



**Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
March 09, 2017 7:00 p.m. Town Hall Council Chambers**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Brian Ainslie, Tom Joyce, Alice Reese, Liz Stone, Kevin Adams, Howard Slinkard, Wanda Holloway, LeeAnn Plumer

ABSENT MEMBERS: Winston Shade

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Cheri Lee

STAFF PRESENT: Len Bradley, Lauren Martin

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Adams called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion to approve: LeeAnn Plumer; Second: Liz Stone; Vote: Unanimous; Meeting minutes approved with no corrections.

NEW BUSINESS:

a. Discussion of allocation of fields between rentals and town programs.

Mr. Adams opened the floor for discussion regarding allocations of fields between rentals and town programs. Parks and Recreation staff are very strict about scheduling fields and facilities. Parks and Recreation programs get first priority. Parks and Recreation partners get second priority. Rentals get third priority and open field use gets fourth priority.

b. Discussion of facility programming and scheduling

The committee had some questions about practice times. There have been some complaints regarding younger children scheduled for 7:00 pm hour-long practices. The committee feels like it would be better to schedule the younger kids earlier and the older kids later, as well as shortening practices for the younger kids. Parks and Recreation staff schedules an hour for everyone. However, adjustments can be made regarding time and length of practices. Please call Christopher Champion; he is the Parks and Recreation Athletics Manager.

c. Questions for Tommy Atkinson the Salamanders General Manager.

Mr. Adams opened the floor for questions about the Salamanders and the upcoming season. Atkinson started with giving some background information on

the team. The Salamanders is a Coastal Collegiate Summer Playing League. Players have to have one year remaining in college after the summer. They stay with host families without pay. Host families are given free tickets. There are 56 games in 2 ½ months. Games are played almost every night with 28 home games and 28 road games. The players travel close to 7000 miles in 2 ½ months. Single game tickets go on sale April 1st, 2017 and opening night is June 3rd, 2017.

There have been some changes this season. There are two people selling tickets instead of one, which is very helpful. There will also be interns helping push ticket sales. This year the Salamanders are offering a Five-Game All-You-Can-Eat ticket for only \$75.00.

The committee asked Tommy what the benefits are of going to see a Salamanders game instead of going to a Durham Bulls game if the driving distance is the same. Reasons included free parking, great seats, wide variety of players coming from large and small schools all over the country, and the players love for the game compared to paid players. A committee member commented on how rewarding it is to watch kids do what they love to do in the chance that one might go pro.

The committee asked Tommy if there were any plans for a female Sal. He responded that there has been talk of a lady Sal, however suits are \$6,000 and they dirty easily.

Committee members mentioned the noise complaints in Oak Hall neighborhood. The neighborhood has not been happy with the sound and late games. End times will be earlier this year, which will make close by neighborhoods happy. Salamanders try to be conscientious of the sound.

Committee members are concerned with the attendance problem from last year and questioned if tickets could be given away on a slow night. Atkinson is hesitant to do that because once you start something like that it is hard to get away from it.

Committee members want to know if the team is expecting a high turnout for the Monday night All-Star game. The majority of turnout is families and host families. It is mandated to have the All-Star game on Monday night. It is a league-mandated date; the team has no say in that. All-star players that are not local are put up in hotels. There has to be enough space for them, their families, coaches, and any other staff. General Managers feed them and entertain them while they are here.

Committee members want to know what the team is going to do to encourage community involvement. The Salamanders will be making some changes to enhance community involvement. Social media will be expanding this year. There will be a person who tweets the game. Pocket schedules will be handed out at games and are on the website to print out. The Salamanders have also been in the

Christmas parade the last 3 years, which is a great way to be a part of the community. There are Little Leaguers at every game which gets parents and kids involved. It is difficult for the players to get out into the community because they are playing games almost every night. When they have a day off, they need to rest up for games. Atkinson also made a comment that there is a fine line between too much information and not enough.

Committee members inquired about the new addition to beer garden this year. The addition is new and Parks and Recreation staff nor the Salamanders will know for sure how it is going to work. The flow of the crowd is first year trial and error. A beer garden ticket is a cheaper ticket. This ticket is for people that like to stand up, walk around and hang out. Baseball games are slowly turning into social gatherings where there happens to be a baseball game going on. There aren't as many people that actually sit and watch the game. The stadium might appear empty because the seats aren't filled up but many people are standing and walking around.

Committee members brought up food choices at the games. The salamanders are going with US foods this year. They are also bringing back Zaxbys and pizza.

Tommy was very appreciative of all the suggestions. His email is on the Salamanders website if anyone wants to contact him about the team.

d. Discussion of land and greenways

Committee members asked Parks and Recreation staff about purchasing land. Parks and Recreation staff has money in reserves if a piece of land comes along that the Town is interested in. Staff is looking for large tracks of land to add parks like Womble in the future. The staff is aware of the need to purchase more land on the west side of town, they have land in Holly Glen subdivision, but the residents and HOA do not want a park in the neighborhood. In general, residents are complaining more about parks in their subdivision. An example of this is Salem Ridge and Bass Lake Park; there have been complaints about people turning into the neighborhood to get to Bass Lake Park. It is a long process from beginning to end to purchase land and build a park. It will take time.

APRIL TOPIC:

- 1) The committee would like to have Gwen Petrella with Sense of play
- 2) The committee wants to discuss using small parcels of land for butterfly parks. They are inexpensive, low maintenance and preserves the land. Additional comments were made that people are complaining about the over development of land, and more people are moving back to areas like Sunset Ridge because they want more trees and wooded area.

ADJOURN: There being no further items for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 8:54 pm.

Action:

Motion:

Second:

Vote: Unanimous