



**PARKS, TREE AND GREENWAY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**September 5, 2012
6:00 PM**

Members Present

Roger Fish
Nydia Morales
Justin King
Brian Olin
Kim Nicholson
Alex Rohleder
Roger McWhorter

Staff Present

Joe Fivas
Hillary Pace
Susan Didier

Call to Order: Chairman Fish called the meeting to order.

Roll Call: Ed Dubisz absent

Approval of Minutes: August 1, 2012 **Approved**

Discussion items:

Chestnut Park and Sardis Park Update- Town Manager, Joe Fivas presented

Town Manager Fivas spoke to the committee about where the council feels the Town is now and the direction they would like to see it go. He mentioned a Council Member would possibly join in the conversation later this evening.

Mr. Fivas spoke about last year's 4.5 million dollar bond proposal for a 51 acre park, located on Matthews Indian Trail Rd. that did not pass by a marginal percentage. He noted the park would be referenced as Chestnut Park, for identity purposes. Mr. Fivas explained that a majority of Council felt it was because the location of the park would not benefit all of the residents in Indian Trail and advised the committee that in response to that, Council began to research developing a second park to be located on the opposite side of Hw 74, creating a park package that would benefit all residents of Indian Trail.

Town Manager, Joe Fivas, described the property purchased for the second park. He noted to the committee that the size (140 acres) and price (\$8000/per acre) of the land purchased was a monumental win for Indian Trail. There are not many tracts of buildable land left of this size in Indian Trail, so whether it is built now or in the future, Council feels this purchase is a "legacy" for Indian Trail. He advised the committee this park would be referenced as Sardis Park for identity purposes.

Mr. Fivas mentioned to the committee that the council also felt that the bond may not have passed because of a lack of public information. They felt the design of the park was not presented during the last election. Council feels that presenting a design plan will give the public a better idea of what they are voting for. Mr. Fivas discussed the designs being done currently by Woolpert Designs.

Another item Mr. Fivas spoke about that may have had a negative impact on last years bond referendum was how the bond would be paid. Council felt this information was not clear to the residents and the lack there of, was possibly another attribute to why the bond did not pass. He explained to the committee that there is a capital reserve fund in this year's budget and the council has expressed that its first priority for this fund is to use it to pay back the bond. Mr. Fivas shared with the committee that the council advised that taxes would not be raised to pay off the bond. He went on to explain that residents vote would be for design. Do they want the facilities the design plan proposes? Mr. Fivas continued by explaining to the committee that the next step for the Town was public information education.

Town Manager Fivas, referenced plans of the latest designs of both parks. He spoke about the feed back received from residents on these designs. He mentioned residents wanting a more natural park versus a park with multiple fields. He referenced some neighboring parks and the facilities they offer. Mr. Fivas spoke to the committee about some of the changes that would be made to the next version of designs. Some things he mentioned were more natural areas, a spray park, and possibly a dog park. He also reviewed benefits and amenities Carolina Courts will bring to Indian Trail.

Traffic congestion and remedies were spoken about by Mr. Fivas. He went over the plans for the Chestnut Connector and spoke of the studies that were performed by NCDOT showing that it should drastically reduce the traffic on both Indian Trail and Old Monroe Rd. Mr. Fivas then reviewed the economic potentials and benefits of adding quality roads and amenities to the town. He also shared plans for another access point into Chestnut Park through Shady Bluff Rd. and advised the committee that the town would be making all the changes to that road. He described

in depth, more of the amenities that are planned for the parks and the value in creating not just a park, but a destination for visitors. He asked for questions and comments from the committee.

Committee member Alex Rohleder asked what the projected cost is for the parks. Mr. Fivas responded that the design needs to be determined first and that the cost will be done in phases. He advised Council will be determining the scheduling of the phases. He noted that the bond will not fund all the proposed amenities.

Mr. Rohleder asked if the bond were to pass would they start both parks or concentrate on building one at a time. Mr. Fivas responded it is his understanding Council will begin developing both parks at the same time.

Committee members and Town Manager discussed building both parks simultaneously. They agreed that would be the best choice and the fair choice for the residents.

Member Kim Nicholson asked if there were any plans to have access from subdivisions to the Thread Trail that residents could use to walk to the parks. Mr. Fivas responded that the bond money could not be used for that. He spoke about the newly formed Pathways 2 Progress initiative. A future vision the Council sees is to eventually develop a greenway that will run from Porter Ridge High School to Sun Valley High School to Col. Beatty Park. He explained this would create leverage for residents to get to the parks safely.

