



**Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
March 13, 2014 7:00 p.m. Town Hall Council Chambers**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kevin Adams, Wanda Holloway, Jennifer Jones, Winston Shade, Stephane Daniel

**ABSENT MEMBERS:** Peter Koutroumpis, Ray Riordan, Kari McCloud, Marty Buckwald, Cheri Lee

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** Hank Dickson

**STAFF PRESENT:** Len Bradley, Adam Huffman, Don Briscar, Tammy Sigafosse

**CALL TO ORDER:** Kevin called the meeting to order

**APPROVAL OF 01/09/14 MINUTES:** Meeting minutes approved, except for correction to change "Senior Retreat" to "Council Retreat."

Kevin announced that Peter could not join us tonight. Ray Riordan has asked to step down as a board member due to prior commitments. Kevin will notify everyone on the board tonight. Kevin asked Len if we had any applications on file. Len will check the file to see if we have any applicants. Our goal is to try to get candidates in line before the next meeting in April. There was a motion from Kevin to accept Ray's retirement. Motion approved.

**Presentation:** Don Briscar, Cultural Center Manager

The Town of Holly Springs' Cultural Center is in its' 8<sup>th</sup> year. 16 out of the last 19 concerts that we have produced have sold out. Hank and the Honkey Tonk Heroes, a tribute to Hank Williams Sr. is one of our upcoming shows. Ticket revenues have surpassed all previous years due to raising our ticket prices and purchasing Etix. Don handed out a report that listed number of tickets sold by zip codes from Aug 1-Feb 28 that stated revenue percentages. About 32% of Holly Springs' residents purchased tickets for our shows. Sponsorships have doubled this past year and Don listed some of the cash sponsors. We are preparing for our outdoor concert series sponsored by Rex Healthcare starting May 27<sup>th</sup>. Don also mentioned the idea of having car shows in coordination with our outdoor concerts.

The Cultural Center programs are at 75% revenue goal for this year. We have programming called Performing Arts Alliance which each member performs twice a year. Current members of this Alliance include the Holly Springs Community Band, the Holly Springs School of Dance, Corner Stone Theatre, and Together on Center Stage. The newest addition to the Performing Arts Alliance is the Performance Reader's Theatre group. The Route 55 Jazz Orchestra was a member but now they are managed by us and have sold out the last 3 out of 4 concerts. Lori Puzak works with the Stars Youth Theatre program and their show "Alice and Wonderland Jr.", is scheduled for the end of this month. We are developing 2 community chorus groups, an adult and youth group. Staff is working on creating a community theatre for Holly Springs at the Cultural Center. We will produce 1 show this summer in August titled, "Bad Year for Tomatoes."

In the November issue of Cary Magazine, the Cultural Center was nominated for best live music concert venue. Although we did not win the title, it was exciting to be nominated.

Kevin shared his amazement of the programs now offered at Cultural Center compared to years ago and asked a few questions. Don stated that we try to keep our top act at \$7,500. The Cultural Center did more shows this year to include 14 performing artists for 17 shows. Fees for acts are up based on travel and we provide overnight accommodations meals and transportation for our scheduled acts.

The capacity of the theatre is 184 seats including handicap seats. We did have 196 seats then went to 184 wider seats. When our shows have sold out, our waiting list averages 8-12 people. We cannot expand our current theatre, but a perfect size theatre is 300 seats. Kevin feels that the Town would support more seats. With more seats, we could bring in higher level of artists. Kevin asked about competition in area. Apex has a 160 seat facility, Cary has several theatres. Garner has a 600 seat auditorium. With 32% of Holly Springs' residents purchasing tickets, Kevin asked if we expect more support from the town. Don replied with more people moving into the area, he would expect much more support. Jennifer stated that we also have excellent support from Raleigh and Wake County. Wanda shared that the Cultural Center produces a wonderful Christmas experience. Don announced a "Christmas in July" outdoor concert scheduled for July 25 and Santa will be there. Len reminded everyone that we will have another musical venue when the new stadium at North Main is complete. We will be using this venue for concerts and will have the capacity of 2000 seats.

**Update from Adam:** Starting in February, the Womble Turf Field is now being used by our youth soccer program. With the 3 inches of rain that fell last week, our programs were still able to run because of the turf field capability of draining and staying dry. Even with all the snow and ice, we had a very active winter from rentals including Wake Futbol, Carolina Soccer, Triangle Futbol and Ultimate Frisbee groups. I9 Flag Football is one of our newer rentals that will start in April. Open play is now scheduled from 4-6, Monday through Friday, late Saturday afternoons and Sunday afternoons. With rental groups requesting the prime time slots during the week and on weekends, other fields such as the Holly Springs High School Multi-purpose field is in demand.

The Hunt Center Track out and After School programs are at average numbers this month. Our youth soccer registration shows a 5% decrease from last year. This is due to competition of other soccer groups in the area. Softball registrations are 2% lower than last year. In our youth basketball program, we have several age groups going to the state SWAC tournaments. We have no drop-off in numbers for our basketball leagues. We have purchased a bus for our Senior program and it is up and running. Our tennis programs have higher registrations this year. With the amount of participants, our tennis program will be held at the High School courts instead of Womble tennis courts. The Hunt Center Fitness memberships were higher in February than in January. We continue to grow in memberships due to offering month-to-month memberships.

