



Recreation and Parks Commission

Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2025, 12:30pm

Alamance Parks Office 3916 R Dean Coleman Rd. Burlington, NC 27215

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair Ms. Lisa Wolff, Vice-Chair Mr. Peter Dahl, Commissioner Ed Priola, Dr. Charles Parker, Mr. David Woody, Ms. Kelly Ronnow, Mr. Mike Dunning, Dr. Harold Kernodle, Mr. Thomas Purcell, Elizabeth Read, Lee Isley (via Zoom)

PARKS STAFF PRESENT:

Jamie Merchel – Director, Chase Parrish – Grants & Communications Coordinator, Guil Johnson – Athletics Director, Nolan Carter – Trails and Open Space Coordinator, Mike Scott – Parks Superintendent

1) COMMUNICATIONS

- a) Call to Order and Establish Quorum
 - i) Meeting called to order at 12:30pm, Quorum established
- b) Review and approval of the April Meeting Minutes
 - i) Motion to approve, motion carries

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

3) REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

- a) Lisa Wolff acknowledged board member Thomas Purcell on his time and service to the board and department. Mr. Purcell has chosen not to reapply for his seat on the board for the upcoming term, but will continue to support the department's efforts as a community member.

4) REPORT OF STAFF

- a) Staff presentation: Athletics Programming Update (Guil Johnson)
 - i) Guil Johnson shared a summary of the most recent basketball season as well as athletics YTD. The basketball season had 225 participants, about 50% of the participants were new and 50% returning. We had about 185 participants overall for all of the other Fall/Winter athletics programming. While numbers for basketball decreased slightly, this reflects some participants in previous years going on to sign up with their local municipality. Our program was a success when considering how many participants were brand new to playing with the department. Volleyball in the Fall was a huge success, with all sessions filled to capacity.
 - ii) Baseball Season – We reached an agreement with the local clubs to let them focus on running club ball the way that they would like to while our department focuses on rec ball and development. The local clubs were able to have about 31 teams this year with about 362 participants. We still have a couple of weeks to go, but currently we have about 120 participants signed up and we anticipate that number to rise in the coming weeks.

b) Director's Update

- i) Jamie gave a special mention to the Alamance Parks' leadership team for their support and efforts throughout the budget process as we prepare for the upcoming fiscal year.
- ii) The river parks crew is working on a reroute in Shallowford Natural Area due to a bridge that is no longer safe to use. Thank you to the river parks crew and Dusty for leading this initiative.
- iii) The Cedarock Park team hosted many events throughout the Spring and have done so seamlessly (Cedarock Family Campout, Envirothon, Trail Run, disc golf tournaments etc.). Thanks to everyone who has helped support these events and made them possible! Also thank you to Jason Witherspoon and Nolan Carter for hosting the Spring Camp & Clean along the Haw River and helping keep our parks clean!
- iv) Shout out to Michael Scott, our Parks Superintendent, who started in January and has helped make sure multiple projects stay on track for successful completion.

5) OLD BUSINESS/UPDATES

a) TOWER IS OPEN

- i) The public response has been very positive. We have a counter that will allow us to report visitation numbers soon.
- ii) Chair Lisa Wolff asked about the possibility of a few days per year designated for those who can't hike to the tower and can be driven to the tower. Jamie is looking into options on how the department could facilitate this.

b) Cane Creek Phase 3 Parking Lot Construction status

- i) Brush clearing has been completed, a crushed rock drive has been established, the vault toilet is in production and install is slated for mid-June. Mr. Peter Dahl noted that the trails crew completed .66 miles of trail building on 05.19. Eventually it will be a 3-mile trail, completion could possibly be this Fall.

c) BE Jordan Ballfield status

- i) Mike is working with contractors now to finish all of the fine-tuning. Project completion is nearing.

d) AO Ballfield Status

- i) The lights have been replaced and have been the highest priority for this project. The lights have been pushed back closer to the property line to allow more space for playing on the field. We are looking at possibly setting up a smaller t-ball practice field in the back corner to maximize space. Still much more work to be done in the future, but are waiting for the 25-26 budget approval before final decisions are made.

e) Village Of Alamance status

- i) We are waiting for 1 more quote for the concrete skirt. Once we have that we will be ready for work to begin.

f) 25-26 Budget Update

- i) County Managers Recommended Budget Presented 5/19
 - If the recommended budget is adopted, the parks department will experience various cuts to the budget for the next fiscal year.
 - The County Manager also showed that for a zero tax increase budget proposal could impact the Parks department in ways such as elimination of positions in addition to the other reductions outlined in the other proposed budget by the manager.

g) Legal response about Public Comment at Programs

- i) Jamie received feedback from the County Attorney regarding the legality of public comments within the department's commission meetings and within our programs. While we do not have any legal obligation to allow public comments and have never adopted this into our commission ordinances, we will still allow this to happen.

Commission member David Woody has proposed the motion to allow public comment at any commission meeting for a maximum of 3 minutes. Dr. Charles Parker requested the motion be amended for Director Jamie Merchel to follow up on the board's bylaws for public comment before a final motion.

6) NEW BUSINESS

- a) Alamance Parks Sponsorship, Advertising and Signage Policy Update Needed
 - i) The last update to this policy was in 2019. There is a need for the department to update this policy to be more relevant to the department's current efforts and sponsorship opportunities. We will present this in future meetings while asking for input before a final update is decided on.

7) ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) Upcoming Programs and Events
 - i) Director Jamie Merchel will send a follow up email with upcoming events and programs.
- b) Group Paddle after our June 17th Meeting (12:30 meeting) Final RSVPs needed
- c) Haw River Canoe and Kayak currently testing offering Tubing adventures out of Glencoe

8) ADJOURNMENT

- a) Meeting adjourned at 1:55pm

Next Meeting June 17th 12:30pm Sax Island Park - Group Paddle to follow