Committee Members discussed their ideas of information that should be presented to the residents so they have a clear understanding of what the parks would mean to them. Some items discussed were accessibility from neighborhoods, safety measures that will be in place, emphasis on the trails, playgrounds and athletic fields, traffic management, and economic advantages through business development.

Public Comment: Resident Druv Bhatt, 1026 Whipporwill Lane

Mr. Bhatt spoke to the committee about the park plan. He felt the fields should be sport labeled. He expressed to the committee that the residents should be told what they can expect from the different phases of the parks development.

Member Brian Olin agreed with Mr. Bhatt and suggested a timeframe be given for expected completion of the different phases that should include details of what each phase contains.

Manager Fivas asked committee for their opinion on adding park FAQ to the town newsletter and what types of information they felt was most important to include. Committee agreed newsletter is a great resource to use and also felt placing ads in the local newspapers would be extremely effective.

Mr. Fivas advised the committee about several informational meetings the Town had planned. He mentioned hosting the meetings in subdivision clubhouses throughout the town, Fire Stations, and the Town Civic Building.

Mr. Rohleder asked if the park plans presented to the residents would be the final plans or would they be proposed plans that may possibly change going forward. Mr. Fivas advised that it was his understanding that the park plans proposed to the residents will not change.

Town Manager and the committee continued conversations on the design and educational information to be presented to the residents. They discussed the park plans having a balance of amenities to include resident friendly components as well as areas like “competition level” sports fields that will in turn create revenue for the community.

Mr. Fivas asked the committee to meet again after the park plans have been revised to offer any further suggestions prior to the plans being presented to the residents. Committee agreed all in favor of meeting again.

Committee Chairman Fish asked about other funding opportunities that may be available for the parks. Mr. Fivas reviewed the process and time frame for funding and grant opportunities that may be available to the Town and gave some examples as to how other dollars can be leveraged for the development of the parks.

Committee Member Nydia Morales suggested putting an emphasis on all the recent the progress the Town has made when speaking about the park.

FY2011-12 Annual Report Discussion- Hillary Pace presented

Chairman Fish asked when the report would be given.

Planner Pace explained the focus for right now would be the committees past fiscal years accomplishments. She advised the committee that the delivery of the work program and the annual report is still being determined as to whether it will be in house or will it go to Council for formal adoption.

Mrs. Pace summarized the committee’s accomplishments of the last fiscal year. She spoke about the committee’s accomplishments in relation to park tree and greenway matters. Some of the accomplishments mentioned were: completion of tree ordinance training, alternative planting plan reviews, Park and Greenway Master Plan review, continual searches for park land, park naming recommendations, Crossing Paths Park improvements, and the beginning stages of the framework for a Community Garden Program.

Mrs. Pace continued discussions of accomplishments the committee made in assisting with the development of ordinances, policies, and plans relating to parks, tree and greenways. Committee and Pace discussed the Urban Forestry Management Plan, Carolina Thread Trail and several speakers that presented to the committee throughout the last fiscal year. Tree care presentations and the former Union County Arborist, David Grant, were also discussed.

Chairman Fish suggested sending a thank you to David Grant for all assistance.

Mrs. Pace spoke about community outreach and public education achievements the committee accomplished. Mayor's Tree Initiative, "Trees 101" class and presentation at the Union West Library, and Community Planting Day were some of the highlights of this discussion.

Mrs. Pace went on to speak about community events the committee assisted with. Discussion included committee's participation in the 2012 Earth Day Arbor Day. Committee was recognized for assisting the children with an Arbor Day mural. A recap of the committee's research for a local heritage tree program and volunteer efforts by the committee were other achievements Planner Pace reviewed with the committee, with emphasis being given to the significant participation of the committee at area elementary schools during the Mayor's Tree Education Initiative.

Chairman Fish spoke about other community groups that this committee could possibly attract. He also suggested the committee do some outreach through area HOA's.

Mrs. Pace asked the committee to reflect on the past years achievements and bring back their thoughts to the next meeting.

Topics for Next Meeting

Work Program/Annual Report

Motion to Adjourn Approved

**Town of Indian Trail
Park, Tree and Greenway Committee**

_____ **Chairman** _____ **Date**

_____ **Secretary**