



Town of Beaufort, NC

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Town of Beaufort Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

6:30 PM Thursday, November 07, 2024 - Train Depot, 614 Broad Street, Beaufort, NC 28516
Monthly Meeting

DRAFT

Call to Order

Chair Michael Rave called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Roll Call

Members Present: Chair Michael Rave, Barbara Francis-Heckman, Sheresa Elliot, Ron Dupuis and Carol Beaird

Members Absent: Dave Inscoe and Doug Williams

Staff Present: Parks Coordinator Rachel Johnson and Interim Town Manager Charlie Burgess

Board of Commissioner Present: John LoPiccolo

Agenda Approval

Agenda was approved unanimously with a change. A representative of the Beaufort Garden Club did not attend the meeting in person but emailed staff a comment to share. This item on the agenda was changed to Community Input to offer citizens a chance to speak on the topic.

Minutes Approval

August 2024 minutes were approved unanimously.

Introductions

Committee members gave brief introductions and stated how long they have been on the committee and what motivated them to seek volunteering to serve on the committee. Carol Beaird was welcomed as the newest member and Sheresa Elliot was welcomed back. Both were appointed by the Board of Commissioners to serve 4-year terms in September 2024.

Election of Officers

The committee elected Michael Rave to serve as Chair, Sheresa Elliot as Vice Chair and Ron Dupuis as Secretary. Ron Dupuis made the motion to approve and Barbara Francis-Heckman seconded the motion.

Public Comment

Members of the public were advised that if they wanted to speak on the Ann Street item that they could do so during the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee's discussion on the topic.

No public comments were made at this time.

Items for Discussion and Consideration

1. Ann Street Water Access Discussion

- A) Visioning/Idea Sharing - Each member of the committee, Commissioner LoPiccolo and staff shared their ideas for the park space. Members each visited the space prior to the meeting. Both committee members and the public drew on a map their ideas for the space.
1. Questions about what the activities would be at the park
 2. Should there be a place for fishing?
 3. Make this space a Swing Park. Carol shared her observations of other parks where nicely placed swings were made available for people to use. Concern was raised about blocking views with the swings but they could be placed appropriately where this would not be an issue.
 4. Public input was provided where flooding continues to be an issue on this end of Ann Street and consideration should be given when upgrades/changes are made. Permeable material should be considered when paving. This area is historically a low-point of the street and floods during king tides and storms.
 5. Input from Advisory Committee:
 - a. Fishing or some type of boating - It was acknowledged that there is strong current going through that area and kayaks and boats would be challenged docking
 - b. A place for visitors to enjoy the view
 - c. Cut back parking spaces and make more park space
 - d. Permeable material for parking spaces to help with flooding

B) Public Input - Two Ann Street residents spoke and staff read several emails that had been received about a potential project at the West End of Ann Street.

Will Ziglar, 117 Ann Street, shared that flooding is an issue at the west end of Ann Street. He said when there are King Tides and/or heavy rains that the storm drains back up and flood the street and parking lot. He would like to see more pervious surfaces, rain gardens, grass and other storm water mitigation. He expressed concerns about the space currently being used for illegal activities.

Chris Tutak, 131 Ann Street, stated that the storm drains back up and flood the area.

- C) Sheresa added that based on the current inputs, she did a quick drawing of what the park could look like and shared that with the Group. The layout was received very well from the group and deserves further consideration. Rachel also added from a town perspective, there are monetart resources to help with the building of the park. Also, the current pilings at the dock are still there and could be utilized for a floating dock or other structures. There are also grant opportunities that could be available to address the water issues in the area.
- D) Garden Club inputs submitted to staff via email include
- a. Incorporate raised beds at the location
 - b. Signage about history of Ann Street
 - c. Attractive signage
 - d. The garden Club will help with plants and maintaining the plants

E) Recommendations to the BOC - Voted Unanimously to recommend the following potential uses for the West End of Ann Street to the Board of Commissioners:

Create a public park with water access that maintains the existing vistas and strives to mitigate existing stormwater/flooding issues.

Recommendations on how to achieve this include the following:

- Eliminate portions of the existing concrete area
- Make parking spaces permeable
- Include a bike/walking path to the center of the space – no golf carts
- Picnic tables
- Benches
- Lush gardens
- Irrigation for the landscaping
- Handicap Access
- Incorporate historical markers – Original location of the bridge into Beaufort, boat building & fishing industries
- Public Art/Water Feature
- Reduce the existing number of parking spaces and move them away from the residence at 102 Ann Street
- Build an observation deck/dock similar in style to Harborside Park for public use
- Bicycle Racks
- Native plants/Rain Gardens
- Explore flood mitigation
- Keep the view open with no obstructions
- Shade – maybe in the form of a swinging bench with a covered area to the side
- Consider community gardening options
- Involve the Beaufort Garden Club
- Design an attractive entryway
- Pocket seating areas
- Green Space

Recap of Recommendations: Initial Recommendations to Commissioners would include:

- a. Cutting parking spaces to make more green space
- b. Public Art

- c. History Markers in the park
- d. Observation deck
- e. Bicycle and pedestrian walkway
- f. Bike racks
- g. Swings included but possible on the side of the park to preserve the view
- h. Raised Beds/Gardens
- i. Redesign/relocate flagpole

It is the opinion of both staff and the advisory committee that much of the work on this project can be done in-house. The next steps are to create a design concept and seek estimates on the construction of a dock/observation deck.

Staff will present this information to the BOC at the regularly scheduled work session meeting.

Member Reports on Park Usage

Ron Dupuis provided a park usage update. He visited Freedom Park, Louis Randolph Johnson Jr. Memorial Park and the green space on Yaupon Street twice a day in August, September, and October and recorded the number of users at each location. Prime times are between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. and after school and after dinner

1. Conclusion: Freedom Park and Randolph Johnson are VERY well utilized parks throughout the time studied. Yaupon Street Open Space is not as well utilized but timing is such that early morning and early evening is when people walk their dogs and utilize this space for walking their dogs early morning and before bed.

Staff Updates

Staff provided an update on the fence mural project at Louis Randolph Johnson Jr. Memorial Park. Art students at ECHS are working on a project. An unveiling event will be planned for the spring.

Art in the Park continues through December.

Additional storm drain murals will be painted in conjunction with Duke and UNC's community outreach/citizen science programs. They will be creating a scavenger hunt.

Board Comments

No additional comments.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Meeting Minutes compiled by Ron Dupuis, Secretary.