TOWN OF GARNER

Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources

Advisory Meeting Minutes

Date: September 19, 2022

Date and Time: Pursuant to the Bylaws governing the Garner Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Advisory Committee, a meeting of the Advisory Committee was held on September 19, at 6pm at Garner Town Hall.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call: Ms. Durham called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. The committee members present were Chair Ernestine Durham, Mark Wood, Jay Ditenhafer, Hope Webber, Autumn Beam, Tim Montgomery (via Teams), and Council Liaison Demian Dellinger. Staff members present were Maria Muñoz-Blanco - Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Director, Megan Young- Operations Superintendent, Todd Riddick – Recreation & Athletics Superintendent, Katie Lockhart – Parks & Nature Superintendent, and Amy Pridgen – Arts & Culture Superintendent.
2. Special Presentation: Town of Garner Character & Land Use Elements (CLUE) Study Guest – Matt Noonkester, CityExplained, Inc.
   1. Mr. Noonkester provided an overview of the CLUE process and project kick-off, including the addition of a character chapter and expanding the land use chapter of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan (Garner Forward).
   2. Mr. Noonkester shared that a community workshop will be held at the Garner Recreation Center on Thursday, September 29 4-8pm.
   3. Mr. Noonkester asked the committee questions to guide the conversation.
      1. Ms. Durham discussed importance of tree canopy and preservation.
      2. Ms. Webber discussed importance of local business, unique to Garner, keeping dollars in Garner, and entrepreneurship. Also shared was the importance of road infrastructure to support it.
      3. Mr. Montgomery shared importance of neighborhoods and the character and communities they create.
         1. Mr. Noonkester discussed studies called value capture, like lot premiums near greenways or mature trees.
      4. Ms. Durham discussed the look and feel of homes and prioritizing uniqueness, along with roads and sidewalks. She also shared a desire for retail and recruiting efforts.
         1. Mr. Noonkester discussed landscaping to diversify a neighborhood. He also shared the consulting team will have a market research team to better understand retail leakage, a study that provides an idea of what retail to target in the future.
      5. Mr. Ditenhafer asked how this plan connects to UDO.
         1. Matt shared that UDO is law, but the Garner Forward is a policy and guide. Mr. Dellinger shared how the UDO plays a role in processes and decisions.
3. Approval of the June Agenda:
   1. Ms. Webber motioned to approve the Agenda and Mr. Ditenhafer seconded.
4. Approval of the May Meeting Minutes:
   1. Ms. Durham said to update 8C typo “chair”
   2. Ms. Beam motioned to approve the minutes and Mr. Ditenhafer seconded.
5. Petitions and Comments from the Public:
   1. Ms. Webber inquired about places to play pickleball and staff noted locations and options, including open gyms at the Garner Recreation Center. Ms. Beam also noted TennisBloc offers tennis and pickleball lessons.
6. Committee Members Concerns/Comments:
   1. Committee introductions, including introduction of new member, Mark Wood.
   2. Staff shared introductions, including new Superintendents Amy Pridgen and Todd Riddick, Katie Lockhart’s recent promotion to Parks and Nature Superintendent, and Megan Young’s transition to Operations Superintendent,
   3. Ms. Beam asked why personal watercraft can’t be used, and Ms. Lockhart noted it’s due to the proximity to water treatment facility. Ms. Beam also asked why the Town doesn’t provide standup paddle boards for rent and Ms. Lockhart noted it’s because of lack of space.
   4. Ms. Durham noted park maintenance at not up to usual standards and the need for signage in Lake Benson Park. Ms. Muñoz-Blanco shared how Public Works has responsibility of park maintenance and Ms. Lockhart reiterated the grounds crew is short staffed. Ms. Muñoz-Blanco noted we could invite Forrest Jones, Public Works Director, to a future meeting for updates. Ms. Durham agreed that would be a good idea so the committee can discuss further since deferred maintenance is a poor representation of the Town. Ms. Lockhart noted she is working on additional park signage, and there’s work being done to create a signage plan for parks.
7. Senior Advisory Committee:
   1. Tina Johnson, Senior Advisory Committee Liaison, not present for update.
   2. Ms. Young and Ms. Muñoz-Blanco provided a brief update on behalf of the committee, highlighting Gardening for Life and upcoming programs and field trips.
8. Reports/Discussion Items
   1. Director’s Reports: Ms. Muñoz-Blanco share the following:
      1. Pedestrian Plan tent will be at the Garner Night Market.
      2. Staff introductions covered in above section.
      3. Fall/Winter brochure distributed to facilities and mailed. Ms. Durham noted how impressed she was with the quantity of programs offered and quality of brochure.
      4. Trick or Treat the Trails back at White Deer Park on 10/31, 3-6pm.
      5. Seeking public input for a master plan update for GRC in preparation for a grant. Additional information and an action item for the Committee’s vote of support for the project and the grant application will be included as part of October’s meeting. Next public input session set for 10/3, 5:30-7:30pm.
      6. No PRCR agenda items for Council this month. Next month expect to bring an update on the South Garner Greenway Extension Study and approval of a contract for the design of White Deer Park Inclusive Playground and Splashpad.
   2. Council Updates:
      1. Council Member Dellinger inquired about potential park projects for American Rescue Plan funding. Ms. Muñoz-Blanco discussed framework being used as a guide for project funding and staff will provide suggestions on prioritizing parks specific projects.
      2. Council Member Dellinger asked about plans for land around Creech Road Park. Ms. Muñoz-Blanco noted there was space for an additional field in that area but the plans for that space are over 20 years old.
      3. Council Member Dellinger inquired about adult leagues and the department’s plans for adding adult leagues and need for enhanced communication and outreach for outdoor adult leagues. Mr. Riddick shared adult basketball and volleyball seasons just started.
      4. Council Member Dellinger asked for a chart/graph for grant funds awarded or applied.
      5. Council Member Dellinger suggested subcommittee for Meadowbrook Park planning to ensure efforts continue in tandem with Yeargan Park planning.
      6. Council Member Dellinger reiterated GPAC needing its own website. Ms. Muñoz-Blanco noted staff would check with Communications Department.
      7. Council Member Dellinger asked Ms. Pridgen to participate in DGA planning for architectural study of cannery.
   3. Announcements:
      1. Ms. Durham circled back to Pickleball, followed by a brief discussion about where it can be played. Ms. Durham also discussed Meadowbrook and potential for small modifications before it’s developed as designed, including disc golf and walking trails. CM Dellinger noted Council was in support of activating in that way. Ms. Muñoz-Blanco noted the team will circle back on Meadowbrook plans once information is available from current studies.
9. Other Business
   1. Ms. Durham asked for a GPAC update from Ms. Pridgen.
      1. 10/29 Nu Blu, followed by Pinkalicious in November.
      2. Ms. Pridgen asked the board to share GPAC’s survey, which will help guide future programming.
      3. Council Member Dellinger suggested contacting Shayla Douglas to assist with promotions.
   2. Adjournment
      1. Ms. Webber motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Beam seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.