – A partnership with other area municipalities, participants complete a 12 hour scavenger hunt throughout Alamance county.
 - Youth Football – regular season games conclude this week and then playoffs begin
 - Farm to Table (10/3-10/4) – area 4th graders visit Cedarock Park to learn about agriculture
 - Upcoming Programs:
 - Sneaky Pete Disc Golf Tournament (10/28-10/29) – Cedarock Park
 - Youth Basketball – Registration underway. This year’s program includes two options: a traditional league and a “Center Court” pod-based program held out of the two community centers.
 - Truck or Treat Events (10/27 & 10/30) – hosted by the Sherriff’s Department and Volunteer Fire Departments, held at the PG and EW Community Centers.
 - Family Campout (11/4-11/5) – Cedarock Park
 - Family Footgolf (11/4) – Cedarock Park, supported by Alamance AIR (Adaptive & Inclusive Recreation)

5) OLD BUSINESS

a) Haw River Trail Updates:

- Jamie gave the update that trail continues to be built in Saxapahaw north of the dam. Approximately 1.05 miles is now complete. Thank you to the Friends of the MST – Alamance County task force for their continued work.
- New trail at Shallow Ford Natural Area will officially open on Saturday, October 21, which is also North Carolina Great State Trails day. Alamance Parks staff and Friends of the MST volunteers will be on site at the trailhead that to provide materials and greet hikers.

b) Cane Creek Mountains Natural Area:

- Staff gave updates on progress at Cane Creek Mountains Natural Area. The Lookout Trail and campsites opened on October 13. Additionally, two wells with hand pumps have been installed at each of the trailheads. Work continues on the Observation



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Tower – a permit has been issued; however, work is on hold until the tower material type is finalized. The existing sidewalk to the restroom at the Oak Hill Trailhead is in the process of being updated for accessibility.

- Phase 3 planning will begin this winter. Nolan Carter, Trails and Open Space Coordinator will walk the site with Friends of Mountains-to-Sea Trail volunteers to flag the trail location. The phase 3 trailhead will be located off of Mr. Hermon Rock Creek Road.

c) Cedarrock Park Playground:

- Planning continues for the updated, accessible playground at Cedarrock Park. The Department has had several planning meetings with Playworld representatives over the past month, and the project is on schedule.

6) NEW BUSINESS

a) Request for Proposals:

- Jamie announced that the Department has two open RFPs: for horse riding services at the Cedarrock Equestrian Center, and for website design for the Haw River Trail. She encouraged board members to review the requests and pass along to their networks.

b) Haw River Trail Economic Development Grant:

- Jamie informed the board that the Department continues to partner with Chatham County and Central Pines Regional Council on an EDA Economic Development grant for Haw River Trail. The next phase of this work entails an economic and development study of the Great Alamance Creek area in the Village of Alamance. The Department will convene a steering committee and develop public input surveys in addition to community tabling events as part of this initiative.

c) Tourism Economic Impact Report from US Women's PDGA Tournament

- Jamie shared the economic impact report from the tournament held on September 21-24 at Cedarrock Park. The tournament had significant impact to the area in terms of lodging, food, and entertainment expenditures. Grace VandeVisser, Executive Director of the Alamance County Visitors Bureau, developed the report. Grace is also working to implement Placer AI as a tool to use for gathering park and venue visitation data.

d) NC Mountains to Coast Cycle Event

- Peter Dahl congratulated the Department and Historic Properties Superintendent, John Guss and Textile Heritage Museum staff for their work in hosting cyclists at Glencoe during the October 3 event. Peter noted that Glencoe was one of the most popular stops among the cyclists. He encouraged parks staff to continue to participate in public outreach events.



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7) ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:07pm by acclamation.