Bass Lake is now offering themed birthday parties. We have seen a big increase in this program and will possibly be training staff to offer this program at the Hunt Center and Cultural Center. Jennifer stated that she has heard great feedback on the birthday parties offered at Bass Lake. Bass Lake is also offering Hunter Safety courses. The summer camps are filling up and we will be using Suggs Farm for some of the summer camp activities.

There is a rumor again that we will not be offering football this year. This is not true. We will stick with our same plan for our Football league. Although we still have issues with traveling, we have received very little complaints. Winston stated that he feels that our department has handled the football issue very well. There were discussions with the board and staff about considering an in-house 8 man league. Jennifer asked if we can offer both an in-house league and a travel league. In June, we should have our registration numbers so we can look at our options. Jennifer also asked about starting a flag football league. Adam stated that we have a rental offering flag football.

**Update from Len:** The Bass Lake and Womble Park greenway projects were budgeted at \$860,000. They were completed \$130,000 less than budgeted. The budget for Womble Park Turf field, lights, asphalt walk, tennis courts, concessions, and parking lot was just over \$3M. There is approximately \$100,000 remaining. Budgets always include contingency money. We try not to use the contingencies. The Womble Park playground budget was \$173,000. We are a few thousand dollars under budget.

The budget for Jones Park Disc Golf is \$121,000. This project is still not finished but the course should be done by the end of spring. We are utilizing volunteers, Parks and Recreation staff and Public Works for this project. Bad weather has also delayed this project. There is a great effort from everyone not to disturb the natural surroundings. Jones Park playground is completed with a budget of \$237,000. Snow has affected some issues with the structure so some design modifications were made to help with the impact of snow and ice.

North Main, Phase I, is in progress with a budget of \$7.9M. We are not sure what we will have left. North Main Phase II budget is \$2M which includes mostly fees, consulting, and permitting. We are in process of bidding and will be accepting bids on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. There was a pre-bid meeting today. Adam attended and reported that 6 general contractors were in attendance. We are estimating the Phase II bid will probably be about \$8M. Sugg property was purchased for \$1M. There is 1.65M in the budget. Sugg Master Plan was contracted by Altay Greenways for \$72,000. The master plan came out this week and is to be approved by Council in October.

The total budget all of those projects is close to \$16M. There is about \$300,000 left in all projects completed which will be transferred back into the budget for Phase II. In addition to bond funds, \$1.3M-\$1.4M into Phase II, we only spent \$6.7M. \$4.8M of the \$7.9M for Phase I was bond funds. Total for North Main in bond funds is \$5.5M. This allocates everything we have for funding. The \$8M is not included in this budget. The Town is making arrangements for financing. We should have final word in the next few months and this must be approved by the Local Government Commission. A total of \$23M in parks projects has been done in the last several years. There is a lot of excitement with the synthetic turf field coming at North Main. This will be a huge draw to the town, and is expected to be completed by summer 2015. We have moved bond money of approximately \$60,000 for the loop at the Bass Lake Bridge and anticipate completion by fall.

Kevin-asked about the \$1.7M bond money of \$300,000 going back to Parks and Recreation? Len said there is a budget amendment for \$1.367 million moving to North Main Phase II project. Kevin also asked if the tax increase has put us behind or ahead? The 2 cent increase in collected taxes from last year got us ahead with financing. We will keep collecting the 2 cents until bond is paid. We will keep accruing funds and the first payment is in this calendar year.

Len noted that the Council Retreat was good and there were great discussions about projects, transportation, Parks and Recreation, a new police station, and a new fiber loop to name a few.

We also discussed the Chamber relationship with the Town. The Chamber was present at the meeting and in Len's opinion, the discussions went well. Len said the overall format of the meeting worked well and much was accomplished. Hank informed the Board that on Saturday, a financial consultant presented a great subject on what the Town can afford and how the Town can afford it. Len also shared that this information was very helpful and encouraging. With all the new projects for Parks and Recreation, it will be awhile before we will have any new projects approved after the stadium is completed.

Kevin commented on the amount of people using Womble Park. Athletics has done a good job in getting the word out. We may want to place more signage out. Len stated that this is just the beginning of developing and growing and we are starting to notice the economic effect of the synthetic fields with lights. Last week, when we received all the rain, Wake Futbol rented the field and invited a soccer group from Virginia. During their stay in Town, this group filled up the Hampton Inn and local restaurants. We are getting the maximum usage from this complex. We are experiencing business community growth, quality of life, and people will want to move here. Please let Len know if you hear any complaints from our residents that we do not offer enough open play. Adam replied that our rentals increase free play time that normally would not be offered. Marty added that renting the turf field has an economic impact on our Town. When the weather is inconsistent, teams will plan to travel here knowing that the event will not be canceled.

Len informed the Board that we have multiple service projects that we have done in our parks and businesses. We have had many inquiries from Scout troops and Eagle Scout groups and have had lots of opportunities available. Please note that all activities require our weekend staff to work; mainly at Bass Lake. Wanda mentioned that there are many community groups helping and volunteering at the local Food Cupboard.

The Board discussed who they would like to invite to speak at the May meeting. An email will be sent out to members to ask for suggestions. Len offered the idea of asking one of our partners at North Main to come and speak. Hank Dickinson mentioned that he met with Scott Dupree of the Greater Raleigh Sports Alliance and he stated that he and local chamber members benefited from his presentation.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further items for discussion, the meeting was adjourned.